

RMCHCS hosts Auxiliary Blood Drive

Written by By William Madaras For the Sun
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Community “challenged” to deliver 65 pints of blood; bikers and fire department pitch in

Rehoboth McKinley Christian Health Care Services will be holding its Auxiliary Blood Drive on Feb. 13 from 2 - 7 pm and Feb. 14 from 8

am - 1 pm at the RMCH Third

Floor Solarium at 1901 Red Rock Dr., Gallup. Volunteers can call Mary Ann at 505-863-3098 or Eileen at 505-879-5576 for an appointment or sign up online at

<http://www.bloodhero.com>

, enter the sponsor code: Gallup. Walk-ins are also welcome.

The hospital is requesting type O and Rh Negative types A- and B- which are currently in shorter supply. Donors are urged to drink plenty of water and eat a full meal, must be 16 years of age, weigh 110 pounds, be in good health and free from colds. The challenge is being sponsored by the RMCHCS Auxiliaries and Vitalant, a nonprofit organization that collects blood from volunteer donors and provides blood, blood products and services across the United States. The blood drive began in 1943 and is one of the oldest in Gallup.

“We urgently need volunteers to give blood and challenge you to donate. One pint can save

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three lives,” said RMCHCS CEO David Conejo. “All it takes is one catastrophe—a plane crash, an earthquake or mass shooting and hospitals can run out of blood and people die. The lives you might be saving could be your own or loved ones.”

During the October 2019 drive, the auxiliary raised 63 pints, 3 pints beyond their 60 pint goal. This year the hospital’s goal is to raise more than 65 pints of blood and will require donations from 115 volunteers or more. The drive is also looking for donations of double red cells which carry oxygen to organs and tissue.

This type of blood is needed by patients having surgery, organ transplants or cancer treatment. People with life-threatening conditions often need many transfusions. By giving double red cells, volunteers can safely donate enough for two red cell transfusions.

Gallup Blood “Challenge” Competition

For the first time, RMCHCS is inviting Gallup’s civic and business organizations such as teachers, police officers, fire fighters, members of the Chamber of Commerce, retail organizations, union members and other groups to challenge its employees to a blood donating competition. A prize will be awarded to the winning team. So far, the McKinley County Motorcycle Community and Gallup Fire Department have accepted the challenge.

“This challenge will help separate the city’s wimps from winners,” said Eileen D’Orazio, chairperson of the Auxiliary Blood Drive. “We are throwing down the gauntlet to Gallup’s employee organizations, large and small, and challenge them to a blood-letting. Bring us your best vampires and fang bangers to help deliver every drop of their blood to our drive. Big prizes await.”

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RMCHCS is also allowing employees to donate blood during work hours which correspond with blood drive hours.

“Our employees will lead by example. We want to give our community the gift of life,” said D’Orazio.

"We accept the RMCHCS Blood Drive Challenge," said Jesus "Chuy" Morales, Deputy Fire Chief, Gallup Fire Department. "We look forward to some competitive blood giving. We are tough firefighters. Not only do we save people from fires, but we now say we save people by donating blood."

“Bikers are often portrayed as outlaw tough guys,” said Gallup biker Jim Christian, a member of the McKinley County motorcycle community. ‘With due respect to Marlon Brando, the original wild one, bikers are also givers. Most of us are involved in charitable events and the RMCHCS blood drive should be one of them. I urge fellow bikers to come out and meet the RMCHS Challenge. You never know when a fellow biker may need blood.”

Children’s Art Requested

In addition to the drive, D’Orazio requests donors’ children and schools with teacher donors to bring student drawings of people giving blood and why it is important.

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“We want children to learn the importance of giving blood and encourage their participation when they reach age 16 and weighs 110 pounds,” said D’Orazio. “This is a practice they can get used to while learning the value of volunteering.”

D’Orazio is asking children’s artwork contributions to be dropped off at the hospital’s information desk in the lobby where they will be picked up by members of the auxiliary. Posters should be sized 8-1/2 x 11 or 8-1/2 by 14 and can be created with any coloring instrument. The best drawings will be displayed in the solarium where the drive will be held and awarded first, second and third place.

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