

## Features



TOP

# Honor Veterans by Giving Blood

OCTOBER 17TH 2012 BY UNKNOWN

## Honor Veterans by Giving Blood

November is a time to give thanks and celebrate Veterans Day. The American Red Cross would like to invite eligible donors to give blood and honor those who have served the country in the U.S. armed forces.

The Red Cross serves more than 3,000 hospitals nationwide, including many Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers. Currently, all blood types are needed, especially O negative, B negative and A negative. Type O negative, the universal blood type, can potentially be transfused to patients with any blood type, especially in emergency situations.

Another way to honor military personnel is by making a contribution to support Service to the Armed Forces, a Red Cross program that offers resources for deployed service members and their families, provides emergency communications, and supports hospital outreach and veterans programs. Learn more at [redcross.org](http://redcross.org).

Upcoming blood donation opportunities are at the following locations:

### \*Butler County

Nov. 2 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Poplar Bluff High School, 1300 Victory Lane in Poplar Bluff, Mo.

### \*Cape Girardeau County

Nov. 4 from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. at St. Andrew Lutheran Church, 804 N. Cape Rock Drive

in Cape Girardeau, Mo.

Nov. 5 from 2-6 p.m. at Nell Holcomb School, 6547 State Highway 177 in Cape Girardeau, Mo.

Nov. 6 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Do It Best, 5422 Nash Road in Cape Girardeau, Mo.

**\*Stoddard County**

Nov. 1 from 12:30-6:30 p.m. at Stoddard County Ambulance District, 501 W. Business Highway 60 in Dexter, Mo.

</images/SMT/blood drive pic small.jpg>

**\*Dunklin County**

Nov. 7 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Senath Hornersville High School, 800 State St. in Senath, Mo.

Nov. 15 from 3-7 p.m. at Malden Elementary School, 505 Burkhart in Malden, Mo.

If you would like to donate blood simply call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org) to make an appointment or for more information. All blood types are needed to ensure a reliable supply for patients. A blood donor card or driver's license or two other forms of identification are required at check-in. Individuals who are 17 years of age (16 with parental consent in some states), weigh at least 110 pounds and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood. High school students and other donors 18 years of age and younger also have to meet certain height and weight requirements.

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds, and provides emotional support to victims of disasters; supplies about 40 percent of the nation's blood, teaches skills that save lives, provides international humanitarian aid, and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a not-for-profit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission. For more information, please visit [redcross.org](http://redcross.org)

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[TOP](#)

## 5th Annual Costume Ball and Murder Mystery Dinner Theatre

OCTOBER 16TH 2012 BY UNKNOWN

### 5th Annual Costume Ball and Murder Mystery Dinner Theatre

**Poplar Bluff, Missouri-** October 19th, 2012 will be the 5th Annual Costume Ball and Murder Mystery Dinner Theatre. Proceeds raised will go to the Ozark Family Resource Agency. This year's murder mystery will be based on the classic board game and movie "Clue". You won't want to miss this classic tale of whodunit! Mark your calendars now, and find your favorite "Clue" costume or come dressed in your costume of choice.

The Mystery Clue will be performed with special guest appearance by Neal Boyd, winner of America's Got Talent. Dinner will be served by Tasteful Creations Catering, drinks provided, music by Semo DJ and lots of fun to be had by you! Social Hour starts at 6pm with Dinner and Play to follow.

The proceeds raised will go to benefit the Ozark Family Resource Agency which helps children and families in the Poplar Bluff and Doniphan area. For more information go to [www.ofra.org](http://www.ofra.org) and have a good time while helping out others in need.

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[TOP](#)

## Foundation Grant will help more Missourians Complete Associate Degrees

OCTOBER 15TH 2012 BY UNKNOWN

### Foundation Grant will help more Missourians Complete Associate Degrees

JEFFERSON CITY – Gov. Jay Nixon today announced that Missouri is receiving a \$500,000 competitive grant to help more Missourians complete their associate degrees from community colleges. The Governor said the grant from the Lumina Foundation supports his stated goal of increasing the percentage of working-age Missourians with post-secondary degrees from 35 percent to 60 percent by 2020.

The Missouri Department of Higher Education will use the grant to create a statewide system for reverse transfer among the state’s two- and four-year institutions, both public and independent. A reverse transfer policy will enable students who have accumulated sufficient credit, in combination from those institutions, to earn an associate degree. Nearly 2,000 Missouri students are expected to be able to earn associate degrees as a result of the two-year grant.

“This will particularly help those students who transfer from a community college before earning an associate degree but who are unable to complete their degree at a four-year university, because of financial or other reasons,” Gov. Nixon said. “The reverse transfer

of the credits they earned at the four-year school can help put an associate degree in their hands, strengthening their value in the job market.”

The Lumina Foundation grant supports the provisions of House Bill 1042, signed into law this past June by the Governor. The bill authorizes the Coordinating Board of Higher Education to develop a reverse transfer policy among Missouri’s public colleges and universities, and requires all two- and four-year public institutions to create a core of at least 25 undergraduate courses by July 1, 2014, that are transferable among all public institutions.

The grant will help the state:

- \*Develop statewide technology and communication infrastructure, and appropriate supporting policies;

- \*Provide a venue for institutions to share information regarding both best practices and barriers to implementation; and

- \*Provide guidance and direction to focus institutions on collaboration and cooperation in support of House Bill 1042.

Gov. Nixon has held several statewide higher education summits with leaders of the state’s universities and colleges, both public and independent, to develop and implement strategies for increasing the number of Missourians with post-secondary degrees, and to prepare students for careers for high-demand occupations.

“Some 750,000 Missourians have college credits but no degree, and by 2018, nearly two-thirds of all jobs in the United States will require some kind of post-secondary education.” Gov. Nixon said. “Higher education is the key to Missouri’s sustained economic progress and quality of life, and essential to our nation’s ability to compete and win in a global economy.”

The Lumina Foundation joined with four other national foundations – The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Helios Education Foundation, Kresge Foundation and USA Funds – in the initiative called, “Credit When It’s Due: Recognizing the Value of the Quality Associate Degree.” The foundations today announced a total of \$6.4 million in grants to support initiatives in Missouri and 11 other states.

‘Credit When It’s Due’ will provide a way to fairly credit community colleges for their

work in preparing transfer students; clarify the value of sub-baccalaureate degrees by awarding them consistently; help individuals – especially those who drop out of college before earning a baccalaureate degree – by providing them a post-secondary credential with proven currency in the labor market; and promote efforts to more clearly define the learning outcomes inherent in all associate degrees,” said Jamie Merisotis, president and CEO of the Lumina Foundation.

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[Go to post](#)



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[TOP](#)

## Local Guys 'N Gals Participate in Tough Mudder

OCTOBER 14TH 2012 BY STAFF WRITER

[Local Guys 'N Gals Participate in Tough Mudder](#)

</images/2012 Article Pics/Features/TME - Logo.jpg>

**Poplar Bluff, Missouri** - On Saturday one of the most popular events sweeping the nation came to the Bricks Off-Road Park near Poplar Bluff. The Tough Mudder physical endurance race is a grueling, physically demanding team sport that requires tremendous dedication by individual athletes combined with a strong sense of team. This is no simple event, but is an obstacle course that teams enter to test their toughness and teamwork.

Noted as "*Probably The Toughest Event on the Planet*", the Tough Mudder is a hardcore 10-12 mile obstacle course designed by British Special Forces that tests a persons all around strength, stamina, mental grit, and camaraderie. The obstacles are named according to their challenge with some of these being "The Berlin Wall", "Kiss of Mud", "Firewalker" and "Jesus Walk". Other more humorous names of obstacles included: "Arctic Enema", "Electroshock Therapy", "Funky Monkey" and "Mud Bog Jog". [Click here to see a map of the course.](#)

 /images/2012 Article Pics/Features/TME - Obstacle List.jpg

Several area teams from Dexter were formed to participate in the event, including the Team Virtus pictured above. Members of one half of the team pictured above are Matt Mills, Bonnie Howard, Jason Comfort, Brett Dorton, Darrin Hillis and Missy Hoggard. Other members of the group included Lori Fuqua, Meagan Masters, Chris Robinson, Josh Robinson, Johnny Porzelt and Rich Jones.

 /images/2012 Article Pics/Features/TME - Mills on the Wall.jpg

Some area residence trained with this group

but were committed to other teams at the event. One particular training partner was Ed Gargas. As a Lieutenant Colonel in the Missouri National Guard, Ed joined his group to give the guard his representation.

Tough Mudder is not a marathon, nor is it an individual competition. Neither is "The Mudder", as most regulars call the challenge, a race. There is no winner and time is insignificant to the overall goal. Tough Mudder is all about finishing and helping everyone else finish.

Many of the obstacles  /images/2012 Article Pics/Features/TME - Meagan Masters.jpg

are physically impossible to accomplish on one's own. The obstacle called "Everest" is a gigantic sloped wall that

requires the participants that are at the top to help the others up that are at the bottom. It becomes a team sport, where members of the same team, and of other teams, assist all participants in getting through the challenge.

Team Virtus began their training this past spring and remained dedicated to a tough regimen of skills in preparation for this past weekend's event. Initially, the distance running became the focus of the group to get their cardiovascular stamina increased, followed by weight training. As the event got closer, the team began to meet at a rural farm where similar event challenges were setup for practice and training.

Josh Robinson became involved with the group both as trainer and a participant. Josh has been involved with the physical fitness of many individuals in the community as a personal trainer. This became more of a group project from his normal private session.

</images/2012 Article Pics/Features/TME - Gargas.jpg>

"Our training regimen was 5-6 days per week with special focus on crossfit drills that relate to the Tough Mudder events," noted Josh. "We also ran 4-6 days per week anywhere from 2 to 6 miles."

The "Funky Monkey" was a notable obstacle

</images/2012 Article Pics/Features/TME - Dorton in the Eel.jpg>

for the team with some team members loving it and some finding it more of a challenge. Much like the monkey bars on the playgrounds of old, this challenge certainly tested their pre-training, requiring a tremendous amount of upper body strength to negotiate.

With estimated crowds of 10,000 to 12,000 people this weekend, area law enforcement was beefed up to make certain the weekend went smoothly. This event is quite a boost to the area economy. Traffic control plans were made by officials to make County Road 484 that enters into the Brick's Off-Road Park one-way in hopes of creating a good flow of traffic.

Family members of the Dexter teams reported that traffic was smooth but did require a 3 to 4 hour wait just to get into the Brick's facilities and find parking.

Participants began to arrive at 8:00 AM on Saturday for the opening start times. Team Virtus were to begin at 9:45AM. Filled with anticipation and months of work leading up to the event, the group was inspired to reach their goal to complete the race and earn the ceremonial orange headband.

"The atmosphere was amazing," noted Meagan Masterson. "People helping and encouraging you wherever you turn."



</images/2012 Article Pics/Features/TME - Team Two Mid1.jpg>

The experience was one of personal reward

to the participants. The great sense of accomplishment was shared by all members.

Unanimously, the "Arctic Enema" was one of the most memorable obstacles to many of the members of the Team Virtus. The obstacle was simply a large trash dumpster filled with ice and water. Participants were required to jump in the container, swim underwater underneath a board obstacle and out the other end of the container.

"The Arctic Enema was a lot colder than I thought it would be," commented Jason Comfort.

"The only obstacle I didn't enjoy was the Arctic Enema. Nothing could have prepared me for the shock that my body experienced," shared Josh Robinson. "I jumped in the ice and immediately my lungs began to spasm, and my limbs seemed to move without my control. But I'm so thankful that we all stared into the face of adversity and jumped right in."

"... the Arctic enema (was the obstacle liked least)!! It was the closest thing to death I have ever experienced." noted team member Lori Fuqua.

The "Electric Eel" was equally as tough for Jason Comfort. The "Eel" was an obstacle that required members to crawl through a mud pit underneath wires hanging down closely overhead. It was a good idea to keep your head down.

"I somehow took an electric shock to the back of my head and face planted myself after that and busted a lip and took five stitches to the upper lip, busted nose and chin," recalled Comfort. "However, I was fortunate enough to put a piece of gauze on it and finish the race and get my orange headband."

"You all should know that the medical staff wanted to pull

</images/2012 Article Pics/Features/TME - Comfort.jpg>

Comfort out as they could see the degree of his injury," commented Brett Dorton. "But he was 9-miles into the course and was determined to finish the race, even with a mouth full of gauze."

Most of Team Virtus speaks openly about the strong feelings of accomplishment. The fear of the unknown seemed to drive the preparation of the team to a level of being over prepared for Saturday's event.

"The course itself was fairly easy to us," added Comfort. "Matt Mills and I talked about

going back to run the event again on Sunday."

A great sense of accomplishment overwhelmed participants. Whether that was the personal motivation of Josh Robinson who watched his brother Chris conquer the "Everest" obstacle, or the individual achievement when he ran straight up the wall without hesitation, or the team spirit of helping other "Mudders" up the hill, the event brought so much satisfaction personally to all of these participants.

"My brother and I then turned around on top of the wall and proceeded to pull up Mudder after Mudder until our arms were dead," said Robinson.



Meagan Masterson said, "I can't put it

into words as this was one of my greatest experiences by far. The feeling of accomplishment makes me smile just thinking about our team."

When asked if another Tough Mudder event is in their future, Team Virtus was quick to answer that they would definitely be looking for other events.

"In a heart beat!!!" noted Lori Fuqua. "I recommend everybody at least once in their life try it!!"

"There will definitely be more Tough Mudders in our future that we will participate in," said Comfort.

Wrapping up a great accomplishment was best done by Darrin Hills, who captured the essence of the event in his words.

"There were thousands of warriors on the course, and you had the feeling that any of them would pick you up and carry you to the finish line if you were unable to continue," related Hills. "I had the fortunate opportunity to train and compete with a great group of people, and we all ran as a team. That gave you a great feeling of pride and accomplishment to all finish together."

"It was just an awesome, awesome experience and I look forward to doing another Mudder with my teammates," closed Hillis.

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[Go to post](#)



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[TOP](#)

## Local Man Finds Success in Music Business

OCTOBER 12TH 2012 BY UNKNOWN

Local Man Finds Success in Music Business

*Written by*

*Zach Hedrick, SMT Writer*

**Dexter Missouri-** Keith Morrison is an up and coming musician from Dexter, Missouri. Being raised and living in the Missouri heartland gives Keith his work ethic and focus on success. His voice and lyrics in the songs he writes pay homage to those who came before him, and his enigmatic stage presence sets him apart.

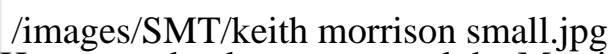
His talent as a musician and a songwriter is clear in his music. Keith's touring boundaries have expanded from his home in Dexter tremendously in only six short months.

Keith's determination and willpower was proven at a young age. He emerged as a fighter at the tender age of four. Due to issues during birth, Keith had to deal with frequent headaches and multiple seizures.

His parents were proud and hardworking, but were without medical insurance. The Morrison's church received donations and held benefits to help in their fight to get Keith

the treatment he desperately needed.

Keith was taken to the Methodist Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee where surgeons performed tests, eventually discovering a tumor on his brain. Skilled surgeons removed the tumor, despite a 90% chance of him being paralyzed. The risk was taken, giving Keith a chance at a normal life. To the doctors surprise his rehabilitation took only a little over four months.


 everything, including walking and talking. However, the doctors warned the Morrison's that Keith would probably never be able to play, read, write or do what normal children do everyday. Every time you hear his songs you are hearing a bit of a miracle.

Keith gets his musical talent honest. His father played drums for a 50's & 60's cover band when he was a child so a family tradition began. Keith learned to play the drums at 12 years old, playing in his middle and high school bands. The snare drum & triple toms kept him busy while dreaming of his future in music. Then, there was baseball. Keith was a very talented baseball pitcher his Junior year of high school, pitching the first no-hitter for his Babe Ruth Summer League team in Dexter. Keith could have played college baseball, but decided to chase his dream of playing music instead.

The Morrison's moved to Selmer, Tennessee where Keith began his climb, playing in a few bands, finally landing a regular gig with the band "Southern Style." As the drummer and lead singer Keith quickly became a well-known artist in the Selmer area.

Not long after his success in Selmer, Keith found himself being actively recruited by the band "Steel Country." The songs he covered varied greatly, playing everything from Alabama to Waylon Jennings. As the band's fan base grew, people wanted to hear Keith sing more.

The band got a new drummer, and Keith got out front, selling out shows in northern Mississippi. To date, Steel Country has opened for multi-million dollar touring acts, such as Hank Williams Jr. and Jerry Lee Lewis. Keith also was honored to perform at the Alabama Music Hall of Fame with the legendary band, Lynyrd Skynyrd. Steel Country released a single in both Japan and The United Kingdom, receiving multiple raves.

 I.V. series "Nashville Star." He has been making trips to Music City, Tennessee regularly, co-writing songs with exceptional songwriters, such as; Marty Brown, Tracy Byrd Sarah Majors, and Faith Hill. He has also

had the privilege of working with Michael Martin Murphy, Corey Barker, Jon Conley, C.J. Watson, Dave Tough, and David Harper. (composer for Sony Pictures, ABC, NBC, CBS & HBO).

Keith's new demo CD reflects his country-rock roots and amazingly smooth voice. He is currently working on a compilation of original works for his upcoming album. His fan base is growing, and anxiously anticipates its release.

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