



## January is National Blood Donor Month

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**ST. PAUL, Minn.** (December 31, 2009) – January is National Blood Donor Month, a time when the Red Cross recognizes and thanks the nearly 4 million donors across the United States who roll up their sleeves and give hope to patients in need through the American Red Cross. Every two seconds someone in America needs blood.

During winter blood donations often decline as inclement weather causes blood drives to be cancelled and seasonal colds and flu can keep donors home. January can be a difficult month for blood donations yet the need for blood continues. That's why it's important for all eligible donors to make and honor blood donation appointments this month and throughout the winter.

Many donors say they get a great feeling from giving blood. Like 11-gallon donor, Jean Schueller of Marshall, Minn. "I've given blood for 31 years. It's a very satisfying way to help others," she says. "The Red Cross staff and community volunteers I meet are a great support system and encourage me to continue this small yet vital way of helping patients in need. I often ask others to give blood and let them know that when they do, they'll feel gratitude and love from the families who benefit from their donations. One hour of your time could be worth a lifetime to someone else."

Young eligible donors are especially encouraged to give blood and start building regular donation habits. The Red Cross encourages all donors to make a New Year's resolution to give blood regularly to help ensure a stable supply.

Platelet and type O negative blood donations are especially needed this month. By donating blood regularly, you make a vital contribution to modern healthcare.

### **How to Donate Blood**

Simply call 1-800-GIVE-LIFE (1-800-448-3543) or visit [givebloodgivelife.org](http://givebloodgivelife.org) to make an appointment or for more information. All blood types are needed to ensure a reliable supply for patients. A blood donor card or driver's license, or two other forms of identification are required at check-in. Individuals who are 17 years of age (16 with parental permission in some states), weigh at least 110 pounds and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood. High school students and other donors 18 years of age and younger also have to meet certain height and weight requirements.

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**About the American Red Cross**

Governed by volunteers and supported by giving individuals and communities, the American Red Cross is the single largest supplier of blood products to hospitals throughout the United States. While local hospital needs are always met first, the Red Cross also helps ensure no patient goes without blood no matter where or when they need it. In addition to providing nearly half of the nation's blood supply, the Red Cross provides relief to victims of disaster, trains millions in lifesaving skills, serves as a communication link between U.S. military members and their families, and assists victims of international disasters or conflicts.

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