

Black Excellence Is in Our Blood!

Donate In Honor of Black History Month

During Black History Month this February, the American Red Cross honors the significant achievements of Black Americans and the vital role blood donations from individuals who are Black play in meeting the transfusion needs of patients and those with sickle cell disease. Right now, the Red Cross is experiencing an emergency blood shortage, and donors are urged to give blood or platelets as soon as possible to help alleviate the shortage and ensure lifesaving medical procedures are not delayed.

With the theme “Black Excellence Is in Our Blood,” the Red Cross honors the vibrant legacies of trailblazers whose collaborative spirit of excellence continue to shape the organization’s humanitarian mission. Frederick Douglass, a prominent Black abolitionist and author who escaped slavery, supported Clara Barton’s efforts to establish the American Red Cross. Having been impressed by Barton’s aid to soldiers who were Black during the Civil War and her desire to improve the protection of the wounded during wartime, Douglass signed the original Articles of Incorporation for the Red Cross in 1881.



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February is designated as Black History Month to honor Douglass’ birthday on Feb. 14. Howard University, one of the nation’s top historically Black colleges and universities, formed its Red Cross Unit in March 1917 under the leadership of Red Crosser Hallie E. Queen. Determined to aid the war effort, students met daily to make 1,000 hospital supplies before the semester ended, and coordinated entertainment for Black soldiers stationed at Fort Meade. Howard University carries on this tradition today through its Red

Cross Club, which hosts blood drives and completes community service projects.

Dr. Charles R. Drew, a surgeon and pioneer of modern blood banking, was named the first medical director of the Red Cross National Blood Collection Program in 1941. His work with the Red Cross helped save the lives of hundreds of thousands of soldiers and civilians during World War II. Dr. Drew’s efforts to increase the blood supply led to the use of bloodmobiles and other collection, preservation and distribution processes still used today.

Commemorate Black History Month by rolling up a sleeve to give blood or platelets. Use the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visit RedCrossBlood.org/OurBlood or call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) to schedule an appointment today. All who come to give blood, platelets or plasma Feb. 1-29, 2024, will receive a \$20 Amazon.com Gift Card by email. Join the Red Cross in elevating Black Excellence during Black History Month: Discover and support Black-owned businesses on Amazon! Terms apply. Visit rcblood.org/heart for details.



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