

# **BLOOD TAKEN FROM UMBILICAL CORD SAVES A BOY'S LIFE**

**The 10-year-old's family is calling the medical procedure a miracle**

*By Diana Guevara on Jun 27, 2012*

An Orange County boy dying of a rare disease has been saved after doctors discovered a possible cure using blood from the child's own umbilical cord.

Doctors said they have only had a handful of these types of cases and the procedure is still in the experimental phase.

At only 10 years old, Ricky Martinez has had to learn a lot. For more than a year he has been battling an extremely rare disease known as Aplastic Anemia.

"I didn't understand what platelets were, what white count was," said the 10-year-old Wednesday afternoon.

His only hope has been to get a bone marrow transplant. His family has been searching for a donor since.

"Knowing that this is our only child that was the most devastating because I was like God please don't take him from me," said the boy's mother Cynthia Martinez.

The Murrieta-based family has received an outpouring of support from their community. Countless blood drives have been held in Ricky's honor including a blood drive organized by students at Cal State University San Marcos back in December.

"He's my world and just like any child would be to any parent, you're going to sacrifice and do whatever it takes to fight until the end," said Oscar Martinez, Ricky's father.

For months doctors at Children's Hospital of Orange County (CHOC) have searched for a possible match.

But in an unexpected find, they were able to locate blood from his own umbilical cord through a national database in Washington D.C. Ricky's mother had donated the umbilical cord to science after he was born.

"We couldn't afford to bank it ourselves [so] I figured let me help somebody else," said Martinez. But in an ironic twist of fate, "It came back," she added.

It is an experimental potentially lifesaving blood transfusion that is already showing signs of promise.

"He's doing better than they even expected," said Ricky's father Oscar.

After a month-long stay at CHOC, Ricky finally got to go home on Wednesday. "It makes me feel special because I'm helping other kids have a second chance at life," the boy said.

His mother says he will be on a special diet for the next 100 days while they build up his immune system.

**Reference:**<http://www.nbcsandiego.com/news/local/Blood-Taken-From-Umbilical-Cord-Saves-A-Boys-Life--160623165.html>