

JULY 2023 COMMUNITY CONSECTION

A MILLER-KEYSTONE BLOOD CENTER PUBLICATION



Guests look on as Valerie Lewis, COO, BSI Corporate Benefits, cuts the ribbon for MKBC's new Easton location.

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MKBC HOSTS RIBBON-CUTTING AT RELOCATED EASTON DONOR CENTER

On Wednesday, April 12, MKBC celebrated the relocation of our Easton Donor Center with a ribbon-cutting celebration. Addressing those in attendance were MKBC's Rami Nemeh, Chief Operating Officer; and Valerie Lewis, Chief Operating Office of BSI Corporate Benefits. Lamont McClure, Northampton County Executive, presented the Blood Center with a proclamation acknowledging the new donor center location, as did representatives from the offices of U.S. Congresswoman Susan Wild and State Senator Lisa Boscola.

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The Honorable Lamont McClure, Northampton County Executive, presents MKBC's Rami Nemeh, Chief Operating Officer, with a certificate of recognition at the recent ribbon cutting event.



JOIN THE MKBC TECH HEROES LEADERSHIP GIVING SOCIETY! SEE PAGE 2



DONOR CENTER LOCATIONS: 1255 S. Cedar Crest Boulevard, Suite 1300, Allentown, PA 18103 • Five City Center, 740 Hamilton Street, Suite 120, Allentown PA 18101 • 1465 Valley Center Parkway, Bethlehem, PA 18017 • 3765 Nicholas Street, Suite B, Palmer Township, PA 18045 • 2745A Leiscz's Bridge Road, Reading, PA 19605 • 400 Main Boulevard East, Suite 601, Ewing, NJ 08638 • 400 Route 315, Suite E, Pittston, PA 18640

SATELLITE LOCATIONS: Western Pocono Community Library, 131 Pilgrim Way, Brodheadsville, PA 18322 • Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, 102 N. Hellertown Avenue, Quakertown, PA 18951 • Plainfield Volunteer Fire Company, 6480 Sullivan Trail, Wind Gap, PA 18091 • St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 1105 E. Lincoln Highway, Exton, PA 19341

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

A publication designed to inform our community about the programs and services of the Miller-Keystone Blood Center.

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Readers are invited to send their comments and letters to us at:

Miller-Keystone Blood Center Lehigh Valley Corporate Center 1465 Valley Center Parkway

Bethlehem, PA 18017









The Blood Center's Easton Donor Center is now located at 3765 Nicholas Street, Suite B, in Palmer Township – next door to Redner's Supermarket. Hours of operation at this site are currently:

Monday & Tuesday	7:30 am – 2:00 pm
Wednesday	12:00 pm – 7:00 pm
Friday	6:30 am – 4:00 pm
Saturday	6:30 am – 1:00 pm
Thursday & Sunday	CLOSED

A very special thank you to BSI Corporate Benefits, the Community Partner for our Easton Donor Center location; and to everyone who joined us for our ribbon-cutting event. We are also grateful to Aman's Artisan Indian Cuisine, who provided appetizers for our grand opening celebration. To schedule an appointment at our Easton Donor Center, or any MKBC location, visit GIVEaPINT.org!



JOIN THE MKBC TECH HEROES LEADERSHIP GIVING SOCIETY!

Technology and equipment are critically important to the Blood Center, and they are the two most expensive purchasing areas. In fact, in order to maintain a ready and safe blood supply, there are dozens of technology and equipment purchases that are made each year, many of which are necessary updates required by the FDA.

You can have a direct impact on the purchase of modern and high-tech equipment and technology for our collections, laboratory and distribution processes. By becoming a member of our MKBC Tech Heroes leadership giving society, you will play a vital role in the purchase of new equipment and technology needs.

Participants in our MKBC Tech Heroes leadership giving society commit \$1,000 or more annually. Together, members fund new equipment and software, upgrades to current technology and equipment as well as operational needs for the MKBC fleet of vehicles. Our donors will gather annually to learn about equipment purchases and their impact. Purchases will be made based on income to the fund each year.

For additional details, visit GIVEaPINT.org and click on the "Support Us" tab, or contact Lina Barbieri, CFRE, Director of Philanthropy, at 610-419-5275 or lbarbieri@giveapint.org.

POSSIBLE ANNUAL FUNDING NEED	OS	
Phlebotomy Training Aids	\$1,200	
Blood Refrigerator	\$2,000	
Vitals Monitor	\$2,000	
Donor Chairs	\$3,000	
Platelet Counter, Incubator, Agitator	\$7,000+	
Fleet Vehicles	•••••	
Courier Vehicle	\$28,000	
Cargo Van	\$60,000	
Annual Fleet Maintenance	\$100,000	
Bloodmobile	\$300,000	



FROM LOSS TO LEGACY

"YOU HOLD YOUR CHILD AS CLOSE AS YOU CAN, AND PUSH AWAY THE UNIMAGINABLE."

Those words from "It's Quiet Uptown," a song about loss, tragedy and sadness from the Broadway hit, Hamilton are powerful. But the song goes on to give listeners a sense that, eventually, there will be a turning point, that from the most unimaginable loss – that of losing a child – something good and powerful and beautiful might emerge.

That is what Harvey and Susan Hohl have given to everyone around them during the past 20 years. The sense that from the ashes of their daughter Angela's death at age 17, a Phoenix

"I am so struck by

to turn a personal

MKBC account manager

-Robin Schappell,

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tragedy into triumph.

has risen in the form of the Angela Hohl Memorial Drive at Daniel Boone High School in Birdsboro which marked its 20-year milestone during December 2022. Add to that other blood drives spearheaded by the Hohl's - one at New Hanover United Methodist Church in Gilbertsville, their church

when they lived in the area and Amity Athletic Club Pool in Birdsboro, where Angela lifeguarded for three summers – and one can see the legacy built to honor their daughter.

Angela's Illness

Energetic and beautiful, Angela Hohl woke up on Saturday, August 2, 2003, with swollen glands. Since she was a lifeguard and the family had just also returned from a trip where swimming with the dolphins had been one of the activities, the family immediately thought - "infectious disease" and called the family doctor. The following day, with glands even more swollen and a tough time breathing, she was taken to the emergency room. The family learned her blood count was off and that a spot was presenting on her lungs. She was immediately sent to St. Joseph's in Reading where, by Tuesday, she needed her first blood transfusion.

The Hohl's learned their daughter had a very rare, fast-moving leukemia. Angela died on a Thursday, 26 days from the morning when she woke up with swollen glands.

During her short illness, Angela needed more than 75 units of blood, and, because she required a precise type of platelet from specific donors, the Hohl's were often in a fearful holding pattern waiting for those lifesaving units to arrive.

After she passed, the Hohl's decided that they wanted to prevent other parents from having to wait each day to learn whether the lifesaving gift of blood, rare or not, would be available.

"I am so struck by their commitment to turn a personal tragedy into triumph," said Robin Schappell, MKBC account manager. "They never want anyone to go through what they did with their daughter in the event that blood is not available."

And, as they say, the rest is history.

Today, the Angela Hohl Memorial Drive continues to be one of the largest and longest held drives conducted by Miller-Keystone Blood Center in the entire region.

It is hosted four times a year; December being the largest and the one the Hohl's never miss

"The Hohl's give of their time every December, greet everyone, thank them for donating and share their daughter's story and the importance of donating. It is very impactful," said Schappell.

"Angie wanted to be a teacher: to educate, and so we see this blood drive as our way to keep her teaching dream alive. Our hope is that we are educating these students about the importance of blood donation, making them understand, making it a habit," said Angela's mother, Susan. "To us, this keeps Angie's memory alive. And maybe we have fulfilled her dream of educating and making an impact by doing this."

"We are so proud that these Daniel Boone kids still want to do this, there are so many students that want to help," she added.

"Frankly it baffles us, but we are so inspired that students still remember our daughter," said Harvey, Angela's father. "There have been amazing administrators working on this project and we thought when they left or retired, that it would end the drive, then we thought for sure that with COVID it would finally be the end of the drive," he added. "But it keeps on going."

The pandemic has taken a toll on the landscape of blood drives with a big shift in the

percentage of product being collected from blood drives. However, the Daniel Boone Drive continues to be among the strongest conducted by MKBC. It appears it has reached a tipping point and has a life of its own.

According to the Hohl's, it is the students who do the lion's share of the work. They handle the planning and run the committee.

"There is a 20-year-long list of Daniel Boone students and graduates who have done this amazing work," said Susan.

"The students at Daniel Boone are amazing and want to continue to honor Angela even though they were not even born when Angela was a student. They are excited to learn about her and keep that legacy of saving lives alive," added Schappell.

The numbers over the 20 years are astounding. Donor appointments over the years continue to grow ranging from 150 in the early years to nearly 500 one year. The continuous growth has been nothing short of miraculous.

In fact, since the beginning, more than 10,000 units/products have been collected at about 80+ drives at Daniel Boone, plus another almost 4,000 units/products collected from the

70+ drives hosted at the New Hanover

United Methodist Church and the Amity Athletic Club Pool. There is also a MKBC Bloodmobile with Angela's photo on it. That one coach, has served at more than 2,300 drives. Really impressive when you consider that one unit has the potential to save up to three lives.

The Hohl's impact on MKBC continues past the halls of the high school. The Hohl's are financial supporters too. "We give because we can, and because we realize how important the financial piece is to the work that Miller does."

In fact, the Hohl's have gotten into the habit of sending dollars that would go toward holiday presents to MKBC as a family tradition. They also support other organizations that were special to Angie too, like the Harvey Cedars Bible Conference, where a room is named in her honor. And their philanthropic spirit is hereditary. Harvey III, Angie's brother, completed a 100-mile bike ride in 2006 with the "Team in Training" hosted by the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society raising \$8,000 in memory of his sister.

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It's a family (and friend) affair

"Giving blood is a selfless act but doesn't have to be nameless," said Henry (Hank) Limper, a friend and continuous blood donor whose three daughters have been heavily involved with the drive. "I give blood to honor the memory and infectious smile of Angela Hohl."

Limper's daughters, Kaleigh, Casey and Devin, all had their time with the drive during their high school years. Hank and the Hohl's became friends and remain so today even after the Hohl's moved away.

Today, the Hohl's reside in Rhode Island having retired from the real estate world where Susan worked with title insurance and Harvey worked in private mortgage insurance. They moved to be in closer proximity to their son, Harvey III, and their three grandchildren. The pull of grandchildren

is strong but the pull of memories, friends and blood drives in the Birdsboro area continue to bring the Hohl's back to town every few months.

"Our three grandsons talk about Angie all the time. They act like they knew her," shared Susan.

Some of that might be the care with which the Hohl's keep Angie's memory alive like the "Quilt of Jeans."

"Angie had a lot of jeans, as most teens do. And after she died, I just stuffed them all in a bin. I hoped one day to make something from them. Then, once I retired, I took those jeans out of that bin and made a quilt for each of the boys," she added

Throughout it all, their faith was their guiding force. "Our church helped us so much," the Hohl's shared together. "We wonder how people without faith handle something like this."

According to her parents, Angela Hohl was named for the Rolling Stones hit, Angie.

Their loss brings to mind some of the lyrics:

Angie, Angie When will those clouds all disappear?

Angie, Angie
Where will it lead us from here?

The answer: The Hohl's remain determined to ensure a safe and ready blood supply for the region. They plan to continue to support MKBC as much as they can.

... All for their Angie.

11 REGIONAL DONOR GROUPS HONORED AS MKBC LOCAL LEADERS

Campaign Recognizes Donor Recruitment Success by Area Schools, Businesses, Churches and Other Organizations

Miller-Keystone Blood Center recently hosted a luncheon to celebrate 11 area organizations for their commitment to the health and welfare of our community through blood drive sponsorship.

"Our Local Leaders campaign recognizes those schools, businesses, church groups and other organizations who go above and beyond the call of duty to support their community," said Monika Wiegers, Manager of Mobile Recruitment, Miller-Keystone Blood Center. "By hosting blood drives with our regional blood provider, these organizations are also supporting the MKBC Mission Statement, which is 'Saving lives by partnering with our community to provide a continuous supply of blood products and services."

The following groups were acknowledged through Miller-Keystone Blood Center's Local Leaders campaign for collecting at least 200 lifesaving units during the 2022 calendar year.

EAST PENN MANUFACTURING	.661 units
LEHIGH VALLEY HEALTH	
NETWORK-CEDAR CREST	.554 units
DANIEL BOONE HIGH SCHOOL	.421 units
ST. JOSEPH THE WORKER PARISH	.373 units
ST. LUKE'S UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL	.353 units
KEMPTON EXCAVATING	.328 units
FLEETWOOD HIGH SCHOOL	.256 units
GEISINGER MEDICAL CENTER	.247 units
ST. PETER'S UCC	.200 units
ALISON PERNO, IMO	.200 units
LEHIGH UNIVERSITY HEALTH	
NETWORK-MUHLENBERG	.200 units



A Pete Castagna, President & CEO (L), and Barbara Gates, Account Manager (R), present Jennifer Birch with the Local Leaders Award for East Penn Manufacturing.



Pete Castagna (L) presents John Fitzpatrick and Mike Godorov (R) with the Local Leaders award for St. Joseph the Worker Parish. Mike serves as blood drive chairman for the Knights of Columbus, which sponsor the blood drives held at the Church.



MKBC ANNOUNCES BIOLINKED® ALLIANCE

This past Spring, the Blood Center announced another unique opportunity to help others through an alliance with BioLinked®, an organization that has partnered with trusted blood centers throughout the United States. The goal is to build a robust network of diverse individuals interested in participating in clinical research studies (paid/unpaid). Participation is optional, confidential and self-managed, allowing BioLinked® to anonymously search for willing individuals who meet specific research needs.

"Participation in the BioLinked community propels clinical research that finds cures," said Rami Nemeh, COO, Miller-Keystone Blood Center. "An individual's status as a blood donor has no impact on one's participation in clinical research studies.

To become a BioLinked® participant, visit MKBC's website to create an account, sign in and complete your profile. Remember – it is optional, confidential and self-managed; you can update your information at any time.

Be sure to select MILLER-KEYSTONE BLOOD CENTER as your referring blood center!



THE UNICORN BLOOD DONOR – BRIAN BOBBIN

We're not saying that Brian Bobbin, 32, of Northampton, has a single, large, pointed, spiraling horn projecting from his forehead. In fact, the definition of unicorn aligned with Brian is something a little simpler – "a person or thing that is rare and highly valued."

"That's the version of unicorn we mean when we say that Brian is a Miller-Keystone Blood Center unicorn," said Rami Nemeh, chief operating officer. "He is young, he gives platelets on a super-regular (every two weeks) basis, he is a financial supporter of MKBC and he's happy to do all of it. And, there isn't a background story of a family member that was sick or

had trauma and, therefore, needed blood. He just does it because it's the right thing to do."

Brian is truly "rare and highly valued" in terms of his support of MKBC. "If we could figure out how to encourage others his age to lean in to supporting MKBC the way he does, there wouldn't be a blood shortage," added Nemeh.

Bobbin began giving blood in 2009 during a blood drive.

"I'm one of those people who likes to try things once," said Bobbin. "It was fairly quick, it was easy, it didn't hurt, I had no reactions and I felt good afterwards."

Then, as is often the case, life got in the way. He had started a new job and just lost the momentum. But, then, he made the decision to do better and has been a consistent blood donor for 13 years having surpassed the 50-Gallon Lifetime Donor milestone with 207 total donations so far.

"It was fairly quick, it was easy, it didn't hurt, I had no reactions and I felt good afterwards."

A mechanic by chance, Brian is a welder by trade having graduated from the Welder Training & Testing Institute in Allentown. He's worked on some huge, high-visibility projects including flood gates that have protected New Orleans since their installation after Hurricane Katrina as well as repair work on the famous Whitestone Bridge in the Bronx.

These days, you'll find him every other Saturday each month between 6:45 a.m. and 7 a.m. iving platelets.

"What time I get to speak with him is always interesting as our conversation is usually centered around music. He always wears a band t-shirt whenever he comes in which is right in my wheel-house as the wife/mother of a musician," said Yvonne (aka Yaya) Vallone, donor recruitment specialist. "Brian is also a Weekend Warrior, which means he donates platelets at least twelve times in one (1) calendar year. Any donor who commits to that kind of schedule is definitely a hero in my book."

Currently, Brian works 10-hour shifts, 5 days a week as a mechanic on heavy excavating equipment for a local firm. And on weekends, after his MKBC appointments, you can find him cycling along the Ironton Rail Trail, Nor-Bath or D&L trails.

"I don't *find* the time to give blood, I *make* the time." He's a member of the "Be The Match Registry," an organization that connects patients with blood diseases with bone marrow donors and he even encourages his aunt and uncle to stay consistent with their blood donations as well.

"I love Brian! Always happy and nice to talk to and always reschedules," said Angela Lopiano, donor recruitment specialist.

Monique Ricketts, lead staff in Bethlehem, agrees. "From the first time I met him up until now, he is always so pleasant, ready, and willing to give the gift of life."

And, if that isn't enough, he decided that becoming a financial donor to MKBC was "just another extra way to help out."

"My dad said to me when I was a kid, 'Do what needs to be done without someone having to tell you to do it,' and that's the motivation for giving that drives me. Just do it because it's important to do and don't make a big deal about it."

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MKBC'S VETERANS STILL SERVING PROGRAM

Miller-Keystone Blood Center proudly supports our military servicemen and servicewomen. Through our Veterans Still Serving program, the Blood Center proudly presents our military veteran and active military blood donors with a token of our appreciation an MKBC Challenge Coin!

A Military Challenge Coin is a symbol representing a military member's dedication and service in the Armed Forces. It also serves as a means of keeping the members of the military connected. The Blood Center's Veterans Still Serving program was inspired by the late Peter Noyes, an MKBC blood donor whose knowledge brought the Challenge Coin history to our attention.

Please contact us to learn more about the complimentary MKBC Challenge Coin, which we would like to present to you when you visit us for your next blood donation!





Veterans Still Serving (Left) Scott Galebach; (Above) Robin Rosenberg



Veterans Still Serving (Above) Kurt Stelzer; (Right) Wayne Leibensperger



MESSAGES FROM GRATEFUL TRANSFUSION RECIPIENTS

Thank the Donor® is a program which allows blood donors and transfusion recipients to anonymously connect, enabling the recipient to thank the donor for their lifesaving generosity via email. These are just a few messages that our blood donors have recently received:

⁶⁶THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR DONATION. In a critical time of need your donation was able to save my grandmother. Thank you from my entire family, we appreciate you and your donation more than words can say. 99

44 YOUR DONATION WAS VERY MUCH APPRECIATED and was given to my husband who is going through chemo for sarcoma cancer. It made a world of difference to him. Thank you sooo much! 99

66 THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATION OF PLATELETS. I'm a young 80 year old male whose bone marrow has stopped working. Your platelets are helping me stay alive until the doctors can find the reason. I have a wife, 4 grown sons, 12 Grandkids and 2 great grandsons. We all THANK YOU very much. 99

66 THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR DONATION. I just had a baby and lost a lot of blood. I am very grateful for your gift."

IN MEMORIAM

In February 2023, Kathy Kunkle, Administrative Assistant to the Donor Recruitment Department, passed away unexpectedly after a short illness. Kathy joined the Blood Center in 2008, and was known for her kind spirit and giving nature, as well as her strong organizational skills and attention to detail. In her memory, the Blood Center recently donated a bench to Forgotten Felines and Fidos, Inc. in Germansville, where Kathy's daughter is employed.

"I am truly touched by your gift," said her daughter. "My mom loved all animals, and especially enjoyed seeing the sicklier little ones grow stronger and healthier. A memorial bench is a wonderful way to honor her generous spirit."

The memorial bench is located in a shaded area with a beautiful view of rolling fields. The inscription is below.



STAFF UPDATE



DARA GONZALEZ recently joined the Blood Center as the Community Liaison Manager, a position made possible by a grant from the

Highmark Foundation to underwrite MKBC's Diversity Program. In this role, she will be reaching out to schools, churches and other organizations within the Hispanic community to educate them on the importance of a safe and stable blood supply, and to encourage their assistance in helping the Blood Center diversify our community's blood inventory. Ms. Gonzales studied **Business Management and Political Science** at DeSales University, and was previously held positions with Creditsafe Canada Inc., Guardian Life Insurance, and Freedom Financial Resources.

GIAVANNA MURGIA sible for all aspects of

Second Harvest Food Bank.

was recently appointed as the Blood Center's Marketing Coordinator. In this role, she is respon-

the Blood Center social media activities on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter, among other media applications and activities. Ms. Murgia is a graduate of Moravian University with a degree in Communications, and she completed her internship in Marketing and Development with the

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Lehigh Valley Corporate Center 1465 Valley Center Parkway Bethlehem, PA 18017

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MILLER-KEYSTONE BLOOD CENTER

OUR HOSPITALS

Miller-Keystone Blood Center currently serves as the only blood provider to the following hospital systems:

IN PA:

Lehigh Valley Health Network

- LVHN Carbon
- LVHN Cedar Crest
- LVHN Dickson City
- LVHN 17th Street
- LVHN Hazleton
- LVHN Hecktown Oaks
- LVHN Muhlenberg
- LVHN Schuylkill East Norwegian

St. Luke's University Health Network

- St. Luke's University Hospital Bethlehem Campus
- St. Luke's Hospital Allentown Campus
- St. Luke's Hospital Anderson Campus
 St. Luke's Hospital Carbon Campus
- St. Luke's Hospital Easton Campus
- St. Luke's Hospital Lehighton Campus
- St. Luke's Hospital Miners Campus
- St. Luke's Hospital Monroe Campus
- St. Luke's Hospital Sacred Heart Campus
- St. Luke's Hospital Upper Bucks Campus
- Geisinger St. Luke's Hospital

Grand View Health

Reading Hospital/Tower Health

Geisinger

- Geisinger Bloomsburg Hospital
- Geisinger Community Medical Center
- Geisinger Jersey Shore Hospital
- Geisinger Lewistown Hospital
- Geisinger Medical Center
- Geisinger Medical Center Muncy
- Geisinger Wyoming Valley Medical Center

IN NJ:

- Hunterdon Health
- St. Luke's Hospital Warren Campus
- Summit Health Florham Park
- Summit Health Berkeley Heights



YOUR HOSPITAL'S CHOICE FOR LIFE-SAVING BLOOD.

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