



## The Importance of Blood Donors

Address to the Brethren and Visitors of The Electric Lodge No. 495 on Nov 21, 2018 by R.W. Bro. Robin J. Colville – DDGM Hamilton District “C” on his Official Visit.

Good evening Brethren:

Tonight I would like to talk to you about the importance of the Blood Donor program and its relevance to Masonry.

I chose to speak about this topic this evening, because of a special relevance to the Electric Lodge, as well as the history and importance of the Blood Donor program in District “C”.

To share a little bit of history, District “C” was formed in 1974, and the leadership team at that time decided that the District was to have a strong, energetic Blood Campaign with each Lodge appointing a Lodge Chairman, with set Lodge targets. In addition the DDGM was to appoint a District Blood Donor Chairman.

For the ensuing 10 years the Blood Donor program was continued through the leadership of V. W. Bro. William. Hoyle, a member of The Electric Lodge No. 495, he being appointed Blood Donor Chairman Emeritus of the 3 Hamilton Districts. For many years after the passing of V.W. Bro Bill Hoyle to the Grand Lodge above, the Blood Donor program and the participation of our Lodge members in this program was recognized with the presentation of the Bill Hoyle Memorial trophy, a prestigious award our District Lodges competed for by having the members donate blood and record their donations under their Lodge name. I am not sure of the whereabouts of the Bill Hoyle Memorial Trophy today, but his legacy lives on for his strong support of the Blood donor program in our Hamilton Masonic Districts.

During the past 10 years, our District members have continued to support the Canadian Blood Services clinics. In 2011 R.W.Bro. Eduardo Cordero was our District Blood Donor Chairman, and he reported that 300 units of blood had been donated within the District and was encouraged by the increasing response from the membership. Almost up until his untimely passing, and under the continued guidance of R.W. Bro Cordero, a stronger alliance between Canadian Blood



Services and Masonry was established, as he initiated a program where various Lodges would act as sponsors for several of the mobile blood donor clinics that are held each year.

It was during that period that he recruited my own Lodge – Buchanan 550 – to adopt the mobile blood donor clinics that are held every 2 months at the Hamilton Convention centre, and as well as providing financial support for these clinics we also have a team of volunteers who regularly attend the clinics to greet and interact with the donors while they get a drink and snack after their donation. As a regular volunteer myself, I find this quite rewarding as the donors themselves are generally very friendly and appreciate the fact that the Masons are there for them, to make sure they are OK after their donation and to have a short friendly conversation with them and thank them for their time and donation..

Although we see new donors, and especially new first time donors, I have found that many of the same donors come to the Convention Centre clinic every 2 months, and as a result we get to know them by name and in many cases establish casual friendships. One of the regular donors is Paul Wilson, who writes articles for his column in the Spectator. During the last clinic earlier this month I mentioned to him how I enjoyed his recent article which focused on the Scottish Rite building and his interview with W. Bro Hal Hilgram, and he told me that he was so impressed with the Hamilton Masonic Centre and how Masons run with projects and always see them through ... just like being there to greet him at the blood donor clinic as regular as clockwork. That made me feel pretty good and confident that what we do at these clinics really does make a difference ... even if it is small one.

But the donors themselves are the heroes, and the ones who are rewarded with the feeling of doing the good deed, and the possibility of saving someone's life. In fact, one of my own family members recently needed 2 units of blood during a minor procedure in hospital, and without that blood being available there was no guarantee of survival. It truly is the gift of life!

My brother George is a Mason and a regular blood donor, and I asked him to tell me what being a Blood Donor meant to him. He sent me a short note and I would like to read it for you.



“As a young teen I watched my Father faithfully give blood every 3 months. Being curious I asked him why he would do that, and he told me that without people’s generous donations, people in need of blood, whether through sickness or accident, might not get better, and may possibly even die. When I was in high school, there was a blood drive and as long as you were 17 and had your parents consent, you were allowed to give. That is when it started for me. 38 years and 144 donations later I am still a dedicated donor. To show how important I think donating is, I plan vacations around donation times, and I haven’t vacationed to certain places or gotten a family crest tattoo that I have always wanted, for the reason that I would be restricted from donating blood for 6-12 months. One of the slogans used by Canadian Blood Services is “ it’s in you to give”. And that couldn’t be more true ! It doesn’t cost you anything. except for a little of your time. And who knows... you or someone you know may need it someday”

The same day he sent me that note last week he also booked his appointment for his next donation.

Most of you may know that the Grand Lodge has strongly supported the Blood Donor Program that has been in place for decades ...and in fact the Grand Lodge continues to encourage our Masonic Lodges and members to support Canadian Blood Services, but are moving away from the task of tracking Masonic donations and keeping statistics that are becoming less relevant than they were in the past. After all ... giving blood is not about numbers and statistics, it is about helping others and saving lives.

Not everyone can give blood ... there are many reasons why. But for those who cannot donate, there are still many other opportunities to participate and support the blood donor program.

As Masons, remember your initiation and the lecture you received at the northeast angle of the Lodge, and you were asked ... would you give it were within your power? I am sure every Mason in this room answered that question by saying “YES”

Well brethren, please remember ... “ it’s in you to give!”  
Thank you for your kind attention.