

Student donors welcome at clinic

Canadian Blood Services to hold day-long event next Friday at Loyalist

By Graeme Murphy

There is a constant need for blood supply in Canada and students are the new targets set in the sights of the Canadian Blood Services organization.

On Friday, Feb. 6, Loyalist College opens its doors of the Kente building gymnasium to establish a one-day blood donor clinic, joining the 21,000 clinics that take place each year across Canada.

Annie Barrette, CBS resource manager in donor relations for northern Ontario, says that "students are new donors and we absolutely need new donors. The earliest people can donate is at 17 years and if we focus on recruiting young donors, we have a higher chance at making them donors for life. We hold various recruitment events across all colleges and universities."

According to statistics obtained by CBS, approximately one in every 60 Canadians gives blood when one in every two Canadians is eligible to give blood.

"It can take up to 50 donors to help one person who has been seriously hurt in a car accident, eight donors a week to provide treatment for a patient with leukemia, and about five donors for someone going through cardiovascular surgery."

"There is a constant, grave need for blood as it has a short shelf life and supplies are dwindling," reports Barrette.

Cory Mestre, co-ordinator of fitness facilities and campus recreation at Loyalist elaborates.

"In the week leading up to the clinic, we will be all over social media. Print posters will be up around the college. Table notices will go on the tables in the cafeteria, the student Shark Tank area, as well as in the Student Access Lab. We want to make sure that students are aware of it but at the same time, we don't want to put the notice out too soon and have it fall off the radar. So it's a tricky balance trying to find that blend of get-



Photo by Graeme Murphy

Cory Mestre, co-ordinator of fitness facilities and campus recreation at Loyalist College, sits in the medical clinic at the college. A blood donor clinic will be held at Loyalist on Feb 6. Mestre has donated blood over a dozen times in the last few years to support the Canadian Blood Services.

ting the info out there and have it stay in the forefront in their mind. We try to strategize when the word will be put out.

"You have a very easy ability to make a very significant impact on the lives of others, people who have particular dis-

eases who need blood transfusions, accident survivors, people going through operations, things like that," said Mestre.

"All you need to do is go lay down on a reclining chair, get comfortable, have a needle, which is no different that get-

ting a vaccine, and then you get some cookies and juice afterwards.

"It's one of the absolutely easy and simple ways to make significant impacts on other people's lives and I feel compelled to do it because at some point in everyone's life, someone within

their life, someone in their circle will experience that need and it only seems like the right thing to do."

The clinic at Loyalist will run from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. More information and appointment booking can be found in advance by calling 1-888-236-6283.

Compassionate support to patients and families

Hospice Quinte celebrates 30 years of service to the community

By Amanda Cheung

Hospice Quinte will be celebrating its 30th birthday this coming March.

The organization seeks to serve the community with a variety of different programs for those with a terminal disease or life-ending illness.

"People usually have a negative view of hospice and what it means and what we do for the community. But really, our programs here and our staff, we're really just here to provide compassion and support and hope for the families and the patients, to provide them with the opportunity to live their lives to the

fullest," says Rachel Pearsall, community relations and fund development for Hospice Quinte.

One program in particular, called the patient volunteer program, can be an example of how the hospice encapsulates

the idea of compassion, support and hope.

In this program, a referred patient is assessed and then partnered with a compatible volunteer. They take into consideration similar interests, hobbies and time availability.

Janice Macinnes, patient and volunteer co-ordinator at Hospice Quinte, says that their time together could be spent reading, sharing stories, assisting in light housekeeping and companionship.

'For the volunteer, it's certainly a sense of reward that you've made a difference. In order to be a volunteer, you have to have a compassionate heart and our volunteers do.'

Volunteer co-ordinator Janice Macinnes

"A big part of the program is when the volunteer comes in, because there may be often a caregiver in the home. Those people need a break. Whether it's just a break to have a rest period or to get out to do groceries,

our volunteer will sit with the patient so they are not alone while the caregiver leaves the home. That's also one of the things we provide."

This program is gratifying for both the volunteer and patients.

"For the volunteer, it's certainly a sense of reward that you've made a difference. In order to be a volunteer, you have to have a compassionate heart and our volunteers do," says Macinnes.

"As for the patients, because so often when they're at home, they become, even if there's family at home or whatever, they start to feel isolated, so our volunteers come in and they do develop a relationship with them...often they become a friend and so it brings that extra dimension to the person's life."

A large part of the organization is made up of volunteers. They are trained and receive 30 hours over the course of a 10-week program in hospice and palliative care.

"People know that we work with volunteers and the people that are going to be coming in are giving their own time," says Macinnes.

"They're just so grateful that someone has agreed to give up their own free time to help them and that's the most outstanding thing that I've noticed. That particular trait is across the board and so it makes my job very rewarding because you feel like you're helping and making a difference in these people's lives."

Father receives gift of life from his son

Volunteer shares kidney transplant story to put face on issue of need for donors

By Graeme Murphy

The Trillium Gift of Life Network promotes organ and tissue donation to students through very personal stories.

On Jan. 28, Belleville volunteer Charlie Benson, who was also one of Loyalist College's very first students, made a day-long appearance to promote organ and tissue donation through sharing his own memorable experience.

"I decided to volunteer with Trillium Gift of Life after I had a transplant four years ago -- a kidney, originally my son's kidney," said Benson.

"I went through it myself, looking for a donor and having to go on dialysis for a year. It was opportune that my son Phillip stepped forward and offered a kidney to me." Benson had suffered from kidney disease, and a milder stage of kidney disease, nephritis, for the 20 years leading up to his surgery, before functionality of his kidneys dropped to a very low percentage.

"Both of my kidneys were at 10 per cent functionality before I went on dialysis.

I was on dialysis 10 hours a day, every day of the year and I had to use the machine starting at seven o'clock at night until seven o'clock in the morning. It did relieve me from a lot of tiredness that I had, but it was part of my condition," said Benson.

"I would wake up sometimes at seven and by ten in the morning, I was having a nap. Then I would wake up and have lunch. By two o'clock, I would have another nap so it really reduces your en-



Photo by Graeme Murphy

Charlie Benson visits Loyalist College on Jan. 28 on behalf of the Trillium Gift of Life Network to promote organ and tissue donation registration. Four years ago, Benson beat kidney disease when his own son Phillip donated his kidney in support of his father.

ergy level.

"I was unable to do a lot of things that I used to do. So that was my condition prior to the transplant and now I'm out skating with my grandchildren and I'm out volunteering and doing other things. It's not that I try to do too much, but I just want to make sure that people are aware of the sort of things an organization can change for you," said

Benson.

"I'm just out there trying to tell other people about the story."

According to the agency's website, the Trillium Gift of Life Network is a not-for-profit agency of the government of Ontario. As summarized in their mandate, TGLN plans, promotes and supports organ and tissue donations and transplantations in Ontario as

well as providing Ontarians with tools and supports to help them make informed decisions.

Stakeholders include donor families, community volunteers, transplant recipients, health-care professionals, youth and non-governmental organizations, supportive private sector companies, and governmental organizations.

Currently, over 1,500 people in On-

tario are awaiting an organ transplant, yet only a quarter of Ontarians are registered donors, about 26 per cent or 3.1 million out of a qualified 11.8 million, according to TGLN affiliate and donor registration service beadonor.ca.

"I've been out there promoting on behalf of the TGLN for the past year. I really got involved in it. I just felt that the TGLN was the best way to go," said Benson.

"I used to work here at Loyalist for 32 years and I was a student here for three. I felt that the message needed to get to young people and mature students to let them know of the possibilities they can give," said Benson.

"We did an awareness program at the Quinte Mall in November for three days and it worked out well to reach out to other parts of the population. The bottom line is, in most cases, that 30 per cent of the populations in Belleville and in Trenton individually are registered donors. Only 30 per cent! In Toronto it's only about 18 to 20 per cent. So we need to raise that number."

There are a number of campaigns that have happened at Queen's University, the University of Toronto and some of the other colleges individually for volunteers in those areas.

"TGLN just has a core group of volunteers and then there are add-ons like myself that get involved if there's a campaign locally. I used to know a lot of people in the schools around the area, so I get invitations to make presentations to Grade 12 biology classes or what-have-you.

"I even did that before I was involved with TGLN. Just the whole issue of organ donation was important to me."

For more information about Trillium Gift of Life Network and organ and tissue donation visit www.giftoflife.on.ca or to register as a donor visit www.beadonor.ca