

“Why I Donate”



Giving the Gift of Life

Name: Hallie Foran

Age: 22

Hallie Foran, 22, learned about the importance of blood donation at a young age. She is passionate about raising awareness for her generation, and she recently started sharing her message on TikTok. Foran was thrilled to make her first blood donation last June, alongside her mother Christine Foran, New York Blood Center Enterprises' director of corporate and community events, and her father.

MY MOTIVATION FOR BECOMING A BLOOD DONOR...

I started volunteering at blood drives at a young age. One thing that always stuck out to me was not the number of people that came in to donate, but the different walks of life they represented. There were people who had never left a certain state or people who came to the United States without being fluent in English. They were all driven by the single idea of saving lives. I was honored that I had the chance to share that goal with them, even if it took me a long time to become a donor.

MY FIRST DONATION EXPERIENCE...

I wanted to donate for a while, but I wasn't able to due to the height and weight restrictions in place for people younger than 19 years of age. I was going to donate with friends once I qualified, but I eventually decided that my parents and I would donate together. When we told NYBCe I was coming in to make my first donation, they set aside three beds, and I sat with my mom on one side and my dad on the other. It was great being able to donate with my parents next to me. The blood center staff were also incredible and made sure we were okay. It was a really nice experience feeling connected to the staff as well as my parents.

HOW I STARTED RAISING AWARENESS ON TIKTOK...

I never intended to do a video on blood donations. I purely post on TikTok because I find it fun, but I do reach a certain amount of people. I realized that blood centers are often severely lacking donations from my age group. This is something that centers throughout the country also face. The lack of Gen Z donations is an incredibly important issue. I knew that I could reach people in my age group, even if it's just through a simple video. I've been asked to make more videos about donating blood. People often ask me if the process is painful. But pain doesn't really matter when you realize that sitting in a chair for 15 minutes could save lives; pain is temporary.

Gen Z donors often don't know that donating is an option. They'll learn about donating if there's a blood drive at their school, but my high school didn't have blood drives. My college has blood drives, but there's not always a lot of advanced notice. I realized pretty quickly that I could raise awareness, so people my age know they don't have to wait for a blood drive to have the chance to donate blood.

WHAT I'D SAY TO THE NEXT GENERATION OF BLOOD DONORS...

It doesn't take a lot of time to donate. At the end, you are giving the gift of life. Many blood recipients are patients with cancer and, unfortunately, there's not a cure for many types of cancers. When you donate blood, you get to make these patients' lives a lot easier. There are numerous reasons people receive blood. My good friend's dad passed away in January 2021. He was a 9/11 first responder and went through about 20 years of kidney failure. He was receiving dialysis and eventually had a transplant, and he was also receiving many blood transfusions because of his condition. There are many people of all ages, including children, that may require blood transfusions. Donating to help people you don't know spend more time with their family is an incredibly rewarding experience.