

Blood Drive

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what JEMS tried this time, said Darcy Magratten, co-coordinator of the mobile blood drive and a JEMS member.

As music from the band "Radiohead" played softly in the background and the aroma of chili and cornbread comforted donors, the scene seemed more like a social gathering than a blood clinic.

Magratten explained that one of JEMS' aims was to get people to come down and see just what it takes to give blood.

"There's this stigma," she said. "Once you get past that first donation, you realize it doesn't really take much."

She explained that when donors give blood, they help save lives, including those of people with leukemia and women who have complications during childbirth.

"The time you spend here is extremely worthwhile," Magratten said. "There is so much you don't even think about."

Proudly making her 66th blood donation was Ann Zartler of Juniper Circle. She named several reasons why she has donated so vigilantly through the years.

She joked that the free Lorna Doone cookies get her out to the blood drives, but she has also seen



Darcy Magratten was all smiles during the recent blood drive sponsored by JEMS at the Portuguese American Citizens Club. The R.I. Blood Center will host another mobile drive at McQuade's Market on Monday, Dec. 14, from 2 to 6 p.m.

Photo by Andrea von Hohenleiten

firsthand the benefits of having willing, healthy donors.

"My husband lived a lot longer than he might have because there was a safe blood supply," she said. "Donating blood is a lot easier than most people think it is and it doesn't hurt."

All those who donated blood last week had different reasons for being there, but they all agreed on a few things: It's quick, it's easy, it's painless and it's worth it.

John Warner, a Deck Street resident and the father of two young girls, has donated regularly since his college days when his cousin and his cousin's two infant daughters were involved in a tragic car accident.

"One daughter was killed," he said. "And my cousin and the other daughter survived, [but] they needed blood."

The R.I. Blood Center staff recommends eating a good meal, getting a good night's sleep and drinking plenty of water in preparation for donating blood.

A regular donor for 26 years, Marlene Murphy of Aquidneck Avenue said she always prepares by drinking plenty of fluids.

She donates in the names of her parents, who are elderly, and for her husband, who suffers from deep veins and can't comfortably give blood.

"I'm the only one who can in my family," Murphy said. "Besides, I'm good at it! It only takes

me five to six minutes from start to finish."

Another donor, Robin Lee, a Cole Street resident, received her four-gallon cup this year. The R.I. Blood Center gives a commemorative coffee cup to every individual who donates a gallon of blood, according to Frank Prosnitz of the R.I. Blood Center.

Ever since she was a little girl, Lee wanted to donate blood — her older brother did, but she was too young and too small. Then, she hit the 110-pound weight criteria and has been donating whenever possible ever since.

"I think it's a good thing to do," she said. "They always make it so easy here. There's a drive in Jamestown every four weeks or so."

Although most people are aware of the importance of giving blood, Sheldon speculated that many still shy away from donating because of fear and uncertainty. But, she said, the needle hurts less than a paper cut and there are no health

risks if donors follow preparation guidelines.

She encouraged those who are interested in donating to call or visit the blood center locations for information on eligibility.

"Things have changed for the better," she said. Many people who in the past could not give blood are now eligible to donate because of advancements in technology and better screening processes, she added.

According to Sheldon, whole blood donations are the most common contributions, especially at the mobile drives. Once the blood is collected, she said, it's transported to the main location and lab in Providence, where the whole blood is tested for illness to ensure a safe product. After that, the components are spun and separated into platelets, plasma and red cells. Once separated, each of these components is used individually to help heal patients and each serves a specific function, she said.

According to the R.I. Blood Center website, platelets control bleeding and are commonly used for transfusions in chemotherapy patients, plasma is used to treat victims of burns, shock or dehydration, and red cells replenish blood lost during surgery and in trauma victims.

For every whole blood pint donated, three lives can potentially be saved, according to the site.

If you missed last week's blood drive, McQuade's Market will sponsor a mobile drive from 2 to 6 p.m. on Monday, Dec. 14. The R.I. Blood Center also encourages donors to visit its stationary locations throughout the state; appointments are preferred, but walk-ins are always welcome. Information on more mobile blood drives can be found at www.ribc.org. Donors must wait six to eight weeks between donations.

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Teen Center looking for a few good friends

The Jamestown Teen Center staff is working to establish a non-profit organization that can raise money to help with its activities.

Teen Center Coordinator Debbie Tungett said last week that the Teen Center wants to move to the next level of organization and in order to do that, it needs to raise money.

"We see this organization working much like the Friends of the Jamestown Library," she explained.

Tungett said the group is currently seeking adults and youths to serve on the Friends of Jamestown Teens board of directors.

"We are looking for people who are interested in the youth of Jamestown," she said. "We will probably have a board meeting once a month."

The board would help raise and approve funds that will be used to pay for teen-related programs, and also to purchase items like computers and furniture for the center, Tungett said.

Anyone who would like to serve on the board is asked to drop off a letter of interest and a resume at the Jamestown Teen Center, 41 Conanicus Ave., Jamestown.

Tungett also said the Teen Center will hold an open house during the Village Christmas Tree Lighting on Saturday, Dec. 5. The open house will be from 4 to 8 p.m.

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