

For Brandon it's now a hip hop world

At 14 months he was diagnosed with acute leukemia

Brandon Lavender bounces about the room with the energy of perhaps two six-year-olds, quick to demonstrate the hip hop steps he's learned at his mother's dance studio, and proud to show off the new action toys he received for Christmas.

Energy -- the likes of which are the trademark of a healthy and active six-year-old.

His mother sits by with a smile -- a smile that wasn't always there, and a sense of contentment that has replaced fear and frustration.

At 14 months old, just a little over four years ago, Brandon was listless, non-communicative; he wouldn't eat or drink and was crying much of the time. A pediatrician's initial diagnosis was a double ear infection. Later that night, when his fever peaked at 105, his mother, Sandy Lavender, raced him to Hasbro Children's Hospital.

The diagnosis could not have been worse. Fourteen month old Brandon Lavender had Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia, the most common form of leukemia among children.

That night Brandon had three blood transfusions,



Sandy and Brandon Lavender

Sandy said, and many others -- red cells and platelets -- during two and a half years of treatments that involved chemotherapy and frequent spinal taps.

"At first, I thought they were wrong," Sandy said. "I think I cried for a week straight. I didn't know what was going to happen or what to expect."

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Seasons' Pass Enters Fifth Year

New Artist
to be introduced
March 1



Artist Harley Bartlett, whose painting will be unveiled on March 1.

When the Rhode Island Blood Center announces its new Seasons Pass artist on March 1, it will begin the fifth year of a program that has substantially increased the number of individuals donating four times a year, and increased the number of blood drive sponsors hosting four or more drives a year.

Seasons Pass is among the most successful Rhode Island Blood Center programs aimed at thanking volunteer donors for their support, and encouraging additional donations.

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Pilgrim High School football players record perhaps their biggest win

Several members of the Pilgrim High School varsity football team, their season over, were among dozens of high school students, faculty, staff and friends who were all huge winners at a recent blood drive.

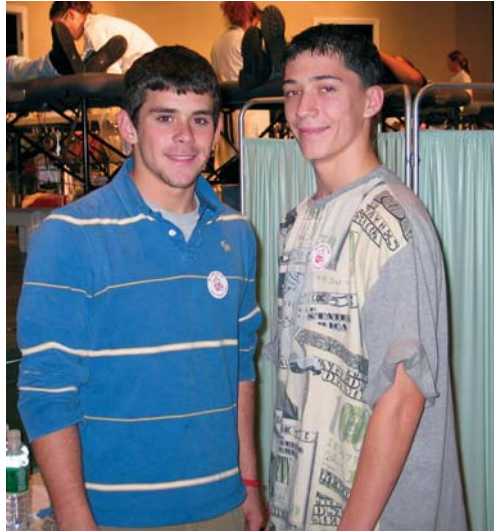
Until now, for many of the football players and other sports participants, donating has been difficult because practice or games have prevented their participation. But between seasons, several football players, encouraged by teachers and coaches, donated at a recent Pilgrim High School Blood Drive.

"I've never been able to do it (donate) before," says Anthony Dubre, 17 and the football team's quarterback and punter. "Some people say it hurts, but it wasn't that bad. You can save three lives. I feel better that I gave blood and helped people out. If somebody needs it, I'll give."

Peter Deloge, 17, a wide receiver and outside linebacker, was also motivated by understanding that his donation would help save lives, and because Pilgrim High School has been recognized for its level of blood donation. Pilgrim has consistently finished first in its category in the Rhode Island Blood Center's High School Hero Challenge.

And Shawn Lindell, a 17 year old senior who plays defensive end, was donating for the second time, also because of his understanding that his donation had the potential to save lives.

"When I turned of age I thought it was the right thing to do," Shawn said. "It really doesn't hurt, it's only a pinch."



As these student athletes showed leadership on the football field, they are again showing leadership, giving back to the community and helping to save lives, one pint at a time.

Pilgrim High School football players Anthony Dubre (left), quarterback and punter and Peter Deloge, a wide receiver and linebacker, after donating blood at the school's recent blood drive.



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**Host a
Blood
Drive!**

**Do you know a company or organization
that might host a blood drive?**

**Call Frank Prosnitz
Community Development Manager
401-248-5723**

MetLife contribution aids RIBC educational programs

MetLife and MetLife Auto & Home continue to be among the Rhode Island Blood Center's strongest sponsors, not only in collections, but also by fostering the Rhode Island Blood Center's educational programs.

For the second year, MetLife Foundation has awarded the Rhode Island Blood Center a \$1,000 grant. This year's grant will help fund production of educational materials for the Blood Center's Elementary School Program. Last year, MetLife Foundation's \$1,000 contribution helped pay for a billboard promoting the Rhode Island Blood Center.

"I get great satisfaction helping to organize our blood drives at MetLife," said Collette Berthiaume, MetLife blood drive coordinator. "After running my first blood drive nine years ago, I made a commitment to see participation at our blood drives increase.

"Not only have we done that, but, through the generous donation of a MetLife Foundation grant, we're able to provide financial support for important projects that can promote the importance of blood donation, and also educate young people about the importance of having a safe and ready blood supply."

Providing important tools

MetLife's contributions provide the Rhode Island Blood Center with important tools as it accelerates its educational program to reach into schools at all levels.

"It's important to educate elementary school youngsters about our blood system, as we cultivate our future blood donors," said Glenn Halvarson, the Blood Center's manager of community of education. "MetLife has demonstrated its willingness to assure an adequate blood supply now, and into the future."

Each year, MetLife runs six or seven blood drives at its Warwick facility. In 2005, this facility collected 635 pints of blood, and collected 637 pints in 2006. Each blood donation has the potential to save three lives, since each pint of blood is divided into three components – red cells, platelets and plasma.

That means that over the last two years, MetLife donors have potentially saved 3,816 lives-- greater than the population of Little Compton.



notebook In Appreciation



Kathy Connolly, Rhode Island Blood Center Public Relations Director, presents a recognition award to Rick Paolino, Senior Sales Manager for the Crowne Plaza at the Crossings for the hotel's continuing support and generous contributions, especially for the NBC10 Holiday blood drive and the NBC10 February Community blood drive.

RIBC TV Show

The Rhode Island Blood Center's current television program tells the compelling story of a family whose nine-year-old son was told he had a 20 percent chance of survival, unless a marrow match was found within a month. The program airs every Sunday morning at 9 a.m. on Cox Cable's Channel 3.

Connolly joins Tomorrow Fund board

Kathy Connolly, the Rhode Island Blood Center's Public Relations Director and a long-time advocate of and for the Tomorrow Fund, was recently elected to the Board of Directors of the Tomorrow Fund, the only local non-profit organization that provides daily emotional support for children with cancer and their families.

volunteer spotlight

Aquidneck volunteer, Helen Oliviera, retires

It was about 16 years ago when Helen Oliviera first donned her Rhode Island Blood Center smock, given to her that day by her cousin Mary, at a Knights of Columbus blood drive in Middletown. There weren't enough volunteers, so Helen was recruited and readily enlisted.

She's worn the smock ever since, spending the last dozen years as a volunteer at blood drives, and most often at the Blood Center's Aquidneck Donor Center. That is until recently, when Helen decided it was time to retire.

On her last day at the Blood Center she sat greeting other volunteers, RIBC staff and donors in what she has affectionately been called her kitchen.

"My greatest joy is my family," says Helen, a grandmother of six and great grandmother to 11, the youngest just two-years-old. But she looks around, and adds "this (the Aquidneck Donor Center) has become my family."

To Helen, there's something special about the place, an atmosphere in which donors and staff know each other by first name, ask about kids and grandkids, and recognize that what they are doing gives an individual and his or her family hope.

"Donors are wonderful people," she says. "Look at what they're doing." Reminded that each donation has the potential of saving three lives, she says "every time I hear that I'm amazed."

Helen began volunteering regularly at the Blood Center after retiring from her secretarial position in the



Middletown School system, the town in which she was born, raised, worked and lived in.

She recalls that as a young woman she worked at the torpedo station, reaching Goat Island by ferry; the heartache of her husband's death some 29 years ago; the loss of a son at the young age of 46; and the joy of a family that surrounds her – two daughters who live locally, six grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren.

Helen looks forward to spending time watching her two-year-old great grandson at his playgroup, and returning to the Middletown

Senior Center for computer courses, taught, of course, by a blood donor.

And you can count on Helen to be volunteering in some capacity, whether it is at the church where she'll bake for those who are ill, or perhaps at a blood drive somewhere in Middletown.

Meanwhile, Helen's departure leaves a void at the Aquidneck Center, according to Christopher Macri, the Blood Center's Volunteer Coordinator. Macri is actively looking for volunteers to fill Helen's hours.

Helen regularly worked at the center every Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Thursdays from 12:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. and Saturday from 8 a.m. to noon. Anyone interested in volunteering at the Center during these hours or volunteering at area drives should call 401-453-8378 or e-mail christopher.macri@ribc.org for more information.

Volunteer Opportunities

Greeter/Refreshment: greet and direct donors, pass out refreshments
Days, times and sites flexible, weekdays and weekends available

Driver: pick up boxed blood at mobile drives
Days, times and sites flexible, weekdays and weekends available

Clerical: help us with various mailings and projects
Providence and weekdays only, days and times flexible

Learn more by calling! Volunteer Coordinator 401-453-8378

NBC 10/Coast 93.3 FM Blood Drive collects more than 500 pints



Donors and Blood Center staff at Warwick's Crowne Plaza.



Barbara Morse Silva amid her makeshift studio.



NBC 10 photographer Bob Emerson and Barbara Morse Silva.

The annual NBC 10 Holiday Blood Drive reached near record totals, collecting 518 pints of blood just a few days before the Christmas Holiday. Since each blood donation has the potential to save three lives, the efforts of donors, staff, television and radio stations, and particularly Health Care Reporter Barbara Morse Silva, potentially helped save 1,500 lives.



Boxes of blood ready for transport to the Blood Center for testing, processing and distribution.



Media sponsors with special donor, from left to right: NBC 10's Barbara Morse Silva, Cost 933 Fm's Tad Lemire, Donor Santa Claus, Coast FM's Ted Crapf and BJ Mansuetti.

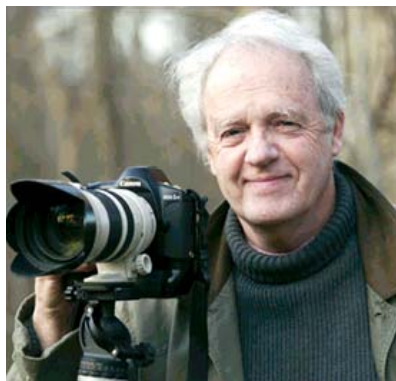
Our Seasons' Pass Artists



2003-2004
Cindy Kelly



2004-2005
Maxwell Mays



2005-2006
Richard Benjamin



2006-2007
Harley Bartlett

New print to be unveiled March 1 (from page 1)

A unique marriage of the arts and health care industries, the program recognizes the impact that both have on quality of life.

“At the Rhode Island Blood Center our impact on lives is clear, as each blood donation provides hope for recipients and their families, potentially saving as many as three lives,” said Frank Prosnitz, the Blood Center’s Manager of Community Development. “Art impacts life in a different way. Its images reflect hope, expectation, and inspire. In many instances, while history books can tell us chapter and verse about a particular point in time, it is the visual and performing arts that explore the soul of a society.

“For our donors, perhaps, it is much simpler,” Prosnitz said. “Not only do they receive a wonderful piece of art, but also a symbol of their contribution to saving lives. It is a constant reminder of their generosity.”

The Seasons Pass program recognizes those individuals who donate four times over a 12 month period, from March 1 to the last day in February (28 or 29), and companies that hold four or more blood drives during that period.

Artists for the first four years have been Cindy Kelly, Maxwell Mays, Richard Benjamin and Harley Bartlett.

Bartlett, the president of the Providence Art Club and renowned oil painter, will unveil his work at a press conference on March 1. At that time, the Blood Center will also introduce the artist for 2007-2008. Visit the Blood Center’s Web Site (www.ribc.org) after the March 1 press conference to meet the new artist, and view Harley Bartlett’s work. A story will also appear in the next issue of this newsletter.

Prints of Harley’s work will be available at all blood drives and at the Blood Center’s five fixed locations beginning March 1 for four-time a year donors. The Blood Center’s fixed locations are listed on the back page of this publication. To find a blood drive near you, consult the Blood Center’s Web Site (www.ribc.org).

Reminders

Seasons' Pass

Donate four times before February 28, 2007 and receive a print of a Harley Bartlett painting.

For more information call 1-800-283-8385

Workshops recognize blood drive coordinators

The unsung heroes of any blood collection system are the individual blood drive coordinators, who unselfishly work to assure that their individual blood drives meet or exceed goals.

The Rhode Island Blood Center is scheduling a series of Coordinator Workshops to recognize the achievements of coordinators and provide a forum for coordinators and blood center staff to exchange ideas that can be helpful in running future blood drives.

“This is a two-way conversation,” said Glenn Halvarson, the Rhode Island Blood Center’s Manager of Community Education. “We can provide information for coordinators, but we can also learn from coordinators to provide better tools that will help them.

“This also provides coordinators an opportunity to share ideas,” Halvarson said. “Coordinators often work in a vacuum, without the benefit of interacting with other individuals who are doing the same thing for their organizations or companies.”

While the workshops are held regionally, coordinators may attend any workshop that is convenient to them.

For information about times or locations of workshops, or to register for any of the workshops, please contact Glenn Halvarson at 401-453-8387.

Fifth annual drive remembers triplets



July marks five years since the passing of the Stafford triplets, who suffered from a serious virus. In their struggle, they used many types of blood products. Now five years later Ed and Therese Stafford (pictured here with their son Nigel, 3) remain dedicated to the Rhode Island Blood Center, and the need for blood donations, “because,” the Staffords said, “the blood center was there for us in our hour of crisis. They were unwavering in their attempt to help, just as we hope blood donors are there to help others.” The fifth annual blood drive in memory of Simon, Graham and Grace Stafford is scheduled for March 27, from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Coventry Recreation Community Center.

'Each day is a reminder of how far Brandon has come (from page 1)

She felt anger, confusion, frustration, helplessness, all the emotions that a parent experiences when they see a child facing a serious disease.

“You want to take everything away from him,” Sandy said. “You want to take the pain for yourself. It’s so hard to describe. Helpless. You’re looking at him, and he’s not able to tell me what’s wrong. He’s so young. I just wanted to take all the pain away from him so he would be all better.”

It’s now four years later, and since ending his treatment, Sandy said, “he’s been doing really well.”

He has his blood checked every two months and in between he’s playing soccer, learning math and reading in his Warwick kindergarten class, while learning



hip-hop at his mom’s dance studio, Center Stage, also in Warwick.

For Sandy, each day is a reminder of how far they have come, from the first days when Brandon was so lethargic that “he couldn’t even hold a cup,” to now when he practices hip hop in their living room.

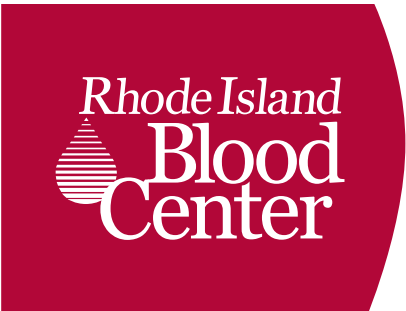
Much of it she owes to blood donors.

“I don’t think you realize until you see somebody firsthand how blood donation actually helps,” Sandy said. “Not only for him, but for all his friends at the hospital that I see getting blood transfusions all the time.”

“Every day I think back to when he was ill. Now he’s like a new child.”

Save a life. Donate blood.

site	address	donation hours
Providence	405 Promenade St., Providence, RI 02908	Monday - Thursday • 8am to 8pm Friday • 7:30am to 5:30pm Saturday • 7:30am to 2:30pm
Middletown	688 Aquidneck Ave, Middletown, RI 02842	Tuesday and Thursday • 12:30pm to 7:30pm Wednesday • 10am to 5pm Saturday • 8am to Noon
Narragansett	14 Woodruff Ave., Narragansett, RI	Monday & Wednesday • 11:30am to 6:30pm Friday • 11am to 5pm Saturday • 8am to Noon
Warwick	400 Bald Hill Rd. Warwick Mall	Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday • 10am to 7pm Saturday & Sunday • 8:30am to 1pm
Woonsocket	Pavilion Plaza, 2168 Diamond Hill Rd. 02895	Tuesday & Thursday • Noon to 7pm Saturday & Sunday • 8am to 2pm



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