



Today's Donor

Great Lakes Blood Services Region **Fall 2008**

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

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

You've got one life to give.

And you can give it again and again. As a platelet donor, you can help save a life, every three days, up to 24 times a year. Give the gift of life by donating platelets through the American Red Cross. Call 1-800-968-4283, ext. 292 or visit www.redcrossmichigan.org

Why we give: Dustan's story

Dustan Colyer will tell you all about his life. But sometimes he does it best through song.

"Actually, my friend **Sean** writes most of the songs about me," says the **14-year-old** who has battled a childhood **kidney cancer** half his life. "He just wrote one called *Return*. It's about when I came back home from the hospital."

Dustan's **mother Karey** doesn't mind the electric sound of **Kaos Redeemed**—a band she says is named for Dustan's life.

"I love to listen to them," she says of the guitar-driven group that gets its rhythm from Dustan's drum lines. "Sometimes it's pretty loud, but it's wonderful to hear his voice."

For six months, the Colyer house in **Plainwell** was void of Dustan's music. He'd been in the ICU of **C.S. Mott's Children's Hospital** in Ann Arbor, then at **Bronson** in Kalamazoo, undergoing stem cell transplants, chemotherapy and hundreds of platelet transfusions. It was his third fight to beat **Wilms tumor**—a cancer that strikes about one in 12,000 children and affects the kidneys.

Dustan was first diagnosed when he was 6 years old, and again as a pre-teen. Intensive treatments pushed the disease into remission once, then twice. Each time, his mother says, Dustan fought back, returning to school and friends, ready to resume everyday life.

"This last time was the roughest," Karey says, mentioning that now that he's a teenager, he reacts a little differently and feels frustrated he has to go through things again. "But he just said *well, I beat it twice. I can do it again.*"

Dustan's fight wasn't easy. While hospitalized, he struggled with bleeding, often coughing up blood or bleeding profusely. His platelet levels dropped, and wouldn't hold. He was on a ventilator. Sometimes he received four to five transfusions a day. After 100 transfusions, Karey and his father **Jason** lost count, but took action when they heard platelets were in short supply.



Dustan Colyer with his dog Elsie

"We put a note on Dustan's blog that he needed platelets," says Karey. "And we gave a number to call. Lots of people were checking his blog. The response was overwhelming."

Almost 70 people from Dustan's tiny hometown made the **180-mile round trip** to the American Red Cross in Lansing to donate platelets. Many were giving for the first time.

"Teachers, co-workers, friends from church, even people we didn't know went to give," says Karey, amazed that so many people took a whole day from their busy lives to drive and donate for Dustan. "I don't think Dustan would be here today if it weren't for them."

Dustan eventually received more than 300 donations of platelets to help save his life. There was a time, Karey says, when she, his father, and sisters **Leeah** and **Breena** traveled to the hospital to say their good-byes. Now, just a few months later, he's building a tree house, playing in the marching band, and attending ninth grade.

"I couldn't have done it without my friends and family," says Dustan of his recovery. "I was so overjoyed to come home and see my two dogs. It was so hard to be away from them. They were jumping all over me. I was so happy."

If you would like to read more about Dustan and his fight to beat Wilms Tumor, visit his blog at www.dustancolyer.blogspot.com

Make the ask...

Time and again, we hear the number one reason people haven't donated platelets is because no one has ever asked them. We've asked you. And you've donated. Again and again.

As a platelet donor, you know what it's like. And you know the feeling of helping to save a life. Wouldn't you like to share that feeling of pride with someone else? Consider this:

- Let your friends and family know about the need for platelets. Show them your "badge of honor" next time you give . . . and explain how you've just helped save a life.
- Help someone schedule an appointment to give . . . or make your appointments together! Lots of donors come in pairs. They tell us it gives them a chance to spend some quality time together, to do something different. Some donors go out for breakfast, lunch or dinner before or after giving. Others tell us they go to the movies, go shopping, hit the links, or spend time attending community events. Make a day out of saving a life!
- Feeling shy? You can simply pass along this newsletter, or mention the American Red Cross Web site. Your friends and family can browse the site, read about platelet donations, and even make an appointment to donate.

If everyone who currently donates recruited just one more donor, we could help twice as many hospital patients.

Thank you for all you do. And that phone number and web site for your friends and family?

1-800-968-4283, ext. 292
www.redcrossmichigan.org

A donor's story: Maurice DeLisle

Maurice DeLisle thrives on adventure.

He's been to Italy twice, to the Dominican Republic once, and regularly canoes, camps and rides a motorcycle.

"You've got to live for today," says the 63-year-old who did two tours of duty in Vietnam as a **U.S. Navy Seabee**. "Because tomorrow may never get here."



Maurice DeLisle

That philosophy, Maurice says, is part of what drove him to become a **platelet donor** through the **American Red Cross**. Another is the sense of pride and civic duty he feels after giving.

"The Red Cross called and asked if I would try giving platelets," says Maurice, who was then working on earning his **eight-gallon pin** for whole blood. "I didn't have a clue what platelets were, but I was up to a new challenge."

Maurice made the 60-mile round trip from Fowlerville to Lansing to make his first dona-

tion in February. Since then, he's sold on the idea of giving the tiny particles in his blood that can help cancer patients and other seriously ill or injured people.

"I'm curious about the whole process and how platelets help people," says Maurice who made his living diagnosing and fixing heavy machinery. "I get a real feeling of pride and respect every time I give."

Although retired, Maurice still tinkers with machines and cars. He remains active in the **American Legion** as the post finance officer, and is the commander of the local **VFW** post.

"I don't tell people what to do, but I do try to persuade them," says Maurice of the times his family and friends have noticed his post-donation bandages and asks what he's been up to. "I say if you ever want an honest answer, just ask a sailor."

Your question, your answer

I met someone the other day who said he has been donating platelets through apheresis for more than 30 years. When was the process first available to donors?

Collecting platelets through apheresis has been **possible since the 1970s**, and continues to advance technologically. The Great Lakes Region of the American Red Cross began collecting platelets through apheresis in the mid-1970s at a specially-equipped center in Lansing. To keep pace with demand, we opened a second facility in Flint in 2004.

The 1970s were a dynamic decade for blood banking. In 1970, blood banks moved toward an all-volunteer blood donor system. In 1971, **testing for the Hepatitis B** surface antigen began. In 1972, **apheresis became available** as a way to extract one cellular component of blood, and return the rest of the blood to the donor. Then, in 1978, the FDA began

requiring blood bags to be labeled as "paid" or "volunteer." As the decade closed and the 1980s began, physicians who were specifically trained in **transfusion medicine** began to actively participate in patient care.

Just as medical advances continue to affect how donated blood is used by patients, blood collection methods and technology changes constantly. Thank you for sticking with us as we enter new frontiers in helping to save lives.

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

Front and Center...

On the campaign trail. It's fall. And for us planners (and non-planners), it's time to start thinking about the upcoming holidays. The Apheresis Centers in Lansing and Flint are **open every holiday**—except for Christmas day. That's because hospital patients need platelets regardless of the day, regardless of the season. To show our appreciation for your giving spirit, we'll have special canteens during the holidays—including things like donuts, chips and popcorn, even hotdogs! We'll also be giving out special gifts during these times, too—things like T-shirts, key chains and pens. "Many of us don't think about donating during the holiday," says



First-time donor and Lansing staff Debra Starin assisted by Wendy Murchison

Apheresis Recruiter **Sara Spoelman**. "But your platelets make a great gift. It's one that keeps on giving and costs nothing. That's about as good as it gets!"



Lansing staff member and donor Lora Briggs

They're getting on the books. Red Cross staff walk the walk . . . and roll up their sleeves to help save lives. In the past few months, several staff in both our Lansing and Flint locations made appointments to give. And while those staff were on the beds, their team members took on extra work to ensure their donations went smoothly and hospital patients got the products they need. "This is real teamwork and dedication," says Apheresis Manager **Sara Heeg**. "Our staff truly give 110 percent-plus to their jobs."

Staff profile: Alex Grabowski



Alex Grabowski

Alex Grabowski never thought he would work for the **American Red Cross**. But now that he's here, he's quick to tell his friends about everything he does.

"I never had a full grasp of what the Red Cross was about," says the 2007 graduate of **Michigan**

State University. "I like the idea of knowing what you do helps others. It's not just a self-centered activity or about making millions."

As an **apheresis technician** in the **Apheresis Donor Center in Lansing**, Alex understands the immediacy of platelets in helping to save lives. Some of that knowledge comes through the **on-the-job training** he received since starting in November. His other familiarity comes from earning a **bachelor of natural science**, and being curious about how the human body works.

"I've led a very active life," says Alex whose studies included **kinesiology**. "Learning how our bodies react to activity or to disease has always grabbed my interest."

Alex enjoys learning the basics of his job, and is working to consistently deliver the finest donor experience possible. Part of what he likes about his work is knowing that if you do something in a certain way—and do it right—everything will go a lot easier.

"Our work is very organized," says Alex who helps prepare kits, performs phlebotomies, ensures donor comfort, and packs and gets products ready to ship to the lab. "It's interesting to see how all the parts line up."

Alex put that organization to the test by becoming a **platelet donor**. It was good, he says, to see things from a donor's point-of-view—and ultimately to help save a life.

In between working part-time at the Red Cross, Alex is taking classes at **Lansing Community College** in **pre-nursing**. Hobby-wise, he likes movies, and claims he probably saw every rentable movie at Blockbuster during his teen years in **Royal Oak**.

"I don't have a favorite movie or a favorite type," he says. "As long as the story is good and the characters are more than two-dimensional, it's worth watching."

Our horizons...

Organizations on board. We're starting to network with our communities to help save lives. To date, we've got a few things going with businesses, schools, community groups, and other organizations in our bigger and smaller towns that surround our donor centers. Some of those include . . .



Lions Clubs International



. . . **Lions and Kiwanis Clubs**. Building on the success of our relationship with the **Dimondale Lions Club**, we've gone and given presentations at the **Delta Township** and **Lansing Kiwanis** as well as the **Lansing Delta Lions Club**. Recruiter **Sara Spoelman** tells us that civic groups are instrumental in reaching community members who can actively spread the word about the need for platelets, and help recruit new platelet donors.

"Members of these groups are very involved in the community and are always eager to find new ways to help out," says Sara "When they're eligible, many become donors, and if they're not, many become volunteers for other Red Cross Services. It's one of those win-win situations for everyone, especially our hospital patients and their families."

Are you a member of a group or an organization? Want to schedule a presentation on platelets? Or do you have an idea for recruiting platelet donors and volunteers from within your group? 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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The way we give...

Donor Rick Jones makes donating platelets a regular part of life. Here's what he says about why he gives . . .

"The Red Cross frequently calls and tells me they need my platelets and blood. I'm fortunate enough to be Type O-negative, the "universal donor," with large veins and good health. I found that donating whole blood or platelets by apheresis is pretty painless. The Red Cross employees are great! They always make it a pleasant experience." **Rick Jones, State Representative, 71st District**



Nearly two dozen donors were recently recognized for donating platelets up to 24 times a year. Pictured here are donors who drove to Lansing for the special event and Annual Meeting of the Great Lakes Region.

Would you like to tell us why you give platelets? Call or e-mail Ann Kammerer at 1-800-968-4283, ext. 360 or kammerera@usa.redcross.org

By the numbers: Great Lakes Region

Fast facts on our collections

**Fiscal year 2007:
July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008**

Platelet products

Our goal	12,368
What we did	14,230 (115%)

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

Platelet products

Our goal	13,780
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Procedures

Our goal	7,965
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