Connecting Donors to Patients
A Letter of Thanks From a Patient to Donors (see p. 3)
Greetings donors, volunteers and friends,
I’d like to officially welcome you to the Summer 2015 edition of LifeLink!
Our donors are at the heart of our mission here at Stanford Blood Center (SBC), and as you will see in the following pages, the focus of this issue is on what they mean to us.
Some highlights in this issue are:
• Two new patient stories that thank donors and underscore the need for continued donation
• A letter from a donor-turned-patient thanking donors and staff
• Two new Community Heroes stories
• A call for more volunteers from our strong donor base
• An updated and new look for our donor website SBCDonor.org
• A list of our newest Milestone Donors – more now than ever before
Our shared goal is to have enough blood on the shelves for the patients who need it. SBC’s donors unselfishly continue to respond to this call-to-action by doing their part to further our mission.
Our donors’ commitment has allowed Stanford Health Care to expand the complexity of their service. The growth plans for Stanford Hospital & Clinics, Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital Stanford and a soon-to-open outpatient cancer center in the South Bay add significant responsibility for our blood center. SBC itself is in its own strategic expansion-planning phase to evaluate capacity and consider ways to provide even better service to patients.
SBC has always supported research – it’s one of the things that distinguishes us from other blood centers. We are using unique approaches to advance science, including making use of blood byproducts from donations that otherwise may have been discarded. These byproducts are used in a variety of ways including for in-vitro and in-vivo clinical trials, for allergy research, to study therapies for cancer research, and to determine compatibility between transplantation patients and donors. This innovative approach has put us in an optimal position to not only serve our patients who need blood now, but also those who may become patients in the future. Through your invaluable generosity, we will continue to provide first-class support to patients in our community and fulfill our mission.
As you may know, the summertime is an especially challenging time of year to meet the demand of local patients. Please consider making one extra appointment this summer to help us meet hospitals’ needs. Your generosity and dedication are celebrated by SBC and in the lives you help save.
Wishing you health and happiness,

Harpreet Sandhu
Administrator, Stanford Blood Center

From The Administrator

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Cover: “The Donor Issue” featuring one hundred of SBC’s Milestone Donors.
Content: Loren Magaña, Kristin Stankus, Nadia Alvarado and Vanessa Merina.
Design & Layout: Loren Magaña and Dana Constance.

Check out our website for updates on promotions and events: bloodcenter.stanford.edu
We wanted to share a thank-you letter from one of our donors who became a patient. She has now seen the entire process from a totally different perspective and specifically wanted to thank our donors for their dedication and generosity.

November 29, 2014

Dear SBC blood donors,

For years, I, like you, was a blood donor. I donated platelets mostly and sometimes was asked to donate whole blood. I began donating blood to SBC back in 1980. Although I did not get in to donate as often as I wanted to, I was faithful up until about two years ago. I was well aware of how important blood products are for those suffering from cancer, for the preemie babies and those dealing with other major medical challenges. I felt very proud to be able to help in a small but important way.

In May of 2013, I myself was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer. I underwent surgery and we all hoped for a complete surgical cure. Sadly, in December of that same year, I had to have a second surgery and then went through 30 sessions of radiation treatment to the head and then on to bio-chemotherapy. I was told it is one of the most toxic of the cancer protocols. It is at that time, after each five-day hospitalization when the chemo made my blood counts plunge, that I became a recipient of the blood products you so caringly and faithfully provide. I never thought I would need to receive platelets and red cells myself. I have always lived a healthy lifestyle exercising regularly, eating a healthy diet, have work I love, and loving family and friends. By all counts, I “should” have been one of those people who never had to get the bad news of a cancer diagnosis. But there I was, seriously debilitated by the toxicity of the drugs that we also hoped would save my life.

The rare form of mucosal melanoma that I have failed to completely respond to surgery, radiation and bio-chemotherapy. I went on to a regimen of immunotherapy and am doing well as of the writing of this letter.

What I want to say is that I know now what it is like to be on both sides of the equation. I have donated blood products for years and then suddenly and dramatically, the tables turned and I had a huge need for the products myself. I want to thank each and every one of you for the gift you give each time you go to make your donation for people you will never meet, like me. But just because we never meet does not mean people like me are not grateful. We are truly grateful and I wanted you to know my story. I want to thank you with all my heart and be sure you know your efforts are so important and so appreciated.

Gratefully,

Magdalena Cabrera
milestone donors

Congratulations to those who have made noteworthy donations since our last issue

100 Donations
Marilyn Anderson
Carol Augustine
Stephen Baird
Roger Baldwin
Laurette Beeson
James Blain
Robert Brushwyler
Glenn Cole
Sandra Devol
Randall Devol
Valerie Drury
Michael Dunn
Oets Emmons
Brent Fairbanks
William Fitch
Cathryn Floyd
Darryl Greco
Timothy Grolle
David Heintzelman
Thomas Himel
Susan Holtzapple
Kevin Jones
Karen Koppett
Colleen Labozetta
Stig Lundh
Rietta McCain
William McClintock
Graig McHendrie
Ruth Rabin
Robert Rohrbacher
Eliot Tarlin
Alan Whitaker
Bradley Whitworth

200 Donations
Riya Young
Daniel Barrit
Anne Faust
Kevin O’Neill

300 Donations
Ronald Mancini
Michael Pica
Ross Smith

400 Donations
Dennis Briskin
James Levison

500 Donations
David Polnaszek
Tom Welch

Tom Welch
500 Donations

David Polnaszek
500 Donations

Dennis Briskin
400 Donations

James Levison
400 Donations

Ronald Mancini
300 Donations

Kevin O’Neill
200 Donations

Anne Faust
200 Donations

Sandy & Randy Devol,
100 Donations
Meet two blood drive coordinators inspiring their communities and everyone around them

Stanford Blood Center (SBC) and YMCA of Silicon Valley have been partnering to host successful blood drives for decades. In 2013, the partnership was further strengthened with the addition of the Central YMCA Blood Drive. This new partnership blossomed due to the dedicated work of blood drive coordinator (BDC) Kristen Hess. The Central YMCA, led by Hess, has now hosted five very successful drives and collected over 120 units. Her enthusiasm and devotion for blood donation make Hess a natural and effective donor recruiter.

Hess spends many hours thoughtfully planning to make sure every blood drive is special for club members, YMCA employees and SBC staff. “Working with inspiring donors with uplifting stories motivates me to continue being a blood drive coordinator,” shared Hess. One potential donor even reached out asking if she could give blood after finishing chemotherapy treatments for breast cancer. Hess unfortunately had to tell her no but was very inspired by this woman’s example nonetheless. She used this story to help advocate about the importance of having blood on the shelf for those in need. “Meeting these people who have decided to do their part to help complete strangers is the best reward of all,” said Hess. As director, Hess also works with all of her community partners to cross-promote blood drives and takes every opportunity to advocate for more blood donations on behalf of SBC.

SBC sends a huge thank you to Kristen Hess for all of her hard work and tireless commitment to helping save countless patient lives in our community.

At Sacred Heart Prep in Atherton, SBC is fortunate to have a very dedicated BDC, Dean of Students Brian Bell. Spend a few minutes walking around the campus with Bell and you will immediately see how close he is with students, faculty and staff. At a time when being friendly with teachers and administrators can be a cultural anathema for most high school students, Bell seems to easily develop friendly mentorships with each of his students. Sacred Heart Prep is a relatively small private school, however Bell’s drives often equal the total number of units collected at high schools three times its size.

Bell spends nearly the entire day at the drive, interacting and thanking his students, staff, faculty and donors, while making sure that SBC staff has everything they need. Amazingly, collections doubled after Bell took on the role of BDC for Sacred Heart Blood Drives in 2011. At each drive he somehow manages to recruit more donors than the previous one, helping to create enough products to save over 1,000 lives. “The blood drives we host on campus have made it so easy for us to introduce our high school students to the entire process,” said Bell. “Several alumni have gone on to host blood drives at their college campuses across the country.” After sharing with students how important blood donation is to our local community, most become natural ambassadors for blood donation and even help with donor recruitment on subsequent drives. Bell wants to sincerely thank our donors and let them know that they are all heroes in his book because they are giving the selfless gift of life to someone in need.

SBC salutes Brian Bell’s many accomplishments and his incredible committed partnership to saving lives.
Patient Stories

We enjoy sharing important stories and messages of gratitude from blood recipients to connect donors to patients.

Aria’s Story

Beating the Odds: A Little Girl’s Struggle with a Rare Blood Disorder

Aria is a lively 17-month-old with a smile that can melt your heart. One would never guess that she was born an anemic preemie who spent the first month of her life in the Newborn Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital Stanford (LPCHS).

The odds were stacked against Aria from the beginning, given her mother’s complications with the pregnancy and delivery. Aria was delivered seven weeks early via an emergency cesarean section due to preeclampsia in mom, and Aria only weighed 3 pounds and 3 ounces at birth.

At two months old, Aria received her first blood transfusion because she was unable to produce her own healthy red blood cells. Over the next six months, Aria received seven more blood transfusions and doctors struggled to identify the cause of Aria’s anemia. Part of the reason for the difficulty was because doctors could not distinguish her red blood cells (type O+) from the transfused (also O+). The decision was then made to transfuse Aria with O- blood, which meant that the few O+ blood cells she was producing could be tested. Thanks to this decision, the doctors were able to diagnose Aria with Diamond Blackfan anemia (DBA). According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), DBA is a rare blood disorder that is also associated with birth defects and/or other abnormal features. DBA occurs in every racial and ethnic group and about 25 to 30 new cases are diagnosed in the U.S. and Canada annually.

Some people who have been diagnosed with DBA have a family history of the disorder and a known genetic cause. However, in many others, there is no known cause for DBA. It is incurable, yet treatable – most commonly through corticosteroid medication and blood transfusions. In some cases, bone marrow/stem cell transplantation is considered. Fortunately, with proper treatment and care, people diagnosed with DBA can still live full lives, often enjoying most of the activities that other people do.

Since her initial treatment, Aria’s visits to the hospital have reduced significantly and she continues to grow and thrive. Her mother tells us, “Aria continues to be an amazing little girl. The staff at LPCHS has been a second family to us. We used to go in twice a week for blood work and now we go every two weeks. She has had about 10 transfusions and started her steroid treatment when she was 12 months old. She is 17 months now and is thriving on a low dose of steroids, so we are very fortunate so far.”

Because of her rare blood disease, Aria has received many units of blood from generous donors that sustained her health; these units also provided doctors with the tools to diagnose her condition. “I am so thankful for blood donors because without them, Aria wouldn’t have been diagnosed and most likely wouldn’t have survived!” her mother said.
The Navarro Family Story  
Transplant Recipient Inspires Daughters to Give Thanks, Give Back

On March 14, Luis Navarro’s daughters carefully took off his blindfold to reveal 50 of his closest friends and family. They were gathered for a surprise birthday party and blood drive to celebrate his 56th birthday. The surprise element wasn’t the only thing that made this birthday memorable: Luis and his family were also celebrating the recent liver transplant he had received from Stanford University Medical Center (SUMC).

Two months earlier, while sitting in the waiting room while their father received one of his many blood transfusions after his transplant, Gabriela and Anais Navarro were feeling helpless because they thought there wasn’t much they could do for him. One of them remembered they had spotted a blood mobile earlier in the day, and that’s when something clicked.

It was at that moment they decided donating blood would be a great way to do something that could help their father and others like him. “We had been wanting to throw dad a surprise birthday party to celebrate his life and thought this would be the perfect time to give back by doubling the birthday party with a blood drive,” shared Gabriella.

Almost 20 years ago, Luis was waterskiing with friends when the boat that was towing him unexpectedly reversed and the propeller caught Luis, damaging his right leg and abdomen. Since then the accident has led to other serious health complications such as liver damage. Last year, Luis’ family noticed he was losing weight quickly, unable to absorb nutrients. Doctors decided to put him on a strict regimen of Total Parenteral Nutrition (TPN) or tube feedings. Unfortunately, liver damage is also a common side effect of TPN and in November 2014 he was admitted to SUMC, hoping to receive a liver transplant. Due to the severity of his illness, Luis moved up the transplant priority list quickly. Over Christmastime Luis’ health rapidly declined until eventually he needed a transplant as soon as possible. His family knew time was of the essence but were not sure if a healthy liver would be found. “We really didn’t know if he was going to make it and it almost seemed as if he’d lost all hope, too.” said Rosie Navarro, Luis’ wife. Waiting for a proper organ match made days feel like years. Miraculously, on December 28 a match was found and the next day Luis was prepped for surgery. While Luis was in surgery, his family experienced feelings ranging from excitement and nervousness, to fear and joy. After all of the high hopes and letdowns, the much-needed transplant they had prayed for was finally going to happen.

Just over three months after his surgery, Luis is home and on the road to recovery. His body has adapted to the transplant very well and without any complications. Doctors have said Luis’ blood work looks great and he is currently in physical therapy working on regaining his strength. Luis’ daughters want everyone to know how important blood donation is. “It’s hard to understand until you’re put in a position where someone you love needs blood,” said Anais. “There were countless times we wished we could give him part of our health, a healthy liver, anything to make him better.”

The surprise birthday party and blood drive successfully drew 37 first-time donors. First-time donor and Luis’ nephew Cesar Padilla didn’t just donate blood for the first time, he donated double red blood cells. “I was really surprised how easy it was,” Cesar said. “Now that I know how many people could be potentially saved, I hope to donate a lot more.”

SBC’s goal is to help as many people as possible with the blood it collects and to help ensure an adequate blood supply for local hospitals. “Blood donation gives me the opportunity to provide something to people that can save lives,” said Gabriela. “We will forever be thankful to those SBC donors who donated blood that our father received.”

Luis Navarro (center) with (L-R) wife Rosie, and daughters, Anais and Gabriela
SBC’s Donor Website Gets A Makeover

If you have recently logged into SBC’s donor website, you know it’s sporting a new look and feel. In addition to being easy on the eyes, the website is now more intuitive and makes it simple to find the information you’re looking for.

When you visit sbcdonor.org, you’ll be greeted by a photo of our Palo Alto Center and notice that it’s very clear where to log in. After you log in, you’ll also notice that the navigation bar is now at the top of every page and can quickly take you to your donation history, wellness information, appointments or the Rewards Program. You can even use the navigation bar to order a replacement donor ID card.

One major change that resulted from the new design is how your “Donor Info” is displayed. On the old website, it was shown in the upper left-hand corner of every page. Now, the information is displayed as a drop-down window from the navigation bar. Simply click to display your blood type, Rewards Program points, lifetime donations and eligibility, and click again to hide.

Long-time donors may also notice a subtle change to the Rewards Catalog. Previously, catalog items were displayed in two columns. Now, three columns of items are displayed and we’ve included a link to the Rewards Program FAQ.

Other new features located at the top of every page are links to SBC’s social media channels including Facebook, Twitter, Google Plus, YouTube and the SBC blog Hemoblogin. If you have any questions while you navigate the updated website, you will still find SBC’s phone numbers and email addresses at the bottom of every page. We hope you enjoy our new website as much as we do!

Did You Know?

Did you know that you can sync your donation appointments to a digital calendar? When you receive an appointment confirmation by email, you can click a link to download an ICS file. The ICS file is compatible across multiple calendar programs including Outlook and iCal.
Cellular Immunology Lab

Cancerous cells use sophisticated strategies to avoid being recognized and destroyed by the immune system. However, cancers cannot usually spread between individuals, suggesting that the immune system has the ability to recognize and kill tumor cells. Therefore, several members of Dr. Edgar Engleman's laboratory, led by a postdoctoral fellow, Yaron Carmi, investigated the basis by which the immune system reacts to these transplanted tumors in mouse models. Surprisingly, they found that antibodies, which are proteins made by immune cells that specifically bind foreign molecules, initiated the activation of other immune cells which then efficiently killed the tumor. Moreover, by recreating this mechanism of immune activation, they were able to eradicate naturally-occurring tumors, including metastases, in mice. In addition, they showed that this mechanism could be used to activate human immune cells from cancer patients, causing them to kill their own cancer cells. These exciting results, which are described in detail in an article published in the April issue of the journal *Nature*, suggest that this novel strategy holds the promise of a new and powerful treatment for cancer.

Histocompatibility, Immunogenetics & Disease Profiling Lab

The Histocompatibility, Immunogenetics & Disease Profiling Lab has been actively involved over the past year in developing and validating new clinical tests. These will replace decades-old testing methods that have been used for determining the compatibility between patients needing a solid organ (e.g., heart, lung, kidney, pancreas, etc.) or bone marrow/stem cell transplant and their donor. The lab has developed several new methods for flow cytometry crossmatching to tell whether a patient can get an organ from a particular donor, i.e., whether the donor is “compatible.” New tests for determining how vigorously the patient will respond to try to reject the donor organ are also under development. In a separate arena, the Lab has been focusing on developing state-of-the-art, next generation or high throughput sequencing (HTS) to more completely type the genes that cause organ rejection or engraftment failure and reduce the time required to get these lifesaving results, since time is of the essence. In parallel, new HTS methods for the (much) faster detection of viruses important in the post-transplant period have been developed which will improve diagnoses and assist physicians in the selection of the appropriate drugs to both eliminate the virus and protect the transplanted organ.

Viral Immunology Lab

The overall goal of the Viral Immunology Lab is on dissecting the human antibody response to human pathogens for the development of preventive vaccines. A focus has been to comprehensively map the antigenic regions on the surface of hepatitis C virus and to determine their functions. We have identified clusters of immunogenic domains that serve as immunologic decoys and clusters of less immunogenic but highly conserved domains that mediate broad virus neutralization. In addition, we determined that some of these domains are not associated with viral escape. This information is being applied to design a vaccine capable of eliciting a broadly neutralizing antibody response that avoids the induction of non-neutralizing antibodies or neutralizing antibodies associated with rapid viral escape. Our approach to mapping antigenic regions is being applied to other human pathogens that include filo viruses and methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*. 
Each winter, SBC partners with a new nonprofit organization for our annual Give Good Campaign. This year, we partnered with BayKids Studios, based in San Francisco. BayKids Studios helps children facing serious illness heal through the art of filmmaking. For each donor that took part in this campaign from December 15 to 28, a contribution was made to BayKids Studios that will be used to produce patient films. Of the whopping 1,896 registered donors who took part in this special promotion, an impressive 166 were first-time donors.

Partnering with BayKids Studios in 2014 had many benefits, including the introduction of a Give Good donor storytelling book and website, sbcstories.org.

Due to the enthusiastic response from our volunteers and staff we were able to inspire new and prospective donors to start giving and keep giving.

“We loved seeing all regular and first-time donors who came out to participate in Give Good,” said Loren Magaña, SBC spokesperson. “What a great way to give back during the holidays.”

The Journey to 580

Thirty years ago, Linda Johnson was attending college at the University of Connecticut and there was a blood drive on campus, so she decided to give. Recognizing the importance of donating this precious resource, she continued to donate through the years. From making donations during mobile drives at her office to later making donations at SBC, Linda has since made nearly 600 donations.

It has been quite a journey for Linda. She was the first female donor at SBC to reach the 500 donations milestone. Staff, volunteers and donors have come to know Linda well, and her donations have potentially saved more than 1,000 lives. When asked why she started donating, Linda replied: “I started donating because blood is so precious. I was healthy and able to donate, so I wanted to do it to help others in need.”

On March 13, we celebrated Linda’s 580th donation, which also happened to be her last donation at SBC, as she will soon be moving to Oregon to retire. It was a bittersweet celebration – although we couldn’t be happier for Linda as she embarks on her new adventure – we are sad to say goodbye to a very special donor and friend.

On the topic of retiring and relocating, Linda said, “I am looking forward to moving to a small beach town, volunteering in my community, getting to know the locals, and becoming a beach bum.” SBC would like to extend a fond farewell to our friend Linda and wish her all the best. We’ll miss you!

Do You Enjoy Being in the Canteen?

If you’re looking for a new way to be a part of the SBC community, consider volunteering!

• Help out in the canteen at our donor centers or at mobile drives
• Meet other donors and staff
• Enjoy flexible schedules

To learn more, contact Volunteer Services at 650-498-4794 or SBC-Volunteers@stanford.edu.

Stay Connected With SBC Via Our Social Channels

[Icons for Facebook, Google+, Twitter, YouTube, SBC Blog]
Four Seasons Club

Let everyone know it’s cool to be in the Four Seasons Club with this year’s fun Las Vegas-inspired T-shirt. This new design is available in unisex sizes small through XX-large.

All donors who give blood at least four times in a single calendar year will have the option to order this collectible T-shirt.

10 Times Gift

We’re also offering a new tote bag that’s practical and eye-catching for 2015! It’s perfect for bringing home groceries or packing a lunch to go, and its two mesh side pockets are ideal for small water bottles. There’s also a hook-and-loop closure front pocket for keeping small items secure.

Questions? Please call our Marketing Communications team at 650-736-7786 or email sbcsupport@stanford.edu.

2015 Donor Recognition Program

2015 Donor Promotions!

Grateful Life Tour

SBC’s 11th annual Grateful Life Tour (GLT) kicks off in May and will be making “tour stops” at each donor center throughout the summer. Every donor that visits a center during that center’s “tour stop” week will receive a 2015 GLT tie-dye T-shirt. Donating is groovy all year long and this summer SBC is highlighting that it’s also patriotic. Donors will be able to show that their hearts beat true under tie-dye that’s red, white and blue with the 2015 Grateful Life Tour T-shirt.

Grateful Life Tour Stops:
- Menlo Park - Fri. 5/22 – Sat. 5/30
- Palo Alto - Fri. 7/3 – Sat. 7/11
- Mountain View - Fri. 8/28 – Sat. 9/5

Choose Your Getaway

All Centers & Mobiles
Fri. 8/21 - Thurs. 8/27

Make a donation from 8/21 through 8/27 and be entered into a prize drawing:
- 7 winners will receive a $200 Hotels.com voucher
- 1 very lucky winner will receive a $500 airline voucher from Southwest Airlines and a $200 hotel voucher from Hotels.com.

Ongoing Promotion» Hobee’s Coupons

All Center Locations

Our friends at Hobee’s are offering donors generous thank-you gifts. When you visit one of our centers, just ask for the coupons at registration – Hobee’s complimentary dinner entree with purchase of another dinner entree.

Ongoing Promotion» Monday Movie Madness

Palo Alto & Menlo Park Centers
Mondays from 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Palo Alto, at Menlo Park (platelet appointments only) from 12:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

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 when you donate at our Palo Alto Center or give platelets at our Menlo Park Center.

Please note: Menlo Park donors will receive their movie ticket in the mail following donation.

Ongoing Promotion» Sports Basement

20% off Coupons

All Center Locations

This popular sporting-goods source continues to thank you for saving lives. Ask registration for a 20% off coupon when you check in to donate.