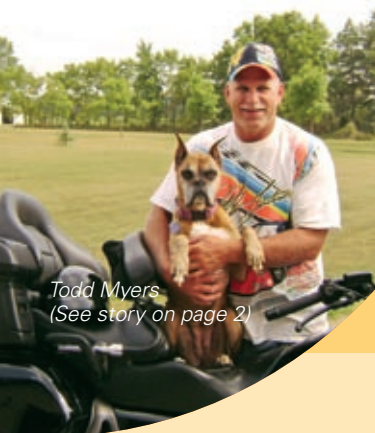



Today's Donor

News For Our Apheresis Donors



Todd Myers
(See story on page 2)

Fall 2007

Great Lakes Region Blood Services 

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

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

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

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

Sunday
CLOSED

Flint

1401 S. Grand Traverse

Monday
Noon to 7:30 p.m.

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

Wednesday and Thursday
CLOSED

Friday
6:30 a.m. to Noon

Saturday
6:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Sunday
6:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Flint Apheresis Team Lead Val Edwards

Be thinking about your Thanksgiving Day holiday donation! Information about Thanksgiving Day hours will be sent to you via e-mail or posted in the donor center.

Why we give: Brenda's story

She was never a morning person, and always complained that the birds woke her up—especially on weekends.

But today, she's happy to hear the birds, and even to rise at daybreak. Simply put, **Brenda Acre** says she's happy to wake up.

"I learned some very good life lessons," says Acre of the three months she spent three years ago undergoing intensive care for a **rare form of leukemia**. "Now when I wake up in the morning I say *I have today. What can I do to make a difference?*"

Brenda's experience with **acute promyelocytic leukemia** acquainted her with feelings she wouldn't wish on anyone. She simply wasn't prepared, she says. Nor were her husband, **Brian**, and her children, **Paul and Danielle**. After all, she'd always been on top of her job at **Firstbank-Alma**. She'd always been there for her family. And she'd always been healthy and feeling well, up until she came down with what seemed like a bad flu.

"I thought I would get a shot and be on my way," says Brenda of the Monday she went to the doctor after spending the weekend in bed. "But they sent me home to get an overnight bag for the hospital. The next morning they diagnosed me with leukemia."

Brenda still remembers the first few sentences the doctors said. *You can't work for a year. We're going to start you right away on chemo and put you in intensive care. You're going to be in the hospital for a long time.*

"I knew I was going to miss a lot," says Brenda as she thought about her job, her family, and about her daughter's senior year in high school. "I couldn't go prom dress shopping with Danielle. I couldn't go to her pom-pom team's state finals. I might not even see her graduate. I was mourning the loss of things to come."

What did come were **weeks of chemotherapy**, coupled with **transfusions of blood and platelets**. Every day was a new challenge. She faced



Brenda and Brian took a trip to Alaska to celebrate two years of remission. This picture was taken on a day at sea.

allergic reactions, difficulty breathing, breast cancer scares . . . and losing blood faster than doctors could transfuse.

"What I didn't know at the time was that this was a sign of the end stage of leukemia," says Brenda of the day she woke up bleeding. "But then doctors gave me platelets. Lots of platelets. And the bleeding stopped."

Brenda knows she wouldn't have made it that day, or even survived those first few days after diagnosis, if platelets hadn't been available. But she did make it. She even attended her daughter's graduation, **strengthened by platelet donations** and by arsenic therapy that pushed her into **remission**.

"All we ever really have is today," says Brenda, who has returned to work and speaks occasionally to civic groups about her experience. "Sometimes when you get busy in life, you take people for granted. I try not to do that now."

People like Brenda need platelets in their fight to beat serious disease. They can do it with the help of platelet donors like you. Thank you for all you do.

Today's

Calling all eligible donors . . .

On a national level, women make up about 50 percent of blood donors. And that near 50-50 split holds true for Michigan.

In the past year, some of you may have heard that the American Red Cross is starting to collect plasma exclusively from men to minimize the risk of a rare transfusion-related condition. **Transfusion Related Acute Lung Injury (TRALI)** occurs in 1 in every 5,000 blood recipients, and causes sudden shortness of breath. TRALI is most commonly caused by **white blood cell antibodies** that can only be produced if someone has been exposed to blood either through transfusion or pregnancy. The incidence of these antibodies is about **15 to 20 percent in women**, and **less than 1 percent in men**. These antibodies are most commonly found in plasma, in particular **fresh frozen plasma**—or **FFP**.

In the Great Lakes Region, we sometimes take donations of plasma during the process of platelet apheresis. To minimize the incidence of TRALI for our blood recipients, all women donors (with the exception of Type AB) will no longer donate a plasma product during platelet apheresis. The Red Cross will also strive to manufacture FFP only from whole blood given by men.

"Because we're moving toward collecting plasma just from men, both men and women platelet donors are going to be more important than ever. Because we won't be collecting plasma from women, they can now donate a double or even triple platelet product; and the men will be needed for the extra plasma collections," says Apheresis Supervisor **Sara Heeg**.

A donor's story: Todd Myers

Todd Myers started his work life in the shop, working at **ACDelco, Delphi** and then the **General Motors truck plant** in Flint. That's where he also started saving lives, giving blood for dozens of years at factory-sponsored blood drives.



Todd Myers with his dog Dakota, Honda Goldwing and NASCAR gear.

"But then the American Red Cross called me and asked if I'd like to try donating platelets," says Myers. "So I did about two years ago. I can do it. So I do."

Switching from whole blood to platelets wasn't the only change for this Swartz Creek resident in the last couple of years.

Caught in the swirl of the state's shifting economy, Myers took the GM buyout, and followed his wife, **Dana**, into nursing. Today, he's an RN at **Genesys Regional Medical Center Health Park**, working in neuro-trauma intensive care, while Dana works in cardiac step-down. His 19-year-old daughter, **Brittany**, is also in the nursing program at Mott Community College.

"My wife says I like to help people whether I like to admit it or not," says Myers, who was more open about talking about his hobbies like motorcycle riding and NASCAR. "I'd probably need a lot of therapy to find out why I do what I do."

Dana puts it another way. "Todd just thinks that's how everyone should be," she says of his being an all-around good person. "Some people do nice things so people recognize them. Todd just does it to do it."

Last year, **Todd gave platelets 23 times**—just one less than the maximum 24 times a year. These days, he comes in to the center on Saturdays or Sundays, fitting in time to save lives in between working third shift.

"I see the whole circle now," says Todd of donating platelets. "I'm a donor. I work at a hospital. And as a nurse, I help give blood and platelets to patients. I'm much more aware now of how giving can help."

Your questions, your answers

I heard that the American Red Cross is setting appointments and collecting platelets on some holidays. Why is that?

Yes. **You heard correctly.** The primary reason we're keeping our doors open when most of us take the day off is to ensure the availability of platelets to patients who need them most. For those of you who have known someone with cancer or any other serious disease, you can understand that serious health concerns do not take a holiday . . . they stay with you whether it's the Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, Christmas or any other day.

Hospitals are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week—with no time off for holidays. Like hospitals, the Red Cross is known for helping to save people's lives, and we want to uphold the trust the public has put in us. To do that, we must ensure that platelet and blood products are available—whenever and wherever they are needed.

Platelets are very fragile and must be transfused to a recipient within five days of collection. That makes **every day of the week crucial to platelet collections**. As we approach what is commonly known as the holiday season, please remember the ongoing need for platelets, and make one extra donation during this important time. Thank you!

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.

Donor

Your Platelet Pages



On the campaign trail

Updates on perks and programs for apheresis donors

Monthly pins. Big thanks are due to all of you who have donated platelets every month so far in 2007. Hospital patients are grateful for your generosity, and we're proud to see so many of you wearing and displaying your monthly pins. We still have a few more months left, so be the one to make your platelet donations, help save lives, and receive all 12 apheresis pins.



New in '08. Beginning January 1, 2008, everyone who volunteers to give platelets will receive a punch card. Whenever you

come in to donate, we'll punch your card for you . . . and you'll be on your way toward receiving up to six prizes, including small tokens of appreciation at your 1st, 6th, 12th, 18th and 24th donations. The punch card promotion runs through December 31, 2008. Be the one to receive all six prizes, and present to donate 24 times in 2008! *Our thanks to donor Todd Myers for this creative promotions idea. Todd is our featured donor this issue. You'll find his story on page 2.*

Team achievement. Our Apheresis teams in Lansing and Flint recently received the *Circle of Excellence* award from the American Red Cross Ohio-Michigan Division. In the last fiscal year, hard-working staff collected more than 114 percent of our collection goal, and maintained a 63 percent split rate for donations.

Staff profile: Wendy Murchison

Wendy Murchison was looking for a family-friendly job when she came to work at the American Red Cross. What she found was one big family.

"I really like our donors," says Murchison who has been with the Red Cross for 13 years—four of them as a donor technician in the **Lansing Apheresis Center**. "We tend to build friendships and relationships with all of them."

That, she says, makes each and every day, and brings even more meaning to her job of taking platelet donations from mid-Michigan residents. A graduate of **Ross Medical Education Center**, and **lifelong resident of Lansing**, Wendy enjoys the challenges of working in a medical environment, and the idea that what she does helps save lives.

"I just like the idea of helping people," says Wendy who is working hard to convince her husband **Eugene** and four

younger siblings to become platelet donors. "Lots of people don't know how much your donation can help people who are sick or have cancer."

Wendy started at the Red Cross right before her daughter was born, collecting whole blood at drives across the central part of the state. She moved into the platelet collection arena eight years later, attracted by the special process and the idea of doing her job out of a single location.

"**Jocelyn** is 12 now," says Wendy of her daughter. "She's a cheerleader, goes to a school for visual and performing arts, and lots of other things. When I'm not here or with her, I like to shop-shop-shop—anywhere and for anything."



Wendy Murchison

Make the most of your donation!

You're giving platelets for a reason: to help save someone's life. At the **American Red Cross**, we're dedicated to helping you attain that goal.

To do that, we've set two benchmarks. Our first is to have fewer than 4 percent of donors "QNS." A **QNS** happens when we're not able to draw the full amount of platelets from you—and your donation cannot be completed. In the past several years, we've provided special training to our staff to help improve our phlebotomy techniques, and to reduce the number of donations that come up "**Quantity Not Sufficient**." You can help, too, by drinking plenty of water and eating a good meal before you donate.

Our second goal is to keep our **deferral rate below 14 percent**. Please be sure not to take aspirin 48 hours before your appointment, and call us if you're not feeling well or on antibiotics. Doing so can help save everyone time, and provide the most comfort to you—our donor—during the time you give.

A fond farewell. . .

. . . to **Amber Kanski** as she leaves the Great Lakes Region. Many of you knew Amber as our **Apheresis Representative**, and may have met her as she worked with staff in our donor centers. "Amber took her responsibilities to heart," says Apheresis Supervisor **Sara Heeg**. "Her dedication was only second to donors in helping to ensure patients have the platelets they need." Amber moved with her husband to Metro Detroit. The couple is expecting their first baby in December.

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Between donor and recipient . . .

Lots of things happen—and happen quickly—between the time you donate platelets and the time your gift of life goes to a patient in need. Here’s a quick roadmap of what happens within 24 hours of your donation:

- Unique computer barcode number assigned to donation and donation test tubes
- Donation number scanned into computer for donation history
- Donation placed in transport container; sent to component laboratory
- Test tubes sent to National Testing Laboratory
- Donation tested for blood types, RH factor and transmissible diseases
- Test results received; platelets released or discarded based on results
- Donation labeled and stored
- Donation shipped to hospital for transfusion to patient

With platelets, each moment is critical. Not only are platelets exceptionally fragile, with a shelf-life of just five days—they’re needed by people who are seriously ill with diseases like cancer and leukemia. When you give platelets, chances are, someone very sick is waiting for your donation.



Packing platelets

By the numbers: Great Lakes Region

**Some fast facts on the year
behind us, and the year ahead**

**Fiscal Year 2007:
July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007**

Procedures	7,043
Products collected	12,043
First-time platelet donors	437

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

Procedure goal	7,020
Product goal	14,400 <i>(An increase of 19 percent)</i>
First-time platelet donor goal	600 <i>(An increase of 37 percent)</i>