the loyalty issue

I’m saving someone’s life, and for me it’s just giving some of my time. **Linda Johnson**, page 3 • I understand firsthand the importance of the work we do because blood collected at Stanford saved my life. **Geoff Belanger**, page 7 • This work will change the way people think about obesity. **Daniel Winer**, page 6 • Our family gives blood as a way of giving back the priceless life-extending help that was given to Aaron. It saves lives! **Janice Lee**, page 4 • Each man’s life touches so many other lives. **Clarence the guardian angel** from *It’s a Wonderful Life*, page 5 • We believe in Stanford, the quality of their work and the care for their donors. **Stan Jensen**, page 4
In this issue, we’re taking a 360º look at our community—donors, blood recipient advocates, researchers, and staff—and sharing stories about their remarkable dedication. All of the people in these stories are motivated by and dedicated to different things—their son or daughter; an unnamed, unidentified patient; the health of future generations. One thing they all have in common is relentless, unwavering loyalty. Their quest is never finished and they never give up. This issue of LifeLink is a celebration of some of the loyal folks who comprise the Stanford Blood Center family.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue as much as I enjoyed working on it. I knew my friend and co-worker Geoff Belanger had received a blood transfusion after his birth, so I asked if he would like to write about it for LifeLink—it’s a unique connection, after all. But when I read what he wrote about his ordeal (page 7), I was shocked! I had no idea that he needed so many transfusions for such a long period of time. It was a reminder to me (as if I need one) that the need for blood is always nearby.

And I’d like to extend a special thank-you to those of you who were donating at our 800 Welch location in the mid-1990s—I know some of you are reading this because I know how loyal you are as SBC donors. Thank you for saving Geoff!

Brooke Wilson
Communications Manager | brookewilson@stanford.edu, 723-8270

**contributors**

**Deanna Bolio**
Deanna works in our communications department. She creates the posters, flyers, and handouts that publicize our upcoming blood drives. Deanna loves football, baseball, and basketball.

**Harry Sussmann**
Harry manages technical projects for SBC. He loves snowboarding and spending time with his daughter, who’s an undergrad at Stanford.

**Jennifer Reczkowski**
A New Jersey native, Jen works in our marketing department and is also our resident copy editor. She loves horror movies, tiki torches, and kittens.
promotions

Giving is Groovy Tie Dye Shirts!
- Friday, May 27 to Monday, June 6
- Friday, June 10 to Monday, June 13
- Friday, June 17 to Monday, June 20
- Friday, June 24 to Monday, June 27
- Friday, July 1 to Monday, July 11
- All Center Locations

It’s almost summer, 2011, and giving continues to be groovy here at SBC! We’ll have our seventh annual tie-dye t-shirt available on the dates above, giving you many opportunities to collect your well-earned color explosion on cotton. More dates to come in June and July…

Check in on Foursquare
- Now through Saturday, July 30
- All Center Locations

Let your friends know you’re out and about saving lives. Check in to Stanford Blood Center on Foursquare (or any other location-based social network, like Facebook Places, Gowalla, Loopt, etc.) and we’ll send you off with a new t-shirt featuring the design shown here.

Ongoing» Leave Your Lunch Money at Home
- Food available 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
- Hillview– First Tuesday of Every Month
- Campus– Second Wednesday of Every Month
- Mountain View – Third Tuesday of Every Month

Donate on one of the days above and you’ll find a platter of lunchtime loveliness in the Canteen! We’ll have sub-style sandwiches and those little bags of potato chips, too. This promotion will be going on every month, so set up your appointments ahead of time!

Ongoing» Monday Movie Madness!
- Every Monday from 7:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Hillview, at Campus (by platelet appointment only) from 7:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.
- Hillview & Campus Centers

We need your help on Mondays. To thank you for coming in when we need you most, we’ll give you one AMC Theatres movie ticket! On Mondays, donate at our Hillview Center or give platelets at our Campus Center. Please note: Campus donors will receive their movie ticket in the mail following donation.

events

We’ll be having special summer events at each of our Centers!

Mountain View BBQ
- Mountain View Center
- Thursday, June 2, Noon to 7:30 p.m.

Hillview BBQ
- Hillview Center
- Wednesday, July 6, Noon to 7:30 p.m.

Campus Picnic
- Campus Center
- Thursday, August 18, Noon to 7:30 p.m.
The buddy system
By Michele Hyndman

On Dec. 29, 2010, Linda Johnson became the first woman to make 500 donations at Stanford Blood Center. It was more than 20 years ago when Linda’s friend and Stanford Blood Center platelet donor, Stan Jensen, urged her to check if she would make a good platelet donor. Linda was a perfect candidate with good veins and a high platelet count.

As they have for more than two decades, Linda and Stan have donated through a specialized two-hour process that allows the Center to collect specific blood components such as platelets. This donation type allows them to donate up to 24 times a year. Whole-blood donors are limited to a maximum of about six donations per year. Stan has donated more than 350 times at Stanford Blood Center.

“I’ve been a blood donor my whole life,” said Johnson who began donating at other centers in college and through blood drives at work. “How much time have I spent in those chairs?” she wondered.

Stan and Linda carpool every other week from Moss Beach to Palo Alto to donate at Stanford Blood Center. “We believe in Stanford, the quality of their work and the care for their donors,” said Stan.

When Linda was called several years ago to donate platelets for a specific patient for whom she was a match, it cemented her commitment to donate as often as she was allowed. “I’m saving
In the family
By Deanna Bolio

Fifteen-year-old Maya Israni has been around blood drives since she was no taller than the Canteen table. Today, Maya is the youngest blood drive coordinator for a community blood drive. Maya was six when her mother, Sonoo, hosted the first blood drive at Ladera Recreation District, which she did in response to the September 11, 2001 tragedy.

“I called the Blood Center and asked if I could help in some way and they told me they were always looking for people to create blood drives,” Sonoo said. “I did one in the spring to honor my mother’s birth and one in the fall to honor my father’s.”

The twice-annual blood drives became a staple, with Maya and her older sister, Ellora, doing what they could to support the drive, including helping with publicity and calling neighbors.

“I was brought up with an ethos that said ‘with privilege comes responsibility’ and responsibility goes beyond writing checks,” Sonoo said. “I’ve been a volunteer for most of my life and from the time they were little, I’ve had them volunteer with different things.”

When Sonoo’s eldest was a teen, she asked if she could take charge of the blood drive and her mother agreed. Maya took over the reins last year when her older sister went off to college. She credits both her mother and her sister for leaving her a great base.

“They both really helped me and built me into it,” Maya said. “They built a really great foundation for me, like this great list of 70 or 80 people that I can always call up. That has been the most helpful.”

“What stands out about Maya is how organized she is. She’s even two or three weeks in front of me at times,” said Elisa Manzanares, Stanford Blood Center Account Manager. “She’s also very gracious.”

Organization is key since Maya balances her coordinator duties with a host of other activities, including school athletics, music, a part-time job and volunteer work.

“I think she uses the same skills for the blood drive that she used to be the top salesperson in selling cookies as a Girl Scout,” Sonoo said. “She’s comfortable reaching out to people.”

The Isranis attribute some of the success of their blood drive to the support of their tight-knit community.

“For the community, the blood drive has become a place where people can come and gather twice a year,” said Sonoo. “They come early and they stay late talking in the Canteen.”

This October, Maya will bring the community together once again for the 20th Ladera Recreation District blood drive.

There to lend an arm

When we ask John Paul Mayor for whole blood, he donates whole blood; when we ask for platelets, he donates platelets; when we ask him to come in for a photo shoot to help us with a Facebook experiment (see above), he delivered a heartwarming, genuine testimony about why he’s a blood donor.
While reading the paper one morning, Manuel, a 30-something Mexican immigrant, learns that there’s a local blood shortage. Having never donated blood before, Manuel decides to “help my fellow Americans.” Afterward, he describes the experience as “incredible,” and from that day forward, Manuel is a regular blood donor – every eight weeks.

In 2000, a new mom goes into multiple organ failure and uncontrollable bleeding shortly after an emergency caesarian section is performed to save her baby's life. Pints of blood are pumped into her body as fast as her veins can accept them. One of those pints is Manuel's. Several weeks later, Manuel's next blood donation appointment comes up and – again – the new mom receives his blood. She leaves the hospital after six weeks with a new mission: to help recruit more volunteer blood donors so that others can be given the same second chance at life she was given.

In 2004, the new mom returns to the same hospital that had treated her and walks into a room filled with news cameras and people. Seated in the first two rows are 22 of her actual blood donors from years earlier. Among them is Manuel, who has a bouquet of flowers in his lap – a gift for the woman whose life he helped save. When he’s called to the podium to meet the recipient of his blood, he embraces her, then her husband, and then their daughter, now four years old.

Years pass and the recession hits, forcing many to foreclose on mortgages they can no longer afford. Among them is Manuel. The stress over losing his family's home manifests itself as serious physical ailments, and he is hospitalized. His wife pleads with him to forget the home, that the health of their family is more important than any material possession, houses included. He remains despondent, but there is one memory that pulls him through his darkest days: giving a hug to that little girl who has a mother – thanks to him. It takes months, but Manuel is able to overcome his health issues and move on with his life.

That Christmas, the new mom receives a card from Manuel announcing that he’ll soon be a grandfather. She sends baby gifts for him to pass along to his pregnant daughter, but when they arrive, Manuel sets them aside. “I'm saving the gifts for the baby shower,” he writes to her. “Before giving them to my daughter, I’d like to tell everyone how our two families are connected through blood donation.” The new mom reads this, and cries. Yes, she thinks, we are connected. Then she laughs as she pictures everyone at the baby shower all heading down to the local blood center together to give blood when the party ends.

Thinking back on this story, I am reminded of the scene from It's a Wonderful Life – my all-time favorite movie – in which George Bailey begins to understand the depth of connection he had to so many people, and vice versa. “Strange, isn’t it?” his guardian angel, Clarence, says to him. “Each man's life touches so many other lives. When he isn't around he leaves an awful hole, doesn’t he?”

This is a lesson I know well – ever since receiving more than 200 pints of blood 10 years ago during the birth of my daughter, Clare. And I’ll forever be grateful that Manuel's life touched mine.
Q: What’s Aaron’s story?

Janice: Aaron was born in 1984 at The Birth Place in Menlo Park. Within weeks, he was diagnosed with Double Inlet Left Ventricle and underwent a surgery that would help mix oxygenated and unoxygenated blood into his system.

His second surgery was an open heart Modified Fontan; his third, a closed heart Pericardial Window connecting the heart sac to the lung sac for fluid build-up evaporation (a side effect from open heart surgical repair); his fourth surgery was to install a temporary pacer; his fifth surgery—at age 23—was major open heart surgical repair of his first open heart surgery and placement of a permanent pacer.

He is currently undergoing tests and being watched for a heart transplant. So far, his doctors think Aaron is a great candidate.

What is Aaron up to these days?

Janice: Aaron earned his AA degree at Fresno City College in 2008. He is now 26 years old and is a student at Fresno State University part-time with an undecided major, but excels in Math and Science. He enjoys computer games (including Wii Sports), casual cooking, watching educational and sci-fi TV, and travels with us on various destinations and cruises. Aaron is very smart and has a candid sense of humor. He is considered disabled and receives monthly SSI assistance.

Why do you think it’s important to give blood?

Janice: Our family gives blood as a way of giving back the priceless life-extending help that was given to Aaron. It saves lives! We give as often as we can in correlation with Aaron’s appointments at Stanford. We live in Fresno, so it’s a three-hour drive each way.

Anything else you’d like to add?

Janice: Needless to say, having one’s child diagnosed with a severe and complicated heart defect is nothing short of devastating. I must give full credit to Jesus, the source of our faith and strength. Aaron should not have survived, but thanks to Jesus, we have witnessed miracle after miracle in our son’s life.

by Amanda Baker | Public Relations Intern
I've worked at the Blood Center for a little over seven years now in a variety of roles, beginning as a phlebotomist. If you've donated on a mobile between 2004 and 2008, there is a good chance I drew your blood, some more than a few times.

Every so often we, as employees, are asked why we stay here. For me, the answer is simple. I understand first-hand the importance of the work we do because blood collected at Stanford saved my life. I was born with a congenital blood disorder called Diamond Blackfan syndrome. What that means is my bone marrow would not produce red blood cells. These symptoms manifested immediately after I was born and I had to be transfused at just a few months old. We were living in the Philippines at the time. My family took me back to the U.S. where I was diagnosed at Lucile Packard Children's Hospital by Dr. Bert Glader, who still works there. I was prescribed prednisone, which triggered red blood cell production until I reached puberty. At that point no medication would work and I became transfusion dependent. I was transfused with two units of packed red cells, each month at LPCH for a little under a year. All the blood I received was collected at SBC when we were still located at 800 Welch Road. Before the first transfusion at LPCH my hemoglobin count was 7.0 g/dL. Remember, the minimum to donate blood is 12.5 g/dL. Getting two units with an hgb count of 7.0 makes you feel like a million bucks.

This experience has ignited a deep passion for the work I do here. This passion has allowed me to succeed in all my roles here, working on blood drives, training new nurses and phlebotomists, and now writing standard operating procedures. I've put my whole self into the blood center, but the donors are what made it possible, since they are literally a part of me.

I'm not the only one who feels connected to the Blood Center because of my experience. My mother, Susan, is a charge nurse on the mobile blood drives and she has the same passion I do. If you've met her before, you'll know what I'm talking about.

Good news is that I've been in remission for over 10 years. No more blood transfusions or medication. My hemoglobin count stays right around 14.0 and if I want it checked I can just go down the hall and have my finger poked.
I am thrilled that Stanford Blood Center was a sponsor of the inaugural Promise Walk for Northern California on May 7 to raise awareness about preeclampsia and generate funds for research through the Preeclampsia Foundation. Thousands of women and babies die or get very sick each year from a dangerous condition called preeclampsia, a life-threatening disorder that occurs only during pregnancy and the postpartum period.

Each year, many of the women and infants who are impacted by preeclampsia require blood transfusions making Stanford Blood Center and the Preeclampsia Foundation natural partners. In fact, I also had a very personal motivation to participate in the Promise Walk.

In July 2006, I developed preeclampsia with my first pregnancy when I was about 35 weeks along with my daughter, Sydney. The onset was fairly rapid. I showed severe signs of edema, my kidneys showed signs of stress, and my blood pressure started to skyrocket. The only cure for preeclampsia is to deliver the baby. At 37 weeks, my midwife and doctor determined that it was no longer safe for me to carry Sydney and that she was big enough to deliver early. It broke my heart that this disorder was usurping the natural course of pregnancy and childbirth, and I prayed that there would be minimal repercussions for Sydney’s health. I was admitted to El Camino Hospital and immediately put on an IV of magnesium sulfate to reduce the chance of seizure and coma. It was a scary and unnerving experience during what should have been the most exciting and joyful moments of my life. Fortunately, Sydney and I both came through with flying colors. I’m grateful for our health and the incredible care we received.

I had a relatively mild case of preeclampsia and it was caught early. Countless other women and infants have not been so lucky. Recently, Lauren Larsen, author of Zu Zu’s Petals: A True Story of Second Chances, spoke at Stanford Blood Center and told her story of preeclampsia, which ravaged her body and required her to receive more than 200 units of blood. I’ve also heard the wrenching stories of families whose loved ones didn’t survive. Scientists still don’t know a lot about what causes this disorder that affects approximately eight percent of pregnancies. My mom developed preeclampsia when she was pregnant with me. My hope is that when Sydney decides to start a family of her own, research, funded by walks like this one, will have led to better understanding and preeclampsia prevention.

Globally, preeclampsia and other hypertensive disorders of pregnancy are a leading cause of maternal and infant illness and death. By conservative estimates, these disorders are responsible for 76,000 maternal and 500,000 infant deaths each year.

Stanford Blood Center’s blood donors help support the treatment of these women and infants. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

In June, I will celebrate my 10-year anniversary working at Stanford Blood Center. For me, it is hearing blood recipient stories, like Lauren’s and so many others, watching my hard-working and passionate colleagues, knowing that scientists within the building I work are making amazing discoveries and seeing the generosity of blood donors every day that keeps me excited and dedicated to our work at Stanford Blood Center.

Mary may also be found speaking at nursing schools about job opportunities in blood banking. Many nursing students are unaware of positions in the blood banking industry, and a career in a field other than critical care can be appealing to some. She recently spoke at the American Health Education program in Dublin, CA where SBC has found many new nurses.

When Mary is not on her feet, she might be grading competency tests for various Blood Center departments, including Collections, Registration, Marketing, and Telerecruitment. Or, she might be training her students on the new computer system soon to be used by donors for completing their medical histories. It’s often a very long day for Mary, but she is committed to making certain that our donors are in good hands.

by John Williams  Marketing Manager
Coming soon: Digital questionnaires for donors

This summer, SBC will upgrade to new software that better manages the way we obtain donor health history information.

Instead of answering the health history questionnaire with a pen and paper, soon donors will review and answer questions with just a computer screen. SBC will gradually implement the new system—rolling it out at our Hillview Donor Center first, then at other Centers, and lastly at mobile blood drives. The software is regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and uses industry-leading computer technology and bar coding.

Some of the benefits of this new system are that it will:

• streamline the registration process for blood donors
• reduce the likelihood of transcription errors by eliminating some of the manual data entry
• reduce the amount of paper produced

Donors will continue to check in with the registration desk when they arrive to donate blood. Our staff will then provide instructions about how to use the new touch-screen monitors.

Please note that we will not be able to store your answers to any questions. The FDA requires that all blood centers ask all donors all questions on the day of each blood donation as a safety measure. Also, please bring your donor identification card every time you donate; this will help expedite your donation experience.

by Harry Sussmann | Project Manager

Safe Blood Africa

One quarter of a million people die annually in Nigeria from lack of blood products. Its National Transfusion Service supplies two percent of the needs of its population of 150 million. In response to the monumental need for modern blood product services on the African continent, the Rotary Club of Carmel Valley founded “The Safe Blood Africa Project” in 2004.

SBC is joining the cause. To help spread awareness, we invited John Edward Watson-Williams, M.D., past Professor of Medicine and Hematology on three continents, and member of the Advisory Board for Safe Blood Africa, to discuss the project at our Café Scientifique speaker series.

He shared his firsthand experiences in tackling daunting medical, cultural, logistical, and financial challenges working to modernize hematological practices in Africa.

We have a hunch that many of our generous blood donors may want to contribute to this cause as well; that’s why we’re working on a new option for our Donor Loyalty Store that will allow donors to contribute to the Safe Blood Africa project. More to come as we finalize details.

Dr. Watson-Williams shared stories of his experiences working in Africa to better the blood supply at our Café Scientifique speaker series in Fall 2010.
A refreshed look for SBC

Through the years our logo has gone through a few changes. Hearts have always been a graphic element of our brand because of what they represent—both figuratively and literally. We’ve recently refreshed our logo to better communicate who we are. Here’s a breakdown:

We are proud to be a part of the Stanford family, so we made our university's name large, and placed it front-and-center.

“Give blood for life!” is our tagline. It, too, has a dual meaning:
• In one sense, giving blood provides life for a patient.
• In a different sense, patients need life-long blood donors who commit to giving blood for the duration of their life.

Part of Stanford University School of Medicine.

As part of Stanford University, we have an academic focus at SBC; some of our resources are put toward researching to unlock the mysteries inherent in blood (see right column of page 6 for an example).

Update: Canteen screens

SBC has installed plasma screens in each Center to display information to donors. Currently, you’ll find rotating messages about the latest promotions, special events, research, new technologies, and patient stories. We will be replacing the donor milestone wooden plaques with an electronic version in the near future, so you can see your name and donation goal achieved.

by John Williams | Marketing Manager

New tees for mobile donors

All donors who give blood (or at least attempt to do so) on a mobile blood drive during the month of May will receive our new “Life happens. Give blood.” T-shirt.

Got an idea for a cool new SBC T-shirt? E-mail your idea to brookewilson@stanford.edu
888-723-7831 • bloodcenter.stanford.edu

Hillview Donor Center
3373 Hillview Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94304

Campus Donor Center
780 Welch Road, Suite 100
Palo Alto, CA 94304

Mountain View Donor Center
515 South Drive, Suite 20
Mountain View, CA 94040

Monday 7:30 am to 3:00 pm
Tuesday 7:30 am to 3:00 pm
Wednesday Noon to 7:30 pm
Thursday Noon to 7:30 pm
Friday 7:30 am to 3:00 pm
Saturday 7:30 am to 3:00 pm
Sunday Closed

Monday Noon to 7:30 pm
Tuesday Noon to 7:30 pm
Wednesday 7:30 am to 3:00 pm
Thursday Noon to 7:30 pm
Friday 7:30 am to 3:00 pm
Saturday 7:30 am to 3:00 pm
Sunday Closed

Monday Noon to 7:30 pm
Tuesday 7:30 am to 3:00 pm
Wednesday Noon to 7:30 pm
Thursday Noon to 7:30 pm
Friday 7:30 am to 3:00 pm
Saturday 7:30 am to 3:00 pm
Sunday Closed