

Everyday Heroes

Blood Centers of the Pacific's Diversity E-newsletter

October 2011

Kudos Oakland Technical High School!

OAKLAND TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

Hats off to the students, parents and teachers of [Oakland Technical High School](#) for being outstanding stewards of community service!

Thirty-eight students, five parents and three teachers came to show their support for the "101 Heroes Blood Drive" on Saturday, September 24th, at [Studio One Art Center](#) in Oakland. Not only did they volunteer their time but they stepped up to the plate and donated blood as well! In addition, Oakland Tech has held blood drives since 2005 and collect about 50 pints at each.

To mark Sickle Cell Awareness Month in September, BCP held the blood drive to encourage at least 101 people to give blood. "101" is significant because it's been 101 years since sickle cell anemia was first written about in a medical journal.

"The blood drive was most wonderful," said David DeLeeuw, co-director of the Health Academy at Oakland Tech. "It was great just to see how students were working hard that day and that they learned about sickle cell and the importance of blood donation."

Currently, the Health Academy has 260 10th to 12th grade students who are interested in healthcare and science. "In addition to preparing students for college, job shadowing, peer education opportunities, internships and community health education opportunities are offered by community partner organizations," said co-director Maureen Nixon-Holtan. "We are glad to add BCP to our list of community partners!"

In this issue, we highlight some of the teachers at Oakland Tech who've set examples for their students to follow.

Maureen Nixon-Holtan

A teacher with Oakland Tech for the past 16 years, Maureen is a Biology teacher and also the co-director of the Health Academy, along with David DeLeeuw.

"The first time I donated blood was at a Health Academy blood drive," said Maureen, who donated at the 101 Heroes Blood Drive. "I was inspired by students!"



Maureen (pictured with teacher Janice Lord-Walker donating blood) was also inspired to sign up as a bone marrow donor at the blood drive. "I met Johnika, and she has to get monthly transfusions for her medical condition," said Maureen. "She inspired me to be a bone marrow donor. For all the procedures she and others like her go through routinely, I can do something to help!" (Johnika Carter-Kiel was diagnosed with aplastic anemia and Paroxysmal Nocturnal Hemoglobinuria (PNH). Aplastic anemia occurs when a person's own bone marrow

does not produce enough red cells. This leaves them fatigued and at a higher risk for infections and uncontrolled bleeding. Johnika shared her story in the July issue of the e-newsletter.)

Janice Lord-Walker

Fifteen percent of non-donors cite "being too busy" as the reason they don't give blood. And while this was also the reason cited for blood donor Janice Lord-Walker for having stopped donating blood, she is back to save lives!

"I donated blood when I was in college," said Janice, a teacher in Physiology Health at Oakland Tech. "But I stopped because I was busy. The 101 Heroes Blood Drive was the first time I gave blood in a long time."



And to reward her "comeback" Janice won one of the raffle prizes that day! "When I was in line at the store after, I explained that I had won the \$50 Safeway gift card at the blood drive," said Janice. "And the man in line thanked me because his daughter had sickle cell!"

Janice wants to let those know that if they haven't given blood in awhile, like herself, that they shouldn't feel bad. "Just go to a blood drive!" she said. "It doesn't take much and especially now with people's budget being tight, if they can't donate money, they can donate blood."



Janice, who's been at Oakland Tech for a year now, enjoyed the blood drive and the festivities as well, which also included appearances by basketball star [Stephen Curry](#) (right), and Miss Black California [Constance Reese](#) (left). "We're glad the Health Academy was able to be a part of the blood drive that day," said Janice. "I felt that the students enjoyed themselves volunteers and were great ambassadors. The blood drive was wonderful, well-organized and informative."

The Magazine Project

Safia Abdul-Sabur was born in Jamaica and diagnosed with sickle cell at birth. Upon arriving in the United States at the age of 6, she became aware that she had the disease when she started first-grade.

Hospitalized with a high fever, pneumonia and lower back pain, doctors confirmed the diagnosis with her and her mother. These hospitalizations continued throughout high school and college, sometimes weeks at a time. And even today.

Following is a letter from Safia appealing for stories about sickle cell for a magazine she is creating:

"Dear Fellow Sickle Cell Patients and Families,

My name is Safia Abdul-Sabur, I am 23-years-old and I have Sickle Cell Disease (HbSC). I graduated from UC Davis in June 2010 and I am in the process of creating a magazine highlighting Sickle Cell to help the public become more aware of this disease.

I am a member of the SCD Solider Network, based in Atlanta, and I am creating a magazine that will allow those with Sickle Cell and their families to share their stories. By you sharing your story and allowing us to potentially get it published you will help to spread awareness by teaching the larger public about the daily struggles of dealing with this disease. This platform will give you and your family a space where your voices will be heard. I feel that for us to bring greater awareness we must feel comfortable about sharing our stories with others. This to me is one of the best ways that we can teach others about Sickle Cell. Presenting facts is one thing



but presenting real stories will help the larger community understand exactly how serious this disease is.

By compiling each person's story I will have content needed to produce a magazine that will be shared with others as a teaching tool that highlights our struggles as a result of this disease. As a Sickle Cell patient myself, I would like to also highlight our experiences, needs and achievements that we have been able to accomplish. For those who are family members I would like you to share your thoughts and experiences of how you dealt with taking care of your family member with Sickle Cell. I have high hopes that each of you will be willing to tell your story and make this project a success. The vision that I have for this is not only to help educate those in the larger community about Sickle Cell but also to help educate and encourage the younger generation of children and their families growing up with this disease. By you sharing your story, I strongly feel that it can be a great help and encouragement to others.

This will be the first time that a project like this has been done in the United States and with your contribution it will be a great success. Please provide me with a brief one and half page write-up. A question that I would specifically like answered is: ***"What does having sickle cell mean to you?"***

If you are interested in sharing the story of what motivates you and having it published, please [email](#) me your name, age and the type of Sickle Cell you have. I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you,

Safia Abdul-Sabur
SCD Solider Network Advocate
Phone: 510-230-8242"

Saving Lives at a Blood Drive Near You

Save lives by donating blood at one of these community-sponsored blood drives or at any of our [center locations](#):

Oakland Community Blood Drive - Children's Hospital
Monday, October 24, 2011, 2pm to 7pm
Location: 744 52nd Street, Oakland, CA 94609
To make your appointment, [click here](#).



Donate Blood. Save Lives. | 1-888-393-GIVE | www.bloodcenters.org