# Community challenge to deliver 65 pints of blood

Written by By William Madaras For the Sun
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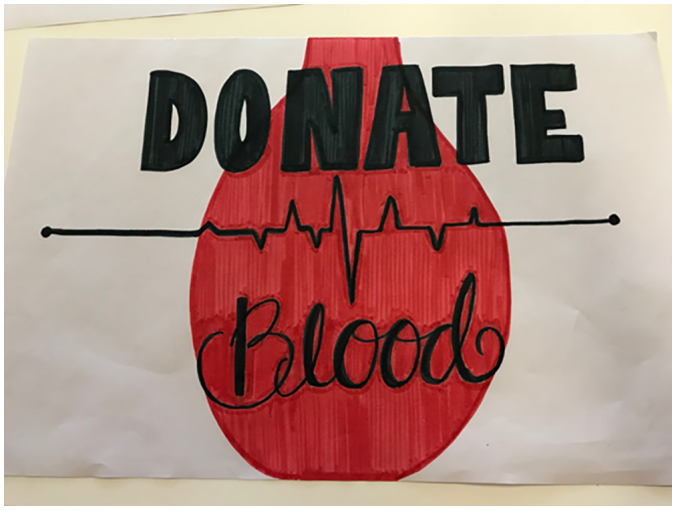

**Bikers, Fire Department help out**

Rehoboth McKinley Christian Health Care Services is holding its Auxiliary Blood Drive on Feb. 14 from 8 am-1 pm at the RMCH Third Floor Solarium at 1901 Red Rock Drive, Gallup. The drive began on Feb. 13.

The hospital is requesting type O and Rh Negative types A- and B- which are currently in shorter supply. The drive is also looking for donations of double red cells which carry oxygen to organs and tissue. When they donate double red cells, volunteers can safely donate enough for two red cell transfusions. This type of blood is needed by patients having surgery, organ transplants or cancer treatment. People with life-threatening conditions often need many transfusions.

“We urgently need volunteers to give blood and challenge you to donate. One pint can save three lives,” RMCHCS CEO David Conejo points out. “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.”

The blood drive began in 1943 and is one of the oldest in Gallup. During the Oct. 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 challenge is being sponsored by the RMCHCS Auxilians and Vitalant, a nonprofit organization that collects blood from volunteer donors and provides blood, blood products and services across the U. S.

***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 their 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,” Eileen D’Orazio said. D’Orazio chairs the blood drive. “We are throwing down the gauntlet to Gallup’s employee organizations, large and small, and challenging 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.”

RMCHCS is also allowing employees to donate blood during work hours that correspond with blood drive hours. “Our employees will lead by example. We want to give our community the gift of life,” D’Orazio adds.

Jesus “Chuy” Morales, Deputy Fire Chief, Gallup Fire Department said, “We accept the RMCHCS Blood Drive Challenge. 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.”

A member of the McKinley County motorcycle community, Jim Christian said, “Bikers are often portrayed as outlaw tough guys. 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 is calling for donors’ children and schools with teacher donors to bring student drawings of people giving blood to show its importance. “We want children to learn the importance of giving blood and encourage their participation when they reach age 16 and weigh 110 pounds. This is a practice they can get used to while learning the value of volunteering.”

Donors are urged to drink plenty of water and eat a full meal. They must be 16 years of age, weigh 110 pounds, be in good health and free from colds.

D'Orazio is asking for 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.

***For appointments: sign up online at bloodhero.com, enter the sponsor code: Gallup; Mary Ann (505) 863-3098; Eileen (505) 879-5576. Walk-ins are welcome.***

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