

Red Cross blood drives help save lives

By LAURIE PELLICHERO
Special to The Times

Every minute of the day, someone needs blood. The American Red Cross provides more than half of the nation's blood supply and is committed to making the blood as safe as possible.

The American Red Cross of Central New Jersey provides area hospitals with safe and reliable blood for use in our community. It holds more than 300 blood drives annually, thanks to the cooperation of local businesses, schools, churches and community groups.

The blood services of the American Red Cross of Central New Jersey are vital to the health of many. Donations of platelets and whole blood donations that are crucial for cancer patients can be made at the Princeton Blood Donor Center at the Red Cross office at 707 Alexander Road.

Princeton resident Angela Hancock said she owes her life to blood donors and the local Red Cross.

An ordained Presbyterian minister and the mother



of two young children, she moved here a few years ago from Tennessee to join the doctoral program at Princeton Theological Seminary.

Her husband, an Army chaplain, was deployed to Iraq. She was under a lot of stress, but also knew something was very wrong with her health.

As she recalled in a recent speech at the Red Cross Heroes of the Heart blood donor recognition event, "I had trouble eating, trouble walking even short distances and trouble keeping my eyes open even in the middle of the day."

Hancock was diagnosed with acute myelogenous leukemia, and spent 113 days in Virtua Memorial Hospital in Mount Holly.

"Acute myelogenous leukemia isn't one of those diseases with a lot of treatment options," Hancock said.

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Photo courtesy of American Red Cross of Central New Jersey
Cancer survivor Angela Hancock addresses blood donors and blood drive sponsors at the Heroes of the Heart award ceremony in September.

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"There is an established plan of attack, only one road to survival. First you are zapped with two powerful chemotherapy drugs which annihilate your bone marrow. You have no red cells to carry oxygen, no white cells to protect you from infection and no platelets to stop you from bleeding to death. Transfusions of blood and platelets, massive doses of antibiotics and drugs to stimulate cell growth are the things that keep you alive until your bone marrow bounces back."

"I began to bleed internally — in my stomach, under my skin, behind my eyes," she said. "Blood transfusions were my lifeline. During my stay in the hospital, I received transfusions composed of 1,092 donations of blood and platelets from more than 1,000 different donors. I left the hospital a

year and a half ago. Today I feel strong and well."

She told the donors, "You took the time and braved the needles and gave part of yourself to help me and others like me. For me, my family and those countless others who have benefited from your kindness, I say thank you."

Funds from this year's Times' Holiday Appeal will be used to support the services and programs of the American Red Cross of Central New Jersey.

To make a donation in support of the American Red Cross of Central New Jersey, please make your check payable to The Holiday Appeal and mail or hand deliver it to: 500 Perry St., Box 847, Trenton, NJ 08605. All gifts will be acknowledged. Anonymity, if requested, will be granted.

For more information about the American Red Cross of Central New Jersey, call (609) 951-8550 or visit the Web site at njredcross.org.