

fall 2003

lifelines

the Blood Centers of the Pacific Newsletter



**Blood Centers
of the Pacific**

a member of the Blood Systems Family



SFPD's Officer Nick Ferrando

Back on Track

by *Angela Woon*

"We've got officers down! We've got officers down!" It was the chilling call across San Francisco police radios last June. No, it wasn't a made-for-television movie, neither was it the re-creation of

a 911 call for a television series.

It was reality.

A high speed chase of a dangerous suspect that resulted in a fatal collision, killing a San Francisco police officer and leaving another critically injured.

"I was on normal patrol that night when I received a call about an assault at 10:30pm," recalls Officer Nick Ferrando. "Another patrol car responded to that same call, when both our cars collided at the intersection of 17th Street and Dolores."

According to Nick, the other patrol car flipped, while the car he had been riding in, did a series of 360 degree turns and hit a traffic light. Unfortunately, Officer Jon Cook, the driver of the other car did not survive the crash. The driver of the car Nick was in, David Lee, and a fourth officer, Michael Celis, were injured. Nick, on the other hand, was ejected from his seat and collided head first into a brick wall.

"I suffered severe head injuries," said Nick, who was hospitalized at San Francisco General Hospital. "The left side of my skull had to be removed to allow my brain to swell and then when it subsided, the skull was put back in." Nick also broke both of his femurs and had rods inserted into his legs.

"The basic word was that I was going to die," said Nick, who was in a coma for several weeks. "I was given my last rites three times and my parents prepared themselves that they were not going to have a son anymore."

Fortunately, Nick, whose father is also a police officer, has no recollection of his ordeal at the hospital. "I had no clue what was going on," said the 26-year-old. "The body shuts down to deal with the trauma. But I do feel bad for my parents and the traumatic experience they had to go through."

As a result of his injuries, Nick used 51 pints of lifesaving blood. "I was lucky that donated blood was on hand to sustain me," said Nick. "I am sure a lot of people didn't know who I was, but if they hadn't donated, I wouldn't be here right now - it's as simple as it can be put."

Nick regrets having viewed blood donation as an inconvenience prior to his accident. "I always thought I was a young healthy guy who didn't need blood," he said. "I was wrong. I realize I was being selfish and making up excuses like I didn't know where to donate blood."

According to Nick, doctors were amazed at his speedy recovery. Nick, whose reason for changing careers from being in the insurance field to the police force, was because he "enjoyed the variety of the job and the purpose of saving lives," is already back on the force and engaged to be married in July 2004!

Nick is thankful for the community's generosity and encourages people to become blood donors. "People should take the time to donate blood," he said. "It is because of these generous donors, that I now have another 50 to 60 years of life left to live."



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Lifelines

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For more information or to schedule an appointment, please contact us at 1-888-393-GIVE.

www.bloodcenters.org

Quick Bits

Taipei Mayor Visits BCP

The Peninsula Center-Burlingame was honored to have Mayor Ying-Jeou Ma of Taipei, Taiwan, visit in August during an in-house blood drive sponsored by the Bay Area Chinese Group. Several of the staff members and guests who came to the center broke out in song to welcome Mayor Ma. BCP's CEO and President, Dr. Nora Hirschler, presented the mayor with a welcome gift.

After the reception, the donors gave blood. Media from the World Journal and the Sing Tao Newspaper also attended the affair.

Birthday Donation

Blood donor Dusty Resneck's family of five came to the Marin Center – San Rafael in July to celebrate his son's 25th birthday!

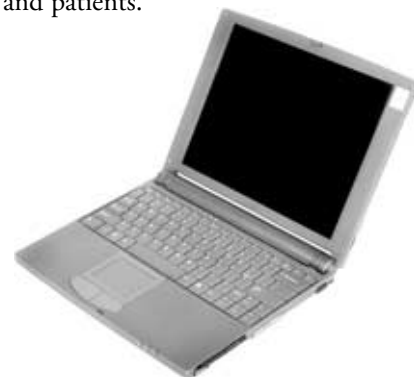
The whole family donated blood, and the mother even brought cupcakes for the staff.

Staff members serenaded Dusty's son with "Happy Birthday," and everyone had a good time!

Mobile Blood Drives Step into the Future

Notice anything "new" when you donated at a mobile blood drive recently? In August, Donor Collections staff began checking the eligibility of all blood donors prior to their donation. Laptops are now taken out to each blood drive and are downloaded every seven days to keep the donor information current.

Both BCP staff and donors gave their thumbs up for the advancement in technology! BCP is looking to actual online registration and printed donor history forms on mobiles in the future. In the meantime, BCP is enjoying this new venture and will continue to provide the best service possible for donors and patients.



SF Rotary Saves Lives in Many Ways

by Lisa Bloch

Blood Centers of the Pacific would like to extend its heartfelt thanks to the San Francisco Rotary Foundation for its generous contribution of \$70,000 toward a “mini-coach!” This smaller-sized donor coach will enable BCP to travel to more area businesses and organizations to collect much-needed blood.

The mini-coach, built in the Midwest, features three beds and one history booth. The coach’s eye-catching paint job was designed by Greg Berger of Pomegranate Design in Sacramento.

“Coach drives” are a wonderful way for large groups of people to donate blood when there isn’t a space available to set up a blood drive.

The Rotary Club of San Francisco is a part of Rotary International, which encompasses more than one million one hundred thousand members in some 29,968 clubs in 163 countries and geographical regions.

The Rotary International organization raised more than \$200 million to eradicate polio and four other children’s diseases from the world. This massive

project is well on its way to completion. Rotary International also funds international scholarships on a scale greater than the Fulbright and Rhodes scholarships put together. Worldwide grants for health, hunger and humanitarian projects are also made jointly with the individual Rotary Clubs.

In San Francisco, the same sort of care and concern for the infirm, the elderly, youth and needy is exhibited by the San Francisco club, which has donated more than \$1.5 million to charitable and educational projects in the past 10 years.



Artist's rendition of the new BCP Donor Mini-Coach

Working Together to Save Lives

by Angela Woon

The Chinese-American Athletic Tournament held a blood drive in July at De Anza College in Cupertino that collected 54 pints of lifesaving blood!

The blood drive was a cooperative effort and would not have been possible if it weren't for the many people involved.

Dr. Tzong-Hae Lee, Director of Molecular Biology at BCP, helped out by translating a BCP press release into Chinese, in addition to providing an explanation about the safety of the donation process. This was published as a news article in the World Journal newspaper, which probably convinced several readers to attend the blood drive.

Volunteers from the Tzu Chi Charity Foundation also helped out by providing explanations about the blood donation process to the Taiwanese speaking attendees. They also helped with the donation paperwork and many in the group even donated blood for the first time in the United States.

And of course, we can't forget the Donor Collections staff headed by Sarah Jang. They all worked non-stop that Sunday and ensured the blood drive ran smoothly.

Thanks to everyone's hard work and efforts, the blood drive was a success!

Next Stop: BCP!

by Angela Woon



Hilldale School

If you've given an apheresis donation, you'd know how one can sometimes get a little chilly sitting in those chairs for a couple of hours. Elizabeth Burgner was one such donor, who came up with a bright (and not to mention warm) idea when she donated at the Irwin Center earlier this year.

Elizabeth and her third grade class at Hilldale School in Daly City made a quilt, which they donated to the Apheresis Department!

Chaperoned by their teacher and some parents, the kids visited the Irwin Center before school let out for the summer. Dr. Kim-Anh Nguyen, BCP's Associate Medical Director, accepted the quilt on behalf of BCP and led the class on a tour of the facility. She explained blood donation to the inquisitive kids and encouraged them to become blood donors when they were old enough.

Thanks to Elizabeth and her class for keeping the apheresis donors warm while they help save lives!



BCP's Dr. Kim-Anh Nguyen, and Joshua, Sammie and Elizabeth Burgner with the Hilldale School quilt.

Desferal Camp

Blood Centers of the Pacific may not sound like an attraction to many, but patients' whose lives have been saved by blood will likely contest that. This past summer, about 25 patients from the 6th Annual Desferal Camp came to visit the Irwin Center, BCP's headquarters in San Francisco, as part of their theme "Blood and Your Body."

According to Laurice Compagno, a Child Life Specialist at University of California San Francisco (UCSF) Children's Hospital, the camp provides "enriching learning experiences, medical teaching, fun activities and field trips." The camp takes place over a period of four days in the summer and participants' ages range from 7 years of age to young adults in their 20's who have thalassemia or sickle cell anemia. Participants were from both UCSF and Children's Hospital and Research Center at Oakland (CHO).

"Desferal Camp is a time where compliance with medications is encouraged and supportive peer relationships are fostered," said Laurice, a thalassemia patient herself and frequent guest speaker at BCP's events. "Adult patients become mentors for the younger campers."

The Desferal Camp is planned through CHO by Toutou Vongphrachanh, thalassemia outreach coordinator, and Laurice, who coordinates special projects for them.

"The kids learned so much and it was truly an enriching experience," said Laurice of the tour at the Irwin Center. "It is vital that they learn where the blood they receive comes from and more about the generous donors who give the gift of life."

For more information on the Desferal Camp, visit www.thalassemia.com.

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"It is vital that they learn where the blood they receive comes from and more about the generous donors who give the gift of life."



BSRI Studies Leukemia Virus

adapted from Blood Systems Research Institute (BSRI) Research News

Most people who have Human T-lymphotropic virus (HTLV), probably aren't even aware that they do, unless it shows up in a blood screening.

Like HIV or the human immunodeficiency virus, HTLV is a human retrovirus but is in a different biological category and causes less disease than its cousin. It was discovered in 1980 as a result of tumor virus research.

Although patients with HTLV are able to lead normal lives, knowing their diagnosis allows them to take precautions to protect their partners or their babies, to whom the virus could be transmitted.

HTLV can be passed from an infected mother to her baby through breast milk, through intercourse with an infected partner, by drugs users who share needles, or through transfusions. Blood donors who are known to have HTLV are told not to donate blood, and all blood donations are tested for HTLV.

HTLV Type I is mainly found in Africa, the Caribbean, and southern Japan. It leads to leukemia and nerve disease in a small percentage of patients. Type II is predominantly found in Native Americans and injection drug users, and causes nerve disease but no leukemia.

In 1989, Dr. Michael Busch, Vice-president for Research and Scientific Services of Blood Centers of the Pacific (BCP) and Blood Systems, and Dr. Edward L. Murphy, Medical Epidemiologist at BCP, and Professor of Laboratory Medicine and Epidemiology/Biostatistics at the University of California San Francisco, started an HTLV study that included 150 HTLV-I donors, 400 HTLV-II donors and 800 controls who were

blood donors but tested negative for the HTLV virus. The cohort subjects were enrolled from among 1.7 million blood donors from blood centers in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Detroit, Oklahoma City and the Baltimore/Washington, D.C. region.

The long-term study called the HOST (HTLV Outcome Study) Study is being conducted with a \$1 million grant from the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute. "We have been tracking our study subjects for 10 to 12 years, and we hope to follow them for another five to 10 years," said Dr. Murphy. "Our goal is to publish our study findings in medical journals, and to use the results for better counseling of HTLV-positive persons."

Every two years, Dr. Murphy and his staff ask HOST subjects, more than 75 percent of whom have been retained since the beginning of the study, about the health effects of the HTLV virus.

"We have a questionnaire and do a physical exam and lab work," said Debby DeVita, Clinical Research Nurse with HOST who does neurological evaluations at study subjects' homes or in-office.

Over the years, only one case of adult T-cell leukemia and 10 cases of a nerve disease called HAM (HTLV-I-associated myelopathy) have been found. Type II patients may also have higher rates of bacterial infections such as bronchitis or pneumonia.

Asked if there could eventually be a vaccine for HTLV, Dr. Murphy said, "The virus doesn't mutate much and is very stable, so it may be actually easier to find an HTLV vaccine than an AIDS vaccine." According to Dr. Murphy, there are only about 300 scientists in the world who are currently working on HTLV.

Light Up A Life Blood Donor-thon!

by *Allyson Bercegeay*

The Shasta Blood Center in Redding hosted their second annual "Light Up A Life" Blood Donor-thon during Daylight Saving Time Weekend.

The "Light Up A Life" Donor-thon was held on Saturday, April 5th, 2003, from 8:00am to midnight. More than 150 people donated blood and blood components during the 16-hour blood

drive. Each donor received a free t-shirt and a mini FM radio. Kami Farris was the grand prize winner for an overnight stay at the East Brother Light Station near Pt. Richmond. The event was held to help boost the north state's blood supply and to provide much needed blood for those patients in need.

Where is George?

by *Allyson Bercegeay and Angela Woon*

At the time this was written, George Taylor was last seen in Reno, Nevada. Some weeks ago, George was in Mississippi and in May, he was in Arizona. The Burney resident is traveling around the continent on his mission to “donate platelets in every state!”

George and his wife, Mary, a 10 gallon whole blood donor, are making this cross country mission a part of their future retirement. “We’ve decided that we’re going to give platelets in every state in the country,” said George. “It’s my lifelong dream. Though I’m not ready to retire, we’ve decided to embark on our journey now.”

Although George, a machinist, has been a whole blood donor and a platelet donor with the Shasta Blood Center - Redding for more than 18 years, he began donating in 1962. “A friend of mine from the Marine base was injured in a car wreck and I began giving for him,” said George. “Later, one of the donor techs talked to me about giving platelets and I’ve been doing it ever since.”

George was also one of 12 donors from across the nation to be inducted into the Donation Hall of Fame 2002, sponsored by Baxter Healthcare Corporation, Fenwal Division.

Asked why he gives platelets so often, George put it simply, “I feel good about what I’m doing.”

And as you finish reading this article, George is probably somewhere else in the U.S. leaving his mark in a special way – by giving the gift of life. Where will George be off to next?



(left to right) Donor Care Specialists Rhonda Rogier and Sophia Otis with Assistant Executive Director David Goff, presenting George Taylor with a commemorative T-shirt at United Blood Services, Jackson, Mississippi.

Two-in-One

by *Angela Woon*

She just gave her 100th blood donation in July at a blood drive she’s been coordinating for the past 11 years. Katherine Aguilar, blood drive coordinator for the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), is a dedicated “two-in-one.”

“My parents were blood donors,” said Katherine, program specialist at the Old Federal Office building in San Francisco, which houses HHS. “I guess they convinced me to be one too.”

Katherine’s been donating blood at the HHS blood drive since 1970. “Everyone should have personal goals – mine is to reach the 15 gallon whole blood milestone,” said Katherine. “After that, I’ll just do it for fun.”

According to Katherine, the HHS has been sponsoring blood drives for more than 30 years and usually pulls in about 18 to 20 pints of blood at each drive. “I took over as the coordinator in 1992,” said Katherine, who received a certificate of appreciation

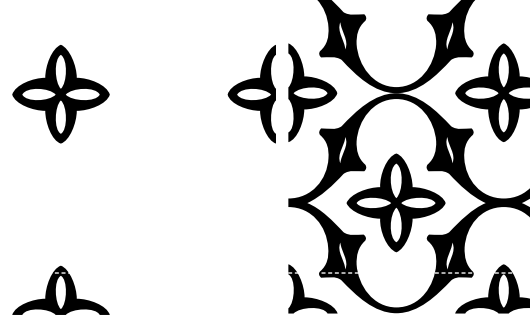


(left to right) Senior Account Representative Jan Holyko, Katherine Aguilar and Mobile Nurse Racie Andallo.

from the HHS regional director for her efforts. “It gives me the satisfaction of knowing that if blood is needed, it’s there.”

This past September at the San Francisco/Marin Blood Drive Coordinator Recognition Brunch, Katherine was honored with the Nancy Ramsey Award for her commitment to helping save lives in the community. The award is given annually to a well-deserving blood drive coordinator for outstanding humanitarian service.

by Lisa Bloch



Radio Alice's Hooman

Events, Events, Events

by Angela Woon

Whole Blood/Apheresis Recognition Brunch

This past August, whole blood

and apheresis donors from the Peninsula Center & Burlingame

and the Redwood City Center were recognized for milestones

Guest speaker Dr. Zahra Pakbaz

reached in 2002. The Recognition Brunch was held at the Embassy Suites in Burlingame, which was attended by more than 120 donors, their guests and BCP staff.

Dr. Kim-Anh Nguyen, BCP's Associate Medical Director spoke at the event, along with guest speaker Meghan Daily. A Thrombotic Thrombocytopenic Purpura patient, Meghan spoke about her need for more than 987 units of blood components that saved her life. Meghan's story was featured in last year's Winter issue of Lifelines.

Coordinator Brunches

About half the blood BCP collects comes from mobile blood drives. To thank the many blood drive coordinators who

organize blood drives at their organization or workplace, recognition brunches were held in their honor during the month of September.

San Francisco and Marin blood drive coordinators were recognized for their commitment to helping save lives in the community at the Radisson Miyako Hotel in San Francisco. Zahra

Pakbaz, M.D., a thalassemia patient was the guest speaker as she

spoke about her lifelong need for blood. One of the highlights of the event was the recognition of Katherine Aguilar, blood drive

coordinator for the Department of Health and Human Services (see story on page 6), as the Nancy Ramsey Award recipient. The

award is given annually to a blood drive coordinator for their generous heart and unfailing commitment to the community blood supply. More than 100 attended the event.

One week later, blood drive coordinators from the Peninsula Center &

Burlingame were honored for their hard work and dedication at the Crowne Plaza in Foster City. Terry Meyer, a heart transplant recipient who used 398 blood components prior to her recovery

was the guest speaker. Dr. Kim-Anh Nguyen spoke at both the coordinator brunches.



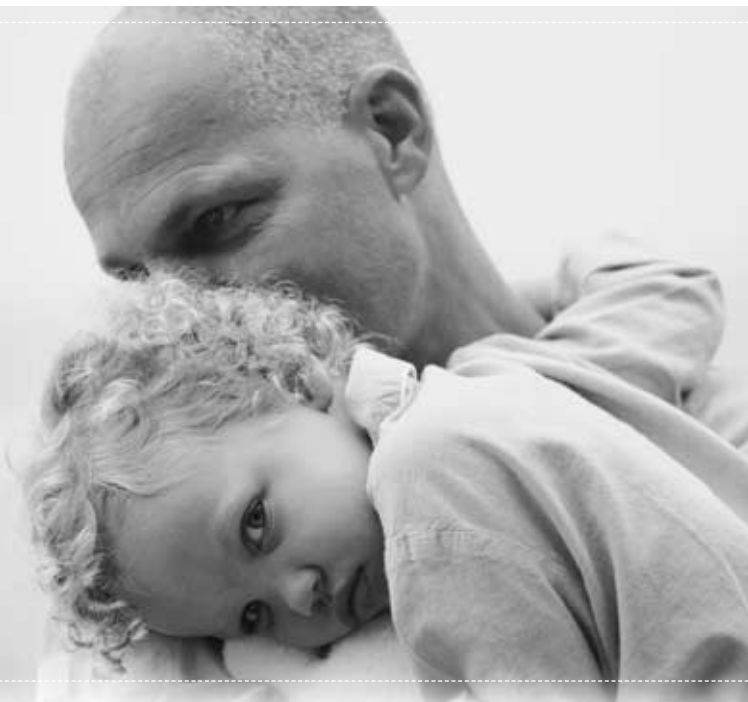
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*Down in their hearts, wise men know this truth:
the only way to help yourself is to help others.*

- Elbert Hubbard



DONATE BLOOD
every drop counts