

Features

MHS Holds First Blood Drive

Students donate blood and help the South Bend Medical Foundation



by **CASSIE WALKER**
Features Reporter

On February 1st and 2nd, Mishawaka High School had its first blood drive. Seventy-one people donated

blood. This is an outstanding number considering the size of our school. Many students and staff sacrificed

to their efforts, students and staff could give back to the community.

Andrew Farmer, a senior, donates blood. He says, "I don't donate blood at school though. I do not feel comfortable." Mr. Gervais, a hall monitor, has donated an amazing 10 gallons of blood over a long period of time.

Did you know that one unit of blood (one pint) can save up to three lives? That's three people saved due to just one person's donation. Donating blood is safe.

Everything used in the process is kept completely sterile, and it is not used again. In order to donate you have to be in good general health, may not be pregnant, and must not have any blood born diseases.

In order to donate blood you must also go through a four-step process. First you have to register. This is where you sign all the papers. Then you

go to screening. All information during screening is kept confidential. After screening you are able to donate your blood. When you donate, the nurses and doctors that draw your blood are trained

to make the process as painless as possible. Most people say they do not feel a thing when they donate their blood. After donating your blood you may enjoy refreshments. The refreshments are there to replenish the fluid lost during donation.

How important was the blood drive? "I think the blood drive was a good way for students to offer something to the community. The blood that's donated stays in our community," says Duerkson.

The first student at MHS to donate blood was Franky Laskowski. When asked how he felt to be the first student to donate blood, shocked he said, "I'm the first to donate? Alright! Feels pretty good then." After he donated his blood though, he felt a little faint, so he had to lie down for a while. This is a common side effect after donating blood. Donating blood is not for everyone though. If you are squeamish or afraid of needles, donating may not be for you.

When asked how many schools actually have blood drives, a nurse from the blood drive said, "Get this, all schools have blood drives in the spring or summer time. This is the first time the South Bend Medical Foundation has been at Mishawaka High School. So far the blood drive has gone well."

Did you want to donate blood this year, but weren't old enough? Mrs. Horvath says that next year we may have a blood

drive first and second semester. If you don't want to wait that long, you can donate at the Red Cross or at the South Bend Medical Foundation. See Mrs. Horvath for more information.

There is no substitution for blood. People die everyday due to loss of blood. With your donation you can help someone live another day. Save a life, donate blood.

Statistics

- Only 5 percent of eligible donors across the nation donate blood.
- Blood donors can donate as frequently as every 56 days.
- Each whole blood donation can help as many as three people. One unit is divided into three parts: red blood cells, platelets, and plasma.
- Whole blood donation only takes approximately 60 minutes.
- We now offer mobile blood drives for donor convenience.
- Blood cannot be manufactured. It can only come as a gift from people.
- Statistics show that more than 25 percent of Americans will require blood at least once in their lifetime?
- You burn about 650 calories by donating one pint of blood.

from: mayoclinic.org

Seeing Red: The American Red Cross



by **CHRIS VALENTINE**
Features Reporter

In 1859, a Swiss businessman traveled to Italy, and witnessed the battle of Solferino between

the Napoleonic army and the defending Austrian troops. Feeling compassion for the wounded and dying, he and the women of the Castiglione village helped the 40,000 soldiers for three days and three nights. Upon his return to Switzerland, he wrote a book titled "A Memory of Solferino." From this book came a plan for nations to create a relief service for wartime wounded and care afterwards. This led to a committee of five Swiss men to try to put this plan into action. This then led to the Geneva Committee and the first International Committee of the Red Cross in 1863.

During the many major conflicts in the rapidly changing Europe, there were many Red Cross affiliates in the field. While all of these revolutions were taking place, a nurse who served in the American Civil War went overseas and aided people during the Franco-Prussian War. This gave her an idea. This gave Clara Barton a very good idea.

Upon her return from all the mayhem, she returns and pushes her idea of starting a Red Cross in America. After all the death that she had seen, she truly believed that this was a necessity. Clara pleaded her case with the government, and in 1881, the first Association of the American Red Cross was founded.

After many years of relative peace, World War I started and the Red Cross was there to help. They provided doctors, food, shelter, and many other things. For their good deeds in the war, they received the noble peace prize in 1917, and again after helping out during World War II in 1944. They also won the award in 1963 to commemorate their 100th anniversary. In 1943, President Franklin D. Roosevelt declared that March is dedicated to the Red Cross. Roosevelt stated, "I request that during that month (March) our people rededicate themselves to the splendid activities of the Red Cross."

After WWII, the Red Cross started the first civilian blood donor program, revised the Geneva Convention protocols to meet higher standards, and continued their humanitarian aid and international disaster relief. Today there are more than five hundred and seventy chapters of the Red Cross in the United States, and even more across the world. To date, 165 out of 171 nations are in compliance with the Geneva conventions and the Red Cross.

The Red Cross Today

In the last two years, major destructive forces have caused widespread damage and sorrow. With the Tsunami, Hurricane Katrina, Landslides, and mines collapsing, it really makes someone think what it is that they can do. The Red Cross is a national and international relief agency that provides immediate help to disaster victims, usually within two hours. But they do more than just go around handing out food and blankets, they provide basic medical training to volunteers, help with military/civilian family communication, and with charity and blood donations.

Everyday, some ninety emergencies occur in St. Joseph County, ranging from fires to flood to anything else that could happen. Their main goal is to provide relief in times of struggle, as a purely independent humanitarian organization. They organize benefits, deliver items from charity to those who need it, teach youth programs to better prepare children today for a crisis that may happen in the future, and help out local blood banks and emergency medical training.

Youth Outreach

Teenagers today have one of the biggest threats in their lives now. With the finding of Bird Flu, SARS, and the occurrence of many natural disasters, the world has become a very dangerous place. That's why the Red Cross has started a youth outreach program. They help train teens in everything from babysitting to life saving CPR and more. The program features safety tips on how to care for young children, fire safety, disaster planning, and the qualities that make the Red Cross what it is. They are encouraging teens all over to start programs at schools across the nation. The basic point is that the best preparation for situations like these would

be knowledge and the ability to use it. It also helps teens give something back to the community, as they are freely volunteering their time for the good of the community. Mary Allen, the Community outreach coordinator, states, "[The Red Cross Youth Outreach] is good because, and I believe, that any young person who is willing to volunteer is going to be a great thing." Needless to say, a teen that does this truly has heart two sizes larger than most others.

In Indiana, there are twenty chapters of the Red Cross. The closest is the St. Joseph County Chapter in South Bend, founded in 1917. When asked about what this particular chapter is about, Allen said, "Our mission is to prevent and prepare and help people with disasters, prevention and medical training." In the local chapter, about twelve members are constantly on the job, but over 400 volunteers are located within the St. Joseph County. When Allen was asked about her reason for being involved with the organization, she replied, "I believe in their mission and in helping others." Troy Heckeman, the Preparedness Director for the Chapter said, "You can't predict a disaster, so the numbers in the area could be helped by the fact that you can try and prevent them and try to get the best people to respond." In the end, all that matters is doing good for the community in our backyard, and for the world.

During the month of March, remember those who have done good for no other reason than to be compassionate and a humanitarian. They give and ask for nothing in return. The Red Cross has come a long way from the ideals of a Swiss businessman to today's International life saving operation that has affected the lives of countless people. They truly have been doing a good thing here that everyone should know about.



Clara Barton