

Macdonald gives 80th pint of blood at local blood drive

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BY: Mary Forney – Lake Powell Chronicle



Photo by Mary Forney/Lake Powell Chronicle Page Hospital phlebotomist Irma Miramontes takes the 80th pint of blood from Ronald Macdonald that he has donated to blood banks during his lifetime. Blood drives were held all across the community over the past week.

PAGE - Resident Ronald Macdonald has been saving lives for more than 40 years and he does it sitting down, with a smile on his face

Giving his 80th pint of blood on Wednesday to Page Hospital, his donations equal saving possibly 240 lives during his lifetime.

Macdonald, 64, began giving blood in 1963 when he became chairman of his fraternity's blood drive. Soliciting help from his fraternity brothers, he got all but one to join him in donating.

He continued donating blood during his college years, but then he stopped after graduation. It wasn't until the 1980s when Macdonald was working for Honeywell in Phoenix that he felt compelled to give his blood again.

His co-worker was in a fatal car collision in which his friend's girlfriend was killed. His friend was in the intensive care unit and needed blood so Macdonald and other co-workers came forward to donate theirs.

"I kind of got hooked into the old Ready Team and donated regularly," Macdonald said. "My grandmother donated 10 gallons of blood, so I figure if she could, then I could too. She lived to be 99 years old so maybe making new blood regularly keeps you younger."

Macdonald, who works as a therapist for the Community Behavioral Health Services in Page, humorously admits that he gives blood selfishly.

"It is the fastest way to lose a pound and skim off some cholesterol," Macdonald said. "They tell me that donating blood helps me rebuild my own blood faster should I be injured or have surgery someday."

Page Hospital's business support coordinator Michele Ward has been the blood drive coordinator for 18 years. Presenting Macdonald with a gift bag from the United Blood Services from Scottsdale, Ariz., and the hospital's auxiliary, Ward spoke about the importance of donating blood during the summer.

"There is always a need for giving blood because it only has a shelf life of 42 days," Ward said. "If it's not used by that time, we have to ship it off elsewhere."

"The people who tend to need it the most in the summer is the travelers. We tend to see more accidents on Lake Powell, and because people are on vacation, we tend to have a shortage when we have an increased need."

According to a fact sheet Ward had prepared, 52 acute-care hospitals in Arizona serviced by United Blood Services require an average of 650 donors every day.

"While 60 percent of the population in the U.S. is eligible to donate, only about 5 percent do it regularly," Ward said. "That's a staggering figure."

"One pint of blood has the potential to save the lives of three people. Ronald is here just about every time we have a blood drive which is four times a year - March, June, September, and December. Our blood drives at the high school are extremely important because, like Ronald, our young people tend to end up being lifetime donors."

Other facts on Ward's information sheet include:

- Red blood cells must be transfused within 42 days of donation and live about 120 days in the receiver's circulatory system. The body replaces the donor's red blood cells within three to four weeks.
- Cancer, transplant, and trauma patients often require platelet transfusions. The platelets must be transfused within five days of donation.
- Plasma taken from the blood donations is used for burn and shock patients and can be frozen for use up to one year.
- Type O is the most common blood type and used most often.

The blood bank at Page Hospital is at 501 N. Navajo Drive. For more information about donating, contact Ward at (928) 645-0114.

Wearing his Scottish kilt and feeling comfortable, Macdonald happily accepted the gifts that Ward handed him in appreciation of his milestone donation.

"They're even giving me peanut butter cookies," he said.
