



# The Carol H. Axelrod Memorial Blood Drive

If you have attended one of our previous blood drives and looked at the newsletter in your gift bag, you may have read our family's story. You will also notice that, once again, we have included it in this newsletter. The story is a part of every newsletter we create because it is the guiding force behind everything we do at our blood drives.

Many people do not realize just how much of a difference their blood donation can make in the life of a transfusion recipient and his or her family. Over the years, several people have told us that they always knew that donating blood was a good thing to do, but it was something of an abstract idea for them. In some ways, blood donation is about preparedness, because the blood products that will be used to help patients must have been collected before the need for them arises.

It is true that, unlike CPR or other kinds of medical assistance, blood donation does not give donors the immediate satisfaction of seeing that their actions have made a lifesaving difference. As a donor today, you will make your blood donation and go on your way, assuming that your blood will be used in some way, at some time, to assist another person, but not knowing when or how.

In sharing our family's story in our newsletters, we hope to remind every potential donor that their blood donation will have a direct impact on someone else. Someone's life will depend on the transfusion that you will have made possible by donating blood today. In fact, as many as three people can be helped by every unit of donated blood! In making a blood donation, you are giving three people a precious, lifesaving gift. How many other activities have that kind of impact?

There is a little more to our family's story than what we typically include in our newsletters. When Carol was hospitalized in July 2007, all we could do was wait, hoping that the numerous blood products the doctors were giving her would start to stabilize her condition. She received so many platelet transfusions that her body started to reject them, and the doctors had to begin a search for donors whose platelets were more closely "matched" to hers—in essence, trying to trick her body into thinking that the platelets she was receiving actually were her own.

Platelet donation differs from whole-blood donation; someone can donate platelets every 7 days (up to 24 times per year), but the process involves being connected to a machine for a couple of hours. We learned that, during the time that Carol was hospitalized and then after she was discharged—still transfusion-dependent—there were a few people who were being asked to donate platelets specifically for her, as frequently as they were able to. And they did! These donors gave so much of themselves, just to help someone they would never meet.

Unfortunately, we will never have the opportunity to thank those donors properly. Obviously, though, they were very special people who knew that their gift would soon be used to prolong the life of someone who was in great need of what they were able to provide.

The blood products that Carol needed were always available for her. We owe that to the blood and platelet donors who made every transfusion possible. In sharing our family's story, we hope to encourage more people to donate blood, donate more frequently, or even consider making donations of specific blood components, such as platelets, plasma, or red blood cells. (*You can learn more about these types of donations at [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org).)*

Carol had a 30-year career as a teacher, so we feel it is fitting that "her"

blood drive can serve as a way to educate people about donating blood. As always, we are grateful to all of you for your continued support. On behalf of every family that learns that a blood transfusion will be needed to help a loved one, we thank you so much for being here today.

#### Our Mission...

The Carol H. Axelrod Memorial Blood Drive was created as a way to "give back" to the organizations and blood-donor community that made it possible for Carol to receive all of the blood and platelet transfusions she needed during her treatment for cancer. Our mission is to help other patients and their families spend more time together by doing our part to ensure that blood products are always available for those who need them. Our goal is to help the blood donors at our drives have an enjoyable and positive donation experience.

Sincerely,

Michelle and Dan Scolnick



# COMMUNITY CHALLENGE UPDATE

In conjunction with our blood drives, we have worked with some wonderful local organizations: Radnor A Better Chance (May 2013), Women's Resource Center and Francisvale Home for Smaller Animals (May 2014), and Laurel House (July 2014). We are thrilled to have helped raise awareness and support for the work that these groups are doing! To learn more about them, visit [www.chablooddrive.org](http://www.chablooddrive.org).

We proudly announce that for every unit of blood collected at our October 2014 drive, we will make donations to **Lankenau Medical Center** and to **ElderNet of Lower Merion & Narberth**, which provides important services to enable elderly, disabled, and low-income residents to continue living in their own homes independently and safely.

## **Lankenau Medical Center**

The hospital where Carol received blood transfusions multiple times per week. We will always be grateful to the warm, caring staff for their efforts.

**Lankenau Medical Center**  
100 E. Lancaster Avenue  
Wynnewood, PA 19096  
[www.mainlinehealth.org/lankenau](http://www.mainlinehealth.org/lankenau)

## **ElderNet of Lower Merion & Narberth**

Provides important services to enable elderly, disabled, and low-income residents to live in dignity and safety in their own homes for as long as possible.

**ElderNet of Lower Merion & Narberth**  
9 S. Bryn Mawr Avenue  
Bryn Mawr, PA 19010  
[www.eldernetonline.org](http://www.eldernetonline.org)

Visit [www.chablooddrive.org](http://www.chablooddrive.org) to register for upcoming blood drives, discover more about what we do in the community, and learn about ways that you can help, even if you are not able to donate blood!

*A successful spring and summer...*

May 2014 blood drive in Radnor Township:  
117 units collected, helping as many as 351 recipients

July 2014 blood drive in Lansdale:  
58 units collected (on a goal of 46), helping as many as 174 recipients

Since its start in 2008, the Carol H. Axelrod Memorial Blood Drive has collected 1,523 units of blood, helping as many as 4,569 recipients!

## **Upcoming Blood Drives**

**October 6 & 7, 2014**

**7th Annual Carol H. Axelrod Memorial Blood Drive at Lankenau Medical Center**  
Wynnewood, PA

**May 2015**

Radnor Township Building, Wayne, PA

**July 2015**

The Reserve at Gwynedd, Lansdale, PA

To register for any of our blood drives, please visit [www.chablooddrive.org](http://www.chablooddrive.org)

We are always thinking about expanding our blood drive. If you know of a suitable location for a blood drive in an area where we do not currently hold drives, please email [michelle@chablooddrive.org](mailto:michelle@chablooddrive.org) and let us know about it!

We invite you to "Like" our Facebook page and follow us on Twitter: @CHABloodDrive

## **The Story Behind the Carol H. Axelrod Memorial Blood Drive**

Our family knows from personal experience that blood donors give hospital patients and their loved ones an incomparable gift: the gift of time. Whether a blood donation is used to save a life, to prolong a life, or to improve the quality of life, it allows families to spend more time together, making special memories. Thanks to the generosity of blood donors, our family was given another year with the mother, grandmother, daughter, sister, and aunt we loved.

Carol, a single mother of two daughters, was an elementary-school teacher in Philadelphia for over 30 years. In April 2003, she was 55 years old and starting to look ahead to retirement when she was diagnosed with multiple myeloma, an incurable cancer of the blood and bone marrow. In 2004, Carol's disease progressed to the point where her doctor recommended she undergo two autologous stem-cell transplants, the most aggressive treatment then available to myeloma patients. Although the procedures did put her disease into remission, the cancer returned less than a year later, and in an extremely aggressive form.

In July 2007, just two months before her 60th birthday, Carol was hospitalized as the result of a complication of her illness. At that point, the only thing the doctors could do to try to stabilize the situation was give her multiple blood transfusions and hope that her body would eventually start to do what it needed to do to heal itself.

For a week, Carol received multiple blood transfusions each day. The doctors said that she could die at any time, especially if they were unable to find the blood products she needed. But somehow, those blood products were always there—because of all the people who had donated the blood that the doctors were using to try to save her life.

Thanks to blood donors, Carol ultimately was able to leave the hospital. Although her body never regained enough strength to allow her to resume treatment for the cancer, she was able to live independently and enjoy almost all of her usual activities because, for nearly a year, she received blood transfusions at least twice a week. Thanks to blood donors, she was able to celebrate her 60th birthday and see her only grandchild turn three years old. And thanks to blood donors, Carol lived until July 1, 2008, enabling her to make a year's worth of memories with her loved ones.

Our family feels that we owe all the special memories of that last year to the generosity of blood donors. Carol's doctors told us that they had never had a patient who was transfusion-dependent for as long as she was. They were amazed that she lived as long as she did, with her only treatment being transfusions of blood and platelets. We were amazed that the blood products she needed were always available for her—and, of course, we were extremely grateful.

After Carol passed away, our family organized a blood drive in her memory at Lankenau Medical Center, the hospital where she had received the transfusions. Held in October 2008, it turned out to be the hospital's most successful blood drive up to that point. We decided to turn the blood drive into an annual event and hold it in multiple locations. With every blood drive we hold, we hope to be able to help even more people who need transfusions. Every two seconds, someone in the U.S. needs blood—and nine out of ten people will require a blood transfusion at some point during their lives.

Human blood cannot be manufactured, and there is no substitute for it. Blood donors were the only people who could give our family an extra year with Carol. Many, many other families find themselves in the same situation every day. Blood is used in emergency rooms and operating rooms, but people with cancer and other chronic illnesses also require blood transfusions, often on a regular basis. Thanks to donors who are willing to take an hour out of their day to give blood, these patients are able to continue to fight their illnesses—and spend more time with their loved ones.

To learn more about our family's story, please visit [www.chablooddrive.org/our-family-story.html](http://www.chablooddrive.org/our-family-story.html).