



The Carol H. Axelrod Memorial Blood Drive

All of us belong to a number of communities—through the neighborhoods where we live, our jobs, the sports teams we follow, religious affiliations, special interests we may have, and so on. And it is always nice to bump into another member of one of our communities, especially when it is an unanticipated meeting in an unexpected place.

We recently had this experience while we were shopping for some items for a room in our house. We had been out and about in an area that is not near our home, but we passed a store that was likely to have what we needed, so we decided to stop in and take a look. The trip proved to be successful, and we waited in the checkout line until we were called to a register.

When we approached the register, we immediately noticed that the cashier, a young woman who was probably around college age, was wearing an American Red Cross blood donor shirt. We recognized the shirt as one that we, too, had received when we had donated blood during the holiday season one year.

It was funny, but we actually got excited when we saw the cashier's shirt! Given that we spend so much of our time trying to encourage people to donate blood, it was a treat to see a like-minded member of the blood donor community. And the fact that she was proudly wearing a shirt that encouraged blood donation, which all of her customers throughout the day would see, was a bonus.

The store was crowded and the cashier was busy, so we didn't want to ask her questions, but we did comment that we liked her shirt. She thanked us with a big smile—making us think that she, too, was happy to meet people who are clearly part of the blood donor community as well!

Sometimes when we are walking around our own neighborhood, where we hold a blood drive every year, we will happen to see someone exercising in a T-shirt that we have given out at one of our drives, or a car will go by and we will notice that it has a "CHA Blood Drive" magnet on it. Those moments are exciting on a personal level, because we know that the person wearing the shirt or driving the car is proud to be a member of the Carol H. Axelrod Memorial Blood Drive community.

As we always say, we are extremely grateful to everyone who has made the commitment to help us save lives. We thank you all for being a very special part of our community, and we hope that your participation in it is as meaningful to you as it is to us!

Sincerely,

Michelle, Dan, and Emily Scolnick 

SAVE THE DATE!

12th Annual Carol H. Axelrod Memorial Blood Drive at Lankenau Medical Center

Thursday, October 24 & Friday, October 25, 2019

Schedule your appointment at www.chablooddrive.org or www.redcrossblood.org (sponsor code "CHAMemorial") or by calling 1-800-RED-CROSS.

DID YOU KNOW...

While a blood donation at any time of the year is extremely important, July is a particularly critical month. With many regular donors on vacation and few blood drives running at high schools and colleges, the American Red Cross often has difficulty collecting enough blood to meet the needs of the hospitals it serves. In addition, with more people engaging in outdoor activities, the need for blood often rises during this time.

Thank you for your help in ensuring that any patient who needs a transfusion during this time will be able to receive one!

**I CHANGE LIVES
I DONATE BLOOD**

The Carol H. Axelrod Memorial Blood Drive
www.chablooddrive.org

COMMUNITY CHALLENGE UPDATE

This July, our Community CHALLENGE will benefit

Greater Harleysville and North Penn Senior Services

and

NAMI Montgomery County PA

Greater Harleysville and North Penn Senior Services

Provides access to programs and resources that help older adults live independently and remain active.

GHNPS - The Peak Center in Lansdale

606 E. Main Street, Suite 1003 ♦ Lansdale, PA 19446

www.ghnps.org

♦ ♦ ♦

NAMI Montgomery County PA

Provides, at no cost, support, education, and advocacy for local individuals and families affected by mental illness.

NAMI Montgomery County PA

100 W. Main Street, Suite 204 ♦ Lansdale, PA 19446

www.namimontcopa.org

Visit www.chablooddrive.org to learn about all of the organizations that have taken part in our CHALLENGE!

The Story Behind Our Family's Blood Drives

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 that 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 transfusions of blood and platelets and hope that her body would eventually start to do what it needed to do to heal itself.

For almost two weeks, Carol received multiple 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 incredibly, 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 she could not 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 and platelet transfusions at least twice a week. Thanks to blood donors, she was able to celebrate her 60th birthday and see her granddaughter 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 so grateful that the blood products she needed were always available for her.

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.

Blood donors were the only people who could give our family an extra year with Carol. We created this memorial blood drive in order to help other patients and families by doing our part to ensure that blood products are always available for those who need them. Thanks to donors who are willing to take a little time 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.