



Blood and Transplant

NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) Board

25 January 2018

A Donor Story: What a difference the human touch can make

We all know how important donors are to us but we wanted to share this story written by a donor who, with his family, has used his network of family friends and colleagues to get more than 150 new donors to donate blood. Here is his story verbatim:

“Hi I’m Pete

- Regular Platelet donor here at Plymouth grove

I’ve been asked to speak to you about what inspired me to become a platelet donor

My answer is simple and the same as all the other donors here.....

An hour’s peace and quiet from the kids and free biscuits and endless brews

Just joking - (ish)

I was a whole blood donor and donated when I could. Things took a turn for me a few years back; My step mum, Lynne, lost her long battle with cancer aged just 49 and left the whole family heartbroken and helplessly frustrated that we couldn’t help her.

Then a couple of months later my father in law, Paul (a regular donor for over 30 years) went to donate his 89th pint on Christmas Eve, but when he did the finger prick test it didn’t drop, much to his anger and disappointment! As some of the staff who are here will tell you. He was advised to go to his doctor to be checked out. He did and, after scans at the hospital a week later, he got the news we were all dreading; he had cancer, bowel cancer. I picked him up from the hospital after he had found out and had to watch him try to digest the news and see his eyes well up, not for himself but selflessly for his kids and his wife knowing how gutted this was going to make them.

That week I gave blood and asked if I could be tested to see if I could donate platelets. I couldn’t help Lynne but wanted to see if I could do anything to help Paul or anyone who is suffering from this god-awful disease. A couple of weeks later I get the call to say I had special golden blood and that I could become a platelet donor.

Thankfully, because of Paul’s good deed in giving blood, they caught the cancer in the very early stages and within two weeks from him going to donate he had had the cancer removed without the need for chemo. There’s proof of good karma if you ever needed it.

After the operation, it now meant Paul wasn't able to donate anymore and he was really gutted as he was desperate to get to 100 donations. My partner Jacqueline then had the idea of what if we asked 12 people to donate on your behalf? She then contacted the donor centre and spoke to 'my lovely Carole' and asked them to put on a special day for us in Denton. They did on the 28th of August We named it 'a bloody good cause' and the response from the local people, friends, family, work colleagues was amazing. He smashed the 12 he needed out of the water and had well over 150 people donate on his behalf (most of them 1st time donors). To my knowledge this figure is now well over 250 as most of them have continued to donate and will hopefully keep doing for many years

I have recently reached the milestone of 100 donations and wear this badge with pride as it's my proudest achievement and wanted to thank all the staff here for making this place so friendly and welcoming in helping me get there.

The care and attention you show proves this is more than just a job to you guys, I now consider you friends. Everybody always has a smile on their faces (apart from Suzanne when they are playing Christmas songs in November!). You should take great pride in knowing that most people return here because you make it such a nice experience

Again, thank you all

Thanks for listening"

As well as this individual achievement in recruiting so many new donors, personal stories are essential to our campaign activity for both blood and organs. These stories help generate significant social and media coverage engaging positively with prospective donors encouraging them to register and act. In September last year there were 2,740 pieces of media coverage mainly linked to Organ Donation Week, 84% of them proactively generated by NHSBT with 98% of these positively carrying our key message. By far the most dominant story was that of [Jemima Layzelle](#) who helped save or transform the lives of a record eight people after she died of a brain aneurysm. More directly we also support existing donors and their families to recruit new donors/potential donors. In blood family members have a higher than average chance of having the same blood group. This month we have contacted existing donors with this message encouraging them to recruit directly, particularly those with the vulnerable groups of O neg and B neg.

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