



Today's Donor

Great Lakes Blood Services Region Summer 2009

NEWS FOR OUR APHERESIS DONORS

Apheresis Donor Centers

Lansing

1729 E. Saginaw

Monday
6:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Tuesday
6:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Wednesday
6:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Thursday
6:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Friday
6 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Saturday
8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Sunday
CLOSED

Lansing Apheresis Supervisor
Amy Grant

Flint

1401 S. Grand Traverse

Monday
Noon to 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday
2 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday and Thursday
CLOSED

Friday
6:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Saturday
6:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Sunday
6:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Flint Apheresis Supervisor
Val Edwards

Helping to save lives through platelet donation is as much a part of summer as baseball, hot dogs and apple pie. And while the need for platelets doesn't go away during the summer, platelet donors sometimes do. We're asking all eligible donors to make donating platelets part of what they do this summer. Give the gift of life by donating platelets through the American Red Cross. Call 1-866-725-2140 or visit redcrossmichigan.org

Why we give: Ryley's story

John A. Roach's story begins with Ryley.

Ryley would have been 9 years old this year. He died from **leukemia** when he was 3.

"He was just a typical little kid, just being around, loving life," says John. "He's the main reason I do what I do."

John is a frequent **platelet donor** through the **American Red Cross**. Before Ryley got sick, he had never heard of platelets. In fact, it wasn't until after Ryley died that he realized he could give.

"I feel great about being able to help somebody who needs platelets," says John. "It's something I can do to pay back all the donors who helped Ryley."



John and Ryley Roach

was long before he got married, and even longer before having Ryley.

"When Ryley got leukemia and needed bone marrow, I wanted so badly to give," says John. "But I wasn't a match. It was heartbreaking. I wanted to do everything I could."

John still waits for that call from the bone marrow registry to say he's a match for someone somewhere. And whenever the Red Cross calls, he's there, giving platelets as often as he can. Every time he goes in, he thinks of Ryley. He thinks, too, of other donors and how their **acts of kindness** gave their family hope.

Learning how to give

John remembers the day he first learned about platelets. He and his wife Janet were at the hospital. Doctors said Ryley needed platelets, but there was a shortage. They were hopeful the hospital would receive some soon, and apply them to Ryley's care.

"We waited hours and hours, and were so relieved when they finally came," says John. "I had no idea platelets were something somebody donated. For a while, I thought they were something manufactured, just like other pharmaceuticals."

John had been a **blood donor** since his military days in the early '90s. He had also joined the **bone marrow registry** after a guy in his unit mentioned how he had donated bone marrow to help a sick child. But all this, he says,

It's that extra time, he says, that he and his wife **Janet** were able to spend with Ryley that keeps him coming back. That time, he says, wouldn't have been possible without the platelets that helped Ryley endure his treatments.

"We were so blessed to be able to do things for him, to be able to tell him every day how much we cared for him," says John. "We were able to say those last words and give that last hug because someone took the time to give."

*John lives in Lapeer with his wife Janet and his two children, 11-year-old **Zachary** and 4-year-old **Lauren**. In between taking his kids to sports activities and working as a builder, John volunteers for the Make-A-Wish Foundation, The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, and with fundraising events for families and children with cancer or leukemia.*

Would you like to tell us why you give platelets?
Do you have a story to share about someone who's needed them?
Call or e-mail Ann Kammerer at 1-800-968-4283, ext. 360 or kammerera@usa.redcross.org

Are you a match?

Not a day goes by that patients don't need transfusions of platelets in their fight to beat serious disease. Sometimes, too, those patients must be carefully matched with platelets from particular donors, which can make the situation even more urgent.

Everyone's blood has a certain type and combination of **human leukocyte antigens**, some of which are compatible with specific people. Patients who receive a transfusion of **HLA-matched platelets** often find their platelet counts improve more than with a transfusion of non-matched platelets.

When you donate platelets, we do a simple HLA typing test on a sample of your blood. Once your type is determined, we enter that information into a database. In the event that a hospital contacts us with a need for HLA matched platelets, we identify donors who are platelet matches. Some of those donors may then be asked to make additional platelet donations to help an individual patient.

Since beginning HLA typing several years ago, the Great Lakes Region has been able to match many recipients with HLA products. Apheresis Recruiter **Sara Spoelman** says that the process allows the Red Cross to provide the optimal product to hospital customers, as well as to patients.

"Our donors get a great deal of satisfaction when they hear more about what happens to the platelets they give," says Spoelman. "It helps them realize even more that they are truly making a difference to someone in need."

A tale of two donors: Virgil and Rachael

Rachael Brooks can't sing or dance, so she gives platelets.

"Plus it's something we can do together," says her husband **Virgil**, who also donates platelets through apheresis. "And that's nice since it's something we can do for someone else, too."

Rachael and Virgil have been giving platelets through the American Red Cross for nearly eight years. It started out as another way they could help save a life in addition to their commitment to donating whole blood. But over time, their trips on Saturday mornings evolved into something else.

"It's our date every two weeks," says Virgil.

"It's a place I can be and not have someone saying mom," says Rachael.

And with five boys, that's a phenomenal feat worth repeating.

Virgil and Rachael met on a blind date 26 years ago in Oxford, Mich. Her sister had set her up with a date with Virgil's roommate. But his roommate couldn't go. Virgil went instead. Within a year, they married.

"Five kids later, here we are," says Rachael. "It was either true love or insanity."

For Virgil, it was being in the right place at the right time. They've made their home in Flint where Virgil works for **Assembly Technologies**, and Rachael for the **Carman-Ainsworth Schools**. In their spare time, they share a love of video games, collecting, their sons, and helping to save lives by giving of themselves.



The Brooks family. Back left to right: Jashuae, Jason, Jonathon; middle: Virgil, Rachael, Jeffrie; front: Jordan

"I wear my Red Cross shirt a lot," says Virgil, adding that he's recruited a half dozen donors just by answering questions about his shirt. "Sometimes, too, people come up and thank me, saying that their daughter or someone they knew had leukemia. Those are the kinds of things that make me realize again why I'm giving."

Your questions, your answers

My doctor recently advised me to start taking an aspirin a day to help prevent heart attacks. Will this affect my ability to donate platelets or whole blood?

When you come to donate platelets, it's always important to let us know if you have taken any medication containing aspirin in the **last 48 hours**. If you don't know whether an over-the-counter or prescription drug you are taking contains aspirin, ask us. While taking aspirin during this time may not be cause for concern when you donate whole blood, it would prevent you from donating platelets.

Platelets are small cells floating in blood that serve an important role in stopping bleeding. Scientifically speaking, platelets induce **hemostasis**. That's the process that stops bleeding through the formation of platelet plugs and blood clots. Aspirin, however, is a **platelet inhibitor**. When you take aspirin, it

can prevent platelet plug formation and block the formation of blood clots. For some people, aspirin prevents blood clots that can clog arteries, causing conditions such as a heart attack or stroke. But a bleeding patient or a patient at risk for bleeding needs platelets that haven't been inhibited.

Because aspirin can affect platelet function, we temporarily defer donors who have taken aspirin or aspirin-containing medicines within 48 hours of their donation. If you are planning to donate platelets, and you regularly take aspirin for a medical condition, we ask that you **check with your physician** first before interrupting your prescribed therapy.

Got a question? Send it to Today's Donor c/o Ann Kammerer at kammerera@usa.redcross.org or call us at 1-800-968-4283, ext. 360

On the campaign trail...

Updates on perks, programs and personnel

Battle for Blood.

They're our local heroes . . . putting their lives at risk to help others. And now they're rolling up their sleeves to help save lives. Join us **June 29 through July 11** for the **2009 Battle for Blood**, a friendly competition between police and fire departments in Greater Lansing. When you come out to donate platelets in Lansing, you'll be asked to cast your vote for either fire or police. Your votes for your favorite force will be added to the score, and later taken to the court. On July 11, teams from the police and fire departments will duke it out in a basketball game at **Pattengill Middle School**, right across from the Lansing Donor Center. So help save lives, and pad the score of your favorite group of public servants. Call and set your appointment today for this year's Battle for Blood



at **1-866-725-2140**, or visit **redcrossmichigan.org** for more information.

Get in the game. Although we're halfway through the year, there's plenty of opportunity for you to get in the game, and help keep platelet donations strong and steady year-round. You'll receive a **punch card** and the chance to accumulate points toward for special prizes. Every time you present to donate platelets, we'll punch your card, and give you a point. For every three points (or three attempts to donate), you'll be eligible to receive a special giveaway. So be sure to join our newest frequency rewards program. We'd like to thank you!

The prizes, and the intervals, are: 3 points: mug • 6 points: thermos • 9 points: towel • 12 points: sports duffel bag • 15 points: cargo cooler • 18 points: ground lounge chair • 21 points: chill and grill outdoor kit • 24 points: \$50 gift card to a restaurant of your choice.

Staff profile: Chiquita Webb

For **Chiquita Webb**, deciding what to do for a living was easy. She simply followed her heart.

"I love helping people," says Chiquita who works at the **Flint Apheresis Donor Center** through the American Red Cross. "That's why I picked my career."

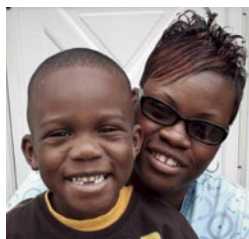
Chiquita started working with the Red Cross four years ago after being trained as a medical assistant at **Ross Medical Center**. As a member of the whole blood collections team, she traveled to blood drives throughout Greater Flint and the Thumb. Two years ago, she applied for a position collecting platelets, and say she enjoys having a home base.

"I live just five minutes from the center," says Chiquita, who is a life-long resident of Flint. "I like that convenience, and getting to know some of the donors personally."

Unlike whole blood where she saw different donors every day, Chiquita says her job as an apheresis technician allows her to see some of the same donors on a regular basis.

"We talk about our families and our kids," she says. "And lots of them are interested in me working, going to school, and taking care of my little boy."

Chiquita attends **Baker College**, and is looking to earn an associate degree in orthotics and prosthetics. She credits the Red Cross for sparking her interest in working with donors and patients.



Chiquita and Malachi

And when she's not balancing work and school life, Chiquita enjoys raising her son, **Malachi**.

"He's 4 years old and just lost his two front teeth," she says. "He's so excited about that."

Every once in a while, Chiquita rolls up her sleeves and donates through the Red Cross. As a student, she likes to give at blood drives at Baker College, but she also takes pride in donating platelets at the center.

"Giving platelets might take a little longer than whole blood, but it's worth those few extra minutes," she says. "It's a wonderful feeling to think that someone else is getting another chance at life because of something that you did."

Our horizons...

Apheresis Recruiter Sara Spoelman shares her experiences in the field and at the Apheresis Donor Center as she encourages people to help save lives by giving or supporting donations of platelets.



We always hear that sometimes the best way to get the news out about goings-on with you, your community group or the place that you work is simply through word of mouth. I'm finding that to be the case.

Recently, I joined a networking group where I'm based—here in Lansing. It's called **Lansing Top Dog Networking Group**. The group consists of about 50 members of local businesses and organization who band together to share ideas, information, resources and success stories. Their goal? To spread the word about their services and products, and to brainstorm on unique ways to get the community involved in their businesses.

While I'm just learning about the networking community, I'm finding it to be a unique way to get my voice out there about the need for platelets, as well as what we do here at the American Red Cross. But even more so, I'm finding it to be a great mechanism for informing others (so they can inform others, too!) about the constant need for platelet donors.

If you want to see what the Top Dogs are all about, check out their Web site at <http://www.meetup.com/The-Lansing-Business-Strategy-and-Networking-Meetup-Group/>.

Got an idea? Or do you have a suggestion for another networking group that would help promote the platelet cause? Contact Apheresis Recruiter Sara Spoelman at 517-318-7292 or spoelmansn@usa.redcross.org.



American Red Cross

Great Lakes Blood Services Region

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Today's Donor

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By the numbers: Great Lakes Region

Fast facts on our collections

Fiscal year 2009:
July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009

Platelet products		Procedures	
Our goal	13,780	Our goal	7,965

Where we're at:
Collections update for July 1, 2008 to April 30, 2009

Platelet products		Procedures	
Our goal	11,484	Our goal	6,651
Actual	13,404 (120%)	Actual	7,092 (109%)

Although it looks like we're out-in-front of our goals, we're just keeping pace with the increasing need for platelets. The need for platelets changes on a daily basis. And as medical care becomes more specialized, we're seeing stronger demand for platelets to help patients in their fight to beat serious diseases.

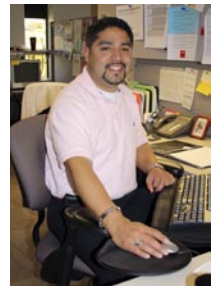
Every time you donate platelets, you help save someone's life. Your dedication can ensure that platelets are there to help a child endure chemotherapy . . . a father survive an emergency surgery . . . a friend beat cancer. Please. Give platelets. Give often. You have the power to make a difference.

Proud to give

Name: Juan Mendez

Who he is: Telerecruitment Supervisor, American Red Cross Blood Services, Great Lakes Region

My first donation: I made my first donation September of 2005 and all I can remember is anxiety, sweaty palms and how sweet the American Red Cross tech was.



Juan Mendez

Why he gives: I started giving blood because I felt it was an important aspect of my job to fully understand the donation process. I have given whole blood, platelets and double reds. The experiences have helped me to train staff and respond to donor needs.

What else: I'm still not totally over my fear of needles, but giving platelets and blood has helped me overcome my fear. Now that I have given several times, my anxiety is not a big deal knowing that someone will benefit from this special gift.

I grew up in Lansing—about five blocks from my job—and attended Fairview elementary next door. I used to walk by the building on my way to school and would sneak in on the really hot days to drink from the water fountain. Shhh!

Recent milestone: I haven't reached my first gallon yet, but hope to by this Fall!