

FREE COPY  
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# BLOOD BUZZ

FEBRUARY 2020 | VOLUME 24



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*#ShareYourHeart  
by committing to  
donate blood  
in 2020.*

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# 2020 is here!

We are already in the full swing of 2020 with the second month of the year already flying past. We hope that this year will be one filled with positivity and clarity (as the year suggests) for all our donors and new donors alike.

The first edition of the Blood Buzz includes great partnerships with radio stations such as YOH Radio and Magic828 as well as our Business Network opportunity at Canal Walk.



Read more about BTS Army and their blood drive at N1 City.

A big thank you to all our donors for making 2019 a special year by ensuring that we could supply the need for safe, sufficient blood in the Western Cape.

#ShareYourHeart this month of love and commit to making four blood donations during 2020.

## Where can I donate?



Find your closest blood donation clinic on our online calendar at [www.wcbs.org.za](http://www.wcbs.org.za)



# #Blooddrive101

BY NADIA TURNER

**#BloodDrive101 is an initiative** in memory of Ty Moore, who passed away following a tragic off-road motorbike accident. He fought bravely for his life for 5 months and during this time received around 200 units of blood.

Without the 200 units of blood Ty received, his family would not have been able to spend those 5 months with him before he sadly passed away due to complications.

The initiative was started by his wife, Debbie Moore, as a way of giving back. Initially, we set out to collect 250 units of blood in September and October 2019. By the end of October 170 units of blood had been collected from the three locations running the campaign namely the Blue Route Mall donor centre, Hout Bay Library donor clinic and Wynberg Boys' High School.

Special thanks to all the blood donors who supported this initiative and helped to honour Ty's fighting spirit. ■

# DONOR HEROES

BY GLORIA KULA



## MUNEEB HENDRICKS

*Number of donations: 36*

### *Why do you donate blood?*

“We always think that somebody else will donate blood. You must be that somebody else. The blood that you donate today could save your own life.”

### *Message to potential donors:*

“I want to be that somebody else, I want to do good for society.”



## MIRIAM O'CONEL

*Number of donations: 7*

### *Why do you donate blood?*

“I want to help others who are in need, and my Dad was a blood donor.”

### *Message to potential donors:*

“Donating blood is not sore.”



## YUNUS HENDRICKS

*Number of donations: 1*

### *Why do you donate blood?*

“I was encouraged by my Dad.”

### *Message to potential donors:*

“It's a selfless act, it can help others and it's good to donate.”



## MR & MRS VAN WEIDTS

### *Why do you donate blood?*

Mr Van Weidts:  
“I believe it's the right thing to do. Any family member may need blood in the future.”

Mrs Van Weidts:  
“We often discuss blood donation as a family, it is vital for everyone to know the importance of donating blood.”



## ANINA NORTIER-BALIE

*Number of donations: 35*

### *Why do you donate blood?*

“I donate blood because I am a Paramedic and know how important it is to donate blood.”

### *Message to potential donors:*

“Donate blood as lives will be lost without one another.”



# Fifth Western Cape Blood Bank opened in Khayelitsha

BY MICHELLE VERMEULEN

The Western Cape Blood Service (WCBS) in conjunction with the Western Cape Government officially opened the fifth Western Cape Blood Bank at the Khayelitsha District Hospital on Wednesday, 18 September 2019.

“It is a remarkable milestone opening our first blood bank in over twenty years and there is no better place than at the Khayelitsha District Hospital,” said Dr Gregory Bellairs, CEO / Medical Director at the WCBS. “It is ideal to be situated in one of the larger state hospitals as it enhances delivery to the surrounding areas. The blood bank will be operational for 24-hours a day which will result in rapid availability of cross-matched blood to this hospital and other, surrounding hospitals served by it, and where the demand is always high, particularly in trauma wards. This, in turn, will save many lives,” Bellairs continued.

Donated blood which has been tested and separated into components (plasma, platelets and red blood cells), are kept at blood banks. When blood is requested for a patient, a sample of the patient’s blood is cross-matched against a sample of the blood in stock, to determine the most compatible match. ■

## What's new at the Blood Banks?

BY HAYLIE ALLIE

We are installing new blood irradiators at the Tygerberg Hospital and Groote Schuur Hospital Blood Banks. Irradiated blood products are required for the prevention of transfusion-associated graft versus host disease, which is a life-threatening reaction that can occur when a patient receives a blood transfusion from a relative. This process exposes the blood product to approximately 25 Gy of irradiation that effectively inactivates the donor’s T-lymphocytes (a specific type of white blood cell) that are responsible for the pathogenesis of this reaction. ■



# WCBS celebrates blood donors at Donor Awards

BY GLORIA KULA

The Western Cape Blood Service (WCBS) hosted its annual Donor Awards on the 15th and the 16th November 2019 at the Century City Conference Centre where donors were acknowledged for reaching milestones.

With Dr Darren Green as the master of ceremonies, the evening of the 15th was nothing short of spectacular. The venue looked great, the atmosphere was buzzing with laughter whilst a live band played in the background.

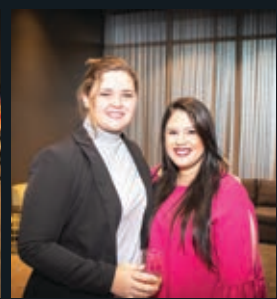
The proud blood donors came together to celebrate their contributions and receive an award. Among them was Mr Kenneth Saunders who was bestowed the 475th donation award. The guest speaker for the evening was Mr Bruce Walsh who shared his life-changing experience of being a blood recipient, after surviving the devastating Planet Hollywood bomb in 1998, which left him severely injured with a broken arm, amputated legs and a cracked skull. Through his ordeal Bruce motivated everyone to be winners.

On the morning of the 16th we honoured more milestone donors as well as our Club25 Donors. Aislinn Louis shared her journey with renal failure. She applauded donors for their courage and generosity for saving countless lives, including hers.

Thank you so much for all of your donations. So few of the population give blood at all, and fewer still reach these incredible milestones, so it really is a great achievement and one worth sharing. ■









# Doctor in the Blood Bank

**Dr Zibusiso Mkandla completed** his National Diploma in Bio-Medical Technology in 2012, Bachelors in 2013 and Masters in 2016. On 12 September 2019, he graduated, PhD in Physiology, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

His research focussed on platelet activation in patients with diabetes. When asked why he decided to do postgrad studies, he said that his interest lies in research.

Dr Mkandla is currently working at the Groote Schuur Hospital blood bank as a trainee technologist. "Immunoheamatology is where my passion lies and working at WCBS is stimulating," says Dr Mkandla. ■



# Blood Buddy at the Sevens

Blood Buddy made a special appearance at the Cape Town Sevens on Saturday 14 December. He was seen participating in the mascot races. He had some serious competition but will return again. ■







# Long Street celebrates 1<sup>st</sup> birthday at new location

BY ALANNA KONDO

Our Long Street blood donation centre started the 2019 festive season on a high note as we celebrated our one year anniversary at the new 9 on Long location. On the 10th of December, anniversary celebrations took place, and all donors were treated to birthday cake pops and enjoyed some good music and fun times. Donors had the opportunity to take a photograph with our special birthday frame, which our team custom made for the occasion.

The Long Street donor centre has been operating in the CBD since 2005 and after thirteen years of creating memories and saving lives at our 22 Long street location, we moved to our new state of the art donor centre at 9 Long Street in December 2018. Our new centre which is opposite Bars Pharmacy is situated right in the middle of the business end of Long Street, a move that has made the centre more accessible to donors. A special thanks to the donors who have supported our Long Street donor centre, you are truly remarkable. ■





# CAPE TOWN NEWS



## BTS ARMY descends on N1 City

BY MELANIE ROSSOUW

With their silky skin, gorgeous hair and catchy tunes, Korean Pop (K-Pop) music groups have taken the world by storm. On Saturday, 7 December at our N1 City blood donation centre, fans of the South Korean BTS K-Pop Group - affectionately named BTS ARMY - descended in droves to donate on behalf of their favourite boy band.

The event was held as a way for the BTS ARMY to celebrate two of the band members' birthdays in December and connect with fellow fans while saving lives. Our blood donation centre was decorated with life-size visual displays and portraits of the two band members and the fans gushed at seeing their favourite



BTS songs playing on our TV screen. Administrators of BTS South African Army initiatives, Tagseen and Naazneen Samsodien said, "We strive to put South African BTS ARMY on the global map and spread the love and message of BTS far and wide. Thank you for partnering with us to make so many dreams come true."

In partnering with BTS SA Army, our clinic saw 100 people in attendance with 70 units of blood collected on the day. It's easy to see how anyone can develop a deep-seated crush on this boy band and we found ourselves steadily becoming fans ourselves. To every BTS fan who supported our cause, we would like to say thank you for being part of our ARMY too. ■



## Magic828 Blood Drive

BY CRAIG HICKS

**Magic828 Music Radio** and the WCBS have had a fantastic relationship for a couple of years. As one of our highly valued media partners, they don't only help by spreading our message to their many loyal listeners, but also open up their doors to host blood clinics during times when our stocks need an extra boost.

In 2019 it was no different and we approached them about a potential December blood drive. As always, they graciously accepted and we set the date for the 13th December 2019.

Situated in the Mowbray Golf Park, there are a number of businesses in the area who assist in spreading the word to all their staff. The Mowbray Golf Park staff were also more than happy to hand out flyers and put up banner displays to advertise the clinic to all visitors and tenants.

Magic828 helped spread the word via shared social media posts, allowing our branding to be displayed throughout their building, and of course on-air mentions and live interviews with our staff leading



up to the clinic.

The result was a clinic attendance of 44 and a collection of 28 units of blood on the day. We also had 5 new donors which is fantastic.

We'd like to say a big thank you to Tabitha Kirstein and the rest of the Magic828 team for being the remarkable hosts they always are, and for always going the extra mile for the Western Cape Blood Service - Here's too many more successful blood drives! ■



## Century City Networking Blood Drive

BY CRAIG HICKS

**Century City** is one of our top blood donation destinations with around 14 active and regular blood clinic sites spread throughout the area, including Canal Walk, ABSA, Discovery Health, and Liberty to name a few.

We also have a good relationship with the hub of Century City, the Century City Conference Centre, having used them as a venue for some of our most important company events, including the annual donor awards and our 80th birthday party.

One of our biggest goals as an organisation is to connect and consolidate relationships with companies, communities and areas, and Century City is no exception. In order to bring role-players, donors, and community members together, we decided



to host a networking and blood donation drive at the Conference Centre on the 5th of December 2019.

We made contact with our blood donors and Donor Representatives in the area,

campaigning on social media, and used sign-post advertisements throughout the Century City Area. We also made contact with organisations in the area who we haven't connected with yet and invited everyone to join us on the day.

We had a very successful day in terms of making some new connections and establishing opportunities for new blood donation venues, which are currently being followed up. We also collected a significant number of units on the day, with 82 donors present, 68 units of blood collected and 17 new donors!

We strive to continue and grow our great relationship with the Century City Conference Centre as well as the Century City community. ■



## WCBS hosts two pop-up shops during the Festive Season



PROMENADE MALL

BY PAMELA NTSEKE

The Western Cape Blood Service occupied one of the pop-up stores offered at Liberty Promenade, Mitchells Plain, throughout December last year.

Thank you to the Mitchells Plain community and Liberty Promenade customers alike for all their support through one of our busy months.

From Monday, 2 December until Tuesday, 31 December 2019 (excluding weekends and public holidays) 649 people attended the clinic. A total of 90 people donated blood for the first time. Thank you to the regular donors that invited friends and family to this Pop-up Store.

On Tuesday, 17 December 2019, YOH Radio; an Urban Community Radio station servicing the Mitchells Plain and surrounding community; partnered with the Western Cape Blood Service. They set up an outside broadcast at the entrance of the store, where they interviewed blood donors and Liberty Promenade customers. Thank you to YOH Radio and their DJ, Jason Wellf, who challenged businesses in the area to send their employees to donate blood. On this day 50 units of blood were collected with a whopping 10 new donors!

Our heartfelt thanks go Liberty Promenade Mall Management and to the Mitchells Plain and surrounding communities. ■



BRACKENFELL CENTRE

BY KELLY THOMAS

Brackenfell Centre hosted the Western Cape Blood Service pop-up store for an entire month, from Tuesday, 17 December 2019 to Friday, 17 January 2020.

The store was located between Deeghuys and Copy Express and branded with the WCBS signage, making it visible from the parking area.

An information table was set up in the foyer of the Hyper Market entrance with banners, information brochures and directions to the store.

During the month, SMS's and emails were sent to donors in the Brackenfell and surrounding areas, as well as door-to-door flyer drops and flyer distribution at traffic intersections. We also advertised the clinic using lamppost posters in main roads leading to the Centre.

During the month of December, 359 units were collected. Thank you to Brackenfell Centre Management for their assistance and also to the donors who took the time to donate. ■



**COMMIT TO**

**2020**



**Donate blood 4 times in the  
year and receive this  
headlamp as a token of our  
appreciation on the 4<sup>th</sup> time.**



# REGIONAL NEWS

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## Ithemba Lobomi blood drive

BY CHRISTA SMIT

**Lorencia Bruiners from Itthemba Lobomi** decided that she would like to make a difference and arranged a blood donation clinic at their workplace for the first time. This comes after her mother received blood and she realised that blood donation is a very important cause.

Ithemba Lobomi is a non-profit organisation based in the community of Thembaletu. The organisation was founded in 2007 to tackle the high rate of HIV/AIDS and TB. It was World Aids Day on Sunday, 1 December and they had a gathering at work on 2 December in remembrance of those suffering with this disease.

Thank you to the staff at Itthemba Lobomi for supporting WCBS. ■



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## Sky Villa Boutique blood drive



BY ARLECIA NOVEMBER

**Sky Villa Boutique Hotel & Spa** in Plettenberg Bay recently hosted a blood donation clinic to help boost our blood stocks for the Festive Season.

Thank you to everyone involved who made the clinic a success. ■

**Left:** General Manager, Paul Duverge, and Events Coordinator, Elmar Killian, donating blood.





## FinGlobal Hermanus hosts blood drive in memory of their colleague

BY CANDICE SINCLAIR



The staff at FinGlobal Hermanus decided to host a blood donation drive in Hermanus, to honour their colleague Dirk Slot, who required multiple blood transfusions towards the end of his life. Staff at FinGlobal took it upon themselves to inspire each other to donate blood.

Dirk was diagnosed with liver disease which led to liver failure. Shortly after that, he had a significant fall, causing bleeding on the brain. Dirk was checked into the Mediclinic Vergelegen hospital, where he then received multiple blood transfusions. In total, Dirk received 4 units of red blood cells, 7 units of fresh frozen plasma, and 2 units of platelets.

Dirk left behind a wife - Selmari Slot, a son of four years old - Lucas Slot, as well as two sisters, his mother, his father and also a grandmother of ninety years of age.

Colleagues and friends added: "I am donating blood today for Dirk and the memory of him." - Tanya Brussow

"I have donated blood today to share in the memory of him and to help WCBS save lives." - Rayno Viljoen

Jana Sprong was asked what inspired her to initiate a blood donation drive at the organisation. She replied: "Not only was Dirk a colleague, but he was indeed a friend. A friend that required a number of blood transfusions, thus we thought that this would be a great way to give back in his honour."

A great thank you to the FinGlobal team for arranging this event and for assisting WCBS in saving lives! May our readers be inspired to by this act of kindness and continue to donate blood and save lives. ■



## Upcoming changes to donation rules

BY DR CAROLINE HILTON

**The blood services carry** a great responsibility to ensure that the blood that we collect is as safe as possible. We therefore have many checks in place to identify when donors may be at risk of transmitting infection via their blood products. Although we understand that it can be very frustrating to be turned away from donating blood (this is called being 'deferred'), we need to make sure that the risk posed to the patient receiving your blood is as small as possible. As we do not want to lose out on your life-saving blood donations, we review our deferral criteria at regular intervals to make sure that we are not sending donors away unnecessarily.

Here are some of the changes that will be made in the long future:

- Donors may not necessarily have to wait as much as three to six months after having **surgery** to donate blood - this will be reduced to three months if you were required to stay one night or more in hospital, and two weeks if you were discharged on the day of the procedure.
- The deferral period for **scope procedures, tattoos, piercings and starting new sexual relationships** will also be reduced from six to three months.
- Donors using any form of **cannabis** had to wait three days before donating blood, but this will be reduced to 24 hours.

Most of these changes are based on more experience and confidence in the laboratory tests we use for HIV and hepatitis B & C, while others have been revised after careful comparison with other blood collection services and independent research.

It is challenging to strike a balance between collecting enough blood while ensuring that it is as safe as possible. While we are very grateful for each and every donation, there are times when we cannot allow you to donate as you may inadvertently endanger the person receiving your blood products. This also emphasises the importance of completing the questionnaire carefully and truthfully, as you may not be aware of potential risk from certain lifestyle practises or health issues. ■



# Chickpea Salad Recipe

BOOST YOUR IRON LEVELS!



BY IRMA GEVERS

Prep: 20 mins | Cook: 10 mins | Serves: 2-3 people

## Ingredients:

- 2 cloves of garlic, chopped
- 300 g finely diced carrots
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 1/2 tsp smoked paprika powder
- 2 tins (350 g) chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 1 red pepper, chopped
- 1 yellow pepper, chopped
- 15 g coriander leaves, washed
- 4 peppadews, finely chopped
- 1 avocado, sliced
- olive oil
- zest of 1 unwaxed lemon
- salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

## Dressing:

- 40 g tahini
- 20 ml of lemon juice
- 30 ml of water

## Method:

Lightly fry the garlic, cumin, smoked paprika powder and carrots in a few swigs of olive oil until the carrots are no longer hard. Add to mixing bowl with the chickpeas, chopped peppers, peppadews and lemon zest. Season with salt and pepper.

Dressing: mix tahini with lemon juice and add water. Mix until it has the consistency of cream. If it is too thin, add some tahini, if it is too thick, add some water. Season to taste. Add to the salad and mix well.

Serve with coriander leaves and slices of avocado.



# Western Cape's Top 10 Blood Donations Schools

BY MARIKE GEVERS



Once again the schools have battled it out to see who's made it to the Top 10 spots and donated the most units of blood in 2019.

The undefeated champions for three years in a row is Spine Road High from Mitchells Plain. This year they have donated a staggering 619 units of blood over four blood donation clinics. They increased their collections with 82 units and had 226 new donors.

The rest of the top 3 also remains unchanged with Fish Hoek High in 2nd place with 505 units and HTS Drostdy in 3rd place with 469 units.

In 4th place is Punt High from Mossel Bay (396) and in 5th place

with only one unit less is Outeniqua High from George (395). In 6th place is Bellville High (392) consistently remaining in the top 10 since starting a blood donation clinic in 2017. A brand new entry in 7th place is Bergvliet High (348) and the 8th place is shared with 355 units each, Langenhoven Gimnasium from Oudtshoorn and Westerford High in Newlands. Two new entries, in 9th place is Fairmont High from Bellville (333) and in 10th place Settlers High from Bellville (324).

Well done to all our schools! Thank you for your commitment - we look forward to seeing who will be in the top 10 in 2020. ■

# Three outstanding schools awarded School Awards in 2019

BY NADIA TURNER

It is with great pleasure and pride that the Western Cape Blood Service is able to award not one, not two, but three Best School awards at our 2019 annual Donor Awards.

Claremont High School and Protea High Academy share this year's Cape Town Metropole award and HTS Drosty in Worcester was awarded the regional trophy. They are all dedicated to the cause of blood donation and go over and above to ensure the success of their blood donation clinics.

Claremont High advertises their clinic to the local community and welcomes all surrounding businesses to donate blood. They arrange their own lucky draws and our mascot, Blood Buddy has become a regular feature at blood donation clinics.

Protea High Academy always tries to think outside the box when promoting the cause of blood donation. With our Battle of the Blood Donor competition they created a boxing ring and recreated a battle, they created video clips and shared it on social media to inspire people to come and donate and our Blood Buddy mascot was even spotted at their traffic circle helping to navigate traffic.

HTS Drosty has set a high standard when it comes to promoting the concept of blood donation and the principal, staff and pupils ensure that the blood donation clinics are successful. The school uses its newsletter, social media pages and an online television platform to create awareness surrounding blood donation and even hosts a quarterly Hostel challenge.

The Western Cape Blood Service is excited to continue to work with these outstanding schools and hope that they will inspire others to go the extra mile when promoting and hosting their blood donation clinics. ■





# 2019 Best Peer Promoter Award shared by two remarkable ladies

BY MELANIE ROSSOUW



With their bright smiles, strong work ethic and positive attitudes, it's easy to see why Anya Rall (Curro Durbanville High) and Mei-Shan Gabriel (Plumstead High) had been awarded the Best Peer Promoter Award at our 2019 Annual Blood Donor Awards. They are been fully committed to our blood donation cause since becoming Peer Promoters and have recruited and assisted countless donors at these school clinics.

"It motivates me to know that I can do something for someone else who needs help - especially when no one else is offering them any help," says the 18-year-old Anya. "I draw my inspiration from my parents - they never give up on me and always help me through thick and thin."

Mei-Shan has also taken the blood drives at her school to new heights by representing WCBS at her school's open day by hosting a registration table, doing a presentation about blood donation and has made our Blood Buddy mascot her best friend. So in turn, we extend a heartfelt thank you to these wonderful young ladies for their dedication, hard work and for adding something wonderful to our world, simply by being themselves. ■

## Inspirational message from Herzlia

BY ALANNA KONDO

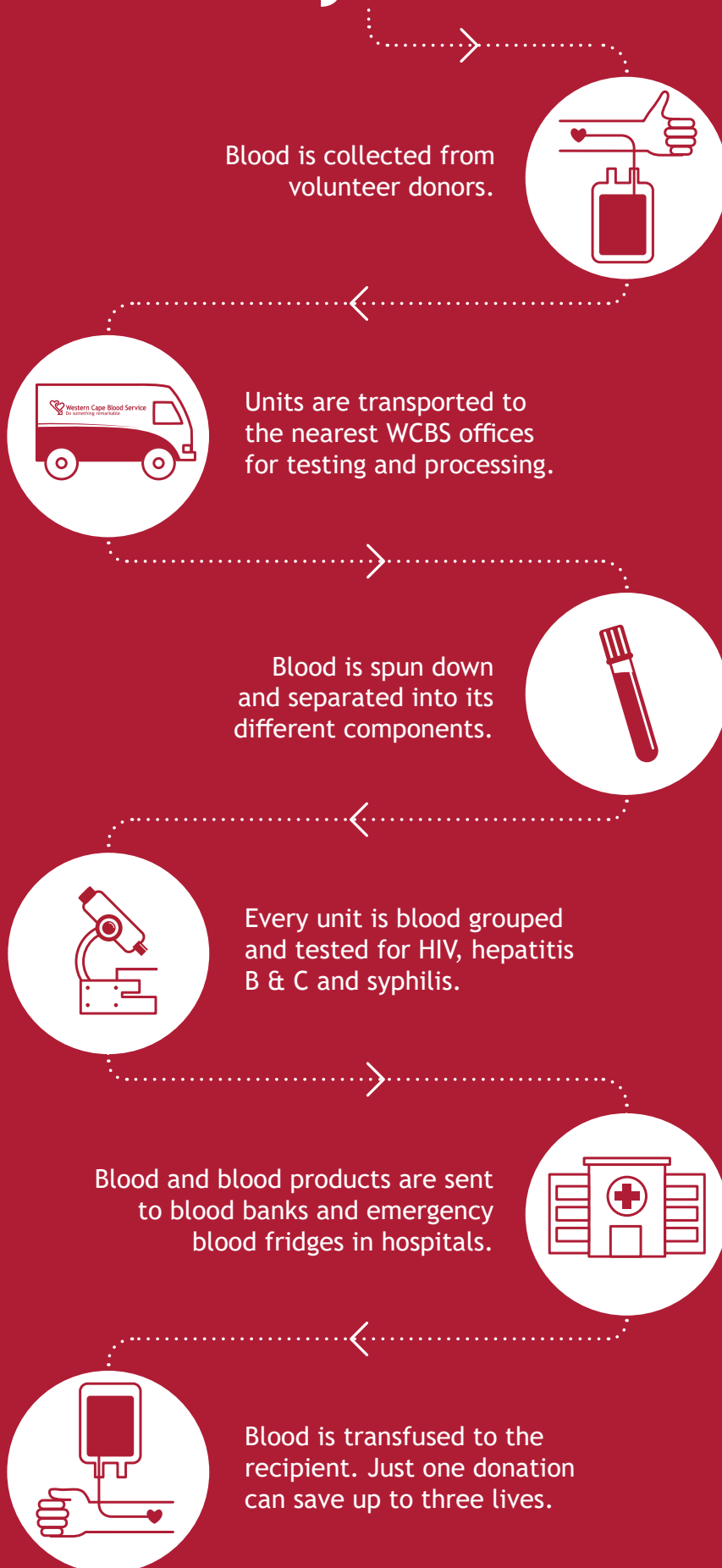
WCBS currently have 129 blood donation clinics at educational institutions around the Western Cape, of which 108 are at high schools and 21 at tertiary institutions. In 2019 the youth - donors between the age of 16 and 25 - collectively contributed to 27% of the WCBS overall collections. Recruiting young people is key to keeping up with the growing demand for blood and blood products in the Western Cape.

At the end of 2019 we spoke to Ms Cindy Thomas, a committed Donor Representative at Herzlia High. WCBS and Herzlia formed a partnership in 2001 when they hosted their first blood donation clinic.

"Hosting blood donation clinics has been an awesome thing, it teaches the learners so much about themselves; they start with the aim to just save lives but in the end they also learn how to overcome their fears. At the start of each year we have a lot of children that are scared of needles, fainting, being in the spotlight and some that are just scared of donating blood in general. Despite their fears, these learners overcome their mental boundaries and make that first donation. Things change when suddenly they realise that they can do it," says Thomas. ■



# Journey of Blood





# INTERNATIONAL NEWS

BY MICHELLE VERMEULEN

INDIA | JANUARY 2020



## Teacher's death inspires teen to create 87,000-strong Blood Donation Community

When Chethan Gowda learnt about the passing of his favourite teacher, he was shattered.

He learnt that she was suffering from a disease and had succumbed to blood loss, since there was no blood nor donors available for her in time. Soon after, he also witnessed a close friend frantically looking for B- blood for her uncle, as he grappled with a medical emergency.

These two incidents deeply moved Chethan and after some research, he realised how critical the blood donation situation in India was.

"In India alone, 12 million units of blood are needed per year, but only 9 million are donated, coming from only one per cent of eligible donors," he informs.

His first-hand encounters with the crisis soon prompted him to start Khoon, a foundation to resolve the blood shortage crisis in India and motivate more people to donate blood. In just four years, Khoon has garnered over 87,000 signatories from all over India.

Chethan was 15 years old when he started Khoon. Initially, he began by organising frequent blood donation camps, prompting

his friends, family and acquaintances to contribute to the noble endeavour.

At present, Khoon operates across India with strongholds in Karnataka, Assam and Bhilai. In Karnataka, Khoon has partnered with the State Health Department and works with 214 blood banks in the state.

At inception, Khoon would receive around 2 to 3 calls per day on the helpline. Today, the number has increased to 40 calls per day. The Khoon team strives to maintain a response time of maximum 30 minutes, within which a potential donor is assigned to a seeker.

Chethan Gowda is in the third year of studying mechanical engineering at present. The pressure of studies is undoubtedly high, but nothing deters him from devoting his free hours for Khoon - his foremost priority.

"Today, handling both my academics and Khoon together has become the daily routine. And my team of 40 core members and 300+ volunteers is always there for support," he concludes. ■

Source: [www.thebetterindia.com/208322/bengaluru-teen-teacher-death-blood-donation-community-inspiring-india-say143/](http://www.thebetterindia.com/208322/bengaluru-teen-teacher-death-blood-donation-community-inspiring-india-say143/)

CHINA | JANUARY 2020

## Volunteers help out in Shanghai

Shanghai Blood Centre is allowing people to visit the centre and work as volunteers to encourage more people to donate blood.

Each session lasts for two hours. Volunteers work outside blood donation vehicles, encouraging passers-by to donate.

"Since the volunteer programme was introduced, residents, schools and expatriate groups have contacted us to participate," said Zhu Guangyu from Shanghai Blood Centre. "About 150 private individuals participated last month."

Many schools also reached an agreement with the centre to organise regular volunteers in the form of their students.

Many expatriates visited the Blood Centre and enquired about donations.



Some 20 students from Xuhui Middle School visited the Blood Centre's labs and donation rooms. They also worked as volunteers on Saturday and Sunday at a blood donation vehicle at a new night street fair on Anyi Road in downtown Jing'an District.

"It is eye-opening to visit the centre, where we learned the importance of blood donations," said Max Yang, a student from Xuhui Middle School. ■

<https://www.shine.cn/news/metro/2001129614/>

USA | JANUARY 2020



## Family aims to debunk blood donation myths

The **Versiti Blood Centre** of Indiana says they need 550 people daily to meet patient needs.

A few days after their youngest daughter Mariah was born, parents, Tamara and Christopher Roberts were told Mariah has Sickle Cell Disease.

Sickle Cell Disease is a group of inherited red blood cell disorders that blocks blood flow to certain parts of the body. It can cause blood clots, pain, and serious infection.

Mariah's symptoms started at around three years old and by

age four, her spleen was removed. During the same time, Christopher says her iron levels dropped so low, a blood transfusion was necessary.

According to the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Sickle Cell Disease affects one out of every 365 African American births.

The Roberts family partnered with Versiti Blood Centre of Indiana to learn more about blood donation in their community.

"When we get to patients that have more complex disease and require multiple transfusions, they're going to need units of blood that have more extended typing and sometimes those units can only come from people of the same racial or ethnic group," said Dr. Dan Waxman, Senior Medical Director at Indiana Blood Centre.

The Roberts have become advocates for blood donation hoping to debunk myths that Tamara says hold people in their community back.

Education is a big part of the Roberts' family mission. "As Mariah gets older, we have to teach her to become independent. She may be okay now, but we never know when a crisis will come back and she may need another transfusion," said Christopher.

Mariah is now 11-years-old and has written two books about growing up with Sickle Cell.

"I hope they encourage other children who are sick. And to tell people not to be scared of donating blood, it will only help people," said Mariah. ■

Source: [www.wishtv.com/news/family-aims-to-debunk-blood-donation-myths-within-african-american-community/](http://www.wishtv.com/news/family-aims-to-debunk-blood-donation-myths-within-african-american-community/)



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