

Third Annual Lonnie Banks Blood Drive

October 23 2012 12:45 PM



Wood River, Ill. (Oct. 23, 2012) - Cancer patients often need blood transfusions during treatment, and Lonnie Banks (pictured below) was no exception. During his battle with cancer, the 60-year-old received over 75 blood transfusions, including platelets, in the first six months of treatment. In 2010, Banks died from multiple myeloma, a blood cancer. His partner, Gail Stewart, said she and Banks organized a blood drive in his

honor while he was still alive as a way of "paying back" the many transfusions he had received. "We never realized how much blood cancer patients needed," Stewart said. "If people had not donated blood when he was ill, he would not have lived as long as he did."

Stewart and the American Red Cross invite the Wood River community to pay tribute to Banks at the third annual Lonnie Banks Memorial Blood Drive on Nov. 6 from 2:00 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Wood River Moose Lodge, 730 Wesley Drive, Wood River, Ill.

With Banks now gone, Stewart said she hopes the blood drive in his memory will help someone else in need.

"I never want someone to need blood and it not be available," she said. "I continue to do this because it is the right thing to do and is what Lonnie would have wanted."

Blood collected at the Lonnie Banks blood drive may help cancer patients, accident victims and other patients in need. Walk-ins are welcome, though appointments are preferred.

How to Donate Blood

Simply call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit redcrossblood.org to make an appointment or for more information. All blood types are needed to ensure a reliable supply for patients. A blood donor card or driver's license, or two other forms of identification are required at check-in. Individuals who are 17 years of age (16 with parental permission in some states), weigh at least 110 pounds and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood. High school students and other donors 18 years of age and younger also have to meet certain height and weight requirements.

About the American Red Cross

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides emotional support to victims of disasters; supplies about 40 percent of the nation's blood; teaches skills that save lives; provides international humanitarian aid; and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a not-for-profit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission. For more information, please visit redcross.org or join our blog at <http://blog.redcross.org>.