

There's power inside you

Area nurse has seen blood's recuperative power on the job and among her family



Jennifer Robertson

When Jennifer Robertson was young, she had a good idea of what she was going to be when she grew up. "I was always pretending to doctor the animals," she said. "I knew from a very early age that I wanted to be a nurse." In 1996, the Stockton High School graduate did just that, obtaining her degree from the Burge School of Nursing in Springfield.

Robertson has held a number of positions during her medical career, including stints as a floor nurse and operating room nurse for Mercy Springfield.

"A transfusion provides an almost-immediate positive impact. It improves a patient's vital signs, skin color and energy level, usually in a very short period of time. It also helps them to feel more comfortable and at ease. That's an important aspect of their well-being."

The power of blood would also be experienced on a personal level by Robertson as her mother fought for her own life. In 2009 Cathy Bird was diagnosed with multiple myeloma, a type of cancer where collections of abnormal plasma cells accumulate in the bone marrow and interfere with the production of normal blood cells.

Treatment involved harvesting stem cells from her own blood. "After a round of chemotherapy to kill the cancer cells, her stem cells were given back," Robertson explained. "Several times, she received packed red cells and platelets when she became too anemic to continue her therapy. It was hard on her, but those treatments paid off, if only for a short time."

Bird's myeloma went into remission, which lasted about 18 months. But, as is the case with many cancer patients, the cancer returned. During the last six months of her life, Bird received blood to combat the effects

of the chemotherapy and platelets to reduce the risk of bleeding. In addition, the blood helped her feel better, improving her quality of life. First, it was a couple of times per month. Then once per week. Finally, as her cancer reached the point of no return, she was transfused one final time and then went home to say goodbye to family and friends.



Jennifer Robertson takes a candid shot with her mother, Cathy Bird, who used blood multiple times during her fight against cancer.

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Holiday shoppers



More than 70 soldiers from Ft. Leonard Wood were the guests of CBCO and Bass Pro Shops on a visit to the Springfield headquarters over the holidays. CBCO does numerous blood drives at the fort, helping to supply both local and military blood needs.

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- ◆ Missouri area volunteers honored
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Cathy Bird died in July of 2012 at the age of 61.

“My mother loved to garden,” Robertson said. “Every corner of our yard had flower beds, bushes, flowering trees and bird feeders. On Mother’s Day we would go to nurseries and buy what she needed for the year. She kept the birds well fed, that’s for sure.”

Although a complete recovery was not in the cards, Jennifer Robertson and her mom carved out three additional years of memories, thanks in part to blood and platelet donors. “I remember in the hospital before the final discharge, Mom was asked if she wanted a final transfusion. She said yes. That gave her the energy to feel well enough for company. Well enough to say her goodbyes to family and friends. Blood bought her that time.”

Since her high school days, Robertson had been an off-and-on blood donor. Now she makes it a point to give her type A negative blood whenever she can, because it makes her feel closer to her mother. “It’s my goal to do what I can to replace what blood donors gave to her.”

“The blood she received made her feel better and improved her quality of life. I thank her donors for every drop, and I hope they realize my gratitude for the great things they are doing when they roll up their sleeves.”



Jennifer Robertson donates blood to honor her mother, who received blood often in her fight against cancer.

Caring for the community and the world

Donors have opportunity to give their gift an added dimension

CBCO donors take great pride in their ability to help local hospital patients by their gift of blood. But with the LifePoints donor rewards program, many donors are choosing to make their donation go further by choosing to gift their LifePoints to a charitable cause.



GBF mobile clinics give rural populations the opportunity to donate blood, increasing the blood supply.

and sufficient blood supply and works with individuals and organizations charged with blood donor recruitment and retention in their communities. Thousands of deaths result each year from blood shortages and the transmission of infections, such as HIV, that devastate lives and families.

People giving blood so that strangers they will never know might live is a shared experience across the planet. GBF works to create opportunities for individuals and organizations to help others within this shared community.

You may also choose to give your LifePoints to CBCO’s local college scholarship fund, or even give your points back to the blood center to help us fulfill our not-for-profit mission. LifePoints represents a way that you can reward yourself for your good deed, or help others locally or across the globe.



If you choose to help an international cause, you may designate your LifePoints to benefit the Global Blood Fund, which helps to establish and ensure a safe, sufficient blood supply in some of the world’s poorest countries.

The charity believes that voluntary blood donation is the cornerstone of a safe

and sufficient blood supply and works with individuals and organizations charged with blood donor recruitment and retention in their communities. Thousands of deaths result each year from blood shortages and the transmission of infections, such as HIV, that devastate lives and families.

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International aid

Two CBCO staffers part of Haitian medical mission

Two CBCO administrators, Senior Director of Donor Room Services Cindy Lusby and Director of DRS Technical Support Georgi Clark, are licensed nurses. For the past several years they’ve been part of a group called Grace4Haiti, a medical missions team that provides supplies, training and patient treatment for a hospital in the small Haitian village of Pierre Payen.

Medical staffing for the hospital is sparse. A handful of doctors and nurses share their time between Pierre Payen and other area facilities. “A great deal of our time is spent training the staff to be self-sufficient,” Clark said. “We might be placed in an emergency room, post-op or clinic. It feels great to be a part of this team and watch the progress.”

CBCO itself even plays a small role in the relief effort. Medical equipment and supplies that are not used by CBCO are saved and carried to Pierre Payen by the group. Some of the excess supplies may include Band-Aids, gauze or lancets. Equipment that has been updated here is offered up to the group as well.



Pierre Payen is a small village whose hospital (pictured) receives support from Grace4Haiti.



On the road again

CBCO finds a “do-it-yourself” solution to bloodmobile construction

Part of the mission of CBCO is to provide a quality product at the lowest reasonable cost. Corners are never cut, but we’re constantly looking for ways to become more efficient. Thanks to the expertise and knowledge of our employees, we’ve found many ways over the past several years to produce things ourselves and even improve some of the ways we operate.

The CBCO bloodmobiles that you see out on the road are expensive pieces of equipment. A fully equipped donor coach can cost as much as a quarter of a million dollars.

For over ten years, we’ve been building our own.

The latest addition to our fleet is actually a refurbishing project from an existing two-bed vehicle we’ve had in the fleet since 2003. “The diesel engine and chassis has less than 45,000 miles on it, so it has many good years left,” CBCO Senior Director of Operations David Caffey said. “We’re replacing the exterior box and the equipment inside. We’re also rebuilding the generator, which will provide additional cost savings.”

Those cost savings can be substantial. Larger bloodmobiles can be built in-house for up to forty percent less than purchasing one outright. This latest project is the seventh coach to be either built or rebuilt by CBCO.

Besides the money saved, each product is custom built to the organization’s exact specifications. “The design is truly custom,” Caffey said. “We lay out the floor plan in advance, then let some of our staff actually walk through the unit and make suggestions. The turnaround time for building it ourselves is also much shorter. We can get them on the road much more quickly by doing it ourselves.”

CBCO employees Mike Rahn and Jerry Purcell use their considerable construction knowledge and build the coaches to exact specifications. “There’s a lot of equipment that goes inside and there has to be a place for everything,” Mike said. “We always try to make things so they’ll be long-lasting, but we also make them as comfortable as we can for both our donors and our staff.”



Above: Mike Rahn and Jerry Purcell put the finishing touches on the interior of a two-bed bloodmobile remodeling project. After new graphics are added to the exterior, the vehicle will be back in service in February.

Heeding the call to give

Donors come through during first emergency appeal since 2011



Area blood donors responded to an emergency call for blood during the second week of January, as CBCO announced its first Code Red emergency in almost three years. Supplies of blood, crippled by severe winter weather and the holiday season, dropped to dangerous levels, causing an immediate call to action.

Blood donors heard the call via many different communication methods. Traditional forms of communication - radio, television and print media - were combined with automated phone calls, email and instant messaging campaigns to help ensure that donors received the message. New social media channels were used, as well, giving people almost instantaneous updates on supply levels and donation opportunities.

“We’re proud of our donors for heeding our emergency call,” CBCO Senior Director of Donor Recruitment and Marketing David Montgomery said. “When the community comes together for a common cause like they did here, they help to ensure that patients that need blood will get it.”



Above: Donors responded to January’s Code Red Alert. It was the first emergency appeal for blood since the Joplin tornado in May of 2011. At left, prior to the appeal, the shelves were almost bare at the Springfield distribution center.



Missouri area volunteers receive honors

Outstanding support recognized at annual luncheon

More than 120 people braved a snowy and cold December day to celebrate their achievements at CBCO's annual volunteer luncheon. The event honors Missouri area blood drive chairpeople for their efforts in saving lives over the past year.

The guest speaker for the event was Annie Fleury, who received multiple blood transfusions when she bled internally after a routine surgery in 2011. Annie's husband David attended the event, as did their two children.

Numerous honors and awards were given, including the Mary Carroll Lifetime Achievement Award. It was presented to Kent Davis, who serves as the chairperson for blood drives at Phelps County Regional Medical Center.

Arkansas donors will have their appreciation event in Fayetteville on Thursday, April 17.

Congratulations to the following Missouri volunteer honorees!

Mary Carroll Lifetime Achievement Award – Kent Davis, PCRMC

Central High School, Springfield, MO

Ava High School, Ava, MO

Pi Kappa Alpha Fraternity, MSU

Delta Zeta Sorority, MSU

Linda Adams, Mercy Aurora Hospital

Seymour Lions Club, Seymour, MO

Expedia, Springfield, MO

Ft. Leonard Wood, MO

Hardee's, Springfield, MO

Ozarks Coca-Cola Dr Pepper Bottling Co.

Journal Broadcast Group, Springfield, MO

KOLR-10, Springfield, MO

Springfield Cardinals Baseball

Maranatha Village, Springfield, MO

Elfindale Manor, Springfield, MO

Guaranty Bank, Springfield, MO

Our mission is to provide a quality blood supply, in a timely manner, at the lowest reasonable fee, while remaining accountable to the local community, blood donors and health care providers.

Circulator is published quarterly by the Community Blood Center of the Ozarks and is available upon request.

How many LifePoints do you have?

Since the LifePoints donor rewards program kicked off last June, hundreds of blood donors have received the added benefits that the program offers.



LifePoints can be redeemed for a variety of gift cards from both local and national merchants. You can also designate your LifePoints to be given for a variety of charitable causes.

Reward yourself for your incredible gift. Create a donor profile online at www.cbco.org. You'll earn LifePoints every time you give!

Get Social!

Keep up with all the happenings at CBCO by liking us on Facebook and following us on Twitter. Search for us by typing in the word "ozarksblood."



Five convenient CBCO Donor Centers near you!

Springfield

Reser Center - 2230 S. Glenstone

Monday through Friday, 7 am to 1 pm
(417) 227-5025

Campbell Center - 220 W. Plainview

Monday through Friday, 9 am to 5 pm
Saturday, 7 am to 1 pm
417) 227-5000 or 800-280-5337

Joplin - Northpark Mall

101 N. Range Line Rd.

(417) 626-8323 or 866-401-5143
Monday through Friday, 11 am to 6 pm

Springdale - 3503 S. Thompson

(479) 927-1200 or 866-401-5144

Monday through Thursday, 11 am to 6 pm
Friday, 8 am to 2 pm

Bentonville - 1400 SE Walton Blvd.

(479) 464-2506

Monday through Thursday 11 am to 6 pm
Friday, 8 am to 2 pm