

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT:

Julie Platt, APR
954-1600 ext. 1024
302-3429 cell
jplatt@scbb.org

**Suncoast Communities Blood Bank Awards Annual Scholarships
21 students recognized for their support of blood bank**

Sarasota-Suncoast Communities Blood Bank (SCBB) recognizes outstanding high school blood donors and student volunteers by awarding annual scholarships. In May, the blood bank presented \$13,500 in scholarship funds to 21 students from 9 area high schools for secondary education. A committee comprised of blood bank and community leaders selected students based on participation in their high school's blood drives, support of the blood bank, academic excellence and commitment to the community.

Sarasota Military Academy (SMA) earned the distinguished "Command Performance Fund" awarded by Century Bank. This award recognizes the one school in Sarasota and DeSoto Counties with the highest percentage increase in donor registrations over the previous school year. Sarasota Military Academy was also recognized on the state level by the Florida Association of Blood Banks (FABB) for contributing the most blood donations during the 2008 school year in the category of 150 or less seniors, for the second consecutive year.

This year-local high school donors increased blood drive registrations 24% over last year's participation. High school students in our region account for nearly 10% of our blood supply, similar to high school donors nationally. SCBB invests considerable effort in recruiting high school students because they have a lifetime of blood donation opportunities. Studies show that individuals who are introduced to the importance of donating blood at a young age are more likely to become a donor for life.

"The 'next generation' of blood donors are high school students. They are vital to the future of transfusion medicine. They will be looked upon to provide care to the Baby Boomers and Gen X'ers," says Dr. Mark J. Magenheim, CEO and Medical Director of Suncoast Communities Blood Bank. "Given this, we are so proud to have one of the state's best schools for blood donations right here in Sarasota and to excel for blood collections among high school donors."

"Century Bank is a community bank, so we feel a strong sense of commitment to local organizations like Suncoast Communities Blood Bank. The Blood Bank fills a vital role in our community that needs to be recognized and supported," says Bill Albanese, Senior Vice President of Residential Lending for Century Bank. "We are also very impressed by the young adults who participated in this campaign. As future leaders, they are setting a wonderful example for their peers. If these students are indicative of the next generation our country will be in good hands."

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“We are honored and humbled to receive the Command Performance Fund for two consecutive years. We strive to instill civic duty in our students,” says Colonel Bill Brockman, Blood Drive Coordinator for SMA and member of the SCBB Board of Directors. “We are proud of their incredible lifesaving efforts to the community.”

The following students received scholarships based on the 2008-2009 school year:

Booker High School: Tempestt Jenkins, Lauren Redifer

Cardinal Mooney: Lauren Gwinn

DeSoto High School: Heather Weir, Alexander Edelmann, Kadie Mogle, Erika Vessels

North Port High School: Erin Powell, Jillian-Rose Tricarico

Pine View High School: Chris Goldstein, Kenneth William Newton II

Riverview High School: Nicole Swain, Tabitha Kurtis

Sarasota High School: Jonathan Flood, Jennifer Connell, Chelsie Carlson, Alison Hassard

Sarasota Military Academy: Sarah Johnston, Nicholas LeBoutillier

Venice High School: Meridith Meerman, Mary Dembinski

Serving on the 2009 selection committee: Elmer Berkel, former Mayor of Sarasota and SCBB Volunteer; Charles Ball, Attorney and member of SCBB Board of Directors; Julie Platt, SCBB Public Relations and Marketing Manager; Joanne Sergo, SCBB Recruitment Specialist; and Sherri Reynolds, Supervisor of Pupil Support Services for the Sarasota County School District and member of SCBB Board of Directors.

To find out about supporting the scholarship program contact Rhonda Peters, Director of Development, at 954-1600 ext. 1033 or email rpeters@scbb.org.

Who We Are

For 60 years, Suncoast Communities Blood Bank (SCBB) has been saving lives by providing blood collection and transfusion services to our community. Much has changed in medicine since 1949, revolutionizing how we save lives. What remains the same is the need for human blood. There is no viable substitute for the selfless act of donating it. Now as then, we can't operate without you. For more information about SCBB visit www.scbb.org.

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