

**kare11.com Printables**[Print this Page](#) | [Close this Window](#)**Minnesota to lower age for blood donations**

A shot in the arm for local blood donations.

Thanks to the work of a high school student, Minnesotans as young as 16 will soon be able to roll up their sleeve to give the gift of life.

The effort to change state law started when Blooming Prairie sophomore Joe Gibson was turned away from a blood drive for being too young.

"I walked up to the table and asked them if I could donate and they turned me away because I was two years too young.," Joe Gibson said of his attempt to donate blood at a school drive when he was 15.

Joe Gibson may have been too young to donate blood. But he was old enough to work to change state law.

Armed with a petition and blood supply research, Joe contacted Representative Patty Fritz to start the process of lowering Minnesota's donation age.

"It's great for Minnesota to see young people serving their state with a very good, unselfish idea. And it will save lives," Representative Fritz said.

Officials at the American Red Cross agree.

"We see the need for blood increasing," Red Cross Doctor David Mair said.

As the need is increasing, Doctor Mair says the donor base continues shrinking.

"One of the things we've been looking at is trying to get people to donate at younger ages. To get people hooked on donating, so it becomes a lifetime commitment." Dr. Mair added.

Officials say Joe's work is a big step in that direction. As of July, Minnesota 16-year-olds with written parental consent will no longer be turned away from blood drives.

"I think the only moral I can say out of all of this is youth can make a difference. Something I truly believe it especially after an experience like this," Joe Gibson added.

[Read more about blood donations and the American Red Cross](#)



By [Jeff Olsen](#), KARE OnLIVE

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