



Blood Drive Chairperson Spotlight

CBCO has thousands of volunteers just like you serving in various capacities throughout the Ozarks. There are so many things we can learn from you. This column is designed to provide that learning forum, while also thanking you for the hard work you do on behalf of area patients.

Virginia Pojar

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in Nixa, MO



Virginia Pojar takes a personal approach to recruiting blood donors.

Virginia Pojar moved from Nebraska to this area in 2006 and has been the chairperson of the blood drives held at her parish, St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in Nixa, Missouri, since the beginning.

She came to this role with plenty of experience.

"Our Lions Club back in Nebraska held a blood drive every other month and I headed that up," Virginia said.

Longevity and reliability are two words that best describe this parish's blood drive efforts. St. Francis of Assisi has held 28 blood drives with CBCO since March 16, 2007. The last 4 blood drives have reached or exceeded their goals for the number of donations.

Whole blood donors must wait 56 days (8 weeks) between making donations. Since mid-2012, St. Francis of Assisi's blood drives have been held every 8 to 10 weeks. Julia Curtman, CBCO blood drive representative, said this is one of the reasons that Virginia and this blood drive stand out. As soon as donors are eligible to give again, Virginia has brought them together once more, and the turnout is consistent.

"She represents our cause very well," Julia said. "Virginia does a lot of one-on-one recruitment to make sure donors understand how important it is to give blood. Her persistence and loyalty make a big difference in the results, and we appreciate her so much."

What does Virginia feel is her most effective way to recruit blood donors? "I explain the need and ask people to give life," she said.

Part of that conversation includes sharing her own personal story. Blood donors saved Virginia's life twice.

"The first time I needed blood was in 1965 when I had kidney surgery. My husband was in the U.S. Coast Guard, and he had to ask shipmates to please go give blood to replace what had been needed, which was several units," Virginia said.

Complications during gall bladder surgery in 2001 led to Virginia's second transfusion.

"I almost bled to death before they got me to a trauma hospital," she said. "They administered blood the whole trip and ran out before they got me to the hospital."

Her passion for the making sure blood is on the shelves for local patients -- and her natural ability to converse with fellow parishioners, friends, and potential donors -- means that she doesn't need to spend much time persuading those who may be apprehensive to give.

"I have not run up against many objections," Virginia said. "I just visit with donors and explain the need."

Spread the word! Look for @ozarksblood



Two Decades. Thirty-nine counties. Thousands of Lives.

It was May 1995 when 25 area hospitals and key leaders met and determined it was time. The Ozarks region needed its own blood center. The hospitals committed to supporting the new effort with loans of \$3.5 million for start-up funds.

Community Blood Center of the Ozarks was incorporated in the State of Missouri as a not-for-profit organization on Monday, June 19, 1995. Fourteen community leaders were named as directors, including the three signers of the Articles of Incorporation — Jim McLeod, Jerry Jared, and Bill Reser.

The following day, CBCO's first two employees were hired – David Caffey, who still serves as Director of Operations to this day; and Gene Waite, Director of Public Relations, who went on to retire in 1999.

Don Thomson was hired as Executive Director on August 7, 1995, a position he held for 19 years. With a foundation of integrity, the blood center began building toward its goal of serving the people of the Ozarks. By September 11, 1995, we had hired a staff of 102 individuals who were busy working toward getting facilities, equipment, and supplies ready, along with undergoing intense regulatory training and the certifications required of blood centers.

We collected blood for the first time on September 18, 1995, seeing a total of 231 donors. Within our first nine months of operations, 7,756 patients at 27 local hospitals were provided with 50,339 blood products.

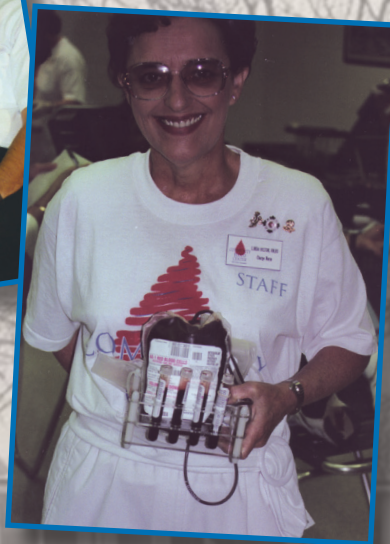
All the while, CBCO leadership dodged bullets from outside forces determined to prohibit our growth. CBCO's policy has always been to take the high road, and that policy has paid off in being the victor when faced with potential roadblocks in those early days.

As we reached our 20th anniversary, CBCO had grown to meet the needs of 39 hospitals in 39 counties within Southwest Missouri, Northwest Arkansas, and Southeast Kansas. The organization is based from five fixed locations – two in Springfield, Missouri; one in Joplin, Missouri; one in Bentonville, Arkansas; and one in Springdale, Arkansas.

Thank YOU for allowing us to give life to YOUR community for the past 20 years. We are honored to be the sole provider of blood and blood products to 39 area hospitals, and we are so looking forward to continuing to fulfill our mission statement while serving our communities for many more decades.

Read more of our history by clicking here:

<http://www.cbco.org/cbcos-20th-anniversary-1995-2015>



Left: Greely Kirkpatrick, CBCO's first donor.
Center: Linda Hilton, Donor Specialist, with Greely's donation.
Right: Jim McLeod, Jerry Jared and Bill Reser, CBCO founders



You are cordially invited to join us
as we celebrate 20 years of saving lives!

20th Anniversary Celebration

Thomson Donor Center • McLeod Room
220 W. Plainview • Springfield, MO

Open House

Friday, September 18, 2015
1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Why should donors set appointments?

Encouraging your donors to schedule their donation appointments, prior to the blood drive, has advantages for you, your donors, and for CBCO.

Advantages for Chair Person – You'll know which recruiting methods work because you'll see results as the day's schedule comes together. Also, you'll have a better idea of whether your blood drive is on track to reach goal.

Advantages for Donors – Donors are able to plan their day better when they have an appointment, which means they can get back to work or class faster.

Advantages for CBCO – When we know how many donors to expect, we can make staffing decisions that will help the event run more smoothly for everyone involved.

Another big advantage? People who sign up tend to show up. Making a commitment solidifies the donor's dedication to saving lives.

Whether you use sign-up sheets or send donors online to our HemaConnect system, be sure to share the advantages of setting an appointment to donate in your recruiting efforts.

Donors who receive an email reminder from your blood drive consultant may use the link provided within that email to schedule their appointments online. Or they may schedule by signing in to their account at CBCO's donor portal (<https://donate.cbco.org/donor/auth/signin>).



MYTH BUSTERS

While you're busy asking others to save lives, you're bound to encounter some questions, objections, and downright myths. This regular feature of The Beat will arm you with the perfect response to turn those fence-sitters into donors.

Myth: I take prescription medications each day, so I can't donate blood.

Few medications will prevent you from donating. When you register at your blood drive, we'll ask about specific medications. Or you may email us at donate@cbco.org if you would like to find out prior to the blood drive.

Myth: I shouldn't donate blood while I'm still breastfeeding my baby.

While it's necessary to wait at least six weeks post-partum to donate blood, after that the decision is up to you. If you feel healthy and would like to donate blood while still nursing, you may do so.

Sixteen-year Lymphoma survivor thanks blood donors

Nineteen-ninety-eight was a year of transition for Rennie Auiler. The stay-at-home mom and Air Force wife was newly divorced and contemplating entering the workforce for the first time in 15 years or returning to school. But then exhaustion caught up with her.

Rennie began feeling pain on her left side. When she visited urgent care at Cox South in November, she was told that an x-ray found fluid building up in her lung.

"They said, 'You have pneumonia. The best thing to do would be to take some antibiotics and rest,'" Rennie said. The pain grew worse. Two more antibiotics were tried. But she wasn't getting better.

Another trip to urgent care, this time with a CAT scan being performed. The physician discovered a 12-inch tumor. Her pain had been caused by the mass pressing against her left lung.

A biopsy was performed at Cox South December 16, 1998, confirming the cancer. She was released a few days later, but relatives brought her back Christmas day when she was feeling worse.

Her hemoglobin was dangerously low. She needed a transfusion immediately.

That Christmas, Rennie received a gift – two units of blood that had been generously provided by CBCO donors, to treat stage two Diffuse B Cell Lymphoma.

Rennie had donated blood since she was a high school student in California, and was proud to be nearing the two-gallon milestone in 1998.

"I was pretty scared because I'd never had a transfusion before," Rennie said. "The nurse in charge of the transfusion was a cancer survivor. She took the time to come in, encourage me, and answer any questions I had about the transfusion."

Rennie felt better by the next day, and began six rounds of chemo the next week, completing them the following May. After another CAT scan, her cancer was restaged - from stage two to stage one.

"The chemo had shrunk the tumor to about half its original size, which was cool," Rennie said. The next step was 20 rounds of radiation, which were completed in June of 1999.

Rennie celebrated her 16th anniversary of being cancer-free on July 30, 2015. She doesn't have as much energy as she used to, and she has some limitations due to heart damage caused by the chemotherapy. Her days are filled with gardening, walking, writing, and spending time with her now-27-year-old daughter.



Rennie Auiler is a 16-year cancer survivor.



Church activities and Relay-For-Life keep Rennie (center) busy.

The keys to her survival, Rennie said, were finding the cancer early, a negative bone marrow biopsy, and the fact that the tumor had not spread. She also gives credit for her survival to the blood transfusion.

"You may not think your little pint made a difference, but it does," Rennie said. "Those two units Christmas night made a difference in my life and gave me what my body needed to get through to the next phase of treatment."

Unable to continue donating blood since the lymphoma diagnosis, Rennie now appreciates what a gift her almost-two-gallons of blood have been for several other recipients.

To blood donors, she says,

"Thank you with all my heart, because it made a difference in my life."