

World Blood Donor Day

“Every blood donor is a hero” 14 JUNE 2012

Announcing World Blood Donor Day, 14 June 2012

On 14 June 2012, World Blood Donor Day will be marked with events around the world to raise awareness of the need for safe blood and blood products and to thank all voluntary unpaid donors for their life-saving gift of blood.

The transfusion of blood and blood products helps save millions of lives every year. It can help improve life expectancy and the quality of life for patients suffering from life-threatening conditions, and supports complex medical and surgical procedures. In many countries, demand outstrips supply, and blood services face the challenge of making sufficient blood available, while also ensuring its quality and safety. Today, in 62 countries, national blood supplies are based on 100% (or more than 99.9%) voluntary unpaid blood donation. However, 40 countries still depend on family donors and even paid donors and collect less than 25% of their blood supplies from voluntary unpaid blood donors. The goal of the World Health Organization (WHO) is for all countries to obtain their blood supplies entirely from voluntary unpaid donors by 2020.

The global theme of World Blood Donor Day changes each year in recognition of the selfless individuals who donate their blood for people unknown to them. In 2011, voluntary blood donors over the world were recognized and thanked with events and activities, from forming “human blood drops” in public places to colouring iconic monuments in red. These events and activities served as powerful symbols on the day, and rallied community involvement in promoting voluntary unpaid blood donation in all countries. Support from government leaders, royalty and celebrities, along with diverse community-based and youth-oriented activities, all contributed to the festivities.

Every Blood Donor is a Hero

The theme of the 2012 World Blood Donor Day campaign, “**Every blood donor is a hero**” focuses on the idea that every one of us can become a hero by giving blood. While recognizing the silent and unsung heroes who save lives every day through their blood donations, the theme also strongly encourages more people all over the world to donate blood voluntarily and regularly.

The objectives of this year’s campaign are to:

- thank and reinforce the self-esteem of those who give blood so they continue to do so regularly;
- inspire those who do not give blood but are in good health to start donating blood;
- encourage blood service staff to recognize blood donors for their “heroic” act each and every time they donate blood; and
- persuade ministries of health to show their appreciation of blood donors and provide adequate resources to move towards 100% voluntary unpaid blood donation.

Everyday heroes respond to an immediate need for blood for transfusion, whatever the conditions, even when it may be inconvenient, putting the needs of others above their own. Voluntary blood donors come from all walks of life, all regions, backgrounds, religions and ages. By choosing to donate blood of their own free will, without any payment, these individuals perform a “heroic” act, a gesture of human solidarity with the power to save lives. Some of them do so many times over several decades.

The 2012 theme also resonates widely in relation to other everyday “heroes” – such as fire fighters, police men and women, rescue workers, civic leaders, and “champions” of social causes and community improvement. This may provide opportunities for powerful connections of people and stories around World Blood Donor Day. For example, as the world’s attention turns to the London 2012 Olympic Games, blood services, blood donor associations and other institutions will have the opportunity to recruit sporting “heroes” to advocate for voluntary, unpaid blood donation at local, national or international levels.

Each year, a host country is identified for a global event that provides the focus for an international publicity campaign about World Blood Donor Day. The global event for 2012 will be held in **Seoul, Republic of Korea**, hosted by the Korean Red Cross and the Ministry of Health and Welfare, Republic of Korea.

Working together for World Blood Donor Day

Your involvement and support will help to ensure a wide impact for World Blood Donor Day 2012, increasing recognition worldwide that giving blood is a heroic life-saving act of solidarity. The enthusiasm and participation of interested partners is welcomed at all levels to make World Blood Donor Day a success. International organizations, including the World Health Organization, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Federation of Blood Donor Organizations, the International Society of Blood Transfusion, the Association of Donor Recruitment Professionals, AABB and others continue to work in close collaboration to provide guidance and support to their membership in this endeavour.

We also recommend that you join the WHO World Blood Donor Day Global Network, a virtual space for sharing materials and information related to voluntary blood donation. We look forward to expanding this network in 2012 and beyond. To find out more about how your organization can become involved and join the network, please contact us: worldblooddonorday@who.int

In the coming months, WHO’s web page for World Blood Donor Day (www.who.int/worldblooddonorday) will present more information, promotional material and additional resources in different languages, such as campaign graphics. Please visit the web site and contribute by sharing your ideas, resource materials and activity plans.

We wish you every success in celebrating World Blood Donor Day 2012.

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