



The Carol H. Axelrod Memorial Blood Drive

The 8th Annual Carol H. Axelrod Memorial Blood Drive at Lankenau Medical Center represents our family's 15th blood drive in Carol's memory. As our blood drives continue to grow, it becomes harder to remember a time when they were not a part of our lives!

However, the truth is that before Carol became dependent on transfusions while being treated for multiple myeloma, our awareness of the need for, and uses of, donated blood was fairly limited. (We will admit that it came mainly from hospital shows on TV, on which characters would race patients on gurneys into operating rooms, calling for "two units of O negative" as they went!)

We have since learned, of course, that the uses of donated blood are many and varied. Our family's own experiences taught us that blood products are frequently used to help people who are fighting cancer. We saw that transfused blood products can increase blood counts, helping patients gain strength and energy and enabling them to continue with their treatments.

But the need for blood products goes well beyond operating rooms and cancer-treatment centers. The Greater Philadelphia region is home to a number of world-class hospitals, and all of them must make sure that their blood banks are completely stocked on a daily basis. The hospitals need to know that they have enough blood on hand—or can easily obtain more—in order to treat any patient who may require it, for any reason.

The need is exceptionally great at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, where some of our region's youngest and most vulnerable patients receive treatment. According to Dr. Deborah Sesok-Pizzini, chief of CHOP's Department of Transfusion Medicine, each year the hospital transfuses over 20,000 units of red blood cells and over 5,000 units of platelets. It isn't hard to understand why blood donors are so important; these numbers represent the need at just one of the many hospitals in our area!

CHOP uses blood to support children before, during, and after surgery. And young oncology patients, like their adult counterparts, may require blood products on a regular basis while receiving chemotherapy. But a quick look at the hospital's website shows that CHOP uses blood products in many other ways—always with the goal of providing lifesaving treatment, or improved and extended quality of life, to children.

CHOP's Division of Hematology provides services for children with blood disorders, including anemia, hemophilia, and sickle cell disease. In sickle cell disease, red blood cells (which are normally round) are shaped like crescents, which can lead to the blockage of blood vessels and potentially cause severe pain, stroke, or organ

damage. One way of managing sickle cell disease is through chronic blood transfusions, administered every 3 to 4 weeks, which are often given to children who have had a stroke or are at risk for a stroke. Blood donors play an essential role in helping children with this condition avoid potentially serious complications.

Children who are treated through CHOP's Pediatric Blood and Marrow Transplant Program receive transfusions of red blood cells, platelets, and other blood components. In many ways, the treatment for these children may be similar to the treatment that Carol received for multiple myeloma; in fact, our family first became aware of the power of blood donation when the transfusions that supported Carol through two stem-cell transplants helped put her disease into a yearlong remission. When children are the patients, blood donors can provide an extraordinarily powerful gift to their families by supplying the blood products that can help them fight their illnesses.

Some children who are being treated at CHOP may also benefit from a blood product called intravenous immunoglobulin or IVIG, which is a solution made from blood plasma (a component of whole blood). It contains antibodies, or immunoglobulins, that can bolster a patient's immune system. IVIG also treats inflammation and can quiet autoimmune response. In fact, our daughter has a classmate who is living with mitochondrial disease, a condition in which his body's cells do not produce enough energy to function properly (he and his family describe this as having "tired and cranky cells"). This condition can have very serious consequences, but the IVIG infusions that he receives every 18 days help him greatly.

The incredible thing is that just one dose of IVIG contains immunoglobulins from more than 1,000 plasma donors—which means that at least 1,000 donors are needed in order to produce a single dose of a treatment that can help patients fight infection and enjoy better quality of life.

Because the American Red Cross supplies blood products to CHOP, your donation today may very well help children who are being treated there. It will certainly be helping as many as three patients at the numerous hospitals in our area! And if you'd like to learn more about donating specific blood components such as platelets or plasma, you can find plenty of information at www.redcrossblood.org.

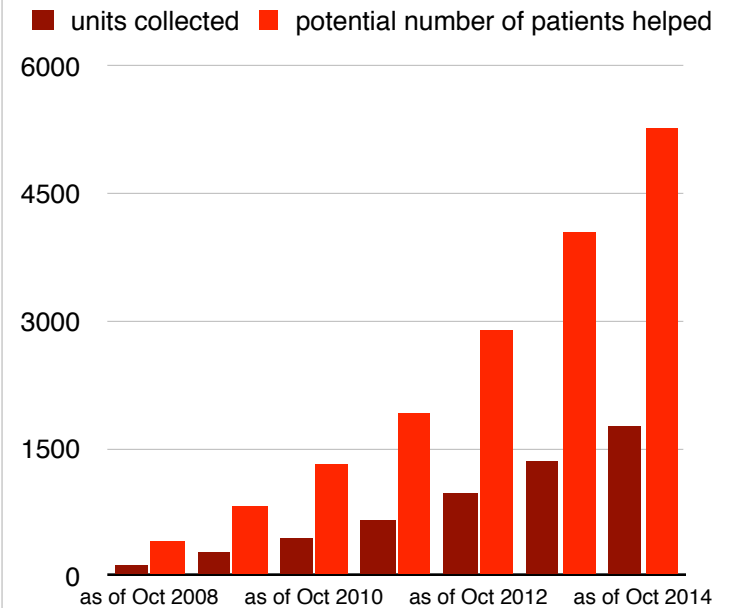
Thank you, as always, for donating blood. It makes such a big difference for so many families!

Sincerely,
Michelle & Dan Scolnick



- For details about the dates and locations of our blood drives in 2016, please visit www.chablooddrive.org. -

Every unit of donated blood can be divided into components that may be given to as many as three different recipients. Therefore, every blood drive has the potential to make an enormous impact. The chart below shows how donors at the Carol H. Axelrod Memorial Blood Drive have helped patients between 2008 and 2014. Thank you for your support!



COMMUNITY CHALLENGE UPDATE

This October, our Community CHallenge will benefit **Maya Rigler's Virtual Alex's Lemonade Stand** and **Red Paw Emergency Relief Team**.

Visit www.chablooddrive.org to learn more about these groups and find information about all of the organizations that have been part of our CHALLENGE!

Maya Rigler's Virtual Alex's Lemonade Stand

Maya is fighting her own battle with cancer while working hard to raise awareness and funds to "make sure that no other kid needs to go through this stuff."

Maya Rigler's Virtual Alex's Lemonade Stand
 % Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation
 333 E. Lancaster Avenue, #414
 Wynnewood, PA 19096
 (866) 333-1213
www.alexlemonade.org/mayarigler



Red Paw Emergency Relief Team

Provides free veterinary care and other assistance to displaced pets and their people during and after a disaster in their home.

Red Paw Emergency Relief Team
 1328 S. 24th Street
 Philadelphia, PA 19146
www.redpawemergencyreliefteam.com

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.

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.