

## **Blood Transfusions Save Lives**

By Susan Zielinski - Red Deer Advocate  
Published: June 14, 2011 6:55 AM



Kayla Whissell, 17, left, whose life was saved by a blood transfusion, has trouble watching registered nurse Marta Boulton insert the needle into the arm of Red Deer Titan rugby player Mark Smith at Canadian Blood Services Monday. by RANDY FIEDLER/Advocate staff

At age five, Kayla Whissell ruptured her spleen and blood donors saved her life.

“I literally severed my spleen in half. I went down the hill I was peddling, I back peddled and I got the handle bars in my spleen,” said Whissell, of Red Deer, who is now 17.

Five units of blood kept her alive and now the Hunting Hills High School student wants to remind the public of people like her who have lived because of the blood they received.

“If we could at least get a quarter of our population to do it, that would be so many lives that could be potentially saved,” said Whissell on Monday for the launch of National Blood Donor Week, which runs until Sunday.

She’s challenging Central Albertans to roll up their sleeves, like the five members of Red Deer Titans Rugby Football Club who donated at the campaign kickoff at Canadian Blood Services donor clinic.

The team pledged a year-round commitment to blood donation by joining Canadian Blood Services’ Partners for Life program. In 2011, they pledge to make 40 blood donations.

Kaelyn Smith, community development co-ordinator with Canadian Blood Services, said Central Alberta has a strong base of regular donors and students from Red Deer’s three high schools shone this year in the annual Young Blood Challenge.

“Lindsay Thurber actually finished third nationwide,” Smith said.

“All three schools finished in the top four in the province. Lindsay Thurber was first. Notre Dame was third and Hunting Hills was fourth. They really take it to heart.”

Canadian Blood Services needs to collect 3,600 blood donations in Red Deer area between now and the end of August. That’s enough blood to help close to 11,000 patients. Smith said summer is typically a challenging time of year. Donors take vacations and get busy with summer activities, forgetting to make time to donate.

She said blood only lasts 42 days on the shelf. Plasma and platelets, separated from the blood, lasts only six days.

Last year, Canadian Blood Services collected almost 900,000 blood donations to meet the needs of thousands of hospital patients across Canada.

To donate call 1-888-236-6283 to book an appointment. Visit [blood.ca](http://blood.ca) for more information.

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