

Charity Ball Aims to Save Local Student

By [Tatyana Rublyova](#)

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Yelena Sadikova. She is in need of a bone marrow transplant.

One of Russia's largest targeted charity events will take place at Swissotel Krasnye Holmy on Saturday, as more than 600 high-profile guests take part in a Christmas ball to raise money to save a Moscow student's life.

Yelena Sadikova, 22, a fifth-year journalism student at Moscow State University, has been battling leukemia for two years and needs a bone marrow transplant to survive.

Her only hope is the Seattle Cancer Care Alliance, a U.S.-based medical unit that specializes in bone marrow transplants. But the cost is high: \$423,000 to fund the potentially life-saving surgery. As of Nov. 24, \$276,198 had been raised, and organizers hope the ball will help them raise the \$146,802 still needed.

"I'm only 22, and I still want to accomplish so much in my life," Yelena wrote on [her web site](#).

The [U.S. Embassy](#) and the [Harvard Club of Russia](#) are among the organizers of the ball, which

will have MuzTV video jockey Oskar Kucher as a host and include a charity lottery. Among the prizes on offer is a vacation to the Maldives and hotel stays in New York and a number of European capitals. The Muskat dance troupe and pop rockers Stary Priyatel will perform.

Yelena's family has been searching the globe for suitable bone marrow donors, but because she carries a rare chromosome type, the number of potential donors is severely reduced.

"We have already spent about \$50,000 looking for donors in Russia, Europe and the United States," said Yelena's mother Alla. "Our only hope is to find one in time."

Experts say it is often easier to find a perfect match among donors of the same nationality that carry a similar genotype, but Russia's largest database, a private rather than a government initiative, has only 7,500 potential donors.

"Compare that with 7 million American donors," said Lyudmila Bubnova, from the St. Petersburg Institute of Hematology and Transfusion Therapy, who organizes the database.

The Christmas Charity Ball is on Saturday at 6:30 p.m. at Swissotel Krasnye Holmy. 52 Kosmodamiansky Naberezhnaya, Bldg. 6. Metro Paveletskaya. Entry costs 3,000 rubles. RSVP online at <http://elenasadikova.com>

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