

## Features



## Rotary Club to Host Blood Drive in Honor of Gavin Thompson

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**Dexter, Missouri** - What should have been Gavin's first day of kindergarten turned out to be a day of needles and chemo. When Gavin grows up he wants to be a Hematologist and develop a needle that doesn't have to hurt children.

No child at the age of five should even have to think of things like that, but for Gavin the next year will be full of blood tests, chemo treatments, and missing school. His mother Nicole Thompson says he absolutely hates to miss school and can't wait to get back after each treatment.

Gavin is 5 years old, son of Grant and Nicole Thompson, and a kindergartner at Southwest Elementary School in Dexter. He was diagnosed with Lymphoblastic Leukemia on August 12, 2015. Gavin had a port put in on August 13th and his first day of chemo was August 14th missing his first day of school.

Since his diagnosis his family has been making weekly and sometimes twice a week road trips to St. Louis for treatment. Gavin struggles with blood transfusions as he continues to develop antibodies and has had severe reactions at times to the transfusions. He has to be still for as much as 4 hours to receive warm blood during the transfusion. If you know anything about five year old little boys that's a difficult accomplishment in its self.

The Rotary Club of Dexter is known for their Service Above Self motto when it comes to donating blood.

They host numerous Red Cross Blood Drives each year, but this one is a little more than a normal blood drive. You see Gavin has captured the heart of Rotary President, Dee Loflin. She has had the opportunity to visit with him on many occasions at his school, at a football game, and even helped find his most favorite hat that he had left at school. To her he is Superman! Brave beyond words, adorable, super polite, and smart! He's extremely intelligent for being just five.

On Thursday, December 17th from 2:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. the Red Cross and the Rotary Club will be ready to go at Sacred Heart Catholic Church Parish Hall located at 102 East Castor Street. Please donate!

A special donation jar will also be available for financial donations as the burden is great with medical bills mounting and travel expenses increasing.

You can make an appointment by calling Dee Loflin, (573) 614-4804 and leave a message. The Rotary Club has set high hopes to receive at least 60 donors during the Blood Drive; that will potentially save 180 lives.

Gavin is incredibly strong and will undergo treatment in St. Louis during the blood drive so please give the gift of life. Cancer sucks! Support Gavin and his family and have a very Merry Christmas!

### **Platelets and type AB plasma also needed**

Platelet donors and those with type AB blood are also continually needed to help ensure patients receive the lifesaving blood products they need. Platelets – a key clotting component of blood often needed by cancer patients, surgical patients and bone marrow recipients – must be transfused within five days of donation, so donations are constantly needed. Donors with type AB blood are urged to give blood or platelets to restock the plasma supply. Type AB donors have the universal plasma type, which can be given to patients of all blood types.

Individuals who donated blood earlier this summer may be eligible to donate again and help patients like an expectant mother at a Red Cross-supported hospital who is currently receiving nearly 100 units of blood products a week until she delivers. Her need alone could add up to 1,100 units.

### **How to donate blood**

The free Blood Donor App – available in app stores by searching for American Red Cross or by texting BLOODAPP to 90999 – not only makes appointment scheduling easy, but donors can also access their digital donor card and be notified when their donation is distributed to a hospital. Donors can also visit [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org) or call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) 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.

Blood donors in the Missouri-Illinois Blood Services Region can now save time at their next donation by using RapidPass to complete their pre-donation reading and health history questionnaire online, on the day of their donation, prior to arriving at the blood drive. To get started and learn more, visit [redcrossblood.org/RapidPass](http://redcrossblood.org/RapidPass) and follow the instructions on the site.

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