

The CFMS is Canadian Blood Services' (CBS) longest standing national partner (it's true – look it up!), and as a result, we decided to move forward with that partnership and become part of the Partners For Life (PFL) program which will really help us maximize the donations we make across the country. Entering into a PFL partnership gives us access to CBS' vast resources and nationwide team of coordinators who will help organize and promote blood donation opportunities to med students at every CFMS school. Through the PFL program, CBS helps us organize our efforts and help make sure that every student at every school is aware of the donation events available in their community. I am very confident that through the PFL program, CBS will help us reach donation numbers that we would have previously thought impossible to achieve.

The biggest challenge as a PFL member organization is setting up local partnerships between schools and CBS local organizers, and I am proud to say that most CFMS campuses have at least one amazingly dedicated local PFL Champion who will work with CBS to schedule and promote all of our donation events (see inset for a table of Champions). The local Champions are your link to CBS and they are all very enthusiastic about this year's drive; don't be afraid to approach them with any questions or ideas that you may have, as I know they would love to talk to you! One of the big jobs that the local Champions had was to set a donation target for this year, and as the donation numbers come in and we come closer and closer to those goals, I must say it is very exciting! In the 2009 year, although the numbers are still coming in, the CFMS contributed 810 donations and that is a number that we can all be very proud of! By building on the successes of last year's blood drive, I hope that we can do even better this year and continue to contribute to the health care system in such a meaningful way.

While the donation numbers are exciting, what we are all most excited about is the actual donation events! As a way to kick off the year's donation events, this past year, every school held a big, school-wide donation event as a part of 'CFMS Blood Month' in February. The great thing about the PFL is that it allows for a lot of flexibility, so each school was able to pick the dates that worked best for them to hold their 'Blood Month' event; as a result, within the month of February alone, we were able to accumulate approximately 250 donations! There will be a CFMS Blood Month again this year, so for more info on your school's Blood Month or other donation events, talk to your local Champion and keep an eye out around the school and your email for promotional materials that are soon to come! I would also like to point out that even if you cannot physically donate blood, you can still be a big part of your school's donation effort by helping to spread the word and get your peers excited about our donation efforts; I'm sure your local Champion would love to have some help! Finally, while the Blood Month events will be the big kickoff of this year's drive, Blood Month will by no means be the last event; the biggest reason we switched to the PFL was to help us donate year-round, so get ready for a fun-filled year of bloodletting!

As mentioned earlier, the largest challenge facing the blood drive this year was that of identifying dedicated volunteers at each medical school campus. As students, we tend to have busy schedules and it has been difficult to encourage people to come forward and lead the blood donation efforts at their school. To address this difficulty, there are two items that we are addressing within the structure of the CFMS blood drive efforts. The first is that we are working to ensure that within the PFL framework, the amount of time and effort spent by our CFMS volunteers is kept to a minimum; CBS has immense organizational capacity, and they are more than willing to make the work of organizing donations as easy as possible! The second way we hope to address the issue of volunteer recruitment is to integrate Blood Drive Champion recruitment into the naming of positions that already takes place at most medical school campuses early in the school year. Some schools have already moved towards including the position of Blood Drive Champion in their elections at the beginning of the school year, and this is a move I hope to see more campuses taking. By identifying a dedicated blood drive leader at the beginning of the school year, we can ensure that we maximize our donation potential and help the greatest possible number of people!

While there will always be more work to be done, between the success of last year's blood drive, the new programs we have tried this year and the challenges that await us in the future, this is a very exciting time to be a part of the CFMS' blood drive efforts, and I must say that all of the energy coming back to me from CFMS schools is absolutely amazing! Keep an eye out for upcoming donation opportunities; for more info, you can always talk to your local Champion and most importantly remember to roll up your whitecoats and give!!!

Mike Bevilacqua
 CFMS Blood Drive Officer
 University of Calgary, Class of 2010
blood@cfms.org

Table of Volunteers:

School	Champion(s)
Dalhousie	Kyle Jewer
Queen's	Clarissa Moodie and Philip Harvey
University of Toronto	Jacqueline Zhai and Soumitra Tole
McMaster	Kylie Redekop and Gayathri Raveendran
University of Western Ontario	Charles Ho
Northern Ontario School of Medicine Thunder Bay Campus	Claudine Lanthier
Northern Ontario School of Medicine Sudbury Campus	Caelen Rody
University of Manitoba	Rebecca McLean
University of Alberta	Serena Cheung and Rene Lee
University of Calgary	Caelen Rody and Gwynivere Davies