



The Pulse

Suncoast **Communities** Blood Bank
We can't operate without you.

Fall 2008

A Quantum Leap Forward

Much has changed in the 60 years that Suncoast Communities Blood Bank (SCBB) has provided blood collection and transfusion services to our local hospitals. Long gone are the days of using glass containers to collect blood or perform direct donor-to-patient transfusions. While the technology has undergone phenomenal changes, one thing that remains constant is SCBB's commitment to safety and exceptional donor and patient care. We don't just collect blood, we save lives. As we reflect on our first 60 years, we also look forward to the next 60 as we prepare for the next quantum leap forward.

Last year our transfusion laboratory performed 67,400 patient tests and over 240,000 donor tests utilizing state-of-the-art transfusion laboratory technology.



A technician prepares blood for storage.
from SCBB archives

Three recent advancements adopted by SCBB are worthy of special note. New software tracks each individual unit of blood from the time of collection, through testing, matching and actual patient transfusion. This "vein to vein" tracking provides comprehensive safety assurance and interfaces seamlessly with Sarasota Memorial Hospital's patient database.

Secondly, a cutting edge procedure is now benefiting patients. This procedure is the reduction of white blood cells in units of red blood cells, creating "leukoreduced" blood. When patients are transfused with leukoreduced blood, the incidence of transfusion and postoperative reactions is significantly less and may result in a shorter hospital stay.


The next advancement to our transfusion services will occur later this year when we implement automated methods to conduct blood typing and antibody testing for patients. This is an expansion of the capacity of the Galileo instrument purchased three years ago; (a purchase made possible through generous support of local financial donors).



Medical Technician Nancy Paul prepares blood for testing.

There will be many benefits to automating some of the patient testing on the Galileo. Patient safety will be improved by utilization of bar coded samples for positive patient identification and direct interfacing of results to the computer will reduce the risk of clerical errors.

"We are excited about the ability to automate some of the testing," says Chris Flood, the director of laboratory services for SCBB. "This will allow technologists to concentrate on more complex procedures such as preparing blood transfusions for infants, or working on patients with rare blood types."

The next 60 years hold more promising changes for the transfusion industry and our blood bank. Stem cell therapy, blood substitutes and molecular testing are all prospects that are currently being researched and that will continue to revolutionize the field of blood banking. But the need for blood donors will continue into the foreseeable future. The exciting news is that with these advancements we are able to do more of what we love to do... save lives! 

ADVANCEMENTS ONLY POSSIBLE WITH YOUR HELP...

From the CEO & Medical Director

Over the years, SCBB has been blessed with support from individuals, agencies and foundations without which we couldn't operate. Generous gifts, to fund such instruments as the Galileo, allow us to remain "cutting edge" and focused on the health of our community. Your support this year helped us increase awareness, enhance convenience, and provide extraordinary levels of safety to the blood supply. Listed are a few ways your gifts have been of benefit:



- software updates to automate laboratory processes: \$110,000
- Computer software to help with the recruitment of donors: \$50,000
- Centrifuge replacement: \$30,000

We know you already donate blood, but charitable gifts are just as necessary to help us further our mission of providing a reliable supply of blood. I know that the economy is tight right now but thanks to your tax

deductible gift we can continue to set the standard for sustainable, responsive and community focused blood services.

If you'd like to know how you can help us remain a leader in blood services, please contact Rhonda Peters, Director of Development at 954-1600 ext 1033.

Thanks for helping us progress...
We can't operate without you.

Mark Magenheim, MD

CEO and Medical Director

- refurbishing one of our bloodmobiles saved us \$200,000.
- purchasing a new portable blood drive vehicle increased blood donor convenience.
- Updating our transfusion laboratory software made our transfusion service more efficient.

These items are just some examples of what it takes to keep SCBB running. Every year we need to raise \$500,000 just to maintain equipment needs. Here are some of the items on our wish list for 2008/2009:

- new blast freezer for plasma products: \$70,000
- plasma storage freezer: \$10,000

Leading us into the next 60 years

We are grateful to have an enthusiastic group of community leaders to support our mission. Our board of directors represents a diversity of professions and offers outstanding leadership and vision.

In October, we welcome five new board members: Colonel Bill Brockman with Sarasota Military Academy; Robert A. Lindsay, Managing Partner for L3 Farms; Bill Dooley, of DooleyMack Constructors; Dr. Thomas Kelly; and William Ferguson, consultant with the Community Foundation of Sarasota County and former board member with the American Red Cross in Connecticut.

The proposed slate of officers for 2008/2009 will be presented at the annual board of directors meeting in mid-October. These officers are: Sara Bagley, president; Wayne Johnson, president-elect; Jim Gabbert, vice-president; Bill Herron, Immediate Past-President; Alice Rau, secretary; Caroline Strickland, treasurer; and Jeff Toale, assistant treasurer.

Life in the fast lane takes a different turn for Harry...

A New Jersey transplant that enjoys the Florida lifestyle, Harry Chororos considers it normal to live life in the fast lane. He keeps a whirlwind pace by working and staying active. But in 2001, an unexpected medical diagnosis brought him to a standstill. Never one to get sick, he developed an impacted molar that bled profusely, sending him in search of



Blood recipient Harry Chororos

medical help. Doctors ran a myriad of tests to determine the cause of bleeding. Tests revealed the root of the problem—Acute Promyelocytic Leukemia (APL), a very rare form of leukemia that typically strikes middle-aged men. Harry was given only days to live. Without Harry's knowing it, the blood cancer had actually been in his body less than a month, and he was losing time.

Unprepared for the diagnosis, Harry didn't take a chance. Doctors immediately started him on a cocktail of chemotherapy treatments and transfusions. Over the course of the next two weeks he received six platelet transfusions and eight whole blood transfusions. As a long-time blood donor, he never imagined he would be on the receiving end.

"Until receiving transfusions, I didn't really grasp the full understanding of just how vital blood is to life. I remember lying in the hospital bed and not even having enough strength to change a channel on the TV remote control," says Harry. "Those blood transfusions were my energy source. Until you have a blood cancer, you take blood for granted."

Fortunately, in most cases, APL can be cured. Now mostly recovered, Harry is focused on supporting a cause that helps him and many others fight cancer. He serves on the board of trustees for the local Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

You can help Harry in his cause. Join Harry and SCBB to support the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society's annual Light the Night Walk. This event raises money and support for cancer research. The walk takes place on Saturday, October 25th, at Ken Thompson Park in Sarasota, from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Come with your friends and encourage them to donate blood to help cancer patients. For more information about Light the Night visit www.lls.org/sun. ♦



Next generation in action...

The school year is well underway for our next generation of blood donors. They are staying busy, not only with homework and extracurricular activities, but also by donating blood.

Local high school students last year alone contributed to 16% of our offsite collections. The first round of high school campus blood drives kicked off in September and is going strong. More school blood drives are scheduled through 2009.

As a thank you to our student donors and supporters,



SCBB blood donors and scholarship recipients Lakisha Foster and Kaitlin Mauch

SCBB is offering scholarships to graduating seniors for post-secondary education (college or technical school). In 2009 SCBB plans to award approximately \$10,000 in scholarship funds. Through a grant from Century Bank, SCBB will award an additional \$3,000 in scholarship funds to the one high school with the highest percentage increase in registrations over the previous year. If you're a parent or guardian of a high school senior, be sure to check out our scholarship program at www.scbb/education.org and encourage your student to apply. ♦