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# RIBC explores public Cord Blood Bank

## Research shows growing use of cord stem cells

Recognizing the growth and viability of retrieving stem cells from the umbilical cord and placenta, the Rhode Island Blood Center is seriously exploring the possibility of developing a public cord blood bank in Rhode Island.

The growth of cord blood banks, and access to another stem cell source, raises considerable possibilities for the treatment of a variety of diseases.

Stem cells traditionally have been found in marrow, and considerable research and debate has surrounded the potential of using embryonic stem cells. In recent years, extensive research has also disclosed the vast potential of using stem cells from the umbilical cord and placenta, resulting in similar benefits as embryonic stem cells, without the moral issues.

Generally, The National Institute of Health defines stems cells as having “the remarkable potential to develop into many different cell types in the body. Serving as a sort of repair system for the body, they can theoretically divide without limit to replenish other cells

as long as the person or animal is alive. When a stem cell divides, each new cell has the potential to either remain a stem cell or become another type of cell with a more specialized function, such as a muscle cell, a red blood cell, or a brain cell.”

Most people associate stem cells with marrow

stem cell transplants that are often used in cancer or leukemia treatment. Research has found that cord cells can be used in the same manner as stem cells found in marrow, with treatments now extending to a variety of other diseases.

In recent years some public cord blood banks have developed, along

with private banks. In both cases the cord blood is frozen for future use, but in private cord blood banks individuals pay to have their baby’s cord blood frozen, raising the possibility of a stem cell match if needed in the future.

The Rhode Island Blood Center is exploring the establishment of a public cord bank, working

*Cord Stem Cells  
May be easier  
to match*

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Donors who visit the Rhode Island Blood Center’s Providence donor room are finding it more comfortable, with new furniture, freshly painted walls, and an exhibit that puts on display the art of Seasons’ Pass artists.

“We want to make blood donation as comfortable and pleasant as possible,” said Scott Asadorian, the Blood Center’s Chief Operating Officer. “Donors are well aware of the gift they give to the community, and

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### Providence Donor Room facelift

## Cord Blood (from page 1)

with legislative leaders, state health officials and various community representatives, including the Brown University Medical School. No decision or timetable has been established to determine if or when the project might move forward.

Cord blood called “placental blood” is the blood that remains in the umbilical cord and placenta following birth and after the cord is cut. Scientists have found that placental and umbilical cord blood holds considerable promise in its ability to provide a rich supply of stem cells. Placentas and umbilical cords are typically discarded as medical waste after a healthy child birth.

Some scientists suggest that cord stem cells provide greater potential than the traditional use of stem cells and may be easier to match.

- Stem cells are generally used to regenerate a patient’s blood and immune system after chemotherapy or radiation treatment. While

chemotherapy and radiation destroy cancer cells, they also destroy stem cells, requiring an infusion of stem cells.

- Research is underway to determine if cord blood stem cells could lead to treatments for diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.
- Research is also being conducted to determine if cord blood stem cells have the ability to turn into blood vessel cells, which some day could be used in the treatment of heart disease, essentially allowing patients to “grow their own bypass.”

If a cord bank were to be established, Rhode Island officials would conduct an extensive educational campaign, targeting physicians, hospitals and expectant mothers, informing expectant mothers of the opportunity to donate the umbilical cord for stem cell research.

## Types of Stem Cells

**Umbilical Cord Stem Cells** can be obtained from the umbilical cord. These stem cells can be saved in a stem cell bank. There is less controversy with umbilical cord stem cells, since the umbilical cord is usually discarded after child birth, and thus the stem cell bank would be using medical waste for potential life saving procedures.

**Embryonic Stem Cells** can be obtained from the early developing stages of an embryo. Embryonic Stem Cells, controversial in a debate between religion, science and government, have the full potential to differentiate into virtually any cell in the human body.

**Adult Stem Cells** can be obtained from full-grown adults, and are usually found in special parts of the body, like bone marrow or early stages of tissue development.



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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

# January is National Blood Donor Month

During January, the Rhode Island Blood Center and Dunkin' Donuts teamed up to celebrate National Blood



Donor month. All presenting donors, at blood drives and the Blood Center's fixed

locations (see listing on the back page), were given a coupon for a pound of any flavor Dunkin' Donuts Blend Coffee.

## Give a Pint, Get a pound promotion

"Dunkin' Donuts is honored to partner with the Rhode Island Blood Center for the annual Give a Pint, Get a Pound promotion," said Todd Wallace, Field Marketing Manager for Dunkin' Donuts. "We hope receiving a pound of delicious Dunkin' Donuts coffee will help encourage our neighbors to reach out and help each other by donating the gift of life at a time when it's needed most."

## Nationally 39,000 units of blood needed daily

Nationally, Blood Donor month is designed to encourage donors to give blood during what are traditionally difficult months. The AABB, a national blood banking organization says that "blood is traditionally in short supply during the winter months due to the holidays, travel schedules, inclement weather and illness. January, in particular, is a difficult month for blood centers to collect blood donations. A reduction in turnout can put our nation's blood inventory at a critical low."

In the community served by the Rhode Island Blood Center, it is essential to collect up to 280 pints daily, while nationally, the AABB says that some 39,000 units of blood are required by hospitals and emergency treatment facilities daily.



## notebook

### *Holiday tradition*



Santa visits the Warwick Donor Center and puts all donors at the top of his list.

### *Make an appointment through eDonor*

After a few months in operation, the Rhode Island Blood Center's new online option for donors to make their own appointments, track their own donor history, or manage their own donor information, is becoming more popular.

eDonor was introduced last summer. It can be accessed through the Blood Center's Web Site at [www.ribc.org](http://www.ribc.org), and by clicking on the eDonor link.

Once on the eDonor page donors who have already donated automatically have an account and can access it by choosing the "Log into your eDonor account" selection. You will be asked to enter your donor ID, which is the ID found on your donor card, and to enter a password. When entering the donor ID ignore the zeroes and start with the first non-zero digit.

## volunteer spotlight

# Volunteer opportunities

Just as myths surround blood donation, there are also misperceptions about volunteerism at the Rhode Island Blood Center, with some people anticipating involvement directly in functions that are actually performed by paid Blood Center professionals.

Many of these myths stem from the belief that phlebotomists, lab technicians and other workers are volunteers. These skilled tasks are actually performed by paid staff.

The Rhode Island Blood Center uses some 125 volunteers to perform four basic duties.

- Volunteers help serve refreshments to donors after they complete their blood donation at fixed locations in Providence, Middletown, Narragansett, Warwick, and Woonsocket, and also at blood drives throughout the state. Besides assisting donors with refreshments, these volunteers remain alert for possible reactions to donation and inform Blood Center staff if someone has a reaction.
- Volunteers greet and direct donors through the first stages of the donation process at large blood drives, helping to assure that these drives run efficiently.
- The Blood Center holds mobile donor coach drives throughout the state every day. At set times during the drive, volunteer drivers transport boxed blood products from these donor coaches to our central processing facility in Providence. All products are safely packed and sealed in special foam lined boxes for transport, maintaining the integrity of the donations and safety for our volunteers. Drivers use their own vehicles and receive mileage compensation of 50.5 cents per mile.



Volunteer Taber Gifford makes a sign for an upcoming blood drive.

- Volunteers who are available during the day also can volunteer for administrative work, helping to process promotional mailings to donors, while performing other administrative duties. These opportunities are available weekdays at the Providence location between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. Flexible scheduling is also possible, with no monthly or annual minimum hour requirements.

Because the blood drive schedule changes monthly, greeters, drivers and refreshment volunteers select times and location that are convenient for them. This allows people to do just one or two drives a month or work several drives a week depending on their level of interest and availability.

Volunteers feel terrific about their role in assuring a safe and adequate blood supply, and also receive a special polo shirt upon completion of 50 hours and are invited to a awards luncheon every summer.

## Volunteer

**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**

## Waugh: 'I always knew my life was a gift'

Linda Waugh seems at ease in her surroundings, an upscale Starbucks coffee shop that she manages and one in which she is arranging to host a blood drive.

The blood drive is important to Linda: "When I was approached about the blood drive, I didn't have any question ... you have no choice."

For Linda, who was diagnosed at the age of three with a genetic abnormality to her heart, blood donors were instrumental in saving her life.

"I always knew my life was a gift," she says. At four, she underwent open heart surgery. Doctors had given her a "slim" chance of survival.

The daughter of a shell fisherman who had no medical insurance, she learned very early in life about the importance of giving back. Her parents were asking neighbors to donate blood to assure that their four-year-old would have the five units of red cells necessary for her surgery and eventual recovery.

Now Linda's 19-year-old son has been diagnosed with the same genetic abnormality of the heart, but doctors have said he doesn't require surgery.

"It's given me an appreciation for a lot of things," says Linda of her own ordeal and the blood products that helped save her, and of her son's condition.

"You have to give back to people," she says. "People have a responsibility. We're given a gift. You have to do what's in your heart."

What's in Linda's heart is to give back by sponsoring blood drives, by helping to assure the availability of a safe and adequate blood supply for anyone who may face a similar situation as she did.



## Survey confirms donors' commitment

It was not surprising when nearly 80 percent of blood donors told the Rhode Island Blood Center last summer that the main reason they donate blood is because of their commitment to help others.

The survey results validated some Blood Center perceptions of donor motivation; while other results from the survey conducted last summer provided valuable information about marketing and donor perceptions. Some 3,276 individuals were surveyed over a two-month period.

Here are some of the results:

- The largest donor group was 46 to 55 year olds, followed by 36-45 year olds, and then

56-65 year olds, 26 to 35 year olds, 17 to 25 year olds, and those over the age of 66.

- Besides commitment to others, the main motivation for those donating at blood drives was convenience.
- Promotional items and raffles were not strong draws for donation. Only 4.97 percent said promotional items were important, and 3.29 percent said raffles were important.
- There were many favorable comments about staff, underscoring the importance of interpersonal relationships, and quality customer service.

'Donor room facelift' (from page 1)



as representatives of blood recipients we think the best way to say thank you is to provide an environment that helps make the donation experience uplifting.”

Besides the facial makeover, the Seasons’ Pass art provides an opportunity for donors to experience a broader view of the art that frequent donors have been enjoying for some five years (the Seasons’ Pass program celebrates its fifth anniversary in March).

The Seasons’ Pass program was initiated in 2002. A local artist, selected from among the area’s most prestigious artists, is selected to develop an original painting or photograph for the Blood Center. Prints are then

made of the finished piece and distributed to four-time or more a year donors, and sponsors of four or more blood drives a year.

As part of the donor facility upgrade, the Blood Center has extended an invitation to all Seasons’ Pass artists to display their works at the Providence Donor Center. Not only are the artist’s work on display, it is also available for sale. A portion of the proceeds of any work that is sold will be donated to the Tomorrow Fund, the organization that provides support for children with cancer and their families.

The first artist’s work on display in Providence is from Richard Benjamin, a fine art photographer who has published three table top photography books and was the third Seasons’ Pass artist.

## Sharing your story could save a life

Many people who have received blood products are so appreciative of the gift of life that they want to share their story with blood donors and others who might be motivated to become blood donors, or more frequent donors.

Often, by telling their story, blood recipients can have a very positive impact on the turnout at blood drives, helping to assure the availability of a safe and adequate blood supply.

The Rhode Island Blood Center has developed a number of ways in which recipients can share their stories: through our newsletter; on posters and flyers promoting specific blood drives; and as members of a speakers’ bureau.

If you have a story to tell, the Blood Center would like to explore the possibilities with you. Please contact either Frank Prosnitz, manager of community development, [fprosnitz@ribc.org](mailto:fprosnitz@ribc.org) or 401-248-5723; or Glenn Halvarson, manager of community education, [ghalvarson@ribc.org](mailto:ghalvarson@ribc.org) or 401-453-8387.

## Reminders

### Seasons’ Pass

Donate four times before February 29, 2008 and receive a print of a Domine Vescera Ragosta painting.

For more information call 1-800-283-8385

# NBC 10/Coast 93.3 Holiday Drive: 437 pints



Blood Center staff members are busy tending to donors, while a donor stops by the NBC 10 table.



Volunteer Ann Marie Macri helps a donor.

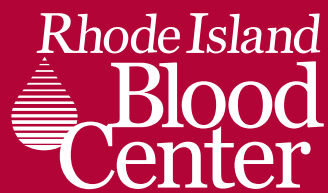


NBC 10 Cameraman Bob Emerson prepares for live shot from the blood drive.



(Above): NBC 10's Barbara Morse Silva with longtime Blood Center volunteer Mary Williams. (Right): Barbara Morse Silva preparing for broadcast behind boxes of blood waiting to be delivered to the Blood Center.





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a publication of the Rhode Island Blood Center

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# Save a life. Donate blood.

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