



Draft Version Aug 2012

NASeA Guide to Organizing a Blood Drive

Prepared by

Community Services Committee

Nepalese Association in Southeast America (NASeA)

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Disclaimer: This guideline does not claim to provide all the information needed for organizing blood drive. This simply presents some useful tips gathered through the experiences of people who have organized blood drives in the cities and states of the United States. Nepalese Association in Southeast America (NASeA) does not take responsibility of information presented in the draft. Further this draft is not complete and is in progress. The NASeA guideline team (above, their contact info below) seeks your suggestions and comments which you could send to Dr. Lila Bdr Karki naseaamerica@gmail.com

NASeA Guide to Organizing a Blood Drive

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"Life's most persistent and urgent question is: 'What are you doing for others?'"

Martin L King Jr.

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Background:

Nepalese Association in Southeast America (NASeA) through its Community Services Committee, has helped collect over 400 pints of blood in less than two year time in different cities and states across the United States including Tampa and Gainesville in Florida, Huntsville and Auburn Alabama, Clarkston and Alpharetta in Georgia, Greenville in South Carolina, Cary in North Carolina, Dallas in Texas and Indianapolis in Indiana.

To organize the drives in these many cities, it collaborated and partnered with several organizations, primarily local city or state organizations of student organizations in local universities.

NASeA felt the need to share its experience of blood drive to many enthusiastic individuals or organizations who would be interested in conducting future drives. The purpose of this guide is to share experience, knowledge, lesson learned in initiating, implementing and evaluating blood drives. The following information is provided to help you along as you plan a successful blood drive:

3 - 4 months before blood drive

✓ Plan and recruit your team

Organize a meeting in your organization at least three to four months prior to the blood drive and gather commitment from members to organize blood drive. Make a good plan accounting for all the things you need to have in order to organize a blood drive. Contact other organizations who have conducted blood drive and ask from their guidance. More you plan the better the outcome is and earlier you plan the better the performance is. The checklist of things you need is given below but the the most important thing you need to remember is the role of your committee members to recruit blood donors on one-on-one basis (contacting each individuals) because people respond better when they're personally invited. All potentially donors should be invited by calling or talking to them individually one at a time.

It is critically important to inform the potential donors that how little time it takes, how easy and safe the process is, and how many lives that their priceless blood would save. It is also important to clarify the myths. Some common myths are, people get really sick by donating blood and you cannot before it is 6 months from last donation. You can infact donate every 56 days (10-11 weeks)

✓ Contact a blood collection agency in your city

Find out blood collection agencies or centers in your city and state who would be interested in coming to your location with mobile bus mobile trailor to collect blood with their nurses and technical staffs. 'Blood Connections' is one the collecting agency in South Carolina while 'Florida Blood Services' is active in Florida. Select the date of the blood drive. Once you have the date confirmed, you need to identify a location. Wallgreen, Walmart, parking lot of movie theater, mall, restaurant are all different locations where blood drive could be held. However for each of these places you first need to gain permission from the owner of these properties.

These blood collection authorities have a minimum blood volume required to be collected. For example the minimum required for Auburn, Alabama was 18 while the minimum in Georga was 33. Again, theos

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✓ **Fix the location where the blood drive be held**

Location is very important if for the convenience of the donors. The parking lot of large retail store (Wall Mart, Publix, Target, Sam's Club), parking lot of pharmacy (Wallgreen, CVS Pharmacy, Rite Aid), Parking lot of movie theater are some of the locations where NASeA has been holding blood drives in. In Tampa, Florida NASeA together with Nepalese Students Association of University of West Florida used the parking lot of large movie theater, In Greenville, South Carolina the parking lot of Wallgreen was used for the drive. Both these were excellent locations because there were many walk in (those who saw the banner of blood drive and enrolled to donate). The locations were easily visible and highly visited by many and they came to donate. The blood drive NASeA did in Alpharetta, Georgia did not attract many donors because it was held in the restaurant of a Indian restaurant, though the minimum volume of blood required by collection center was met. To confirm any of the locations, you need to first send a letter in your organizations official letter head and later follow with him/ her personally. Personal approach is critical here. In Greenville, South Carolina a Nepali who was an employee of the Wallgreen confirmed the location for us. In Florida, the location was confirmed (Movie Theater) by the blood collection authority at itself.

✓ **Recruit donors**

Once you have the location fixed, your focus now should be to advertise or promote your blood drive as much as possible. Start by making a prospective donor list, and then making phone calls. Arrange individual meetings, send e-mails. Use social media like facebook, myspace, twitter as well as bulletin boards, memos, newsletters, e-mail, and web pages to inform and motivate donors. NASeA mailing list and NASeA facebook page was widely used to promote the event. Prepare posters, flyers and hand them in different places the Nepali or non-Nepali donors frequently visit.

✓ **Recruit Volunteers**

As much as blood donors, you need volunteers as well. The volunteers are needed for registering the donor once they arrive, leading them to the screening site, giving out gifts, certificates once the donation is complete. Have at least 10 volunteers ready. Connect with the volunteers through weekly or biweekly conference calls. Call them and motivate them.

Few days before the Drive:

- ✓ Confirm the donors and volunteers. Remember not all donors make prior confirmation and show up at the drive. Make one more time of heavy promotion using facebook and emails. Get the certificates to be given out to blood donors be signed by people who are supposed to sign. Announce in the mailing list and facebook how people should prepare to keep them healthy, relaxed and hydrated for the blood drive.

One the day of the blood drive

- ✓ Arrive early and set up the table, tents, chair as necessary. Prepare with enough gears for both rain or shine. It was warm and sunny in the blood drive conducted in Alpharetta, Georgia while it was raining in Auburn, Alabama drive.

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- ✓ Register the donor and lead them to the screening room in the mobile bus or a fixed tent or camp. Understand that not all the donors are qualified to be the donor that day. The reasons for not being able to get authorize are:
 - Low hemoglobin
 - Recent visit to Malaria prone country. Nepal is considered a malaria prone country.
 - Recent tattoos that you have put or the piercings on your body.
 - Does not speak English. This is true. If you cannot speak English you are unable to donate blood.
 - Less than 18 years of age. The donor must pass the minimum age requirement.
 - If you are feeling unwell, have flu or influenza, coughing heavily.
 - If you blood pressure is not controlled; it is either very high or very low.
 - If you do not have proper picture ID (identification).
- ✓ After people donate blood, make sure they are given snacks and a drink. Yes, lots of drink is important following of drive.

Why Host a Blood Drive?

- ✓ Support your community
- ✓ Energize your members, students or employees by providing a convenient way to give back to the community
- ✓ Garner good will from inside and outside your organization by supporting blood centers
- ✓ Enjoy a partnership where everyone wins
- ✓ It feels good to be a part of helping to save lives.

Quick Steps to a Successful Blood Drive

1. Meet with your blood center representative to schedule the drive, establish realistic goals, and develop a recruitment plan.
2. Obtain support from your organization.
3. Recruit committee members who have both the time and the desire to participate.
4. Publicize the blood drive through a variety of communication vehicles.
5. Provide educational sessions/information
6. Have each committee member recruit donors one-on-one and schedule them for specific donation times.
7. Report your progress to the blood center representative for adequate staffing and accurate inventory management
8. Confirm the site logistics.
9. Communicate the blood drive goals.
10. Remind donors of their scheduled appointments prior to the blood drive.

Tips for Blood Donor before, during and after the Blood Drive

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By following a few recommendations before, during, and after your blood donation can help you make your donation experience as safe, successful, and pleasant as possible.

Before Your Donation

- ✓ Avoid drinking excessive amounts of tea due to the caffeine and tannic acid content and carbonated beverages that contain a high content of caffeine.
- ✓ Maintain a healthy iron level in your diet by eating iron rich foods (see the list below).
- ✓ Get a good night's sleep.
- ✓ Drink an extra 16 oz. of water and fluids.
- ✓ Eat a healthy meal before your donation. Avoid fatty foods, such as hamburgers, fries or ice cream before donating. Tests for infections done on all donated blood can be affected by fats that appear in your blood for several hours after eating fatty foods.
- ✓ If you are a platelet donor, remember that your system must be free of aspirin for two days prior to donation.
- ✓ Make sure you have eaten good breakfast or lunch, depending on the time of the day you are donating.
- ✓ You may want to take iron rich food for a week or two. Things such as:
 - spinach, broccoli, sweet potatoes, whole grains, eggs, whole grain, liver, and
 - Beans (lima beans, soybean sprouts, kidney beans, garbanzo beans, etc.)
 - Bran cereal, whole wheat bread, white rice, Cocoa, brown sugar
 - Raisins, dried apricots, peaches
 - Nuts (especially black walnuts, almonds and cashews)
 - Oysters, clams, scallops and shrimp
 - Wheat germ and wheat, rice or corn flakes, brewer's yeast
 - Prune juice, apple juice
 - Red meats, liver, chicken
 - Vitamin C (citrus fruits, peppers, potatoes, kiwi, papaya, mango)

During Your Donation

- ✓ Wear clothing with sleeves that can be raised above the elbow.
- ✓ Let the phlebotomist know if you have a preferred arm and show the staff any good veins that have been used successfully in the past to draw blood.
- ✓ Whole blood donation, this is the typical way to donate blood. A whole blood donation can be separated to platelets, plasma and red cells. You can donate blood from arms, left or right. You should be wearing a comfortable shirt.
- ✓ Relax, listen to music, talk to other donors or read during the donation process.
- ✓ Take the time to enjoy a snack and a drink in the refreshments area immediately after donating.
- ✓ Health Screening- Complete a health related questionnaire, check for iron level, temperature, pulse and blood pressure. This is a free physical exam for which you would have to spend some money at a Doctor's office. After the donation most of the blood donation agencies will also check for cholesterol and some also provide a free lipid profile. They will also send you your blood type.

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After Your Donation

- ✓ Drink plenty of fluids to replenish any fluids you lost during donation.
- ✓ Avoid strenuous physical activity or heavy lifting for about five hours after donation.
- ✓ In rare cases when bleeding occurs after removing the bandage, apply pressure to the site and raise your arm for 3-5 minutes. If bleeding or bruising occurs under the skin, apply a cold pack to the area periodically during the first 24 hours.
- ✓ If for any reason something doesn't feel right, call the blood centers toll-free number provided to you after your donation.
- ✓ Enjoy the good feeling that comes with knowing that you may have saved as many as three lives
- ✓ Refreshment- Take some juice and enjoy some snacks after the donation. If you feel light headed, it may be a good idea to take it easy before driving or going back to work or school.
- ✓ No smoking for few hours, no strenuous activity, such as working out or pushing heavy objects. Eat good and drink healthy juice and plenty of water. Your body can replace plasma in few hours and cells in few days.

Facts about Blood

- ✓ There is no substitute for human blood.
- ✓ 4.5 million Americans will need a blood transfusion each year.
- ✓ 43,000 pints: amount of donated blood used each day in the U.S. and Canada.
- ✓ Someone needs blood every two seconds.
- ✓ Only 37 percent of the U.S. population is eligible to donate blood – less than 10 percent do annually.
- ✓ About 1 in 7 people entering a hospital need blood.
- ✓ One pint of blood can save up to three lives.
- ✓ Healthy adults who are at least 17 and weigh 110 pounds may donate about a pint of blood every 56 days (eight weeks).
- ✓ 16-year-olds may donate with written parental permission.
- ✓ Four main red blood cell types: A, B, AB and O. Each can be positive or negative for the Rh factor.
- ✓ AB positive is the universal recipient; O negative is the universal donor of red blood cells.
- ✓ One unit of blood can be processed into several individual components: red blood cells, plasma, platelets and cryoprecipitate.
- ✓ Donated red blood cells can be stored for 42 days, platelets for five days. Frozen plasma can be stored for one year.
- ✓ Much of today's medical care depends on a steady supply of blood from healthy donors.
- ✓ Shortages of all types happen during the summer and winter holidays, especially types O and B red blood cells.
- ✓ If only one more percent of all Americans would give blood, blood shortages would disappear for the foreseeable future.

Need to remember

- ✓ Remember to bring your donor card, driver's license/ photo ID, or two other forms of ID.
- ✓ It is better to request for an official translator if some of your donors speak other than English.
- ✓ One with having tattoo has to wait one year to donate blood.

The printing cost of this Guide has been generously sponsored by Dr. Pravin Sah