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BLOOD DRIVE

H-E-B, Carter BloodCare celebrate 'H-E-B Challenge'

SPECIAL TO THE CTR

This summer marks the 17th annual "H-E-B Challenge" blood drive in central Texas. The grocery chain prioritizes blood donation in the summer to help boost donations when collections are at one of their lowest periods.

This year the stakes are even higher because of the alarming effects of COVID-19 on the blood supply.

H-E-B began the community partnership with Carter BloodCare in 2002, when the company sponsored our first large-scale, companywide, multi-location blood drive event.

This year's blood drive event will be held at various

H-E-B locations in central Texas for two consecutive weeks.

"More than any other summer, this year is crucial for the blood supply," said Linda Goelzer, director of Carter BloodCare public relations. "Blood drives at schools, businesses and houses of worship have been canceled due to COVID-19 restrictions; thus, creating a large deficit in the community blood supply. We appreciate H-E-B's commitment to partner with us, especially under these circumstances."

CLEBURNE BLOOD DRIVE

H-E-B Challenge is coming to the Cleburne area.

The blood drive is from noon to 5 p.m. Wednesday at 600 West Henderson St. in the parking lot on the Carter BloodCare bus. For more information or an appointment time, contact Jess Martinez at 817-641-4036.

This summer, employees of the participating central Texas H-E-B stores will again challenge each other to entice the most blood donors, in the series of onsite blood drives.

The store with the highest ratio of donors vs. employees receives a traveling trophy; this helps equal the playing field between small and large stores. The store that accumulates the most

units of blood from their drive is also awarded a trophy.

In addition, the Carter BloodCare Central Texas staff hosts an ice cream social for the H-E-B employees of the two winning stores.

H-E-B Corsicana was the 2019 champion for the highest percentage of donor participation, with 21 percent participation.

Killeen Trimmier H-E-B won the 2019 contest for the greatest number of donations accrued, with 43 units.

Carter BloodCare also issues an annual award for the H-E-B that supports blood donation throughout the year.

The 2019 winner was Granbury H-E-B with a total of 145 annual units.

Carter BloodCare is focused on providing a safe donation experience. Currently, masks are required for donors and our staff; we are performing additional sanitizing between donations; and there is room for social distancing.

Here are some ways donors can do their part to help. To reduce wait times, donors can fill out a questionnaire online before they show up to donate blood.

This means fewer people are waiting, making it easier to "social distance." Making an appointment is the best way to manage overcrowd-

ing.

Carter BloodCare has begun COVID-19 antibody testing for a limited time. All successful blood donations at the H-E-B challenge will be tested.

Donors can retrieve their results, in one to two weeks, through their online donor account. We recommend donors create an account after their donation, if they do not have one.

For information on donor eligibility and appointments, call or text 800-366-2834 or visit carterbloodcare.org.

For more information on antibody testing for COVID-19, visit the Centers for Disease Control web site.