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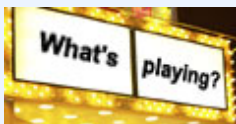
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17 Million Thank You for Canada's Blood Donors

By [Canadian Blood Services](#) | Published Yesterday | [Community News](#) | Unrated

Canada joins the world in celebrating donors' life-saving gifts

OTTAWA, June 13, 2006 - Seventeen million Canadians' lives have been touched by people they have never met or had the opportunity to thank. That's all about to change.

National Blood Donor Week, which runs from June 11 to 17, is an opportunity for the 52 per cent of Canadians who have required blood or blood products for themselves or a family member to thank the half-million Canadians who donated last year.

The centerpiece of the week's celebrations occurs tomorrow, June 14, which is World Blood Donor Day (WBDD). It is the day when 192 World Health Organization members and over 200 voluntary blood donor organizations recognize the selfless act of blood, plasma, platelet and bone marrow donation.

"There will be many celebrations across the country and around the world," said Dr. Graham Sher, CEO of Canadian Blood Services. "This year, we have adopted the theme 'A drop of appreciation' because this celebration is a small token of gratitude for a life-saving gift," said Dr. Sher. Yesterday, almost a thousand Calgarians, including members of the CFL's Calgary Stampeders, kicked-off the week by forming a human blood 'drop of appreciation' for an aerial photograph. Wednesday, the Toronto Blue Jays will host Canada's World Blood Donor Day celebration during a nationally televised game. Over 4,500 blood donors, recipients and others intimately connected with the blood system will be in attendance.

Among them is Const. Claudio Escobar of Ottawa, a father of two who required close to 70 units of blood to save his life. The tables turned for him when his life was saved by the people in his community that he was sworn to serve and protect. "My life changed forever when I was struck by a car while on police duty. Without the generosity of blood donors I would have been another statistic and my family would have lost their dad, husband and friend."

The generosity of donors is demonstrated in people like Skip McWatters of Toronto,

Canadian Blood Services

Canadian Blood

Services is a national, not-for-profit



charitable organization that





manages the blood supply in all provinces and territories outside of Quebec and oversees the country's Unrelated Bone Marrow Donor

Registry. A dedicated team of about 4,500 staff and 17,000 volunteers enable us to operate 41 permanent collection sites and more than 19,000 donor clinics annually.

Canadian Blood Services is a non-governmental organization, however the Provincial and Territorial Ministers of Health provide operational funding, and the federal government, through Health Canada, is responsible for regulating the blood system. For more information, please visit www.blood.ca.

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who has donated an impressive 626 times. "Blood donation is a simple act," says Skip, "I've always found blood donation to be a healthy way to give back to society. Besides, it's not a big deal. It becomes part of your normal lifestyle."

"When it comes to making a difference in their community, blood donors are all-stars," said Blue Jays Ace pitcher, Cy Young Winner and WBDD spokesperson Roy 'Doc' Halladay. "We tip our caps to them, and hope we can inspire more Canadians to step up to the plate and make an appointment to donate blood."

This year, Canadian Blood Services needs to recruit 80,000 new donors to meet the demands of Canadian patients.

That's why creating awareness about the need for blood is so important and why over a dozen Canadian cities, and the provinces of Newfoundland, Manitoba and Saskatchewan are all officially recognizing National Blood Donor Week. At the federal level, Senators Terry Mercer (Nova Scotia-Northend Halifax) and Ethel Cochrane (Newfoundland and Labrador) recently reintroduced a bill in the Senate to declare National Blood Donor Week each year in the week that coincides with World Blood Donor Day on June 14th.

"National Blood Donor Week will represent a clear 'rallying call' to all Canadians to become regular, lifelong blood, plasma, platelet, and bone marrow donors," said Senator Mercer.

Canadians interested in adding their drops of blood to help save lives are encouraged to call **1 888 2 DONATE** (1 888 236-6283), or visit www.blood.ca.





Nearly 1,000 people gathered at Calgary's Eau Clair Market to help form a drop of blood for an aerial photo to kick off National Blood Donor Week. Canadian Blood Services hosted this event entitled "A drop of appreciation" to offer its gratitude for the half-million Canadians who save lives by giving blood each year.

Photo: Mike Ridewood, CP

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