Community Always in Mind at Canyon Country Campus

Each year since its opening in August 2007, the College of the Canyons Canyon Country campus has offered a year-round schedule of events and activities designed to invite students and community members onto campus, while providing a variety of valuable community resources to all residents.

During the fall 2011 semester alone, the college invited stargazers and local astronomers of all ages to the Canyon Country campus’ Carl A. Rasmussen Amphitheater for the annual Star Party event; introduced a new Native Planting lecture series aimed at helping local homeowners learn how they can adopt some of the environmentally sensitive and drought tolerant gardening techniques implemented at the Canyon Country campus; and hosted a patriotic Veterans Day dedication ceremony for the campus’ new Veterans Garden.

Another longstanding outreach program that has enjoyed success at the Canyon Country campus are the ongoing campus blood drives, held in partnership with the American Red Cross and Providence Holy Cross Medical Center.

“College of the Canyons has a long tradition of working with the community, providing support to community-wide interests and needs,” said Dr. Dena P. Maloney, Vice President of the Canyon Country Campus and Economic Development. “When the college opened its campus in Canyon Country we continued this tradition, and have worked with our Canyon Country Campus Advisory Committee to identify opportunities to be a resource to the community. The campus blood drives are an important part of that.”

Since the campus began hosting blood drives in March 2008, mobile “Bloodmobiles” have collected approximately 331 pints, or 41.4 gallons, of blood from COC students and participating community members — contributions that have made a lifesaving difference in the health of 992 patients.

Held several times each semester, blood drive dates are typically listed in advance on the CCC Cares section of the campus’ website, allowing both students and community members an opportunity to pick a donation date and register to give in advance.

However, the majority of donors are actually walk-ups — students and community members who sign up to donate only after seeing the presence of the “Bloodmobile” on campus.

“The number one reason why people don’t donate, we’ve learned, is because nobody asks them to,” said Cheryl Gonzales, a donor recruitment associate with American Red Cross. “But if you ask them, there’s actually a pretty good chance that they’ll turn around and decide to donate.

That’s how we get a lot of our donors.”

As always, all the blood collected at COC blood drives is distributed to local hospitals and blood banks, meaning the donations collected at the Canyon Country campus will be used to assist patients within the region.

“We service more than 150 local hospitals in this region, so everything collected here would go to a patient within the area,” Gonzales said. “Unfortunately, because we serve such a large area we can never collect enough blood, so more donors are always needed.”

During the campus’ most recent blood drive, held in November, several donors were enticed to give through the promise of a complimentary gift package which included free tickets to the Laugh Factory comedy club, food and coffee gift cards and entrance into a regional drawing for a $500 shopping spree.

Those gifts may have had an impact in attracting some first time donors, as the drive was successful in collecting 22 pints of blood from 29 donors. But for the most part, those students and community members who did give blood did so without the promise of a reward.

“I had given blood before, but it was a long time ago, so I thought today would be a good day to donate,” said COC student Melissa
COC student Melissa Rodriguez (right) was one of 29 donors who participated in the Canyon Country campus' most recent blood drive with American Red Cross. “I had given blood before, but it was a long time ago, so I thought today would be a good day to donate,” said Rodriguez, who also recruited her stepfather, Alan Wilson (far left) to donate alongside her. The blood collected at COC blood drives is distributed to local hospitals and blood banks, meaning all the donations will be used to assist patients within the region.

Rodriguez, 23, who also recruited her stepfather to donate alongside her. “We didn't find out about the free Laugh Factory tickets until later, so I was, like, ‘cool.’”

With the continued success of such events, the campus has already scheduled a series of blood drives to be held throughout the spring 2012 semester.

For more information about the College of the Canyons Canyon Country Campus’ lineup of community outreach events, or to register to donate at an upcoming campus blood drive please visit www.canyons.edu/Offices/CCC/events.asp.