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PROJECT 44 LAUNCHING “DRIVE TO SAVE: 10 YEARS OF IMPACT” MEMORIAL CAMPAIGN

Indianapolis, Indiana, November 17, 2025 — In recognition of 10 years since the passing of Andrew Smith, Project 44 is launching the “Drive to Save: 10 Years of Impact” campaign.



The *Drive to Save: 10 Years of Impact* campaign will include new and expanded partnerships, national events, state-wide engagements, and city-wide activations consistent with Men's and Women's DI, DII, and DIII Basketball events and post-season tournaments. With a fundraising goal of \$100,000 by Smith's

birthday, September 9, 2026, Project 44 seeks funding to leverage the convergence of timing, location, and platform of championship collegiate basketball with the 10-year milestone and mission of Project 44.

Created in honor of the late Andrew Smith, who, after a two-year battle with blood cancer, including a bone marrow transplant, passed away on January 12, 2016 at the age of 25. During this time, Andrew and his wife, Samantha, become active advocates for the national bone marrow registry, bringing awareness and advocacy to blood cancer patients in need. This advocacy work would eventually go on to become Project 44.

In partnership with Butler University in 2016, Project 44's initial goal was to save 44 lives through bone marrow donation. As the organization began to experience national, wide-spread success and support, co-founders Samantha Smith-Michael and Krissi Edgington formally incorporated as a 501(c)3 not-for-profit in 2018, with an expanded mission to save lives through bone marrow and blood stem cell donation. By providing education, awareness, and advocacy for the national bone marrow registry, Project 44 has been working since its inception to build mainstream awareness and willingness to support the registry.

“It feels overwhelming and unbelievable that it has been ten years since we lost Andrew,” said Smith-Michael. “When I look back on the past decade, I am so incredibly proud of the work we’ve been able to do for cancer patients, and I’m hopeful of what the next ten years will hold. This campaign is not only to honor Andrew,” she added, “but to also keep fighting for the patients that he spent the last months of his life advocating for.”

Over the past 10 years, Project 44 has:

- Generated national, regional, and local media, adding thousands of new registry members
- Participated in developing and passing historic legislation for the State of Indiana
- Established the state's first-ever bone marrow awareness, education, and advocacy program
- Formalized partnerships with collegiate and professional programs across state and sport lines
- Forged a relationship with anchor institutions across the state to build a recruitment pipeline

“10 years marks a significant milestone for Project 44,” said Edgington. “By highlighting the impact we’ve achieved over the past decade, we also get to celebrate the irreplaceable legacy left by Andrew. As an organization, we feel incredibly blessed to be doing this life-saving work 10 years later.”

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About Project 44: Launched in 2016, Project 44 was created in honor of the late Andrew Smith. Wearing the #44, Andrew was a beloved, standout member of Butler University's two-time NCAA Finals basketball team. Having been a personal recipient of a bone marrow transplant in November of 2015, Andrew and his wife Samantha were blessed with an additional three months together to make and share memories that would last well beyond Andrew's final days on earth. On January 12, 2016, at the age of 25, Andrew passed away following a two-year battle with cancer. Through education, awareness, and advocacy, Project 44's mission is to save lives through bone marrow and blood stem cell donation. For more information, visit Project44.org.

For media inquiries, to make a donation, or to partner with Project 44, please contact Krissi Edgington at krissi@miwimarketing.com.