

World Blood Donor Day

"Celebrating your gift of blood" 14 JUNE 2005



STORIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD



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WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY DESIGNATES 14 JUNE AS WORLD BLOOD DONOR DAY

In May 2005, at the Fifty-Eighth Session of the World Health Assembly, the governments of 192 countries, through their ministers of health, adopted resolution WHA58.13 to establish World Blood Donor Day (WBDD) as an annual event, to be celebrated each year on 14 June. The resolution urged Member States of the World Health Organization (WHO) to celebrate this special day to promote voluntary, non-remunerated blood donation as an integral part of national blood donor recruitment programmes and as a cornerstone of a safe and adequate national blood supply that meets the transfusion requirements of all patients.

Unanimous support for this resolution had been generated by the earlier success of World Health Day 2000, which had the theme of "Safe blood saves lives: safe blood starts with me!" and the first World Blood Donor Day held on 14 June 2004 with the theme "Blood, a gift for life. Thank you".

Dr Lee Jong-wook, Director-General of WHO, said, "The WHO 192 Member States have agreed that World Blood Donor Day will be an officially recognized annual event. This will help raise awareness of the continuing need for safe blood and safe blood donors."

World Blood Donor Day is a celebration of special individuals throughout the world who help to save or improve the lives of millions of patients each year by giving their blood regularly and voluntarily without payment or any other form of incentive. In 2004, it was commemorated in over 70 countries; in 2005, events were held in nearly 100 countries. As the testimonies in this report show, World Blood Donor Day is a unique occasion which unites and touches the spirits of many thousands of people who offer thanks to those who give the precious gift of blood for no other reason than their wish to help others. It also provides an opportunity to reach out to more people with the message that safe blood is needed every day and that they too can become everyday heroes by becoming regular blood donors.

As Dr Lee Jong-wook noted, "Safe blood is a fundamental need for the health system of any country". But the chances of receiving a safe transfusion – or any

transfusion at all – vary enormously from country to country. Some 60% of the global blood supply is donated in developed countries where less than 20% of the world's population live, leaving many of the remaining countries with acute shortages of blood. While much progress has been made in recent years, still only a fifth of countries have achieved 100% voluntary blood donation and the majority still rely on family/replacement donation (the collection of blood from the family or friends of patients who require transfusion) or paid donation. An increase in the number of voluntary blood donors who give blood regularly is of paramount importance in every corner of the world.

Voluntary blood donors play an equally important role in ensuring the safety of blood for transfusion. The transmission of HIV, hepatitis B, hepatitis C or other bloodborne infections through unsafe transfusions remains a significant risk in many countries, but is lower when blood is donated by voluntary blood donors rather than by family/replacement or paid donors.

While a single day – 14 June – is the focus of the celebrations, World Blood Donor Day is part of a wider global campaign to build public awareness of the need for safe blood and to encourage more people to donate blood regularly on a voluntary basis. The day is therefore also an urgent invitation to governments, blood transfusion services and nongovernmental organizations to join together in promoting voluntary non-remunerated blood donation as a means of ensuring that safe blood will always be available for every patient who needs transfusion as part of their treatment.

World Blood Donor Day is sponsored by four international organizations working towards 100% voluntary, non-remunerated blood donation: the World Health Organization, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Federation of Blood Donor Organizations and the International Society of Blood Transfusion.

GLOBAL LAUNCH HOSTED BY THE NATIONAL BLOOD SERVICE OF ENGLAND AND NORTH WALES

On World Blood Donor Day 2005, a global event took place in London, hosted by the National Blood Service of England and North Wales. A "celebration gallery" was displayed in Trafalgar Square showing 100 huge posters of recipients of blood from Britain and around the world. Television personality, campaigner and charity fund-raiser Heather Mills McCartney, wife of former Beatle and musician Sir Paul McCartney, whose own life was saved by blood transfusion following a serious accident in 1993, was guest of honour at the celebrations. At exactly midday, when, just for an instant, it would be 14 June all round the world, she unveiled the gallery.

"It is because of the generosity of donors that I am here today to celebrate World Blood Donor Day," she said. "The galleries are a fitting tribute to blood donors and the lives they have improved and saved. I'd like to say thank you to each and every one of them." She added, "Don't wait until something happens to you, or someone you love, before you actually give blood. It's the one thing in your life that you could do that could make a huge difference."

The celebration galleries in London, in seven other British cities and elsewhere in the world featured photographs and testimonies from people of all ages whose lives were saved or radically improved by blood transfusions. The testimonies, some of which



are featured in this report, were a unique way for recipients to express their gratitude to the strangers who had changed their lives by donating their blood.

Each poster in the celebration galleries featured a person who had received a blood transfusion with members of their families or friends, many of them holding hands. This is symbolic of the way that lives are connected. When blood donors save a life, the lives of more than one person are touched. Family and friends are involved too. The stories alongside the photographs often told of extraordinary bravery and gave a common message that it was through the generosity of blood donors that each person is alive or healthier today.

Liz Reynolds, Director of Marketing at the National Blood Service of England and North Wales, said, "The celebration theme provides us with the opportunity to thank the thousands of donors for the priceless gift they



give to their communities. Through the gallery stories we are highlighting all the different uses of blood, such as general surgery, treatment of blood diseases, paediatrics and orthopaedics. We hope the galleries will convey the enormous benefit regular blood donors bring to everyday people through their ongoing commitment.”

Dr Neelam Dhingra, Coordinator of the WHO Blood Transfusion Safety programme said, “The lack of safe blood in developing countries has a huge impact on mortality. Unsafe transfusions and a lack of access to safe blood have a particularly severe impact on women with complications at pregnancy, trauma victims and children with severe life-threatening anaemia as a result of malaria or poor nutrition. For example, up to 150 000 pregnancy-related deaths could be avoided each year through access to safe blood.”

Dr Steffen Groth, Director of the WHO Department of Essential Health Technologies said, “Today the world

celebrates voluntary blood donors. Thanks to them, thousands of lives are saved every day across the globe. In England last year, one million lives were saved or improved due to blood transfusions; four and a half million in the United States. But unfortunately, many more lives are lost because of a lack of access to blood – safe blood – in developing countries. Most people in those countries cannot take a reliable, safe supply of blood for granted. However, one thing their governments can do is encourage healthy people to give blood.

“Today is celebrated across the globe with one city representing the centre of activities, London, a major international hub and the capital of a country that has a solid tradition of collecting blood only from voluntary, unpaid blood donors.

“Today we highlight the fact that voluntary, unpaid blood donors are the foundation of a safe blood supply because they are associated with low levels of infections that can



be transmitted by transfusion, including HIV and hepatitis viruses. Screening for transfusion-transmissible infections is essential, but the safest donations come from the safest donors.

“A reliable supply of safe blood is essential for scaling up health at several levels, particularly for women and children. For instance, more than half a million women die worldwide every year from complications related to pregnancy and childbirth – 99% of them in developing countries. Haemorrhage, accounting for 25% of the complications, is the most common cause of maternal death. Up to 70% of all blood transfusions in Africa are given to children with severe anaemia due to malaria, which accounts for about one in five of all childhood deaths in Africa.

“Blood, the life source that flows in every person, can be shared to help others. Blood saves lives; safe blood begins with each one of us. This unique resource upon which all lives are dependent can be shared. It is up to each and every one of us, as global citizens, to help others.”

MALAWI – A SUCCESS STORY

The example of the Malawi Blood Transfusion Service has shown the world what can be done with national and international support, determination and will. Its story was highlighted in global media coverage on World Blood Donor Day 2005.

Before 2003, a blood transfusion service did not exist in the country, but in little more than two years, Malawi went from a hospital-based system for blood collection where stocks of blood were insufficient and where safety could not always be guaranteed to two dedicated blood centres and 100% voluntary, unpaid blood donation, with a steadily growing voluntary donor base. It has successfully implemented the strategy for blood safety and availability advocated by WHO and supported by other international agencies working in partnership to promote access to safe blood for all who require it. How did a country which is one of the world's poorest, most indebted and HIV/AIDS ravaged countries work this miracle?

With an HIV incidence of 14.4%, Malawi is home to almost two million HIV positive people among its 14 million population. In addition, 8.1% of Malawians have tested positive for hepatitis B and 6.8% for hepatitis C. The impact of these preventable illnesses on the development of the country and on the future of its young generation is enormous, particularly in the case of HIV, which mainly affects people in their most active years. HIV/AIDS has contributed to a sharp drop in Malawi's life expectancy from 61 years in 1993 to 37 years today.

As in many other low human development index countries, contaminated blood was a significant contributor to the spread of illnesses. To help face the growing challenges of HIV/AIDS and hepatitis while also increasing the availability of blood for transfusion, Malawi launched its national blood transfusion service (MBTS) in 2003. By 2004, safe blood was available to all central, government, district and major private hospitals.

The MBTS initiative received €7.8 million from the European Union over a period of five years, through a financing agreement with the government of Malawi. This has since been increased by €1.56 million for an additional three years, mainly to help with the building of MBTS premises. The Malawian government's commitment during the period was not financial, but consisted of an agreement to support the establishment of a blood transfusion service based on voluntary, non-remunerated blood donors. From 2006, the government does have financial commitment to MBTS.

The MBTS has built its success on tight administrative management, hard work and stringent training. In two years, the MBTS established blood centres in Blantyre and Lilongwe (the capital) with a total of 103 fully-trained staff. The MBTS now supplies all four central hospitals and 80% of the needs of district hospitals and major private hospitals. Progress is already measurable in real, human terms. For instance, in 2002 the blood bank at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Blantyre received 7 000 units of blood, half the needed quantity. Screened for HIV, 2 000 units tested positive and had to be discarded.

Since 2004, when safe blood became available, the paediatric mortality rate at the same hospital has dropped

by 60% for seriously ill children and the maternal mortality rate due to pregnancy complications has fallen by more than 50%. Today, an average of 30 000 units are collected yearly. Even though the real need is 50 000–60 000 units, the improvement is dramatic in a country that did not even have a blood transfusion service before 2003.

A Club 25 project, modelled on projects in South Africa and Zimbabwe, was established and is attracting increasing numbers of young people. These young people, aged between 16 and 25, pledge to donate blood on a regular basis and to maintain a healthy lifestyle so as not to jeopardize their ability to give blood. Within their communities, they are role models and ambassadors for the health of their country.

WHO Regional Director for Africa, Dr L G Sambo's message for World Blood Donor Day 2005 was clear. "Blood Safety constitutes an area in which we can make a difference. In fact, a well-organized and coordinated national blood transfusion service, based on voluntary non-remunerated blood donation and supported by effective quality management programmes can efficiently prevent the transmission of HIV/AIDS and other bloodborne diseases and save the lives of millions of people, particularly vulnerable groups such as mothers and children.

"I call upon all national health authorities to take advantage of this day to strengthen donor recruitment activities by encouraging community participation and ownership of the blood donor component of blood transfusion services. I would also like to use this opportunity to thank all of you that have donated and continue to donate blood, the gift of life, and to congratulate and express my support to blood donor associations and to all those who are working to make safe blood available in health care settings when needed.

"The WHO Regional Office for Africa will continue to work along with other partners towards enhancing the implementation of policies and developing new strategies that will enable Member States to recruit more voluntary and safer blood donors. Let us join our efforts to provide safe blood to our patients and give joy to those who need blood to survive."

ANNOUNCING WORLD BLOOD DONOR DAY 2006

On 14 June 2006, World Blood Donor Day will once again be celebrated around the world, sponsored by the World Health Organization, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Society of Blood Transfusion and the International Federation of Blood Donor Organizations.

The focus of World Blood Donor Day 2006 is commitment – commitment from all. As one element of worldwide efforts to ensure universal access to safe blood, the day itself aims to raise awareness of the need for safe blood, to thank and honour those who donate blood and to encourage current and potential donors to commit to regular voluntary blood donation. The day is also a call to action to governments, national health authorities and national blood transfusion services to expand, and ensure the quality of, their blood donor and blood collection programmes, with the collaboration and support of national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, voluntary blood donor organizations and other partners.

Each year, World Blood Donor Day is marked by an international event that provides a focus for a global media campaign to raise awareness of the need for safe blood and the importance of regular voluntary unpaid blood donation. It also provides an opportunity for national and international organizations to launch long-term programmes and public awareness campaigns. On World Blood Donor Day 2006, the global launch will be hosted in Bangkok, Thailand, by the WHO Collaborating Centre for Training in Blood Transfusion Medicine, the National Blood Centre, Thai Red Cross Society.



สภากาชาดไทย
The Thai Red Cross Society

A World Blood Donor Day 2006 campaign kit and media pack will be circulated in advance of the event. These will be available on the World Blood Donor Day web site and WHO's WBDD web page. News, additional resources and a facility for submitting information about World Blood Donor Day events in individual countries will also be available.

Your involvement and support will help to ensure the success of World Blood Donor Day 2006 and bring the world one step closer to ensuring that safe blood or blood products are available for every patient who needs them.

LOOKING FORWARD TO WORLD BLOOD DONOR DAY 2007

As an annual event of importance in the blood donor recruitment and retention calendar, World Blood Donor Day has already proved its worth in creating wider public awareness of the need for safe blood and regular voluntary blood donors. The WBDD sponsoring organizations invite you and your organization to share your ways of celebrating the day with the rest of the world. What events did your organization hold? What do you consider worked well in your country? Did you have any slogans that were particularly apt or appealing? What were your triumphs, your victories and your successes? What about the humanitarian aspect? Were there moving testimonies from blood recipients and their families, and from blood donors?

Please send reports and photographs for inclusion in the report on World Blood Donor Day 2006, which will help other countries in planning their own celebrations in 2007, and will show the commitment of your organization to achieving the goal of a safe and adequate blood supply for all who need it.

Please send contributions to:

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AFRICAN REGION

ALGERIA

Algeria celebrated World Blood Donor Day nationally. The theme of the day featured giving thanks to regular voluntary, non-remunerated blood donors, and recalling the importance of the gift of blood. A number of events were organized in different parts of the country, notably campaigns to raise awareness of the gift of blood, ranging from open days in Blood Transfusion Centres to ceremonies which honoured donors who had donated many units of blood.

In addition, a publicity campaign was launched which had both a radio and television presence from 1 June. This appealed for donors and told the public about the special events happening around World Blood Donor Day. It featured the slogan "Blood, a source of life that can be shared". Using this slogan, a text message was sent out asking "If you're in good health and between the ages of 18 and 65, think about giving a little bit of your blood".

In order to ensure the greatest spread of the message, many other organizations lent their support to the campaign, notably the Ministries of National Education, Communications, Religious Affairs, Post and Telecommunications, Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Energy and Mines.

On 14 June, a ceremony took place in Algiers which honoured those donors who had given blood many times. In total, 161 donors from different parts of the country were invited to take part. The ceremony was attended by the Minister of Health, Population and Hospital Reform, acting for the President of the Republic. He gave an encouraging message to blood donors, thanking them for their loyalty and help towards achieving the objective of self-sufficiency in blood and blood products.

ANGOLA

As part of the celebrations for World Blood Donor Day, a talk entitled "Celebrate your blood gift" was given at the Angolan Health Ministry in the capital, Luanda. It was

attended by the Minister of Health, Sebastião Veloso, as well as representatives from the World Health Organization, officials from the government, and members of the Blood Donors Association. Patients who had received blood were also present. The main message about human solidarity and the saving of lives through the gift of blood came over very clearly.

This event was part of a campaign, begun several days earlier, to raise awareness of the need for volunteer blood donors in both public and private organizations and with the public in general.

Wide coverage was given to the event by the media. Interviews and debates were seen on television, and many brochures, posters and displays were prepared for the occasion.

CAMEROON

At Douala, the main ceremony for World Blood Donor Day took place on 18 June. With the aid of the Rotary Club, the largest hospital in the city, the Laquintinie Hospital, organized a convention to mark the day. Dr Fritz Ntonè, Director of the Hospital, explained that mobile vans from the University were lent for the occasion. The Laquintinie Hospital collects blood regularly with the help of the Associations of Blood Donors. Dr Ntonè expressed his concern, however, that demand for blood can be very high, and that more voluntary donors are needed to ensure an adequate supply. Cameroon has recently adopted a national blood transfusion policy, which demands 100% voluntary blood donation. While the country has not yet reached that objective, high profile events like World Blood Donor Day will help to raise awareness in the general public of the requirements and the importance of voluntary blood donation.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

To celebrate World Blood Donor Day, Central African Red Cross Society held awareness-raising theatrical events,

using a troupe of actors called Les Volontaires (The Volunteers). Over a period of 15 days, they acted relevant scenes in the towns of Bangui, Bégoua, Bimbo, Kpalongo and Boeing, and also in schools in the capital, Bangui. A film made by the National Blood Transfusion Centre and featuring these actors also went out on Central African television.

At the same time, an effort was made in eight of the Red Cross Society Committees and in three schools in Bangui to set up or restructure Blood Donor Associations. More than 500 information brochures were published and given out. On the day, small gifts of T-shirts were made to voluntary donors.

Finally, over 100 volunteers went on an awareness-raising five kilometre walk in the centre of Bangui. Carrying banners and with leaders giving out a recruitment message via megaphone, the walk was a great success.

COMOROS

An archipelago in the Indian Ocean, the Comoros consist of three islands with considerable political autonomy within the Union of the Comoros and a fourth island which remains under French rule. While each island has a network of health providers, as yet there is no blood bank within the Union. Hospitals at island level act as blood banks, but generally using blood from replacement donors. In 2004, only 7% of donated blood came from volunteers.

In order to promote voluntary blood donation, World Blood Donor Day was celebrated in June 2005. To ensure that each of the three islands of the Union gets an equal share in the celebrations, the health authorities decided that the main events would be held on each island in rotation. Thus, for this year, the island of Mohéli began its turn with a ceremony in the capital, Fomboni. In the week before the event, all three islands enjoyed broad media coverage promoting blood donation and giving information about blood drives in the hospitals.

On 14 June, there was a television broadcast which showed the need for blood to reduce infant and maternal mortality. In a number of towns, posters were exhibited in public places. The support of the Comoros Red Crescent Society and the Association of Voluntary Blood Donors helped to guarantee a successful day.

The official ceremony took place on 16 June, presided over by the Vice-President of the Union of the Comoros, M Caabi El-Yachourtu Mohamed. At his side were the President of the Autonomous Island of Mohéli, His Excellency Mohamed Said Fazul, and many top dignitaries representing the government and health authorities. Many people from the Autonomous Island of Mwali took part in the ceremony, which above all emphasized the need for voluntary blood donors. Entertainment was provided by actors from the Alliance Franco-Comorienne and the Comoros Red Crescent Society who performed two well-received sketches about saving lives through voluntary blood donation, and the need for community involvement in this humanitarian act.

CONGO

Festivities for World Blood Donor Day started early in Congo. Starting on Monday 6 June, several events took place over the following week, culminating in an event on 14 June celebrating voluntary blood donors, both those who had been donating for years, and new donors.

A number of awareness-raising events were held in churches. At the same time, competitions were taking place. People were asked to design posters with the theme "The Gift of Blood". The most spectacular event was a football tournament. Six teams, all players volunteer blood donors, competed for the "Gift of Blood" cup. The first part of the tournament was a knock-out, followed by a three-cornered event.

Seeing blood donors as athletes, clearly healthy, helped to show the public that giving blood is not a dangerous or unhealthy thing to do.

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

In a festive atmosphere, voluntary blood donors joined together with the Minister of Health and Population in a ceremony to mark World Blood Donor Day at the Palace of Culture. Distinguished invited guests paid homage to the generosity of donors.

While accepting congratulations on behalf of the National Blood Transfusion Centre, the Minister did not try to hide the fact that more donated blood is needed, and that this was an occasion to flag the fact that Côte d'Ivoire was still a long way from self-sufficiency in blood supplies.

The association of blood donors (UNADASCI) was represented by its President, Behibro Kouakou. Receiving a computer from the hands of the Lebanese association "Al Gadir", he asked the authorities to continue to support blood donors, to help raise awareness of the need for more voluntary donors and the importance of blood donation.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

In a ceremony to mark World Blood Donor Day, the Director of the National Blood Transfusion Centre, Jean-Pierre Musongela, expressed his thanks to all blood donors, who, as well as helping towards the aim of 100% voluntary donation, had without doubt saved the lives of many people, particularly woman and children. A representative from the Ministry of Health, Jean-Marie Ngilo Zambali spoke to note that up to then, 30% of donors were voluntary, unremunerated donors, and this figure must rise.

The President of the Federation of Blood Donor Associations (Fadobes), Louis Mangombo, expressed his appreciation of the 20 Associations affiliated to the Federation, which now had more than 12 000 members. Louis Mangombo himself has donated blood voluntarily for the past 41 years.

ETHIOPIA

World Blood Donor Day was celebrated in a colourful ceremony in the capital, Addis Ababa, organized by the Ethiopian Red Cross Blood Service (ERCS) in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and supported by the World Health Organization country office.

In attendance were Ethiopian Red Cross officials, delegates from the Federal Ministry of Health, representatives from health institutions, the World Health Organization, Red Cross youth, regular non-remunerated blood donors, journalists from broadcasting and print media and the general public. Media coverage was good with the celebrations broadcast on television later the same evening and press coverage in the papers the next day.

Motivational and promotional materials specially prepared to mark the day were distributed to the donors and dignitaries who attended the ceremony. These included factual leaflets about blood donation, posters, T-shirts, caps, press kits, badges and pocket reminders. At the event, photographs depicting various stages of the blood transfusion value chain were exhibited.

Voluntary blood donors and the media as well as staff of the ERCS were asked to contribute to discussions about how best to involve various sectors of society in the promotion of voluntary blood donation. Particular emphasis was put on how the media could help, but other institutions like community administrative structures were cited as possible collaborators in the cause.

Certificates were awarded to distinguished donors and organizations that had contributed significantly to the promotion of voluntary, non-remunerated blood donation. A total of 150 certificates were awarded, 100 to voluntary donors and 50 to partners and institutions that had contributed greatly. The donor with the greatest number of donations had donated 38 times.

A number of speeches were made, expressing gratitude and warm appreciation of the volunteer donors, as well as looking to the future expansion of the services to cover the

whole country. Currently, around 43% of the blood collected comes from voluntary, non-remunerated donors.

A public lecture entitled "Replacement Donors a Resource to Be Abandoned" was given by the WHO technical assistant on blood safety, Dr Paul Mainuka. The lecture emphasized the need to change from reliance on replacement donations to a system of voluntary, non-remunerated donation, transforming at the same time the act of donation to a social and humanitarian gift.

GAMBIA

On 14 June 2005, volunteer blood donors throughout Gambia gathered in Essau village in the North Bank Division (11 kilometres from the capital, Banjul) to commemorate World Blood Donor Day. The event was organized by the Gambia Blood Donor Association, Gamblood.

The Commissioner North Bank Division, Batata Juwara delivered the welcoming remarks. In a statement delivered on behalf of the First Lady the Secretary for Education, Fatou Lamin Fye explained that the day had been set aside to honour as well as thank blood donors for their generosity.

She described blood donation as the most precious gift of life. The Health Secretary, Dr Tamsir Mbowe commended the people of Essau for championing the national call to donate blood. He called on people from other parts of the country to emulate what he called "the people of Essau's exemplary gesture".

The WHO Resident Representative, Dr Nestor Shivute underscored the importance of voluntary blood donation and called for the establishment of more blood transfusion centres.

The manager of Gamblood, Alhaji Bye Samba Njie informed the gathering that since the formation of his organization three years ago, there had been an increase in voluntary, non-remunerated blood donation. Finally, a representative of the Gambia Red Cross Society, Bye

Cham commended stakeholders for their efforts towards the promotion of a safe and adequate blood supply.

GHANA

World Blood Donor Day was celebrated in Ghana with a number of different events. These were organized by the National Blood Transfusion Service (NBTS) with support from WHO. The Ghana Red Cross Society also took part in some activities.

To start the day, radio and television talk shows were organized in all the major Ghanaian languages. Letters of appreciation which had been received from sickle-cell patients whose lives had been saved by blood donated by voluntary blood donors were exhibited attractively on a "Thank you" display wall at the Accra Area Blood Centre in the capital city.

This display served to encourage voluntary blood donors to continue to donate. It also helped to create awareness that blood saves lives in the expectation that new donors would be motivated to come along. A documentary film "Blood, the Fluid of Life" was shown on Ghana Television in the evening.

From 12 to 14 June, the Ghana Red Cross Society placed two tents at vantage points in Accra. The tents were decorated with posters drawing the attention of the general public to World Blood Donor Day. Members of the Society distributed leaflets and tracts, wearing T-shirts specially designed for the day.

The names of sponsors, institutions and organizations that have helped, and continue to help, were published in the Daily Graphic on 14 June to thank them for their assistance in various ways. A thank you message to all voluntary donors nationwide was also published. In addition, regular voluntary blood donors received well-designed postcards with a thank you message.

The Blood Centre was beautifully decorated on the day. Members of the press from all the media houses came to

cover the day. Voluntary blood donors as well as the general public were invited to visit the centre. Special snacks were given to all voluntary blood donors who called at the blood centre to donate blood. Photographs of different NBTS activities were attractively displayed on a notice board for the general public to view. A short address was delivered by the Deputy Director of the NBTS, Dr Lucy Asamoah Akuoko, explaining the relevance of the day.

A school debate was organized on the topic, "Voluntary blood donation is better than family/replacement blood donation in the quest for safe blood transfusion". St Margaret Mary Senior Secondary School, Dansoman, spoke for the motion while Ebenezer Secondary School, Mamprobi, spoke against it. Both schools received prizes for taking part in the debate.

Before the debate, a Pledge 25 programme was re-launched by the Deputy Director in a short address to the press, students and audience.

Finally, on 14 June, Millicon Ghana Limited, a mobile phone company, sent a bulk text message, "Today is World Blood Donor Day. Enrol now as a Voluntary Blood Donor and join millions over the world to save lives" to all subscribers throughout the country.

GUINEA

The most important task facing the Blood Transfusion Centre in the Republic of Guinea is to raise awareness of the need for a pool of voluntary, non-remunerated blood donors. Consequently, events around World Blood Donor Day concentrated efforts on thanking already existing donors and on helping the general public to see what is required and why.

The events began a week before World Blood Donor Day, with awareness-raising programmes broadcast on the radio station covering Labé. These were in French and other local languages.

On 13 June, an address was broadcast on television and radio by the Minister of Health, followed by a representative from the World Health Organization. On World Blood Donor Day itself, various events took place at Labé, about 400 kilometres from the capital, Conakry. A carnival celebrating the gift of blood was held throughout the town. During the day, a debate was held about the problems Guinea is experiencing with insufficient blood donation, leading to hospital shortages.

Small gifts of appreciation, such as T-shirts, were presented to existing donors, posters displayed and leaflets about the "Gift of Life" given out to the public. Finally, a blood drive was held during the celebrations.

KENYA

World Blood Donor Day was celebrated in 20 Red Cross branches and 6 Regional Blood Transfusion Centres in Kenya. While not every organization did the same thing, the main event in common was an appreciation of existing blood donors and of other supporters, such as corporate partners.

Celebrations lasted a week, and were officially launched on 14 June by the Minister of Health. Activities included a five kilometre walk, carrying banners and slogans. Poems, skits and dramas were acted out by volunteers, all aimed at raising awareness of voluntary blood donation among the general public.

The main celebration saw trophies and certificates being given out to donors and those institutions and organizations supporting the national blood programme. Speeches of appreciation and thanks were made.

LIBERIA

Voluntary blood donors, participating schools and communities throughout Liberia were given thanks and certificates of appreciation at a ceremony organized by the Voluntary Blood Donor Association of Liberia (VOBDAL). On the occasion of World Blood Donor Day, the audience at the event was addressed by the Health

Minister, Dr Peter Coleman, who urged people to consider becoming voluntary donors, while commending those who had already donated blood. He gave special thanks to VOBDAL for its work in recruiting and retaining donors, and affirmed the support of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare in achieving its objectives.

At the event, a number of voluntary blood donors pledged to increase the regularity of their donations in order to save lives.

MADAGASCAR

Moving testimony from a young boy helped an audience to understand just how life-saving the gift of blood is to some people. Young Yohary Marcel Ranaivoson, just 12 years old, spoke at a ceremony to mark World Blood Donor Day. He spoke about being born with anaemia, and having to attend hospital every month for a blood transfusion as his body is unable to make "correct" blood. The gift of someone else's blood allows him to lead a normal life, to attend school, study and play just like any other boy of his age. He said a very heartfelt "Thank you" to all those donors who had, anonymously, given him his life.

The ceremony paid tribute to voluntary donors who had given selflessly over the years. They were thanked for their generosity. A serious note was, however, included in the ceremony. More voluntary donors are needed to ensure that blood supplies are adequate for the demand. Dr Claude Rabemahery, Director of the Blood Transfusion Service at the Centre Hospitalier Universitaire Joseph Ravoahangy Andrianavalona urged more voluntary donors to come forward. Currently, the majority of donors are family replacement donors, a situation that must change. Transforming replacement donors into voluntary long-term donors is a priority, as is the recruitment of new voluntary donors.

MALI

The main objective of the Department of Health of the Mali Red Cross Society during the celebrations for World

Blood Donor Day was an improvement in number of voluntary blood donors. A framework for a partnership between the Mali Red Cross Society and the National Blood Transfusion Centre was prepared, and together the two organizations planned and executed a number of events.

On the day, 500 Red Cross youth volunteers, covering the whole country, gave their blood. Regular donors were presented with T-shirts in a ceremony celebrating their gifts of life. In schools and training colleges, awareness-raising discussions were held, chats and debates took place on radio, all designed to educate the public about blood donation, and to show appreciation to those donors who already give their blood. At the Djoliba Centre, a blood donor panel was set up.

Following the day, the campaign stepped up with the aim of getting 100 volunteers to donate regularly. An Association of Blood Donors was formed, and a conference held about blood donation. It is hoped that Red Cross youth volunteers will donate every three months.

MAURITIUS

All kinds of events took place in Mauritius on World Blood Donor Day. Beforehand, schoolchildren were invited to compete in designing posters and writing an essay on the importance of blood and blood donation. Those who were 17 or older were asked to roll up their sleeves and donate blood.

The event itself was celebrated in the Municipality of Quatre-Bornes. Voluntary blood donors were greeted by the Minister of Health, Ashok Jugnauth, who gave them recognition and thanks and noted how proud he was that the blood collection had increased. He said that he felt sure he could count on the generosity of the people of Mauritius to increase the collection still further.

During the lead-up to the day, schools in particular were targeted as part of the Schools Care Project, run by the Community Health section of the Blood Transfusion

Service. Campaigns raising awareness of the issues involved in the donation of blood helped to motivate donors.

MOZAMBIQUE

The second World Blood Donor Day was celebrated in Mozambique on 14 June 2005. Most of the activity was designed to raise awareness of the importance of voluntary blood donation, with the intention of attracting more low-risk donors.

Between 12 and 22 June, a number of radio programmes on Radio Mozambique promoted the theme of voluntary blood donation. On Mozambique Television (TVM) the Director of the Blood Bank of the Central Hospital in Maputo gave an interview, and there were other relevant broadcasts. Another television channel, Televisão Miramar, interviewed the Deputy Director of the Blood Bank.

A number of leaflets and posters were distributed through all the provinces and districts of the country.

NAMIBIA

The international theme for World Blood Donor Day, "Celebrating your gift of blood" was used in Namibia to launch an awareness-raising campaign to thank existing donors and recruit new ones, so as to keep on target with a safe blood supply.

During the week before 14 June, donors at clinics were told about the special occasion and were presented with letters of appreciation. At shopping centres, companies and town centres there were public displays of thanks to donors for their commitment. On 14 June itself, a small gift was handed out to donors at the main blood donation centre, United House Permanent Clinic. Donors received a red or white cloth cap or shopping bag and a letter of appreciation.

Students who gave blood from 14 June to the end of August were given a small gift in the form of a bookmark, which read "I am a Blood Donor" on one side, and had some recruiting information on the other so that it could be used to encourage other people to donate.

Young people at schools provide almost 20% of the blood collected in Namibia. They are therefore a priority group for recruitment activities. During clinics at schools in June, information posters on WBDD and the Blood Transfusion Service of Namibia were displayed at the clinic venue and discussed with learners waiting to give their blood. Briefings before the clinics were held included information on William Harvey, Karl Landsteiner and the history of blood donation, blood groups and individual donor commitment. Photographs were taken at a number of schools, and are to be made into a kit for each school library. Participating schools will also receive a Donor School Certificate, a blood buddy mascot and a selection of photographs.

Press releases went out and were taken up by many of the media. On the day there were radio and television programmes, and then weekly bulletins on all stations. The television programme "Good Morning Namibia" on 15 June was on blood donation in the country, and there was an opportunity to stress the safety of donating and the importance of voluntary donors.

NIGERIA

In an interview launching the week-long celebrations leading up to World Blood Donor Day, the Permanent Secretary of Lagos State Health Management Board, Dr Olufunmilayo Olatunji noted that June 14 was a time to thank the world's regular, voluntary blood donors. It was also a time to help raise awareness of the continuing need for safe blood and safe donors. For Nigeria, moving from a system of family replacement donors to 100% voluntary donors is essential to ensure safe blood for everyone.

Events during the week included lectures and an interactive session on blood donation, helping to raise

awareness of the need for regular donors. There was a film show, quizzes and a show of local culture. On the Friday, the mosques held a special prayer session and sermons were given on rendering service to humanity by becoming regular voluntary blood donors. On the Sunday, the churches did the same.

On Saturday, a Health Tour involved driving through the city of Lagos in trucks with campaign material on voluntary donation. Mobile units gave the general public the opportunity to donate blood on the spot. Monday, the campaign for donors moved to various donor centres in Lagos State.

Finally, the grand finale came on World Blood Donor Day itself, Tuesday 14 June. In a moving ceremony, regular blood donors were thanked and given awards, recipients of blood gave testimonies, and blood donors spoke of their experiences. Speeches and lectures emphasized the importance of voluntary blood donation. A review of blood usage and blood donation in Lagos State hospitals pointed out the need to move rapidly from the current 7% voluntary donation to 100% to ensure safe blood. An exhibition stand provided information to the general public. Finally, a raffle was held.

In another part of Nigeria, the Association of Medical Laboratory Scientists of Nigeria, Rivers State Branch marked World Blood Donor Day with a number of activities, including a display of posters, special awareness-raising programmes on the radio and television, the provision of certificates to voluntary blood donors and supporting organizations, and the giving out of small gifts, such as pens, key holders, T-shirts and caps.

RWANDA

A "celebration of your gift of blood" was the theme of World Blood Donor Day in Rwanda, where the Ministry of Health, together with Rwandan Red Cross Society and the World Health Organization, organized a number of events.

To start the process, the media helped to raise awareness of the important day. There were radio and television programmes containing a message to the nation, and a number of newspaper articles on the theme of voluntary blood donation and safe blood.

World Blood Donor Day itself saw celebrations in three county towns where there are blood transfusion centres. In each centre, there were speeches, sketches and dances. The highlight of the events was the giving out of gifts to voluntary donors.

In Butare and Ruhengeri, the festivities were enhanced by the presence of delegates from the Ministry of Health and local administrative authorities, as well as staff from the hospitals and blood centres.

At the national level, the celebrations took place at Ruli Hospital, graced by a distinguished guest list, including the Minister of Health. Speeches all emphasized the importance of safe blood transfusion and the need for voluntary donors. The World Health Organization representative gave thanks to those donors whose courage and good will motivated them to donate blood of their own free will. The Minister of Health recalled the theme of the day, and the role of blood transfusion in the health system of Rwanda. He underlined the requirement for safe blood and for quality assurance of the blood stocks. He noted that each year at least 22 000 people in Rwanda receive transfusions. Almost half of these are children of less than five years, and 15% are women with childbirth complications. He gave a strong message of appreciation to those donors who helped to save the lives of their fellow citizens. He also invited others, particularly young people who make up the bulk of the population, to follow their brothers and sisters in the humanitarian act of giving blood.



Among the audience were many young people. They watched as regular blood donors received thanks and small gifts of appreciation. Certificates, T-shirts and mosquito nets were presented to donors who had given between

ten and 14 donations, while those who had given more received radio sets, hoes and bicycles.

SOUTH AFRICA

“South Africa Celebrates” was the main theme of the World Blood Donor Day celebrations organized by South Africa National Blood Service (SANBS), supported by many other organizations throughout the country. Continuing the example of the main display in Trafalgar Square, London, a Celebration of Life Gallery was set up. This showed pictures and case studies of a small group of South African blood recipients, allowing the public to see for themselves the difference that blood transfusions have made in the lives of patients and their families. Recipients included a four year old boy with a chronic bleeding condition, a severe burns victim, a cancer patient, two accident victims and a premature baby. It was an opportunity for blood donors to be acknowledged and thanked for their unselfish commitment to saving lives.

Gallery displays in the form of large framed posters of these patients and their stories were set up in all blood donor centres and at various other venues, such as hospital foyers made available to SANBS for the displays. Educational material was handed out to members of the

public. The posters made a big impression on the public and persuaded a number of people to become blood donors on the spot.

Many branches of SANBS made a very special effort and decorated their clinics most attractively and their eye-catching displays brought interested people into the clinics, some to donate and others to ask questions. Some of the branches also held blood-grouping sessions on the day. These proved to be very successful and many potential donors were signed up there and then.



The objective of World Blood Donor Day was to promote safe, voluntary blood donation throughout the world and to thank all blood donors for their unselfish act of donating blood to help others. South Africans joined hands this World Blood Donor Day to celebrate a universal theme, “Blood is what ties us together”.

It was a day of thanks and appreciation for all the donors in South Africa who unselfishly give up their time to donate a unit of blood to help patients in need.

SOUTH AFRICA

“Of course there would have been no hope at all if it had not been for you, the blood donors to whom we owe our son’s life. How does one thank all the total strangers who so unselfishly go and donate their blood several times a year? It’s a life-giving substance that we have experienced first hand. All we can say is thank you from the bottom of our hearts for giving us our son back and urge you to continue this selfless act of giving. Know that our son, Jordan, is living proof of the value of giving.”

Allen and Lisa Steytler’s son Jordan, aged three, had a blockage in his portal vein causing the child to bleed internally

SEYCHELLES

Seychelles Blood Transfusion Centre, based at Victoria Hospital on the island of Mahé, organized a number of celebratory events on World Blood Donor Day. Following the theme of appreciation for blood donors, a television spot thanked donors publicly. In addition, an educational seminar was held.

TOGO

More than a week of celebratory events marked the occasion of World Blood Donor Day in Togo. The theme of the festivities was recognition of the part Togolese Red

Cross Donor Clubs play in the continuing motivation of voluntary blood donors. It was hoped to encourage the setting up of more of these clubs.

Starting at the end of May, a football festival held at Agbalépédo, a district of Lomé, launched the event. The Red Cross Donor Club there is famous for its competitive team. A challenge was given to teams from the community.

During the week, donor clubs at Bè, Forever, Soviébé and Agbalépédo were visited by Red Cross officials with messages of encouragement and support. The big event happened on Saturday 11 June, when the National Blood Transfusion Centre at Domasséssé held an open day. In the afternoon, the festivities moved to the Red Cross headquarters at Amoutivé-Lomé. Donors and invited guests saw the National Togolese Red Cross President preside over a celebratory event where official diplomas of recognition were presented to the donor clubs at Agbalépédo and Soviébé, and voluntary blood donors were presented with certificates.

ZIMBABWE

The theme of World Blood Donor Day was “celebrating your gift of blood”. The celebrations in Zimbabwe took the form of a commemorative event held at the National Blood

Transfusion Service (NBTS). Health and Child Welfare Minister, David Parirenyatwa congratulated the blood donor recruitment programme that was the envy of many other countries. Zimbabwe has achieved 100% voluntary, non-remunerated blood donation, one of only around 40 countries in the world to do so.

The “Pledge 25” initiative, whereby young people promise to remain regular donors and therefore to keep a healthy lifestyle, has been a great success, the idea being taken up by many other countries. Around 75% of the blood collection comes from the younger generation.

SOUTH AFRICA

In July 2002, as the result of an accident, Beverly suffered burns to 89% of her body. In the past year, Beverly has had over ten operations and received 20 units of blood. For her this was life-saving blood and she felt so strongly about the great gift that she was given by unselfish blood donors, that she was the guest speaker at the recent Milestone Donor Awards held in Durban. Looking lovely, she stood up in front of nearly 300 people and spoke sincerely of how their donated blood had saved her life. In thanking them, her message was one of gratitude and hope and encouragement for blood donors to continue with their wonderful gift of life.

REGION OF THE AMERICAS

ARGENTINA

"Camila suffers from thalassaemia major and has required blood transfusions since she was eight months old. In the beginning, she needed them every 15 days. Thanks to transfusions, she lives a normal life today. Blood safety is essential to Camila's life."

Patricia Chiesa, Camila's mother

BELIZE

Ronald Stuart, President of the Volunteer Blood Donor Service took the opportunity afforded by publicity on World Blood Donor Day to speak about the need for more voluntary blood donors in Belize. He noted that the majority of donors are family replacement donors, and he wanted to encourage them all to become regular, voluntary donors. He himself had donated around 40 units over the ten years or so that he has been a regular donor.

At the recognition ceremony, ten regular voluntary donors were honoured alongside a new donor who is also the youngest. They were given certificates and a celebratory meal.

Talks were given in junior colleges, and a Club 25 scheme was launched. Members of Club 25 were given special pins.

BOLIVIA

A coordinated series of events took place in departmental capitals around the country. Organized by the National Blood Programme and the departmental blood banks, events covered a variety of activities designed to make people far more aware of the need for voluntary blood donors.

In the capital, La Paz, a workshop for the training of donor motivators took place. On 14 June itself, an Act of Commemoration was held. A press release brought notice

of national and international posters about the event. In addition, during the whole week, television programmes broadcast interviews designed to raise awareness of blood donation and its importance.

In Cochabamba, a convoy of cars went through the streets, finishing at the main square, where an act of recognition of voluntary blood donors took place.

In Santa Cruz, local press took up the story. A blood drive was held at a fête where Rotary Club support was acknowledged. In Sucre, celebrations were held in the main square, together with a blood drive. In Potosí, the festivities and blood drive were at the Bracamonte Hospital. In Oruro, motivational workshops were held in

BRAZIL

"A friend of mine received blood transfusions in November 1999 because of a car accident. I donated blood to help him. Later I was surprised to get a call from the Sírío Libanês Hospital Blood Bank about a rare feature they had found in my blood. After an extensive laboratory investigation, a McLeod blood phenotype was diagnosed. I was honoured to help the Blood Bank and my friend at first, but now I am even more rewarded by being able to help more people around the world, as well as contributing to medical research."

30 year old voluntary blood donor



universities, and local press reports helped to raise awareness of the significance of World Blood Donor Day.

Throughout the whole month of June, the Ministry of Health carried a special slogan on all its correspondence, "Solidarity is carried in the blood".

BRAZIL

World Blood Donor Day was celebrated by the Brazilian Association of Blood Donor Volunteers with the launch of its new website: www.voluntariosdosangue.org.br. This is intended to become a database and meeting point for many organizations such as blood banks and professionals in the field. It will also bring together donors. The intention is, in due course, to create a much bigger network designed to promote regular, unpaid voluntary donation.

To help achieve the objective, World Blood Donor Day was flagged to over 100 organizations related to the cause of safe blood in the country. Blood banks, hospitals and donor organizations were contacted.

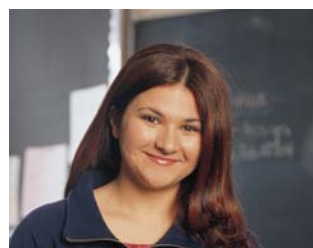
CANADA

On 14 June 2005 Canada's blood agencies, Canadian Blood Services and Héma-Québec, joined with the Government of Canada on the occasion of World Blood Donor Day to announce the progress of Bill S-29, a Bill introduced to recognize an annual National Blood Donor Week in Canada. A national news release alerting the public to the significance of 14 June as well as highlighting efforts to establish a National Blood Donor Week to honour Canada's everyday heroes, blood donors, was issued. In 2006, Canada's first official National Blood Donor Week will be held, and annually it will coincide with WBDD celebrations.

A national media event hosted by the Government of Canada on Parliament Hill provided the perfect backdrop for this milestone announcement. All attendees at the

event received a commemorative leather bracelet featuring the word "vitality" in both official languages. The significance of the word vitality is a reflection of the fact that donors share their health and vitality with others through their generous act of blood donation. The event was made available via a live web cast, so that staff, volunteers, and all Canadians could join in the celebration.

Additionally, radio stations across Canada aired a radio spot promoting World Blood Donor Day. The spot featured voice-over from a young recipient, Samar Chaker, who was also the special guest speaker at the national media event



CANADA

"I was officially diagnosed with aplastic anaemia: a disease that causes the failure of the bone marrow to

produce all blood cells including red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets. This is a very rare, life-threatening disease that only occurs in four out of roughly 500 000 individuals each year. My body was deteriorating and each day was worse than the one before. I required several transfusions daily just to keep up with the amount that I was bleeding. My body was covered in bruises and patikia, which is the bursting of blood vessels beneath the surface of the skin. I was extremely weak and had completely changed physically from all the treatments and medication... Donors' contribution to the Blood Service does not go unnoticed; it is appreciated from every individual you have helped save. You may not realize what you have truly done. But let me tell you, what you have done is give a child back to their parents, a mother or father back to their children, a person back to their loved ones... Each of you is a hero, and I want you all to know that it's people like you who are able to keep love in this world because of the goodness you have brought to it. Continue on with what you have started, and inspire others to do the same."

Samar Chaker

on 14 June. Samar was also chosen to be profiled in the international celebration gallery. Another everyday hero to be fêted was Captain Raymonde Gaumont, with over 700 donations to date. She said that she first started to donate blood at the age of 17, and emphasized the responsibility of all humans to share the privilege of good health.

World Blood Donor Day posters, staff and volunteer stickers, an extensive web site profile, and commemorative cakes completed the efforts at raising the profile of 14 June.

All over Canada, unknown heroes received appreciation and thanks for their gift of life. For example, Bedford man Jim Lord donated plasma on the day. This was his 703rd donation, making him the fourth highest donor in Canada. Anaemia sufferer Janet Beaton of Halifax, who has received about 780 units of blood products, thanked Mr Lord for his gift. Typically, Jim remained modest, saying, "The thing that drives you now is the testimonials from these people".

Michelle Leavis, who received a bone marrow transplant and blood products during treatment for leukaemia, praised such "everyday heroes" for saving her life. She said a person does not have to rescue someone from a burning building to be a hero. "I have two little girls at home and I'll make sure they know that it's because of these guys that their mom is here today."

In Montreal, Jean Bourassa, a resident of Saint-Raymond, has received transfusions every week for anaemia, besides the various times he had emergency needs. "I wish to thank today the blood donors who helped save my life on many occasions. Thanks to them and to the volunteers, I'm still here today", said Mr. Bourassa.

CAYMAN ISLANDS

World Blood Donor Day was sponsored by the Lions family of the Cayman Islands (Leos of Grand Cayman, Lions Club of Grand Cayman, Lions Club of Tropical Gardens and Lions Club of Cayman Brac). Organised by the Cayman

Islands Blood Banks, a big effort was made to raise awareness of the need for voluntary blood donors.

A talk show was broadcast on youth radio, giving out the message of the importance of blood and blood donation. A morning television show, with participants from members of the Lions club and a member of the Commonwealth youth group, promoted the theme of WBDD.

A blood drive sponsored by the Lions took place, with many newspaper articles and advertisements promoting the drive. Bumper-stickers were distributed and text messages were used to remind people about the blood drive. The majority of donors who attended the drive to give blood were new donors, a very encouraging fact.

COLOMBIA

World Blood Donor Day started early in Bogotá, capital of Colombia. A poster exhibition with the theme "Voluntary blood donation strategies" opened at the blood banks. Later in the morning, an Act of Commemoration took place. Speeches by a distinguished list of guests gave appreciation to voluntary blood donors, and emphasized the need for safe blood.

The audience was addressed in turn by the Minister of Social Protection, Dr Diego Palacios Betancourt, the

CHILE

"My little girl fell ill at two years old with serious leukaemia. The chemotherapy affects her good cells, so she needs transfusions of red blood cells and platelets. Many of our family members and friends have donated blood, but it is not enough. It's only because of people who donate without requesting anything in return that many sick people like my little girl are able to live. Today Valeria is recovering, her hair is starting to grow back, and her need for blood transfusions declines every day."

Esperanza, Valeria Soto Fuentes' mother

Director of the National Health Institute, Dr Rafael Romero Piñeros, the Secretary of Health in Bogotá, Dr Mario Esteban Hernández Álvarez, and a representative from the Pan American Health Organization.



Following these addresses, a number of recipients of blood gave moving testimonies about the gift of life they had received. They thanked those anonymous donors who gave blood voluntarily to help them. Afterwards, in an award-giving ceremony, recognition was given to organizations giving substantial support to voluntary blood donation. In addition, each blood bank nominated a voluntary repeat donor with the highest number of donations for an award. The six blood banks in Bogotá that had succeeded in attracting most donors, and the six commercial organizations that had done the same on their own premises were also awarded.

Finally, a toast was given by Dr Mauricio Beltrán Durán, the National Blood Bank Coordinator.

COLOMBIA

“Suddenly one day I got a very high fever, a headache and a feeling of weakness. The diagnosis was dengue haemorrhagic fever. In a week, the fever subsided but I began to have red spots on my legs and hands, my skin turned purple, and my joints swelled from internal haemorrhaging. I received more than 200 units of blood and a similar amount of blood platelets. Thanks to anonymous blood donors, I survived.”

Magda Gisela Zamora Bonilla

COLOMBIA

“For six years I have suffered from agnogenic myeloid metaplasia, which means that every month I need three units of red blood cells. I thank God and all the donors who contribute their blood voluntarily and altruistically. Because of their generosity, I can live with dignity.”

José Idinael Rodríguez Velazco

COSTA RICA

A press conference was held on the day before World Blood Donor Day, led by health sector authorities and the Pan American Health Organization representative.

On the Tuesday, an informative radio programme in the morning was followed by an official ceremony in the main square. Exhibitions, interviews and presentations to partner companies were all received well. In the evening, there was an academic discussion in the Medical College.

During the entire week, the Costa Rican Red Cross undertook a public education campaign about voluntary blood donation.

ECUADOR

The Ecuadorian Red Cross celebrated the second anniversary of World Blood Donor Day by paying homage

ECUADOR

“I am one of the many people who live with haemophilia. Blood from volunteer donors is our main resource for living a normal life. My experience makes me understand the importance of blood donation and, even more, of blood safety. That’s why I volunteer to help at blood drives, persuading people with my own story to be part of such a special group of people.”

Luis Gómez

DOMINICA

“While recovering from routine surgery for a myemectomy, and even before the anaesthesia had worn off I developed a condition called DIC (Disseminated Intravascular Coagulation), the effect of which resulted in severe bleeding over several days. During this period I had to be transfused with over 50 units of blood and blood products to compensate for the massive blood loss over a 72 hour period. It has been seven months and I am alive and well... I am a miracle. I stand today as a living testimony of the wonders of medical science and of the importance of the Blood Transfusion Service in the delivery of health care to clients.”



Debra Roach

to those who contributed by donating blood to save lives. Ximena Vega, in charge of looking after volunteer donors, said that blood donation was a humanitarian act of solidarity. It was simple to do, and very safe, and it contributed to the improvement of health and particularly to saving the lives of human beings.

Beauty queen of Quito, Carla Torres, who is a systems engineer, was one of the blood donors on the day. She said she had been donating since she was 17 years old and up to then had donated seven times.

**EL SALVADOR**

For the first World Blood Donor Day in 2004, an event which presented awards to the voluntary blood donors with the highest number of donations helped to raise the profile of the need for donors in El Salvador. For 2005, the same kind of event which would show appreciation and gratitude to donors was planned.

Distinguished guests were invited to a ceremony which honoured blood donors. Among the guests were the Minister of Health, the country representative of the Pan American Health Organization, the Rector of the University of El Salvador, a representative from the Rotary Club, and the Coordinator of the National Network of Blood Banks.

After speeches of welcome and thanks, awards were presented to regular donors who had donated many times. Dr Mirna Pérez from the Pan American Health Organization handed over certificates of recognition and appreciation. A blood transfusion recipient expressed gratitude for the generous gifts without which he would not be alive.

GUATEMALA

Planning for the World Blood Donor Day celebrations began early in Guatemala. Publicity was recognized as being vital to the success of the day, and in consequence, four guides were produced for the media, designed to generate interest in themes related to voluntary blood donation. At the same time, the media were invited to visit blood banks to see what happens there. This proved a successful strategy, as a number of popular radio and television programmes carried stories, and there was good newspaper coverage. A logo was chosen to carry the theme of the day, and this was widely seen.

The main event taking place on the day itself in collaboration with the Pan American Health Organization, was a celebration to recognize and thank all registered volunteer blood donors. This took place at the General Hospital San Juan de Dios.

The festivities began early, with donors being given T-shirts and pins. The audience heard a testimony from a recipient of blood, Sra Xiomara Solórzano, and from Sr Danilo Estrada, a voluntary donor representing the Donor Club of Chiquimula. All the blood banks had been earlier invited to send a list of their donors, and after speeches of appreciation and recognition by a number of distinguished guests, these men and women were now presented with certificates and medals by the Minister of Health and the Pan American Health Organization representative. The event ended with a tour of the blood bank at the hospital, and refreshments.

In other parts of Guatemala, there were different ways of celebrating the day. In the Hospital of Quiché, a competition to design posters about blood donation was set up. Prizes were sponsored by hospital staff and local people. On WBDD itself, a ceremony took place designed to raise awareness of the need for voluntary blood donation. The audience included students and teachers from the local college.

In Joyabaj, a simple ceremony saw public recognition of three voluntary blood donors from the community. In Zacapa, hospital staff wore a special lapel badge on the day. In Coatepeque, the festivities were enlivened by the municipal marimba band. Recipients of blood gave a moving testimony about the gift of life they had received. Finally, seven donors were given emblems, and diplomas of recognition were presented to local media for their work in promoting voluntary blood donation.

In San Benito Petén, a fête to celebrate the day was held. A mobile disco kept the public informed about the purpose of the day. Certificates were prepared for the ten local people who are regular blood donors. Not all could attend the event, but the certificates were displayed prominently in the blood bank, showing clearly the appreciation and recognition that donors receive.

GUYANA

Staff of the Caribbean Community Secretariat (CARICOM) in Guyana marked World Blood Donor Day on 14 June by

GRENADA

"I am 15 year old, and I have sickle-cell disease. Last year I needed to have a life-saving operation. Thanks to many blood donors, my operation was successful and now I have more energy and can live a normal life. I ran cross country this year for the first time in my life."

Mellissa Joseph



donating blood to Guyana's National Blood Transfusion Service (NBTS). The aim of the exercise was to heighten awareness among staff members of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and the importance of voluntary blood donation as a means of giving something back to the community. It was hoped to encourage staff to become regular blood donors.

The NBTS marked the day with a special ceremony to pay tribute to individuals, families, commercial and nongovernmental organizations, all contributing voluntarily to the work of the NBTS. In a public ceremony, small tokens of appreciation were presented.

Medical Director of the NBTS, Dr Clement McEwan said that since 1992 blood donation had increased. "Zero point seven of our population donated blood, which is about one out of every hundred persons", he noted. He stressed that he would wish to see this figure increased to at least two out of every hundred persons. The festivities around WBDD should help to achieve this aim.

HAITI

In early June, well before World Blood Donor Day, a press conference took place featuring the Minister of Health and representatives from the other organizations involved in the blood programme. Information about the significance of the day was presented to the press and representatives from the other media.

On 6 June, a blood drive took place in the offices of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), attended by an important group of local artistes who, as well as performing on the day, also gave blood. The PAHO representative also donated blood.

World Blood Donor Day itself was dedicated to young donors. A few days before, a party took place in a hotel to which between 250 and 300 young people were invited. Among them were young donors who were publicly recognized and fêted. A programme of entertainment was put on, especially for this group. It was decided to hold the party at a time when the young invitees could attend, as

otherwise they might have been involved in school and college examinations.

On 14 June, in some of the provinces, there were a number of activities associated with the day. A significant number of radio spots were broadcast about voluntary blood donation.

JAMAICA

World Blood Donor Day was marked with an outside radio broadcast which gave spot interviews with donors, organizers and staff of the blood bank. Wide press coverage followed, reporting on an awards ceremony which thanked frequent blood donors and other persons active in promoting voluntary blood donation. Nine men and women from across the island who have been regular, voluntary blood donors over the years were honoured, as well as four others who had worked ceaselessly to encourage people to donate blood.

Regular donors received recognition and thanks. Two of these gave their stories. Eric Wilson started donating blood as a replacement donor in 1980 and since then has become a voluntary donor, giving blood 52 times. A medical student at the University of the West Indies, Johance Rodrigues started to donate when he realized the need. Beginning in 2003, he has since donated on a regular basis.

The Jamaican Blood Bank urgently requires more donors to come forward to maintain adequate supplies of safe blood. Most donors at the moment are family replacement donors, and it is hoped that more publicity following the World Blood Donor Day event will lead to many of these becoming regular, voluntary donors.

MEXICO

Official celebrations for World Blood Donor Day were organized by a partnership between a variety of different state-run organizations, as well as commercial

enterprises, nongovernment organizations and many others.

In different States of Mexico, the blood transfusion centres headed activities such as special plays, sports events and concerts. Community leaders were invited to donate and to speak about their experience in public. Mobile phone companies were asked to promote WBDD by sending a written message to all of their subscribers on the day. Schools, colleges and universities were invited to form blood donor clubs. Ambulance drivers, fire officers and the police department were asked to testify about the need to have a safe and sufficient blood supply.

Each State also organized a special event to acknowledge those people who had donated their blood freely and voluntarily, and to thank them for their gift of life. Parties, dances or lunches were held to acknowledge voluntary donors. Award ceremonies were held. New and existing donors were telephoned to receive a thank you message. "Fame galleries" were set up showing pictures of people who had donated a number of times. Messages of thanks from people who had received transfusions in the past were put on display. Well-known community leaders, such as sportspeople, actors and scholars were contacted to give their support to the campaign for voluntary blood donation.

Campaign kits carrying slogans related to the importance and need for voluntary blood donation were prepared. These kits, consisting of posters, stickers, pins and buttons, were handed out to donors and staff at the blood banks.



A radio announcement, prepared by the National Centre for Blood Transfusion and the Direction for Social Communication, Department of Health, was transmitted by all the radio stations in the country during June. These organizations

were also responsible for media free time, such as interviews, stories and comments. This strategy was reinforced locally, directed specifically to the local population.

Different slogans, aimed at drawing attention and increasing awareness and motivation, were used and published widely, including on the web page of the National Centre for Blood Transfusion. For example, "We need your help. Donate a little of your blood". "Blood can't be artificially produced, that's why, if you are well, it is your commitment to maintain a safe blood supply. Think, because you or a loved one may need an unexpected blood transfusion."

NICARAGUA

The Nicaraguan Red Cross joined with the Ministry of Health and the Pan American Health Organization to celebrate World Blood Donor Day in the city of León. A new blood bank is being built in León, and it seemed appropriate to hold the festivities in this city. The official establishment of the government-backed National Commission for Blood was the first item on the programme.

The three institutions responsible for voluntary blood donation organized a colourful procession, in which participants from the Red Cross branches of Chinandega and León joined, as well as college students who had donated most blood during the year. Flag carriers and carnival figures kept the procession lively.

The parade culminated in a ceremony presided over by the Nicaraguan Red Cross Director of Health, the Director General of the Nicaraguan Red Cross and the representative from the Pan American Health Organization. The Mayor of León welcomed everyone, and introduced the Red Cross Director, who spoke her thanks to voluntary blood donors throughout the country. Her address was followed by the testimony of a blood recipient, who also expressed appreciation of the gift of life given by voluntary blood donors. A number of donors were then presented with certificates.

During the rest of the week, Red Cross branches throughout the country organized many different activities designed to show appreciation for blood donors, and to

NICARAGUA

"I am a haemophiliac and for the past four years I have been going to the Nicaraguan Red Cross to receive factor VIII, plasma and cryoprecipitate to avoid bleeding. Every three months I come from my home in Chinandega because I feel that here they treat me well. I am so thankful that they help me to live."

Rafael Alexander Hernández Miranda

raise awareness among the general population of the continuing need for more voluntary donors to ensure a safe and adequate blood supply.

PANAMA

In a well-planned campaign to raise public awareness of the need for more voluntary blood donors, the staff of the National System for the Supply and Transfusion of Blood organized many activities to take place before and after World Blood Donor Day, as well as planning a ceremony on the day itself. The theme of the campaign was "Give a drop of life".

Beginning in May, different groups were given talks and workshops on the importance of blood donation and how to promote it. A press conference to give information about various events was held on the same day as a blood drive. Press releases were sent out, resulting in quite a number of articles in the newspapers.

On 14 June, a ceremony was held at the Hotel Panamá which publicly recognized and thanked voluntary donors. All the blood banks marked the day in different ways, offering blood typing and handing out information leaflets. Following these public events, the number of blood drives was stepped up over the next month. By July, it was reported that voluntary blood donation had increased by 7.3% each month.

PARAGUAY

A week's worth of different activities marked World Blood Donor Day in Paraguay. An exhibition stand was put up at a shopping mall, with information posters and leaflets helping to raise public awareness of the importance of voluntary blood donation.

On 14 June, a ceremony took place in the Ministry of Public Health's headquarters. During the ceremony, recipients of blood gave moving testimonies, thanking those anonymous donors who had helped to save their lives. Donors then received commemorative cards, and those organizations which helped to promote voluntary blood donation were publicly thanked.

During the week, the awareness-raising campaign moved to schools, with many different kinds of activity showing the need for a healthy lifestyle and the importance of voluntary blood donation.

VENEZUELA



One October afternoon, an accident changed Aarón Subero's life forever. He had a triple fracture of the femur, tibia and fibula with a severed popliteal artery which caused him to lose a huge amount of blood, and there was a possibility he would lose his leg. Nearly 80% of Aarón's blood was replaced. During his first operation, he needed

five units of blood, and he needed two more during the second. His leg was saved, but he then went through months of therapy, electrotherapy, electrosonics, magnetotherapy, swimming and rehabilitation exercises. Four months later, Aarón gave up his crutches. On Mother's Day everyone at his school was ecstatic when they saw him dancing, full of life. The blood of those anonymous donors who one day decided to give blood helped him to walk again.

Finally, on 16 and 17 June, a workshop was held where the scientific societies joined forces to produce transfusion guidelines.

SURINAME

A television film about blood donation was produced just in time for World Blood Donor Day and was broadcast widely. The film follows a blood donor and his blood, addressing issues such as what happens to blood, how safe it is, and so on.

A banner was unveiled in a prominent position which honoured all voluntary blood donors.

Finally, an award ceremony was held for over 300 special donors who had given 10, 25, 50 or 100 donations. They received a commemorative certificate and flowers.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

The Health Minister, John Rahael joined blood donors and staff from the North West Regional Health Authority in a march from the President's House to the Port of Spain blood bank in a ceremony to mark World Blood Donor Day. The Minister told the audience that the demand for blood was outstripping the supply, and that more voluntary, non-remunerated donors were urgently needed. He reassured the public just how easy it was to roll up your sleeve.

Testimonies were given by a number of people. Ephraim Thompson, a regular donor since 1994, told the audience that he had not realized just how important blood donation was until his daughter required blood transfusions for sickle-cell anaemia. Emlyn Millette, a recipient of blood, showed gratitude for the gift of life. Swalaha Baksh Ali, President of the Society for Inherited and Severe Blood Disorders, also spoke, pointing out the need for donated blood in many different kinds of medical condition.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

In a unique partnership arrangement, the nation's leading blood collection organizations and advocacy groups joined with internet service provider America Online (AOL) to raise awareness among the general public of the importance of voluntary blood donation. The partnership between the Association of American Blood Banks (AABB), blood centres around the nation, the American Red Cross, the Give Life Foundation and AOL aimed to encourage young people to give blood. AOL's extensive presence on the World Wide Web has the potential to reach millions of online consumers, particularly young ones. Attracting a new generation of lifelong donors was the main aim.

The initiative was timed to coincide with World Blood Donor Day celebrations around the world. Running for three weeks on AOL CityGuide, a huge site covering more than 300 US cities giving information about local entertainment, it provided an online information guide to blood and its use, plus how and where to donate.



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

"I am a police officer with the Eugene, Oregon, police department. While my partners and I were looking for a shooting suspect, I was accidentally shot and received life-threatening injuries. As soon as I arrived in the emergency room, I received 5 units of blood to stabilize me for surgery. Without life-saving blood, I don't know if I would have survived. My wife and I express our undying gratitude to blood donors for giving the gift of life."

Jay Shadwick

In New Mexico, World Blood Donor Day was celebrated by United Blood Services with specially designed T-shirts for donors to commemorate the occasion. The shirts were given over two days to voluntary blood donors at five blood centres and mobile blood drives serving Albuquerque, Rio Rancho, Santa Fe, Farmington and Roswell (New Mexico), Durango (Colorado) and surrounding areas.

Additionally, the staff in the Roswell Centre treated donors to a barbecue and the Albuquerque Centre staff created a special event day to celebrate the ethnic diversity of the New Mexico population. A cultural theme which had costumes ranging from Irish and Japanese to Hawaiian and Native American Indian formed the decorations. To add to the festivities, local businesses contributed merchandise and gift certificates for drawings, and members of the Apple Mountain Dulcimer Club gave a special performance at the end of the day.

United Blood Services appreciated the opportunity to show recognition to voluntary blood donors with special events on this day of solidarity, during which over 500 blood donors were greeted and thanked.

URUGUAY

On World Blood Donor Day a ceremony honouring voluntary blood donors, presided over by the Minister, took place at the Ministry of Public Health. The press watched as blood donors were presented with certificates of appreciation. Afterwards, a reception sponsored by the representative from the Pan American Health Organization was enjoyed by all.





VENEZUELA

"I was diagnosed with paroxysmal nocturnal haemoglobinuria, an extremely rare condition. I didn't need many transfusions until I became pregnant. The first time I was worried that my baby wouldn't accept the blood. I tried to reassure her. I told my baby that this blood wasn't mine, but that it was the same type as my own blood and that it was going to travel through me to reach her. I know she accepted it because I didn't feel ill at any point. Now the only thing that worries me is whether there will be blood there for me when I need it because of shortages. I don't know who the blood has come from and I never do. But it's there for us: for me and my baby."

Doranna gave birth to a healthy little girl, thanks to the anonymous donors who made this gift of life possible.

VENEZUELA

The Venezuelan Federation of Voluntary Blood Donors (FVDS) prepared certificates for blood donors to show their appreciation. On World Blood Donor Day, the Municipal Blood Bank in Caracas held a ceremony attended by donors. The show, which took place in a busy square in the city, attracted sponsorship in the form of equipment, bands, and gifts such as toys and other souvenirs.

Many other blood banks around the country had local activities, all to do with recognition to donors and the raising of awareness among the general public through the media. An earlier workshop for blood bank staff on the promotion of voluntary donation gave the idea of having a poster competition. Posters were displayed on the day and then sent on to FVDS.

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN REGION

AFGHANISTAN

For the first time in the history of Afghanistan, World Blood Donor Day was celebrated in 2005, led by the Afghan Youth Blood Donors Association (AYBDA). Students and various dignitaries, including the Minister of Health, Dr Sayed Amin Fatimi, the Health Coordinator of the French Embassy, Dr Tissue, and the Chancellor of Kabul Medical University, Dr Charagh Ali Charagh, participated in the event, where they donated blood. The festivities, held in Kabul, were supported by the French Embassy who helped out with posters, banners, transport, rent for the venue and refreshments. Support was also given by CDU (Country Development Unit), an Afghan nongovernmental organization.

Fifty T-shirts, printed with the AYBDA logo, were given out to members. After the first celebrations at the Ministry of Health, the event moved to the University, where students were asked to donate blood.

Voluntary, non-remunerated blood donation has just started to get off the ground in Afghanistan. Until recently, ignorance about the processes involved meant that Afghans did not easily volunteer. AYBDA started with students from Kabul Medical University, who began donating blood voluntarily around three years ago. Now, more and more members come from the rest of the population, as people begin to understand what is needed. Patients, particularly those with thalassaemia, are benefiting.

The Association is currently run through subscriptions from members, but it is hoped that more support will come from the government in due course. World Blood Donor Day will become an important event in the calendar for Afghanistan.

EGYPT

There was plenty of advance preparation for World Blood Donor Day in Egypt. The National Blood Transfusion Center (NBTC) sought and obtained sponsorship from big corporations, such as Alamia, who provided financial help

for advertising and printing, Coca-Cola, who provided drinks and water for attendees at the celebratory event, and Glaxo-Smith-Kline. Invitations were sent out to registered blood donors and first time donors, and brochures were printed specially for the day. The media were approached and gave good coverage to the event.

Egypt was proud to contribute to the global event in London, by providing one of the photographs and stories for the celebration gallery in Trafalgar Square.

On 14 June, the celebrations took place in the evening at Culture Wheel, River Hall, an open space by the River Nile. Dr Ibrahim El-Kerdany, WHO Media Officer, presented certificates to regular donors and they and first time donors were also given T-shirts. A film about a blood recipient, a six year old boy, was shown, and the music entertainment was provided by Nesma Abdel Aziz and the Wust El-Balad band. NBTC also took the opportunity to launch its new web site (www.nbtcegypt.com). Refreshments included free drinks provided by Coca-Cola.

Other activities during the event included a quiz about blood donation, with prizes, and a stall for registration of regular donors. Mr Safwat Hegazy, a well-known religious leader, attended the event and spoke about the importance of blood donation and its influence on integration of the community.

The event had quite an impact. A number of new donors were recruited to become regular donors. Some had attended the event, but others came along afterwards, having seen news of the occasion on the television or heard about it on the radio. The media picked up on the blood service, and have since reported other occasions. In the blood service itself, the event sparked enthusiasm among staff to continue to keep donor recruitment as a high profile activity.

THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

The World Blood Donor Day celebrations in 2004 really boosted the role of existing voluntary blood donors, and

proved to be an incentive in attracting new donors. It helped to increase public awareness of how valuable safe blood donors are to the country.

The 2005 event had a similar aim, but the campaign was quite different. Young graphic designers were invited to design posters with the World Blood Donor Day theme. Iran Blood Transfusion Organization (IBTO) and Messi Graphics Workshop were partners in the event, which took place at Tehran Blood Transfusion Centre.

The works selected were put on display in the main foyer of the Blood Transfusion Centre, and were exhibited for the whole week. After the exhibition, a booklet of the best works was published.

At the same time as this exhibition, many activities were going on. Donors received special WBDD greetings cards signed by popular artistes and athletes who are regular blood donors. Interviews with donors were broadcast on the Islamic Republic of Iran's radio station. Throughout the country, the blood centres celebrated WBDD, with photograph and poster exhibitions and special leaflets.

JORDAN

Under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Muna, a ceremony was held to honour voluntary blood donors who give their blood regularly and without any thought of reward, saving the lives of millions of patients.

SAUDI ARABIA

Yaser is ten year-old boy who was diagnosed with thalassaemia major at the age of two years. He receives a blood transfusion every three weeks. Yaser is at primary school and gets excellent grades. His older brother (13 years old) takes care of him when he has to be admitted to hospital. For the time being, Yaser's life is dependent on regular blood transfusion. He is thankful to all blood donors for their understanding and cooperation so that he can live a reasonably normal life.

During the event, regular donors were presented with certificates of appreciation in recognition of their achievement. National Blood Bank Director, Janet Merza, noted that 40% of blood units in the previous year had come from voluntary blood donors, but the figure must rise to 100% to ensure maximum safety. To this end, publicity and informational material had been prepared and given out to the general public so that people would understand the importance of voluntary, non-remunerated blood donation.

LEBANON

On 14 June, to honour World Blood Donor Day, all donors were sent a text message greeting on their mobile telephones.



MOROCCO

The National Blood Transfusion Centre organized a number of events across the Kingdom of Morocco. In Casablanca, the regional blood transfusion centre had an open day with guided visits. Visitors could donate blood if they wished.

Voluntary blood donors received medals as a token of appreciation and recognition of their generosity. Celebrated under the title "Everyone can save a life", World Blood Donor Day was a day when all voluntary blood donors throughout the world were fêted, and Morocco joined in with a will.

OMAN

The Department of Blood Services, Sultanate of Oman, celebrated World Blood Donor Day on 14 June 2005 by conducting various social and sports activities. At a ceremony, speeches by blood donors and recipients of blood aimed to raise awareness among the general public about the need for voluntary blood donation, and to

educate the public about the requirements for blood on a day to day basis. Blood donors showed that giving blood does not harm the donor, and on the contrary it helps to save lives. A recipient of blood showed great gratitude to donors, and made a clear point about blood needing to be donated on a regular basis.

Mr Saif Bin Ahmed Al-Rawahi, the Under Secretary of Finance and Administration, Ministry of Health, inaugurated a specially designed postage stamp, which displayed the blood donation theme. The Department of Blood Services held a photograph and art exhibition with the theme of blood donation. Participants came from various institutions and centres. There was also an exhibition about the work of the Blood Services over the last 15 years.

Football matches were organized between four teams of donors over two days. This helped to show that blood donation is a healthy and safe practice.

In the evening, many kinds of activity designed with children in mind were put on. There were drawing competitions, face painting, a quiz on blood donation and games. The idea was to raise awareness of blood donation so that these young people are encouraged to become the voluntary blood donors of the future.

Posters with different target messages were printed in advance of the day, and 50 000 copies of a special information flier was distributed with the newspaper "Arabic News" to the general public. On World Blood Donor Day itself, 2 500 balloons with the WBDD logo and toffees were distributed among the general public, particularly to children. In the regional blood banks, different activities concentrated on showing appreciation to existing blood donors, and attracting new ones.

PAKISTAN

Sindh Blood Transfusion Authority, in partnership with other blood donor services, organized a major ceremony on 14 June where a number of voluntary blood donors and

organizations promoting blood donation were honoured. This was part of the week long campaign around World Blood Donor Day which was aimed at raising awareness among the general public of the need for safe blood and voluntary blood donors.

Other programmes were designed to attract more volunteer donors. The acting President and Senate Chairman, Modammadmian Soomre, spoke at a ceremony organized by the Fatimid Foundation, which works particularly for children with thalassaemia and haemophilia. He noted the fact that there are 8 000 people in the country who need blood each day, and the blood supplies can only provide sufficient for 4 000. He urged people to give blood for humanitarian reasons.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

The Department of Blood Transfusion Services, with the support of the Ministry of Health and in cooperation with other health institutes celebrated World Blood Donor Day in a variety of ways. All over the country, blood donation campaigns took place, with the object of encouraging voluntary, non-remunerated blood donation to save the lives of needy patients.

During the campaigns, brochures were distributed to the public about the process of blood donation and blood transfusion services. Well-equipped mobile blood vehicles toured the country for one week beginning on 14 June. During the week, more than 2 000 units of blood were collected.

In addition, parties were held to show appreciation for the humanitarian attitude of voluntary donors. These were attended by the Minister of Health and other well-known and popular personalities. They began with readings from the Holy Quraan, and were followed by speeches from the Minister of Health and from Dr Amin Al Amiri, Director for the Department of Blood Transfusion Services. He thanked donors for their kind hearts and humanitarian feelings. During the parties, around 1 200 blood donors were thanked, and were awarded a certificate of appreciation

and a small gift with the blood donation logo and the name of the donor. All these had donated blood on a regular basis, most more than 20 times, but a few around 70 to 80 times. Other people in attendance at the parties were urged to become donors.

One of the regular blood donors then spoke, expressing his happiness and pride in being a voluntary donor. He thanked the Ministry of Health and the Department of Blood Transfusion Services for the high standard of service available in the United Arab Emirates.

The evening was well covered by the media, which helped to raise public awareness of voluntary blood donation.



EUROPEAN REGION

ALBANIA

World Blood Donor Day was celebrated in Albania in 12 main Albanian Red Cross branches. It was intended to raise awareness of the importance of voluntary unpaid blood donation, and to encourage more people to become regular donors. It was particularly aimed at transforming healthy family replacement donors into regular, unremunerated donors, and also focused on younger people.

A number of messages were transmitted, including "Safe blood starts with me and you. Let's celebrate World Blood Donor Day together", "Give blood, give life! Your donation could make the difference between life and death" and "Giving blood says a lot about you".

A number of different strategies were followed. Support from the Ministry of Health, Blood Transfusion Services, United Nations agencies and the media was sought by means of a letter outlining the objectives of WBDD. The slogan "Blood – a gift for life. Thank you" was used, together with the WBDD logo in all materials and promotional items, such as pins, T-shirts, stickers, leaflets and posters. A press kit was put together and media spots in both public and private agencies were organized. Journalists were invited to give blood and then to report on their experience. City mayors around the country were requested to promote WBDD and to adopt voluntary blood donation as a campaign for the year.

Altogether, 120 volunteers were involved in the campaign from among the 12 Albanian Red Cross branches. They distributed 12 000 flyers, 6 000 posters and 6 000 leaflets. On WBDD itself, 136 donors gave blood, among them the Red Cross staff, the Mayor, and journalists. The following day, the event was broadcast on television.

AZERBAIJAN

At a ceremony held at the headquarters of the Red Crescent Society of Azerbaijan, donors of the year were presented with small gifts to mark the occasion of World

Blood Donor Day. The ceremony was attended by a number of distinguished guests, including Mr Augustin Gill, Regional Director of the American Red Cross Society for Europe, the Middle and Near East, officials of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, representatives from the Ministry of Health and many others.

The President of the Red Crescent Society of Azerbaijan, Novruz Aslanoc, recognized the importance of the collaboration with the Republic of Azerbaijan Scientific Research Institute of Haematology and Transfusion in the promotion of voluntary, non-remunerated blood donation.

During the ceremony, the results of a project to develop voluntary donation in Azerbaijan, undertaken by the Red Crescent Society of Azerbaijan and the Norwegian Red Cross, were announced.

ENGLAND

Matthew Bonner, aged 14, was diagnosed with a rare genetic immune disorder when he was a baby, needing regular transfusions of white blood cells. His only chance of a permanent cure was a bone marrow transplant, which he received in 2003. In gratitude to those donors he will never meet, Matthew said, "Over the past two years I have had two bone marrow transplants, needing lots of blood, platelet and white cell transfusions. Now, 18 months later, I am a normal teenager. Heartfelt thanks to all those very special people who donated blood giving me the chance of a normal life."

BELGIUM

On the occasion of World Blood Donor Day, the Blood Service held an open day to honour all voluntary donors for their generosity in helping to cure or improve the lives of thousands of patients. Everybody was welcome to come and participate.

More particularly, people who had already donated twice were encouraged to join in with the donor family and to



Journée mondiale du don de sang

«Célébrons ensemble la journée mondiale du don de sang !»
14 juin 2005



make a third donation immediately. The slogan was “Never two without three”. The Blood Service centres in Brussels, Namur, Liège and La Louvière were all open until late in the evening.

During the week before or after WBDD, all donors received a token gift of a cereal bar, sponsored by the Blood Service’s partner, Kellogs.

BULGARIA

Bulgarian Red Cross, the Ministry of Health and the National Transfusion Centre joined together to plan and undertake a national programme of celebration for World Blood Donor Day.

The first major component of the national programme was a series of television programmes on the main national and regional state and private channels from 14 June until the end of the month.

World Blood Donor Day itself, 14 June, saw open days in all the transfusion centres in the country. During the day, an awards ceremony was held in the premises of the National Council of the Bulgarian Red Cross. Among the guests were many donors and recipients, there to see ten voluntary repeat donors receive specially designed plaques and a certificate of honour. These were chosen from over 60 nominees from all over the country. Invited guests included directors of hospitals with the highest level of use of blood and blood products, representatives from state institutions, such as the National Parliament, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Health, National Transfusion Centre, pharmaceutical companies, President of the Bulgarian Union of Medical Doctors, President of the Bulgarian Association of insurance companies, many

journalists, Red Cross Youth volunteers, and the representative from the Regional Delegation of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Budapest.

CROATIA

KK was born in 1956 and was diagnosed in 1997 with megakaryocytic thrombocytopenia. During her treatment she was transfused with around 900 different blood components, mostly platelet concentrates. After two years of treatment, she is now completely well. She is pictured with her son.



COUNCIL OF EUROPE

To show solidarity with the rest of the world, staff at the Council of Europe took part in a blood collection on World Blood Donor Day 2005. In cooperation with the French blood programme, Alsace, it was agreed that this initiative should become a regular twice a year event from then on.

THE CZECH REPUBLIC

All over the Czech Republic, transfusion centres in different localities organized activities to celebrate World Blood Donor Day. A press release ensured that information about the events was broadcast widely. Czech radio helped by promoting voluntary blood donation, and collections took place in many of the cities. There are more than 360 000 registered blood donors in the Czech Republic, and the response was excellent.

The biggest transfusion centre at Brno held an open day and press conference. This centre was the first in the Republic to register as a company fulfilling the ISO 9001 quality standard.

In other parts of the Czech Republic, Golden Cross awards were presented to donors from the South Moravia region and Professor Jansky medals were given to donors from the Trebic region.

DENMARK

World Blood Donor Day in Denmark was announced on the cover of the national organization's magazine, which is distributed to all members. Donor Nyt (Donor News) reaches all corners of the country and so alerted all volunteers about 14 June and encouraged them to come and donate. Over 235 000 voluntary, non-remunerated donors received the magazine through the mail at their home address.

ESTONIA

North Estonian Blood Centre was proud to contribute two photographs and a short testimony to the celebration gallery in Trafalgar Square, London, on the occasion of World Blood Donor Day.

In Estonia itself, 14 June saw a big promotional campaign and the launch of a new television commercial that reminded people about the importance of voluntary, non-remunerated blood donation. Many events took place around the country in partnership with a number of private organizations and public institutions. People were encouraged to visit blood centres and donate blood. Donors were all greeted and thanked for their gift of life.

FINLAND

In Finland, 14 June was the launch day for an advertisement in all major Finnish newspapers. This carried the slogan "Thank you, Lifesaver". In the blood donation centre, in addition to normal refreshments of coffee or tea, juice and sandwiches, all donors were offered cake and were presented with a "Lifesaver" canvas bag.

A press release announced the purpose of World Blood Donor Day and was picked up by most newspapers.

ENGLAND

Shahana Hashmi, mother of Zain, 6 years old, gave thanks to the voluntary donors who had helped her son to live. Born with beta thalassaemia major, Zain's body does not produce sufficient red blood cells. He has to take a cocktail of drugs daily and needs regular blood transfusions. His mother said, "It is a wonderful thing for us to be able to say thank you. Without blood donation Zain simply would not be here today and instead of a happy family you would see a distraught one."

ESTONIA

Ädu (6) and Toomas (11) would not be alive if voluntary blood donors had not helped their mother Ädu-Krõõt several times. Ädu-Krõõt is a young woman who has had seven difficult surgeries and complicated pregnancies during which she needed blood transfusion. "I celebrate my birthday several times a year because I know what rebirth means. Thank you, blood donors!" says the mother of five happy children from Estonia.



FRANCE

At the national level, a press release was issued about World Blood Donor Day. At the same time, an article appeared on the web site of the French Blood Institution. In a number of different regions, events took place which were organized by the Associations of Blood Donors.

The main event in Nouvelle Calédonie on World Blood Donor Day was the organization of a day of tele-gifts. People were asked to telephone in their promise to give

blood at a later date, generally within the following two months, according to stocks and requirements.

The Blood Transfusion Centre had a free telephone number to sign up for the pledge. People could also go along to three sites in the town of Nouméa where members of the Blood Donors Association were available to hand out and collect pledge forms.

At the same time, to raise awareness among younger people, a poetry competition took place in schools. The

objective was to collect the 12 best poems on the theme of the gift of blood to make into a calendar to be presented to donors at the beginning of 2006.

GERMANY

On the occasion of World Blood Donor Day, the President of Germany received 70 voluntary blood donors and other volunteers involved in the blood donation programme from the German Red Cross. As representatives of the family of blood donors, they were invited to the Reichstag in Berlin, where they were offered a guided tour around the city after their meeting with the President. There was extensive media coverage of the event.

GREECE

Celebrations for World Blood Donor Day were a part of wider festivities in Greece around the organization of the 19th Conference of Volunteer Blood Donor Associations, which was due to be held in September.

The Conference was held in the city of Serres. Before the event, activities focused on raising public awareness of the important role blood donors play. Logos and posters were created, and many events led to good publicity over the year. Representatives from Blood Donor Associations from the Prefecture of Serres were invited to a meeting in the city's hospital in order to set up an overall committee to coordinate their activities.

This committee ensured that there was participation in a number of high profile events. These included the Panhellenic Conference on Thalassaemia held in Thessaloniki and the government-backed programme for schools, "Agogh Ygias", concerning voluntary blood donation. Blood drives were held in big hospitals and in small village schools.

World Blood Donor Day, 14 June, saw a press release and participation in television shows. With the publicity for

the Conference plus World Blood Donor Day information, the profile of the voluntary blood donor was raised, and there was greater public awareness of the importance of blood donation.

HUNGARY

For World Blood Donor Day 2005, the emphasis was on young people, so the high profile celebrations took place at Szeged, a large university centre. A ceremony was enacted where representatives from public life, such as the Minister of Health, the Director of the National Blood Transfusion Centre and the President of the Hungarian Red Cross were invited to help award first time donors.

At the event, a competition was launched for a slogan to strengthen the solidarity of donors. The title of the competition, aimed at higher education institutions, is the National Blood Donor Recruitment Competition. The

GREECE

"I have thalassaemia. I need a blood transfusion every two or three weeks to survive. I started transfusion at the age of six months. Thanks to the gift of life offered by many blood donors, I am standing here with my beloved wife living, working as a teacher and enjoying life! Society needs people to support and help each other; each offers something special to one another. We give thanks to donors for the gift of blood. It gives us in turn the opportunity to be productive and help other people."

Ioannis Athanasiou, aged 39



results of the competition will be announced at the 2006 World Blood Donor Day celebrations to be held in Pécs.

As well as the main ceremony in Szeged, all the Hungarian Red Cross branches held their own local celebration where donors were awarded and other colourful events saluted voluntary blood donors.

ICELAND

Before 14 June a press release ensured that the public were reminded that World Blood Donor Day was approaching. On 4 June, a Family Fun Day was held at the Sports Arena in Reykjavik. Races were held, with representatives from the Icelandic Blood Donors' Organization taking part.

On World Blood Donor Day itself, there was an open day at the blood bank. A private company sponsored grilled sausages, prepared outside the blood bank by Ólafur Helgi Kjartansson, head of the Icelandic Blood Donors' Organization, much enjoyed by visitors. Donors who visited the blood bank to donate blood were presented with a red rose as a token of appreciation for their humanitarian gift.

Newspapers in Iceland that day published an article by the head of the Blood Donors' Organization.

IRELAND

World Blood Donor Day in Ireland was celebrated with a well-known celebrity who is a regular ambassador for the Irish Blood Transfusion Service. Sharon Ní Bhéolain, a news presenter on RTE (Radio Telefís Éireann), took part in a photoshoot at the Blood Transfusion Service headquarters in Dublin.

She was photographed with a quantity of red balloons indicating the number of donations needed every day, and was also seen in one of the clinics with a regular donor. These photographs featured on main Irish newspapers the following day, with a press release launching World Blood Donor Day.

A Donor Awards Ceremony was held honouring 50 and 100 times donors, which is always done on a regular basis throughout Ireland.

ITALY



World Blood Donor Day was marked all over Italy by many different kinds of event covering a full week. The Blood Donor Association (AVIS) organized celebrations everywhere alongside the opportunity to give blood. For example, in Legnano on the Saturday before, a fête was held in the main square, with clowns and jugglers for entertainment. At the Post Office a special frank commemorated the day.

In Rimini, AVIS organized a beach volley ball competition over the weekend before. In Castelfranco, the AVIS branch there, to celebrate its 50th anniversary and the 25th anniversary of the cycle club as well as World Blood Donor Day, held a cycle rally. A night-time ramble was the activity in Castell'Arquato and Vigolo Marchese. In Fusignano, a marquee was put up from which volunteers gave out information about blood donation. A musical event followed in the evening. In Pordenone, the AVIS football squad took on a team from the town in a match with the theme "Together to celebrate the gift of blood".

Athletes from the Avis-Siemens Cycling Group in Cassina organized a 2 500 kilometre ride going across Italy to join the famous pilgrim route to Santiago de Compostela in Spain. One of them, Giovanni Merialdo, started at the end of May, and went alone all the way across Italy, France and Spain to Santiago. Two others, Giorgio Domaneschi and Gianfranco Locatelli left mid-June from Roncevalles, accompanied by a support camper van. The three, all publicizing voluntary blood donation, met in Santiago at the end of June.

Students from the University of La Sapienza in Rome donated blood at a mobile station in one of the main squares of the city. Publicity over this event was intended

to encourage other people to go to their own local donation centres. Blood supplies often decrease over the summer as people go away on holiday, and Professor Lucia Granati, President of the Federation of Blood Donor Associations, appealed to people to donate before they went.

KOSOVO

The Kosovo Blood Donor Society, National Blood Transfusion Centre and the Red Cross of Kosovo joined together to organize a number of activities to mark World Blood Donor Day.

Posters and flyers were produced which were distributed widely. The press was alerted, and took the opportunity to advertise the worldwide need for blood donors as well as the needs in Kosovo.

Blood centres in Kosovo held open days. A press event took place featuring the Minister of Health, the city of Prishtina Health Director and Director of the University Hospitals. A group of voluntary donors were invited to meet the President and Prime Minister, who also visited the headquarters of the Army and the Police, many of them regular donors.

Donors were presented with T-shirts and were sent greetings via their mobile telephones.

The main celebration took place in the capital city Prishtina. To show appreciation, donors were invited to a big cocktail party at one of the city hotels, and were then taken to the National Theatre to see one of the best comedies of the year.

MALTA

The mission on World Blood Donor Day was to intensify the national awareness campaign to encourage more individuals and donor groups to donate blood on a regular

basis. Malta Blood Donors Association (MBDA) and the National Blood Transfusion Service (NBTS) cooperated to ensure that a number of high profile activities took place.

On 11 June, a press conference was held with the participation of personalities from the worlds of sport, television and radio and entertainment. The following day, Holy Mass, dedicated to blood donation, was celebrated and was televised. At national sports events during the weekend, regular public address announcements about WBDD took place. Television and radio interviews and news slots were broadcast, newspaper articles were published and relevant web sites were updated. A special postmark stamp was produced for 14 June, marked "Save a Life – Donate Blood".

In the morning of 14 June, the NBTS had a mobile unit receiving donors in Church Square, Birkirkara, while officials of the MBTA and the NBTS made a courtesy visit to the President of the Republic. Union officials were in attendance. President Fenech Adami returned the courtesy later by visiting the mobile unit.

Later, the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition visited the Blood Transfusion Centre in G'Mangia, and were greeted by the Minister of Health, the Director of the Centre and MBDA officials. The Police Commissioner was also invited, as well as Civil Protection and Army officials. Archbishop Mercieca accompanied by church dignitaries visited the blood bank located in St Philip's Hospital.

Throughout the day, regular blood donors who had donated blood 10, 50 or 100 times were invited to come along to meet dignitaries in recognition of their noble gesture towards mankind.

MONTENEGRO

All 21 municipalities took part in celebrations for World Blood Donor Day across Montenegro. Voluntary blood donors were given appreciation and acknowledgement at celebrations organized by the Red Cross of Montenegro. In addition, a plaque was presented to the

municipality considered the most humanitarian place because of the incidence of voluntary blood donation. This year the Municipalities of Podgorica and Bar shared the title.

In addition to donors, other people and organizations who had actively promoted voluntary blood donation during the year were acknowledged and thanked.

Blood drives took place in Podgorica, Danilovgrad and Niksic. All events were followed by good press, television and radio coverage, helping to raise public awareness of the importance of blood donation, and keeping donors in the public eye.

NETHERLANDS

On 14 June, the Netherlands paid close attention to World Blood Donor Day. The celebrations were organized by Sanquin Blood Supply Foundation, the organization responsible for the blood supply in the country. The theme of this year's WBDD, "Proud of the donor" was chosen in order to spread the word that blood donors are special and that Sanquin, and indeed the world, is proud of them. In the Netherlands about 300 000 patients per year are dependent on blood or plasma which has been donated by volunteers.

Towards the end of May, the theme was disseminated by means of a poster campaign in blood donor centres and in hospitals. On the posters, six specialists in haematology from academic hospitals put into words why blood donors are indispensable to the treatment of their patients. The theme was further highlighted by sending press releases to national and regional media organizations in advance of WBDD.

A few days before 14 June, donors received their magazine "Bloedverwant" which was devoted to WBDD. Included with the magazine was a small gift, a sticker for a mobile telephone.

On 14 June, persons who came in to donate blood or plasma were given special treatment. The donor centres

were exuberantly decorated and donors were offered fancy pastries with their coffee. Some donor centres were visited by a local government official who gave thanks and appreciation to the donors present. Several local and regional broadcast stations showed interest by visiting donor centres to conduct interviews and shoot some film, broadcast later in the day.

Two national newspapers published a full page advertisement which showed Sanquin expressing gratitude towards all donors. The advertisements used pictures and quotations from the haematology specialists.

In addition, donors were encouraged to leave a message on Sanquin's web site about why they had become a donor. About 250 people contributed and some of their stories were very moving. The stories were available for a short period of time on the web site, and were an engaging method of calling attention to blood donation. Some stories were also published in "Bloedverwant".

The activities surrounding WBDD resulted in attention being paid to blood donation in both local and regional media, a higher turn-out in donor centres and a considerable number of new donor registrations.

SCOTLAND

Premature baby Ryan Snitcher, just 10 weeks old on World Blood Donor Day, weighed only 877g when he was born 14 weeks early. He needed immediate heart surgery to repair a leaky valve in his heart and received a dozen blood transfusions. His mother Francesca said, "The blood Ryan received saved his life. We have been told he would not be here today had it not been for these donations." His father Jeroen outlined his plans to become a regular voluntary blood donor, now he understood just how important it is. He said, "Giving blood is something that never really crossed my mind before. I always thought hospitals had enough but now I know how precious it is I plan to give as much as I can to help other youngsters like Ryan."

NORWAY

Norway needs more blood donors and World Blood Donor Day is recognized as being a good opportunity for blood banks to get themselves noticed, in one way or another.

This time, the Norwegian Red Cross Blood Programme offered all blood donor recruiters the chance to recognize and thank their blood donors by giving them the gift of a rose. On the day, all donors who chose that particular day to donate blood were greeted and presented with a beautiful flower.

For this scheme, Norwegian Red Cross set up a partnership with a retail organization, Mester Grønn, who agreed to provide the flowers at cost price. In some areas, where Mester Grønn does not operate, blood banks were asked to make arrangements with local retailers to provide the flowers, and then to invoice the Red Cross.

At the same time as this initiative, a press statement was released, and the resulting press coverage coincided with a hard-hitting poster campaign.

POLAND

With 21 regional blood centres in Poland, World Blood Donor Day celebrations took place everywhere across the country. This very special day offered a unique opportunity to focus public attention on thousands of people who made the decision to volunteer the most precious gift that anyone can give to another person.

WBDD received full coverage in national and local mass media under a variety of entries and catchwords such as “Accidents and surgeries never rest – blood is in demand every single day, every single minute and all the year round”. In programmes broadcast throughout the country radio and television paid tribute to those who had already given their precious gift of life and encouraged others to donate blood. Local radio stations broadcast special concerts for blood donors. Posters featuring celebrities were distributed.

The Post Office was kept busy. Thousands of congratulatory postcards, letters and leaflets were sent out to honour and thank all individual blood donors, as well as high schools, universities, military units, industrial enterprises and all other contributors to blood donation activities. Mobile telephone text messages were also extremely popular.

WBDD celebrations were accompanied by a wide variety of cultural events such as a Health Quiz in Bialystok where contestants showed off their knowledge of the blood transfusion service, and a Science Festival in Zielona Góra where the regional blood centre gave a first aid demonstration. There was also an exhibition of blood collection and preparation procedures showing traditional and modern blood collecting equipment, supported by a series of lectures on the history of blood transfusion medicine. Other parts of the campaign carried headings such as “A drop of blood in summer” and “Young people with their gift of blood”.

Official ceremonies, attended by local and national celebrities, honoured blood donors, and were often followed by less formal recreational events such as picnics, sports competitions, fishing derbies, barbecues, auctions, rock music concerts and fiestas.



ROMANIA

University Square in central Bucharest was the scene for World Blood Donor Day celebrations in the capital city of Romania.

A quantity of human silhouettes coloured red were connected by a red thread, symbolizing blood donation. There was also a mime in and around the scene, with a big red polyester drop of blood.

Volunteers, some of them with sandwich boards showing promotional posters, urged passers-by to consider the idea of blood donation. Flyers were distributed to the general public.

On 18 June, the Romanian National Red Cross Society, sector 4 branch, with the City Hall of the same sector, held a charity performance in the Children's Palace Park to

honour voluntary donors. The event was attended by Prince and Princess Paul of Romania. Princess Lia, who was involved in Red Cross activities in the United States after the 1989 earthquake in San Francisco, addressed the public commending the activity of the Romanian Red Cross Society.



An audience from all walks of life greatly appreciated a performance which included singing from Children's Palace groups, a soloist with the Romanian Opera of Brasov, Vitali Dumintru, a choral group from Tagoviste Conservatory and pop groups Etnic, Haiducii and Blink-Blink.



THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

The Russian Transfusionist Association, officials from blood centres, blood donors and patients all took part in activities for World Blood Donor Day in the Russian Federation. Press conferences were held with the participation of the World Health Organization representative in the Federation. Reports on television and radio followed, plus many articles and other information in the newspapers.

Voluntary blood donors were nominated for national awards. More than 250 donors were awarded a certificate appreciating their contribution to their own community. The Best Donor 2005 award had several categories. An award was presented to Shinkareva Natalya from Kaliningrad for his splendid record of more than 13 litres of blood and over 167 litres of plasma. Legashov Anatoly from the Omsk region won an award for 180 donations and 80 litres of blood, and Rulev Valentin from Kaluga was presented with an award for over 163 litres of plasma.

SERBIA

In the ten largest cities in Serbia, synchronized street manifestations took place on 14 June, World Blood Donor Day. The main display took place in the Republic Square in Belgrade, where a mobile blood donor session also took place. Young volunteers from the Red Cross of Serbia distributed specially designed leaflets and balloons carrying the WBDD message. A gigantic white balloon with the same message hovered over the scene.

Over 50 000 leaflets and 30 000 balloons were given out on the day. The Minister of Health of Serbia, Dr Tomica Milosaveljevic, joined in the celebrations, which were reported by all the major media. The opportunity was also taken to launch a campaign under the theme, "Your five minutes, someone's whole life", designed to promote voluntary blood donation at the national level.

In addition, over 300 young people took part in a "race of humanity" on the outskirts of Belgrade. This race was

designed to promote the idea of healthy lifestyles consistent with voluntary blood donation, as well as being a fitting end to the celebrations for World Blood Donor Day.

SLOVENIA

Celebrating the National Blood Donor Day and World Blood Donor Day only 10 days apart is very convenient for Slovenia. The National Blood Donor Day is 4 June, in recognition of the anniversary of the first official blood collection in Slovenia after World War II. This year was very special, being the 60th anniversary. The Blood Transfusion Centre of Slovenia and the Slovenian Red Cross therefore started celebrations a little early.

The main celebration took place in the capital city, Ljubljana. A special publication on the anniversary of transfusion medicine was published. With the title "Life goes on", this publication was free of charge and was distributed to many societies and organizations, especially those who were able to promote the positive aspects of blood donation.

At the Blood Transfusion Centre, an exhibition showed a remarkable set of pictures, photographs and sculptures created by students from schools in Ljubljana. The premises were decorated with hundreds of balloons displaying the logo and motto of World Blood Donor Day. All blood donors received a special thank you gift.

Television, radio, press and online coverage was strong. Representatives from the Blood Transfusion Centre and the Slovenian Red Cross, as well as many blood donors were interviewed on several news programmes on national television, commercial television and radio stations. Almost no Slovenian newspaper missed reporting about the importance of the blood supply and about the activities organized for this purpose.

On 14 June, a new media campaign began with the slogan "This is a special day. I'm giving blood", focusing largely on donor recruitment. There were television and radio slots as well as a printed advertisement in the newspapers. Most of the slots were free of charge.

On 18 June, Slovenian Red Cross, supported by the Blood Transfusion Centre of Slovenia, organized a large traditional open-air meeting, in which several hundreds of blood donors from all parts of the country took part.

SPAIN

A National Blood Donor Day has been celebrated in May in Spain for the last 18 years, but since 2004, 14 June has been the day in which all the events showing appreciation and acknowledgement of the donor have taken place.

During the week before 14 June, across the whole of Spain, hundreds of different activities proclaimed World Blood Donor Day. There were news programmes, lectures, social events, competitions and press conferences. In fact around 2 000 different events were related to the day. In these activities, more than 50 blood donor associations and 28 transfusion centres took part, together with health authorities and collaborating organizations.

The week culminated in a solemn ceremony which took place on 14 June at the Ministry of Health. The motto and logo of World Blood Donor Day were displayed prominently. At the ceremony, "great donors", or donors who had donated more than 75 times in the past received awards. There were 413 donors in this category coming from all over Spain. National merit awards were also awarded to 20 individuals or organizations who had promoted voluntary blood donation. Those receiving awards, whether donors or promoters, came from donor

associations belonging to the Spanish Federation of Blood Donors.

The special event was organized by a partnership between the Spanish Federation of Blood Donors, the Ministry of Health and the National Foundation for Voluntary, Non-remunerated Blood and Plasma Donation.

SWEDEN

Sweden is self-sufficient in blood products, but new blood donors are always welcome. That is why events on World Blood Donor Day are important. In the country, there are more than 410 000 registered voluntary donors, or 5% of the population, with around 260 000 of these donating blood at least once a year.

There are about 90 blood centres, most of them at hospitals run by local government. A few blood centres have moved out of hospitals to places where it might be easier for donors to attend to give blood, such as shopping centres. There are also blood buses operating in cities and country villages and visiting larger companies.

World Blood Donor Day is marked by events for voluntary blood donors. As announced in the newsletter "Geblood" (Give Blood), one of the ten Blodomploppet or Blood Circulation Races was held for the first time on WBDD in Uppsala. These races, held between May and August in ten towns had more than 30 000 participants in 2005. The prize for the year's blood donation effort was awarded at the event.

TURKEY

Nuri, a 25 year old mechanical engineer has sickle-cell disease. Diagnosed at the age of three, has needed a blood transfusion monthly since then. He is very grateful to blood donors for his health and energy. He says that every blood donor is a hero and every blood donation is a gift of life. He has had dozens of units from people he will never know. In his own words, "Thank you for your gift of life and for my health".

TURKEY

Baris, now aged 29, was diagnosed with sickle-cell anaemia in 1981. Every month since then she has received one or two units of blood. A graduate from Hacettepe University Biology Department, she likes to keep an eye on what is happening in research about her illness. She is very happy that 14 June has been chosen as a day to honour blood donors, and wants to thank donors for her health and celebrate the day with them.



In Scania, the red carpet was rolled out, and red roses were given away to everyone turning up to donate blood on 14 June.

SWITZERLAND

The Swiss Blood Transfusion Service marked World Blood Donor Day on 14 June with a special gift presented to all voluntary blood donors coming to donate on that special day. Big posters were placed in all blood transfusion centres in Switzerland reminding people about the importance of the day. Some regional blood centres celebrated the day in their own way, with a number of different events.

Shortly before 14 June, a special pop-up page on the Blood Transfusion Service's web site reminded donors of the day and of the need for donors.

A press release was sent out on 13 June, resulting in good coverage. The information given out stated that the high level of safety in blood donations had continued to be maintained, but that there was a worrying trend of decrease in the number of donations offered.

TURKEY

The Turkish Red Crescent Blood Services Department joined together with blood banks, the Transfusion Society and the Ministry of Health to organize World Blood Donor Day activities. The goal was to ensure that all Turkey learned about the significance of the day, and that all voluntary, non-remunerated blood donors should be acknowledged and thanked.

On June 14 radio broadcasts across Turkey thanked blood donors. In 29 cities, including Ankara, Istanbul and Izmir cocktail parties were arranged, at which donors who had donated more than 35 times were presented with medals and plaques. In Izmir, donors were taken on a sea trip.

Posters were distributed throughout the country, greetings cards were sent to thank all blood donors, and the Turkish Red Crescent web site had a message thanking all donors.

Television programmes gave information about the day, and also thanked all voluntary, non-remunerated donors. T-shirts with the WBDD logo were presented to donors. National banks agreed to put a text message on all their automatic cash machines.

TURKMENISTAN

With support from the Ministry of Health and the Medical Industry, World Blood Donor Day was celebrated on June 14 in Ashkhabat with a conference. Representatives from agencies such as the World Health Organization, AED/USAID/START Project, Turkmen State Medical Institute, regional blood centres and the media received information packages and booklets in Russian about safe blood.

Dr Karriyeva, the WHO Liaison Officer, presented the World Health Assembly's Resolution on World Blood Donor Day and short films were shown on World Health Day in 2004 and on clubs for young donors around the world. The conference continued with delegates invited to take part in role-plays about blood donation topics.

Turkmenistan has a national system for collecting, storing, and providing donor blood to patients, but at the moment in practice, patients still remain dependent on donations from families or friends. Evidence from around the world demonstrates that voluntary, unpaid donors are the foundation of a safe blood supply because they are least likely to transmit potentially life-threatening infections to the recipients of their blood, but no promotional programmes have until now existed in Turkmenistan to encourage people to volunteer their blood.

The event in Ashkhabat highlighted the importance of strategies to attract a new generation of blood donors, particularly young people with healthy lifestyles, and resulted in a set of recommendations on improvements to be made to the national blood transfusion services and the promotion of voluntary donation.

SOUTH-EAST ASIA REGION

BANGLADESH

The Blood Transfusion Society of Bangladesh (BTSB), the association which brings together voluntary blood donors, organized a number of events for World Blood Donor Day in 2005. A seminar and discussion on the significance of the day was held, designed to raise public awareness of the issues of safe blood and the need for more voluntary donors.

Motivational events were carried out in a number of institutions, and there was a blood drive held at the Department of Transfusion Medicine, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, Dhaka. This was organized jointly by the BTSB, a Badhon-Dhaka University student-based organization, and Sheba Bangladesh, a nongovernment organization.

This event was followed up during the rest of the year with a number of indoor and outdoor blood camps.

BHUTAN

On 11 June, members of the 83rd National Assembly, headed by the Honourable Speaker, came forward to help sick people by participating in a blood donor drive that day. Present for the occasion were also Cabinet Ministers, the National Assembly Secretary, Dzongdags and other representatives of the people.

Blood transfusion services are hospital-based in Bhutan, and mostly rely on family and replacement donation. Shortages of blood are often faced by the blood banks. The National Assembly therefore felt that a high profile blood drive would be the best way to educate and inform the people living in all 20 districts about the importance of voluntary blood donation.

The main feature of the programme on that day was a talk given by the Secretary of Health, who emphasized the fact that human beings are the only source of blood as there is no substitute for it. He went on to underline the advantages of voluntary blood donation over replacement

donation and to reassure as to the priority given to the safety and health of blood donors in the donor recruitment and selection campaign. He also gave information about the technical aspects of blood, such as the lifespan of blood units, the safe blood donation interval and the use of blood components so that every single unit of blood is used to maximum advantage.

The altruistic spirit behind a blood donation and the joy of bringing smiles to many sick patients was emphasized by a donor. A laboratory technician at a central hospital who had donated 38 times in his life shared his experience with the audience. He helped to reassure potential donors that there was no risk to their own health.

Out of 111 Assembly members, aged from 30 to 60 years of age, who registered to give blood, 77 members met the donor selection criteria and went ahead to donate blood.

The event was covered by national television, Bhutan Broadcasting Services, and went out on the air in the daily news bulletin. It certainly helped to raise awareness of the need for regular, non-remunerated donors, and to show that blood services everywhere celebrate this day in order to thank and show appreciation to their donors. In Bhutan, the blood transfusion services and all people working in the area of health very much appreciated this humanitarian gesture from the National Assembly.

INDIA

All over India, events took place in celebration of World Blood Donor Day. Every event had in common the main

INDIA

Three years ago, Kishan Kuman Bharghava lay sedated on an operating table. Before he went under the surgeon's knife, he needed five units of rare AB-positive blood for the bypass operation. The blood came from voluntary donors. Today the owner of a printing press is a sprightly 56 years old, and lives the hectic life of an entrepreneur.



theme for the day in 2005, which was appreciation and thanks to donors for their gift of life. The Indian Society of Blood Transfusion and Immunohaematology (ISBTI), the only voluntary national body working for the promotion of a blood programme based entirely on voluntary, non-remunerated blood donors, held mass rallies with banners and posters, quizzes, seminars, blood donation camps and ceremonies to honour blood donors in all States, but particularly in Rajasthan, Gujrat, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Delhi, Chandigarh, Jammu, Karnataka and Kerala.

In Delhi, a blood camp organized by the Indian Red Cross Society was attended by nearly 2 000 people. Donors arrived on motorcycles from all over the city. The camp was opened by Health Minister, Yoganand Shastri.

In Kerala, different organizations joined together to carry out a number of ceremonies to honour blood donors and those organizations playing a strong role in the promotion of voluntary blood donation. Partnerships were formed between the All Kerala Blood Donors Society, the Police

Department, the Kerala State AIDS Control Society, the Kerala State Blood Transfusion Council, Kerala blood banks and so on.

In Madhya Pradesh the State AIDS Control Society oversaw projects to set up blood donation camps organized by the medical colleges and district hospital blood banks and held at various educational institutions, industries and banks. Political leaders, including members of Vidhan Sabha, Ministers, Mayors, President of Nagar Palikas and Members of Parliament participated in these activities.

In Orrissa, voluntary blood donors giving more than 20 and 50 blood units were presented with silver and gold medals and a certificate of appreciation. A Red Cross vehicle donated by Honourable Member of Parliament, Mr Rudra Narayan Pani was inaugurated and was dedicated to the service of blood donation camps in rural areas. A motor cycle and car awareness rally was held with participation from members of voluntary blood donors associations, nongovernment organizations and college students.

Placards, handbills, banners, stickers and a public address system helped to spread the message about the importance of voluntary, non-remunerated blood donation.

In Kota, capital of Rajasthan, a mass rally lasting all day was held. A big procession with banners and posters kept the public informed about the event. Once assembled together at the ISBTI headquarters, quizzes were held among the audience, who came from schools and colleges, scouts and guides organizations, blood banks, nongovernmental organizations and ISBTI. Two blood donation camps were held in different locations, and 194 units of blood were collected. In the evening, speakers at a ceremony and seminar on safe blood transfusion highlighted the role of voluntary blood donors, showing appreciation and thanks for their humanitarian acts.

In Andhra Pradesh, Osmania Medical Doctors' Forum, a voluntary body of doctors of the institute, supported World Blood Donor Day. In the 2005 celebrations a blood donation camp organized by a major political party saw political activists donating blood and recipients of blood thanking all donors.

In Tamilnadu, the Sithi Vinayagar Blood Bank, Salem, celebrated by sending greetings and thanks to all voluntary blood donors and by also encouraging young people to donate blood.



In West Bengal, the Association of Blood Donors of West Bengal organized blood donation camps, display hoardings, posters, car stickers, a cavalcade and tableaux, a workshop for donor motivators, television and radio spots and newspaper articles. Events culminated in a convocation to honour donors and donor organizers.

In Chandigarh, the Blood Bank Society and students of St Stephens School joined together to promote voluntary

blood donation. Students, carrying red and white balloons, spread the message across the city. Petrol pumps in the city carried banners which thanked blood donors.

MYANMAR

A number of events were planned around World Blood Donor Day in Myanmar, with the motto "Celebrating your gift of blood". The inaugural ceremony was held in Mandalay city, organized by Mandalay Division Myanmar Red Cross Society Supervisory Committee, and with guests from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Divisional Health Office, government Blood Transfusion Service and other organizations concerned with blood and blood safety. Around 500 guests were there to see awards and thanks given to voluntary blood donors.

In the town of Moenyo (Bago Division), Myanmar Red Cross volunteers and other voluntary blood donors attended a blood drive at the National Blood Centre in Yangon, followed by an award ceremony to appreciate and thank all donors.

Between 14 and 16 June, a training course was given to blood donor recruiters in Mandalay. A total of 30 participants from the seven urban districts of Mandalay Division took part in the event, which was flagged as a commemorative event for World Blood Donor Day.

INDIA

Surbhi Sethi is 21 years old, and a graduate from Delhi University. She is thalassaemic. Every month, she needs two units of blood transfused



to help her cope with the anaemia which is the result of her condition. Surbhi is determined to make the best of her life because of the lifeblood she has received from people she will never know. Surbhi and her family send their love and prayers to those selfless donors.

At Kyaing Tong, the capital of Eastern Shan State, an awards ceremony was held where recognition was given to donors who had given more than 100 times. A follow-up blood drive took place. On 15, 16 and 17 June, talks about blood safety and blood donor recruitment, with blood grouping offered afterwards, were given at Kyaing Tong Degree College, Government Technical College of Kyaing Tong and Maing Phyak Township Red Cross, targeted specifically at young people.

NEPAL

Whole day blood drives took place on 14 June in two locations in Nepal. The first was at Nepalgunj City and the second at Kohalpur Medical College. In the city, there was an informative rally with a display of photographs. The World Blood Donor Day motto was prominent and leaflets and brochures were handed out.

Recognition was given to voluntary blood donors in the form of special certificates and tokens of appreciation and esteem. Donors who had given more than 10 units of blood were specially recognized.

SRI LANKA

In the two weeks leading up to World Blood Donor Day, a big effort was made to interest the media so that the message about the importance of voluntary blood donation would be widely disseminated in time for the day itself. On 1 June, around 60 members of the media visited the National Blood Transfusion Centre. The visit was followed by a press conference on 8 June, with 55 participants, including the Minister of Health, the Director of the National Blood Transfusion Centre, the Director of the Health Education Board and the WHO Consultant for Blood Safety.

On 14 June, a donor congratulation and appreciation event took place. Recipients of blood, a thalassaemia patient and a haemophilia patient spoke of their gratitude for the gift of life given by unknown voluntary donors. Awards

were presented to voluntary donors and donor organizers, as well as to blood banks and blood bank staff. The winners of a Thank You card competition were announced. A street drama with the theme of blood donation provided the entertainment.

Two other functions took place in the provinces of Anuradapura and Badulla to thank and recognize blood donors.

A campaign to raise public awareness of voluntary blood donation was also conducted in newspapers, radio and television programmes. Banners, posters and handbills were distributed all over commercial capital, Colombo. At the same time, pledge forms were developed to expand the donor database. People who filled them in pledged to become a regular donor. These blank forms were kept at many different locations, such as banks and food outlets, so that people could easily access them.

THAILAND

The National Blood Centre, Thai Red Cross Society, the Committee for Recruitment and Promotion of Voluntary Blood Donors and the Provincial Chapters of Thai Red Cross joined together to organize the celebrations for World Blood Donor Day on Sunday 12 June at the National Blood Centre.



As well as celebrating World Blood Donor Day, the day also marked the 50th birthday of Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, Vice-President and Chairman of the Thai Red Cross Society.



Activities were varied. A “Thank You Wall” was set up for recipients of blood to express their thank you notes in writing. A photograph competition for the Landsteiner Award was held with the theme of “Thank You...Donors”. The award winner and runner-up were happy to pose for photographs themselves to publicize the event. There was a display from the Thalassaemia and Haemophilia Club

showing how essential the donation of blood is to sufferers. A walk and rally took place, and there was a blood drive.

Posters, pins, T-shirts and television advertisements helped to spread the message about World Blood Donor Day and its theme “Celebrating your gift of blood”.

WESTERN PACIFIC REGION

AUSTRALIA

In 2005 World Blood Donor Day fell during Operation Lifeblood, an ambitious campaign to recruit 40 000 new blood donors across Australia. This was launched in May and lasted for 13 weeks. As part of the campaign, the Australian Red Cross Blood Service's mascot, Captain

Lifeblood, went about the country generating plenty of media activity and attracting new donors.

For World Blood Donor Day, the Governor General of Australia volunteered to record a broadcast announcement which featured on television and radio, thanking blood donors and calling on more Australians to

CHINA

"When I came to I realized that I was lying in the hospital and all my hair was gone. I had a zigzag scar on my scalp. I didn't remember anything, but my father told me that I was hit by a taxi cab that was out of control. I was badly injured, with broken legs and huge blood loss. I was unconscious for three days. My father told me I had to have 20 units of blood, without which I would not be alive today. I just want to deliver a glowing tribute to those who helped me out, nurses and doctors of course, but particularly those voluntary blood donors who are strangers to me, but who gave me their gift of life. I would just like to say what kind benefactors they are, and to me they are real heroes. I thank them."

Mei QiuXiang, a 19-year old girl from AnHui Province, was badly injured in a traffic accident in Shanghai early in 2005



support the Operation Lifeblood campaign. Former Australian of the Year and specialist burns expert, Dr Fiona Wood, also showed her support with a photograph alongside campaign mascot, Captain Lifeblood, which was distributed widely and was picked up by daily and weekly newspapers across Australia in time to mark WBDD.

At a regional level, football stars from well-known league teams the Parramatta Eels and the Penrith Panthers showed their support for Sydney's blood donors, with representatives from both teams making appearances at their respective blood donor centres.

Celebrations also took place in a number of locations around Australia. In Tamworth, residents who had cause to be grateful for the gift of blood joined with donors at the festivities. One donor, Daniel Alderson, made his 126th donation, having been a donor for 45 years. Mary Carter started in 1942 during the Second World War, and clocked up 120 donations. Blood recipient Stuart Holmes expressed his thanks to repeat donors like Mr Alderson and Ms Carter, and said that without the generosity of voluntary donors, he would not be alive.

CAMBODIA

In 2005, under the theme "Celebrating your gift of blood", the Cambodian Red Cross Society (CRC) and the National Blood Transfusion Centre (NBTC) marked World Blood Donor Day with a number of different activities. The biggest issue in Cambodia is the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS and the dependence on family replacement donors to obtain sufficient blood for the country's needs. Only 20% of the blood supply comes from voluntary, non-remunerated blood donors whose blood is safer than that of family replacement donors. One of the proven strategies for increasing voluntary blood donors is to improve donor retention and recognition. Since this group of blood donors has already been identified as low risk for HIV, there is a great need to encourage them to return for further donation by making them feel valued and recognizing their efforts.

The 2004 World Blood Donor Day campaign helped to focus attention on the issues. Building on successful activity then, 14 June 2005 was celebrated with voluntary, non-remunerated blood donors and other organizations covering a range of sectors in Cambodia.

The main event was a public recognition ceremony in Phnom Penh to thank blood donors for their unique gift. Individuals who have been regular donors and institutions that have helped promote voluntary blood donation received special recognition during the ceremony, receiving medals and certificates. Donors and recipients of blood shared inspirational stories with the audience which contributed greatly to raising public awareness of the importance of voluntary blood donation. Among those invited were the Prime Minister and other government Ministers, CRC and NBTC authorities, voluntary blood donors, other volunteers, school directors, chief monks and celebrities.

During June 2005, CRC and NBTC launched a large-scale promotional campaign. Its aim was to advertise World Blood Donor Day and to promote the importance of voluntary blood donation. Advertisements appeared on billboards, brochures, posters and in television spots. During this time, special souvenirs were handed out to repeat blood donors when they donated.

CHINA

World Blood Donor Day was celebrated nationwide in China on 14 June. In every part of China, events were organized to celebrate the day, thank blood donors and to promote voluntary blood donation. The Health Ministry took the opportunity to announce excellent progress in numbers of people donating blood voluntarily in China. From 5% in 1998, the figure soared to 79.4% overall during 2004, while one province, Henan, has achieved 100%.

Activities throughout the country included mobile blood donation stations being set up in different towns in the provinces: Shijiazhuang, capital of north China's Hebei

Province, Wuhu in east China's Anhui Province, and Xining in northwest China's Qinghai Province. In Beijing, Yang Lan, well-known television hostess and Pu Cunxin, famous film actor, who have for many years been ambassadors to the Ministry of Public Health in China, donated blood at the Red Cross Blood Centre. Both celebrities are household names in China. They joined donors yesterday giving 200 millilitres of blood each at the blood centre. "I am an ordinary citizen. I donate blood every year for those who are in need," said Pu, "but as a public figure, I want to encourage people to help save lives".

Guan Lihong who works at the Beijing Blood Centre celebrated her 55th birthday yesterday by donating blood, something she has done twice a year for many years. It is the last time she will be able to give blood, as selection criteria do not allow people over 55 to donate. After giving blood herself, Guan went back to work at the Blood Centre to help all those other donors who came to donate blood. "Thanks to the millions of people who give blood voluntarily, thousands of lives are saved everyday. I am honoured to be one of the donors", said Guan.

In Shanghai, there were a number of different events. Shanghai Blood Centre and the local Blood Donor Volunteer Team organized a celebration at Changfeng Park. The winner of the nation's first blood donor award, Qiu Zhiqing headed a deputation of around 50 regular

donors. The general public were treated to a performance by the Xiejin Student Art Group of Shanghai Teachers' University. Health officials ran a quiz on blood donation knowledge. Expatriates banded together to show their solidarity with the local citizens and donated blood. A new club for rare blood groups was set up to promote knowledge of Rh negative blood donation and blood use.

In Zhejiang Province, a big celebration was held in the capital Hangzhou to commemorate the day. More than 600 representatives of blood donors who were from every city and district participated in the celebration. Donors who had given many times on a regular basis were given recognition and thanks. In Shaoxing, the festivities were designed to express sincere gratitude to blood donors for the love they showed in giving. In Huzhou, exhibition boards showed information about blood donation, brochures were handed out, and an expert team answered questions from citizens about blood knowledge and policy. ZhaoYong, a student from Zhejiang University of Technology testified to the love shown to him from his classmates whose donated blood saved his life when he suffered from respiratory function failure owing to Guillain-Barre Syndrome. Zhang Congcong from Ningbo felt that blood donors are real heroes. She folded one thousand paper cranes to present to them and to wish them safe, healthy and happy all their lives.

In Hong Kong Special Administration Region, the Blood Transfusion Service invited the public and those who had received a transfusion to express their appreciation to blood donors. The campaign to collect expressions of thanks and gratitude started in May, and arrangements were made to ensure that blood donors saw extracts from

CHINA

"I think every day for me is thanksgiving day. I want to give thanks to those who have generously helped me, and who go on supporting me physically and spiritually. Thanks go to my family and friends, but also to all the voluntary blood donors who are strangers to me, but are willing to share something of their lives to save the lives of others. There is nothing more noble. No human words can really capture what the blood and tissue donors did. I would just like to offer my sincere thanks for giving this blood recipient the chance to live."

Yangyong, a 22-year old college student diagnosed with leukaemia



the campaign via different media nearer to World Blood Donor Day. On the day itself, the Annual Donor Award Ceremony was held to present awards to donors who had donated more than 50 times, including the record-holder who had donated more than 325 times. Donors who had donated more than 25 times also received awards at an earlier ceremony. Special heart-shaped pens were presented as part of the award.

In Macao Special Administration Region, the Blood Transfusion Service started off the celebrations for World Blood Donor Day with a "Walk for Life" held in the Natural Park on 5 June. About 1 000 blood donors and their families, top government officials and members of the Legislative Council enthusiastically participated in the event. It was followed by an exhibition with the theme "Giving Attracts Blessings" in the City Square on 14 June. Voluntary blood donors were given thanks and recognition by doctors and blood transfusion recipients. Regular blood donors also gave messages of encouragement to others to follow their example. The highlight of the World Blood Donor Day celebration was the blood donor awards ceremony and dinner on 24 June. Certificates and awards were presented to blood donors who had donated for multiples of five times. Top government officials and recipients of blood transfusion were invited to present the awards.

FIJI

World Blood Donor Day was celebrated in Fiji in the three main divisions, Central/Eastern, Western and Northern. A one day programme held in Lautoka included an award ceremony for blood donors who had donated 10 units and above. Vomo Island Resort chef Mohammed Zavir Zamal, aged 25, was the youngest regular donor and received a certificate. Assistant Health Minister Tomasi Sauqaqa gave a stirring message about blood safety and voluntary donation. The general public were invited to attend, and as well as witnessing donors recognized and given thanks, saw schoolchildren taking part in a speaking competition with prizes. A blood drive was held at Khalsa College in Ba which collected 28 units of blood.

JAPAN

World Blood Donor Day was celebrated in a number of Japanese Red Cross Blood Centres in the country. Campaigns were run to familiarize the general public with the aims of the day, and also to express recognition and thanks to donors. Regional blood centres used their web sites for information about World Blood Donor Day, and also handed out posters and leaflets. In the street, free advertisement pocket tissues were given out. Radio and television broadcasts publicized the day. On 14 June itself, mementos were presented to donors with expressions of gratitude.

THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

In the city of Vientiane and Savannakhet Province, celebrations for World Blood Donor Day started with a media campaign to raise the profile of the event in the public eye. Television and radio spots, banners and posters gave out information. The newspapers printed an interview with the President of the National Blood Transfusion Committee which was picked up by television and radio.

In Vientiane, a competition was organized around the World Blood Donor Day slogan, and a mini-marathon was held which attracted around 1 000 people. In Savannakhet Province, a ceremony was held where certificates and medals were given to blood donors to express thanks and appreciation. A number of dignitaries, including government officials, members of the Blood Transfusion Committee and community leaders attended the ceremony, in which students and the general public also participated. Blood drives were also organized, and more voluntary blood donors were recruited.

MALAYSIA

Chairman of the National Blood Programme, Dr Haji Bahari bin Datuk Abu Mansor was the guest of honour at

the event held at Kota Kinabalu, Sabah on 12 June to celebrate World Blood Donor Day. The Chairman of Malaysian Red Crescent Society (MRCS) Sabah Branch, Tuan William J Chai, and Chairman of the national MRCS, Kuala Lumpur were also honoured guests.

MONGOLIA

In order to raise public awareness of the importance of voluntary blood donation, materials related to blood safety and blood provision were translated into Mongolian and published in the newspapers Udriin Sonin (Daily News) and Uneeder (Today) in advance of World Blood Donor Day. Other publicity material included a billboard for the streets dedicated to World Blood Donor Day and four different posters.



An award ceremony was held to thank five voluntary, non-remunerated blood donors, who were presented with badges, notebooks and pens. In addition, the three best organizations that had very successfully promoted voluntary blood donation received awards.

NEW ZEALAND

World Blood Donor Day was celebrated in New Zealand, but also marked with a plea for more donors to come forward. The Chief Executive of the Blood Service reassured the public that there was sufficient blood in stock right then, but that if donor numbers fell, there could be a shortage. Donor numbers have fallen, but the demand for blood and blood products remains high.

One donor who knows the value of blood gave her story while she was donating blood. Television personality Lana Coc-Kroft needed two transfusions when she contracted a rare virus from a coral cut. She was in a coma for nine days, but the two transfusions saved her life. Back to health again, she was giving her own gift of life to publicize the need for more New Zealanders to make voluntary blood donation a priority. She had been a donor for more than 20 years, but it was needing blood herself that made her realize just how important the act of giving blood can be. "It's humbling to think your contribution can have such a positive impact on someone's life", she said.

PHILIPPINES

The Department of Health, The Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC) and the Philippine Blood Coordinating Council (PBCC) joined together to organize a number of events for World Blood Donor Day.

Posters, streamers and leaflets were distributed around hospitals, schools, shopping malls, transport stations and other public areas. Throughout the month of June, a media campaign on television, radio and newspapers helped to support the activities.

In the capital, Manila, the programme started early in the day with messages from Undersecretary of Health, Ethelyn P Nieto and PBCC President, Dr Elizabeth Arcellana Nuqui. Testimonies from blood donors and blood recipients were heard. The celebration attracted a large crowd with a Blood Olympics Cheering Exhibition by students, a dance display by the Blood Programme mascots, Don and Donna, and a short concert featuring performances by talented entertainers from the hospital, the Philippine Army Band and celebrity guest artistes. Promotional items such as bags, pens and memo pads were given out, and donors received thank you cards. In addition, the day was chosen for the launch of a comic book on voluntary blood donation, initiated by the PNRC and the Happy Hearts Foundation of Asia. During the day 95 units of blood were collected from voluntary donors.

An annual pledge programme was also launched. Pledge donors aged between 18 and 25 were sent reminder birthday postcards.

Nationwide, many different events took place organized by Department of Health Centres, local government, PNRC Chapters, government and private blood facilities, Blood Galloners Clubs and other stakeholders. Events included mobile blood donation camps, seminars and lectures on voluntary blood donation, a motorcade, photograph exhibitions, and a poster-making competition.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

The official programme for World Blood Donor Day included the first appearance of the new logo of the blood service, which has moved from the Papua New Guinea Red Cross Society to the Order of St John, following an agreement signed between the Health Department and the Order.

Students and staff of Port Moresby Grammar School and Gordons Secondary School took part in the celebrations. Young people are the main target audience of the blood service, with encouragement to become regular, voluntary, non-remunerated donors. Currently around 50% of donors

are family replacement donors. Dr Umuli Aeno, Blood Service Director, told the audience that voluntary unpaid donors are the safest, and this is why it is necessary to phase out replacement donation.

After the ceremony, the audience was offered a tour of the blood service facilities.

SINGAPORE



World Blood Donor Day 2005 built on the success of the event in 2004 when the Singapore Red Cross, together with the Centre for Transfusion Medicine of the Health Sciences Authority and the support of Bloodmobile Organizers carried out a series of activities over six months starting in February and

ending in June. A "Wall of Thanks" carried thank you notes from patients and people whose lives were touched by blood donors.

For 2005, Singapore Red Cross wanted to involve the community and corporate organizations, especially the hospitals, in the celebration of this important and meaningful day to commemorate the contributions of blood donors.

All the major hospitals in Singapore were invited to participate as partners in the collection of thank you notes from recipients of blood and their friends and relatives. Posters were given to hospitals to put up in the hospital compounds. During visiting hours, Red Cross volunteers at the hospitals invited visitors to sign a thank you card. These heart-shaped thank you notes were tied to beanie bears, sponsored by TV Asia, and were presented to blood donors on World Blood Donor Day. On 14 June, donors were invited to a party at the Padang, where a picnic dinner was followed by a film show. Speaking at the celebration, Senior Minister of State for Health, Balaji Sadasivan honoured voluntary blood donors, calling them community heroes.

“CLUB 25” - ATTRACTING YOUNGER DONORS

Young people, who tend to be healthy, idealistic and motivated, are an excellent pool of potential voluntary unpaid blood donors. Recruiting and retaining youth donors not only improves the long-term safety and sufficiency of a country's blood supply, but can also reduce the prevalence of HIV/AIDS and other infections by promoting safe lifestyles among young people.

In the original Club 25 programme, first launched in Zimbabwe in 1989, students pledged to donate blood 25 times by the time they reached the age of 25; the commitment now varies depending on the country. For example, Club 25 members in Malawi (aged 16-25) pledge to donate blood at least 25 times in their lifetime; in South Africa, the pledge is to donate 20 times by the age of 25. Part of the pledge is to maintain a healthy lifestyle in order to provide the safest blood. The Club concept can also embrace young people in this age group who cannot donate blood but choose to volunteer their service to further the overall aims of the Club 25 programme.

The Club 25 concept (also known as “Pledge 25 Club” or “Pledge 25”), has proven to be a remarkably effective and relatively inexpensive way of targeting youth donors. Club 25 is designed specifically for young people. By attending a blood centre and belonging to a Club they learn about healthy lifestyles and share what they have learned with their community. These young blood donors can also remain active in health promotion activities by fighting against HIV/AIDS, substance abuse and other health risk behaviours, as well as promoting, for example, first aid, good nutrition, physical exercise and road safety.

The philosophy behind Club 25 is to be open and honest with young people, providing clear guidelines about blood donation criteria and facts about the best HIV/AIDS protection based on the evidence available, and then allowing young people to make their own choices.

This philosophy is working: in Zimbabwe – where about 70% of the blood collected is from students – the HIV infection rates among blood donors fell from 4.45% in 1989 to 0.35% in 2005, when the infection rate in the sexually active population was 21.3%. In South Africa, within four years of implementing a Club 25 Programme,

the South Africa National Blood Service reported that the HIV infection rate among Club 25 blood donors was 0.04% in a country where HIV prevalence is around 26-28%.

The Malawi Club 25 has only been operational for two years and the two Club 25 leaders there, who are in their early 20s, tell of their experience:

“As well as promoting healthy behaviour, Malawi Club 25 provides opportunities for social interaction and collaboration at global level. There are positive effects to all members for personal development and leadership skills. Many club members will become successful professionals and leading figures in their communities and some will be appointed to positions at national level and even in international organisations. The acquisition of leadership skills for personal development and growth through social interaction at different levels is an important aspect of the Club.”

Strong Club 25 programmes – where youth benefit from up to 10 years of positive reinforcement and education regarding their HIV negative status – have the potential to spawn a generation of HIV negative adults who also have a lifelong commitment to the concept of regular donation of safe blood after they leave school.

Several countries in addition to Malawi, South Africa and Zimbabwe have established a Club 25 or similar youth donor club, including Bangladesh, Botswana, Haiti, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, Swaziland, Togo, Uganda and Zambia. Experience has shown that successful Club 25 programmes require:

- High-level support;
- Adaptation of the concept as appropriate to each country's unique situation;
- Careful planning prior to implementation;
- A dedicated budget;
- A dedicated, responsible and committed staff member;

- Support and commitment from youth, who should drive the programme;
- Constant monitoring and evaluation.

While the initial planning and development process for a Club 25 may be more time- and resource-consuming than for traditional “top-down” approaches such as advertising campaigns – Zimbabwe’s programme, for example, was developed through an intensive, long-term, peer-based participatory process – the extra effort should be well justified by the outcome.

INTERNATIONAL CLUB 25

A new initiative has just been launched with the support of the World Blood Donor Day sponsoring organizations.

The establishment of an international network to link leaders of Club 25s around the world will allow members of the clubs to share their experiences with other countries, and give young voluntary blood donors the opportunity to experience social interaction and collaboration at a global level.

As new Club 25 programmes are implemented in many countries around the world, many more young blood donors will have the chance to forge links with others, broadening their perspective and their horizons. As role models and peer educators in their own communities, they will, by their example, influence the health and well-being of their country.

International Club 25: One world...one blood.

You can read more about the International Club 25 initiative on <http://www.ifrc.org/youth/activities/club25>

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International Federation
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