

Red Cross recognizes Damascus Lions Club as Community Hero

FOR THE FREDERICK NEWS-POST

In observance of March as Red Cross Month, the American Red Cross Greater Chesapeake and Potomac Blood Services Region recognizes the Damascus Lions Club as a Community Hero. The club is one of four Red Cross regional sponsors highlighted by this commendation.

In the GC&P Region, the Red Cross must collect more than 1,100 units of donated blood each day of the year. The Red Cross relies on sponsors like the Lions Club to help recruit blood donors to constantly replenish the region's blood supply. Charlie Hertel of Damascus serves as the blood drive coordinator and is greatly responsible for the continued success of every Lions Club blood drive.

"I feel driven to supply the community with blood due to having known people that have needed blood," said Hertel. "The best lead is by example. I got involved with the Lions Club to do the blood drives."

To date, the Lions Club has provided more than 6,500 blood donations from volunteer donors in the Damascus community. Each unit of blood collected is processed and then sent to area hospitals, where it can help up to three patients per donated unit. The Lions Club — with support from the Damascus community — has provided life saving blood for thousands of area patients.

"Sponsors like the Damascus Lions Club play a very important and contributing role in helping area patients," said Katie McGuire, director of marketing and communications for the American Red Cross GC&P Region. "When sponsors demonstrate such leadership and ownership of blood drives, this encourages even more donations that help more patients."



Courtesy photo

Pamela Davis of the American Red Cross honored Charlie Hertel and the Damascus Lions Club as Red Cross Community Heroes.

The Damascus Lions Club has sponsored community blood drives for more than 11 years with an average of five blood drives annually. Nearly every blood drive collects donations from approximately 100 volunteer blood donors.

Hertel also commands support from local merchants to increase the success of each blood drive and thank those who generously come out and donate blood. Hertel commonly partners with the local Safeway and Kentucky Fried Chicken to receive discounted or donated breakfasts or lunches during blood drives. The Lions Club also plays movies for children to watch while parents donate blood. Child care is even provided during blood donations to create an even more inviting atmosphere.

The Damascus Lions Club is a 61-year-old organization and is one of 45,033 Lions Clubs world-

wide. Its mission is to serve; with a focus on sight and hearing impairments and solutions. Lions Club blood drives support their overall mission of service to their community. During March, the Red Cross also recognizes Griff's Landing of Frederick, Verizon Business of Ashburn, Va., and the Greater Hanover, Pennsylvania Red Cross Chapter for continued support of life saving blood donations and blood drives.

For information on sponsoring blood drives with the American Red Cross, e-mail Mike Baisey at baiseym@usa.redcross.org or call 1-800-787-9282, ext. 4925 for more information. The Red Cross urges all community members who are eligible to give blood to donate as soon and as frequently as possible. Call 1-800-GIVE-LIFE (1-800-448-3543) to schedule an appointment to donate blood today and save a life.