

# VolunteerView

Fall 2011 • Heart of America Region Blood Services • 405 W John H. Gwynn Jr Ave • Peoria, IL 61606

Dear Volunteers,

I would start by saying I hope that you are enjoying the season but instead I will just say 'brrrrr'. As a season, fall (my favorite by the way), was almost non-existent. Winter is roaring in. I predict a first snowfall is just around the corner.

This fall was a very productive one for our Volunteers. In October, **Maureen Gebhards** opened a nursery school called **Polliwogs**. Good going Maureen. Many of our Volunteers wrapped up their gardens for the season and brought in the last of their winter harvest. Thanks to **Bob Wegner** for bringing in wonderful green tomatoes. I have a good recipe for them if anyone would like it.

We reactivated the donor suitability assistant position and had three Volunteers **Mike Lison**, **Shelby Sterling** and **Mick O'Neil** volunteering their time. Mick apparently created an Excel program that greatly decreased the paperwork that goes along with donor suitability. **Kazia Blair** who supervises the donor suitability assistants is very impressed and thankful for the change.

On Sunday, November 6th the **Peoria Friendship House of Christian Service** honored **Phil** and **Patricia Webber** with the Individual Recognition award. If you recall, Phil and Patricia also

won the **2010 Humana Awards**.

I was saddened to see several Volunteers leave including my Volunteer Recruitment Assistant, **Jessie Lunini**. Jessie had been with me since September 2009 and knew my system in and out. She will be greatly missed. I was fortunate though to get a replacement from the **Experience Works** program. **Maseleen Monte** is my new Volunteer Recruitment Assistant and I am happy to have her with us.

On October 9th, we collaborated with the **American Red Cross Central Illinois Chapter** to have a potluck before going to catch a Peoria Rivermen game. **Sue Barlow**, Volunteer Coordinator and **Anne Fox**, Executive Director joined me and several Volunteers and their family and friends at the chapter. Everyone brought a delicious dish and Sue and I provided the chicken. Afterwards we all made our way over to the Civic Center to watch the game. It was my first Rivermen Hockey game and I have to say it was exciting and very fun. Please read the article on page 4 for more information about the Rivermen.

As you know, each year I choose a new theme to honor **American Red Cross Volunteers**. The theme for 2012 is **Hats off to our Volunteers**. Thanks much to my coworker **Deb Motsinger** for coming up with the theme. My

2011 fall intern, **Troy Pritchard** is working hard on designing the anniversary and birthday cards for next year. Troy also designed the invitations for the **2011 Holiday Open House**. This year the Open House will be on Wednesday, December 7th from 8:30a to 10:30a. Unfortunately, we are back to being in one room but so it will be cozy. You should have already received your invitation. I hope you can join us for breakfast.

As my 5th year of being a Red Crosser draws to a close, I want to, as always, thank each of you from the bottom of my heart. You are such a wonderful group of people. **Hats off to You** for all that you do for the American Red Cross.

Sincerely,  
Lisa Balraj  
Volunteer Recruitment



# Spotlight On:

## Volunteer: Ray Williams

Ray Williams is only weeks away from his one-year anniversary volunteering with American Red Cross! He has been picking up and delivering blood for the Hospital Services Department since January 1st, 2011. Aside from Red Cross, Ray also volunteers at a number of other agencies. He serves as a finance officer for The American Legion 1151 and is on the board of directors for the Tri County Peoria Urban League. Ray has been serving on The Urban League board for over twelve years.

Ray chose to volunteer at American Red Cross because he knew it was a great way to give back. His favorite part about volunteering at Red

Cross is meeting people at the different hospitals around Central Illinois to which he delivers blood. Ray ventures out as far as Paris in Southern Illinois and Hannibal, Missouri. Both towns are more than 3 hours away from Peoria and add up to 300 mile round trips each. When asked what he would tell someone in order to get them to volunteer at ARC, Ray said, "You meet a lot of great people. It's a very well organized firm so you can be sure they know what they're doing. My application process was more thorough than when I worked for Caterpillar!" Ray has provided American Red Cross with his invaluable time, experience, and commitment. Thanks for all your help Ray!

## Department: Center Collections

### *What does the department do?*

The Center Collections department is responsible for collecting blood from American Red Cross donors. However, there is much more to it than that. After the blood is collected, we use hi-tech blood separating technology to split all the different parts of the blood into groups for specific transfusion purposes. Some of these different parts that the blood is separated into include platelets, plasma, granulocytes, and stem cells. All of these parts are useful for specific cases where people are lacking in these particular blood components. Stem cell collections from autologist donors are of particular importance due to the vast medical treatments they can be used for.

### *How do volunteers help?*

There are a wide variety of tasks that volunteers help out with in the

Center Collections Department. Cyndi Ambrosch is the Aphaeresis Collection Manager. She specifies in the collection of platelets and plasma. (Those volunteers who are familiar with blood separating technology assist Cyndi in splitting up the platelets, granulocytes, plasma, and stem cells into different groups for collection.) Other volunteers help out by staffing the desk and making sure that donors are comfortable when in the process of giving blood. Some volunteers make popcorn and provide snacks to the donors to make sure that they have enough stamina and nutrition during and after the blood donation process.

## Department Volunteer: Center Collections

### *Volunteer: Nishi Malhotra*

Nishi has been working in the Center Collections department since

# Spotlight Gallery:



## Volunteer spotlight:

*Ray Williams*  
"Hospital Services Driver"  
(Left)

## Department Spotlight:

*Cyndi Ambrosch*  
"Collection Manager"  
(Right)



## Department Volunteer Spotlight:

*Nishi Malhotra*  
"Center Greeter"  
(Left)



July of this past summer. She maintains the greeter position at the front desk. Some of her duties as a greeter include signing off vendors when they come to the building, meeting and greeting walk-in blood donors, and answering any questions about donating blood that walk-ins might have. She has brochures on hand but is almost always able to answer any question herself. Nishi has volunteered a lot in the past and has taken up the hobby of organizing blood drives. She helps out with blood drives here and also organizes a drive up in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Nishi says that she enjoys working as a greeter because it is a great way to give back and make friends with new faces every day. Nishi believes in what the Red Cross does and is glad to be able to help. Thanks, Nishi!

# 11 Reasons To Volunteer

## 1. Give back!

Many people consider their volunteer work to be one of the most rewarding aspects of their life. The feeling of gratitude you get from helping those in need is like none other!

## 2. Make a positive difference.

Improving the community around you is an unparalleled good deed. Every single volunteer can help out significantly. Leave your impact on society by helping out the less fortunate all around you! Here at Red Cross, you can make an impact on a patient in need of lifesaving blood by donating every 56 days.

## 3. Have fun!

Volunteering is not all work and no play! Most volunteers are caring, fun-loving people. Any group of volunteers can have fun implementing even the most simple of missions. There are plenty of ways to better your community while laughing along with friends in the process. At Red Cross, our volunteers keep our blood donors company while providing them drinks and making them popcorn!

## 4. Try new things.

The ways you can volunteer are often fairly flexible. You can choose to help out in a variety of different ways. You can even suggest new events or activities to further impact your community. Try starting a blood drive at your school or workplace! You never know. It might just catch on and start a revolution!

## 5. Build your resume.

Volunteering helps your career! Companies love to see a good amount of community service and volunteer work on an application/resume. Volunteering shows that you have an interest in your community.

## 6. Meet new people.

Volunteering is a great way to connect with people with similar interests. It's the perfect environment to create new friendships that will last a lifetime. You would be surprised how many connections you can make through volunteering.

## 7. Learn about different cultures.

Many different types of people volunteer. You will meet with people that come from all sorts of different backgrounds. Whether it's a global relief project or serving soup at a homeless shelter, you can gain invaluable insight into what life is like for countless people. Volunteer at American Red Cross and learn about the people's lives that are saved by blood donation!

## 8. Share knowledge and experiences.

Many people, who are established in their careers, or at retirement age, are often at the point when they want to give back. What you know can help out just as much as what you do. Professional volunteers are needed to keep large volunteer organizations operating in today's ever growing society.

## 9. Feel needed.

Volunteers are needed every day. You are a valuable provider to the ones you are helping. This is especially true in blood donation. Only 38 percent of the world is eligible to donate blood and out of that, only 3 percent actually do! The need is constant.

## 10. Because you can!

Don't ask, "Why should I volunteer?" but "Why shouldn't I volunteer?" You are bound to get a rewarding experience out of all the time you put forth bettering the world around you. The American Red Cross greatly appreciates every volunteer. We have new volunteers sign up all the time! Whether you volunteer with us or any other not for profit group, you can be sure that it will be well worth your time.

## 11. Volunteering helps you live longer!

Volunteering is a great way to keep yourself busy and positive. According to a Heath Psychology study, volunteering to help others and not yourself might help you live longer. In the study, they took a random sample of Wisconsin high school students in 1957. The students were given a survey asking about their volunteer habits. Years later, the results found that the respondents who said they volunteered to help others lived longer than those who said they did it for their own benefit or not at all.

# The Volunteer Crew

The Peoria Rivermen are a local professional hockey team. They are part of the St. Louis Blues farm system. Recently, the hockey club put together the Volunteer Crew program thanks in part to James Celkis, the creator. Celkis explained that the purpose of The Volunteer Crew is to recognize and encourage volunteers in the community around Peoria. Created this summer, The Volunteer Crew is still in its infant stages.

Lately, The Volunteer Crew has recognized volunteers around Peoria by providing them with free tickets their season opener versus the Rockford Ice Hogs. Volunteers from multiple organizations attended the game. Most notably were **The American Red Cross: Blood Services & Central IL Chapter**. Celki provides special thanks to Red Cross's Volunteer Recruitment Representative, **Lisa Balraj** because she gathered close to 30 Red Cross volunteers and staff to attend the game. Before the game began, staff member **Cheryl Kohn** was given the honor of dropping the first puck on the ice. Kohn was honored for being an exceptional collections manager for Red Cross as well as for being a breast cancer survivor. The timing of the event was perfect

since Kohn had her final breast cancer treatment only two days prior to the game.

Overall, the Volunteer Crew has been a success so far with its events recognizing volunteers. Celkis hopes that through these events the Volunteer Crew can build lasting relationships with volunteers and begin to grow as a non-profit organization. Celki says he was inspired to create The Volunteer Crew by the Chicago White Sox's volunteer organization called Volunteer Corps. He is currently recruiting interested persons for the cause and is looking to gain further support from The Rivermen's front office, coaching staff, players, and fans. He says he hopes to do more with this organization, and hopefully it will become its own entity and bring in more volunteers. Right now, Celkis says he looks forward to teaming The Volunteer Crew with more volunteer organizations like the **Boys & Girls Club**.

Look for The Volunteer Crew in the future! "There is a lot in it for you including a free Riverman Game!" Celkis says. "You get to meet a lot of new people not to mention the sense of personal satisfaction you get from helping out others in need!"



*James Celkis (above) attended the game along with the rest of the volunteers. James is responsible for the creation of The Volunteer Crew.*



*Volunteers received free tickets for the game. T-shirts were also raffled off during a potluck at Red cross shortly before the event.*



*Red Cross Volunteers root on The Rivermen during their bout with The Icehogs.*

## A word from a Red Cross employee: Maseleen Monte

"I have a long term relationship with the American Red Cross", says Maseleen Monte. "The work the American Red Cross devotes to people in dire situations is phenomenal. I worked for the Red Cross from 2003 to 2005 as a contractor at the headquarters office in Washington, DC. My title then was technical writer-editor. I worked at the call center in Virginia answering calls and providing assistance for people devastated by fire in California in 2003. Volunteering, to me, is no different from paid work at the American Red Cross. The Volunteer department here is well organized and the staff treats the Volunteers with respect. They also do a good job with letting Volunteers know how much they contribute and how valuable their time is to American Red Cross."

# Anniversaries For Fall 2011:

*The following volunteers are celebrating their volunteer anniversaries this fall.  
The American Red Cross says thank you to all of its wonderful volunteers!*

## September

Deborah Hollenberg Sept. 1st, 2010  
 Lauren Piggush Sept. 2nd, 2010  
 Holly Czappa Sept. 4th, 2007  
 Robert Bliss Sept. 7th, 2010  
 Mavis Hermann Sept. 12th, 2009  
 Philip Webber Sept. 14th, 2005  
 Chris Campbell Sept. 15th, 2008  
 Jenni Campbell Sept. 15th, 2008  
 Mike Mathews Sept. 15th, 2005  
 John Reynolds Sept. 15th, 2009  
 Jacob Hemann Sept. 22nd, 2010  
 Kathleen Hillard Sept. 26th, 2001  
 Jane Funk Sept. 29th, 2008  
 Kirk Kessler Sept. 30th, 2003

## October

Homer Gurtler Oct. 1st, 1989  
 Lonnie Owens Oct. 2nd, 1982  
 Marcia Bragg Oct. 6th, 2008  
 T. Mongkolrattanotha Oct. 6th, 2009  
 Emily Hoerr Oct. 7th, 2008  
 Linda Leib Oct. 12th, 2007  
 Lee Hallahan Oct. 13th, 2009  
 Joshua Williams Oct. 13th, 2009  
 William Shipley Oct. 18th, 2001  
 Kyle Massey Oct. 18th, 2010  
 Jack Hathaway Oct. 19th, 2011  
 Derrick Poole Oct. 19th, 2010  
 Verna Sanders Oct. 20th, 2010  
 Adam Holloway Oct. 20th, 2010  
 Ernest Bruns Oct. 22nd, 2001  
 Don Frintz Oct. 22nd, 2003  
 Mark Hughes Oct. 26th, 2010  
 Courtney Stephens Oct. 27th, 2008  
 Beth Dubois Oct. 28th, 1993  
 Andrew Brown Oct. 28th, 2008  
 Richard Knowles Oct. 28th, 2008

## November

Perry Van Beek Nov. 1st, 2005  
 Danielle Teslow Nov. 3rd, 2010  
 Richard Alexander Nov. 5th, 2001  
 Marion Moreland Nov. 12th, 2007  
 Nancy Throckmorton Nov. 16th, 2006  
 Chris Null Nov. 17th, 2008  
 Jan Raitt Nov. 22nd, 2010  
 Armando Hendon Nov. 23rd, 2010  
 Karl Stach Nov. 29th, 2006

## December

Dorothy Witzig Dec. 1st, 2003  
 Janet Marshall Dec. 2nd, 2002  
 Rodger Marshall Dec. 2nd, 2002  
 Alfred Eskildsen Dec. 2nd, 2003  
 Dave Foster Dec. 3rd, 2009  
 Dave Stroemer Dec. 3rd, 2009  
 Leah Laxton Dec. 7th, 2010  
 Dana Flowers Dec. 8th, 2010  
 Mike Tubbs Dec. 10th, 2007  
 Robert Funk Dec. 14th, 2006  
 Thomas Keegan Dec. 14th, 2006  
 Ronald Goetze Dec. 16th, 1998  
 Harold Ericson Dec. 24th, 1998



*All spotlights, stories, & layouts  
written and designed by Fall  
2011 Communications Intern,  
Troy Pritchard.*

# New Volunteers In 2011

*This is the first year at Red Cross for our new Volunteers who have  
joined this fall. Thank you for joining The American Red Cross Team!*

## August

Barb Veach Aug. 8th, 2011  
 Alison Pierce Aug. 15th, 2011  
 Jessica Innis Aug. 15th, 2011  
 Madelyn Garrott Aug. 16th, 2011  
 Laquantey Buckley Aug. 17th, 2011  
 Colby Hughes Aug. 27th, 2011

## September

Haroon Zahid Sept. 8th  
 Leah Kleiber Sept. 12th  
 Sara Mitchell Sept. 12th  
 Natalie Foster Sept. 14th  
 Sidney Lovell Sept. 15th  
 Mike Lison Sept. 20th

## October

Tiffany Grant Oct. 4th  
 Jessie Johnson Oct. 8th  
 Mark Nepumeceno Oct. 14th  
 Troy Pritchard Oct. 18th  
 Shelbie Spierling Oct. 18th  
 Michael O'Niel Oct. 18th  
 Angel Slaughter Oct. 19th  
 Nadine Lautzenheimer Oct. 26th