

TVUUC Blood Drive Handbook

Personnel

It is helpful to have at least a two or three person committee or task group, although one person can sometimes conduct a blood drive adequately. Having more than one person involved offers a chance for continuity of experience from one drive to another. It also facilitates having enough personnel to get people signed up to donate; it can be a drag for one person to feel obligated to be at church from before the first service till after the second service for two to four Sundays in a row.

Date(s)

Blood drive dates should be selected well in advance. Start by consulting the church calendar, because one can't have a blood drive when there is a potluck lunch after church, Family Promise, the Hops and Hope run, or any number of other church events. It's debatable how much attention needs to be paid to the UT athletic schedule, school calendars, the alignment of the stars, and other arcane factors; consider those if they are important to the organizers, but otherwise you can probably ignore them. Any date will be bad for some people. Try to identify dates that are generally good for TVUUC, and then check with Medic Regional Blood Center to see which one works best for them. Once a date is confirmed with Medic get it protected on the TVUUC calendar. It has been judged that blood drives work only when we are having two services.

If you are attempting to have both a fall and a spring blood drive, it might be a good idea to establish both dates at the same time.

Medic Regional Blood Center

Attempt to negotiate with Medic Regional Blood Center an arrangement that really gives us a chance for maximum benefit from the blood drive. In order for the blood drive to give coverage for all TVUUC member households we would have to get donations from 1/3 of that number (currently probably someplace between 100 and 150 households). Medic says it counts the donations at the blood drive and those from people who say they are donating for TVUUC 30 days before and 30 days after the blood drive date. Realistically, we cannot take enough donations at any one blood drive to reach that goal, and I'm not sure they track carefully the additional donations. If they counted all donations within a 12 month period, we might well make that goal.

Medic is generally good about providing a lot of publicity materials. We also have a lot left from prior drives. There is a plastic storage box in the "mail boxes" in the office work area that contains pamphlets, T-shirts, and other materials. Use what you think will work for the drive you are putting on. Past drives have used the T-shirts to make the people stand out who are try to get folks signed up. Medic will create posters, and may prepare bulletin inserts that can be used a week or two before the drive; someone from the committee should offer to insert them rather than expecting office staff to do that. Medic will prepare a sign-up sheet in 15 minute increments for the committee to use in getting prospective donors signed up.

Publicity

Publicize early, often, and variously. Once a date is established, get a notice out via newsletter or maybe “Announce 2” e-mail.

The two or three newsletters preceding the blood drive should each have different stories explaining the how and why of the blood drive. The newsletter after the blood drive should have a “thank you” story.

Use as many as possible of the electronic media associated with TVUUC to get the word out. Be imaginative in finding ways to frame the message.

On Sundays when you are getting people to sign the Medic schedule sheet, be sure you have the Board member on duty supplied with a succinct and motivating announcement to read.

There is a list on the church software of TVUUC folks who have been blood donors; have staff send these folks an e-mail letting them know that they can sign up on Sunday. In the best of all possible worlds, figure a way to get them signed up on-line before the first Sunday. It is conceivable that, especially if a better “contract” can be negotiated with Medic, we could function with one on-site blood drive and then periodic e-mail reminders to regular donors that they are probably eligible to go in and donate again.

Signing People Up

Be inviting and slightly assertive about getting people signed up to donate. Sometimes a table has been set up in the foyer or the Greg McKendry Fellowship Hall, but at other times having someone rove with the sign-up list on a clipboard has worked better.

The best participation we have had in a blood drive was the year when we had one person getting people signed up to donate and had two or three other people with petitions to the Food and Drug Administration questioning the blanket exclusion of gay men as donors. People as they signed the petition could be encouraged to sign up to donate. Even people who couldn't donate (gay men, people with medical conditions or histories, people who had recently traveled to England, etc.) could happily gather petition signatures and urge others to give blood. This was a one-time thing, but it may suggest to you a way to broaden participation.

Day of the Drive

Be on hand to help welcome the Medic crew and get them into Greg McKendry Fellowship Hall. They handle their own set-up, but may have questions for you.

Have committee members encouraging walk-ins to donate blood. It is almost always possible to accommodate people who volunteer on the spot.

Try to devise a system so that non-donating church members don't take the goodies (soft drinks, cookies, etc.) that Medic has set out for donors. (Good luck on this.)

*Gordon Gibson
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