

Sheep Dog Blood Donor Team Rises to Top 100 Thanks to Elite Givers

3 March, 2024

Making it to the top 100 of over 64,000 teams isn't easy in any competition—that is, unless you truly have the best of the best in your ranks.

The competition: Who can give the most blood?

The competitors: all kinds of organizations from across the nation.

The prize? Well, some would say giving blood is its own prize, knowing a stranger somewhere now has a better chance at life.

The grand tournament has been ongoing in the Red Cross Blood App for about a decade, according to Brett Crystal, a Red Cross staffer. Individual donors can form teams to represent their chosen cause or organization with their blood donations.

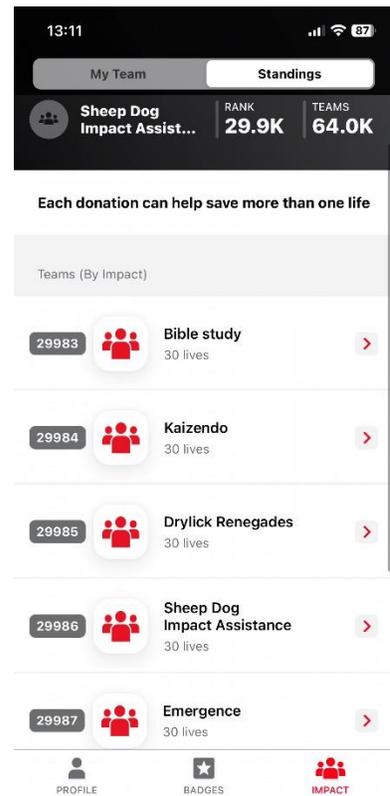
Without donated blood products, countless lives would be cut short every single day. This fact hits close to home with Sheep Dog Impact Assistance. Scott West, Sheep Dog's Director of Outdoor Adventures, once depended on blood transfusions to survive. He suffered the loss of both legs in an explosion while serving as a Cavalry Scout in Iraq. In a voice interview, West recalled,

"I lost 45% of my blood. I wouldn't be here if it weren't for the medics and blood transfusions, both in Iraq and in the hospital in Germany."

Dozens of surgeries and a few years later, Scott West was jumping out of airplanes again. He now tells his incredible story and leads our nation's Sheep Dogs through rigorous outdoor experiences to give them a fresh perspective on their lives.

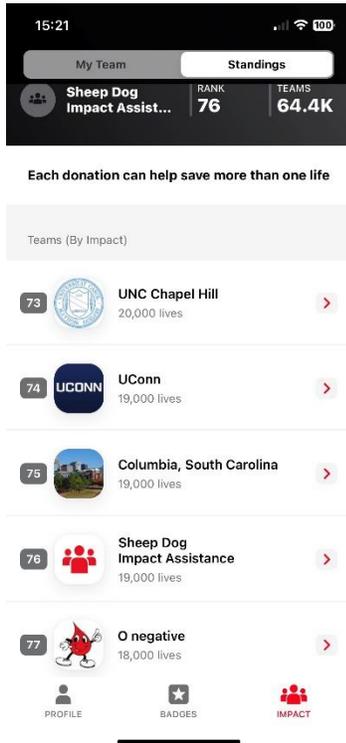
Some time after the American Red Cross decided to launch the friendly competition in 2014, an anonymous supporter took initiative and started a small team called "Sheep Dog Impact Assistance." With a membership of three, they impacted some lives and rose to about the median in team ranking, placing 29,900 out of 63,000 teams.

But in February 2024, an elite kind of blood donor responded to a team recruitment call on social media. Upon learning of Sheep Dog's cause of Post-Traumatic Growth to prevent suicide in the military and first responder communities, Jim Henderson



The Team's ranking in December 2023.

decided to take a stand with the team. But Jim isn't just any blood donor. He is a Plateleteer. And he brought Plateleteer friends.



'Plateleteer' is the affectionate moniker of those who hail from the platelet donor community. It is a community which wields incredible power for the good of humanity.

In a Facebook comment, Henderson said,

“I was aware that there is a problem but was not aware of the name of your organization. So let's see if we can get a few folks to help in changing that awareness.”

In the span of three days, Sheep Dog's blood donor team skyrocketed in rank, all the way up to 76th place out of 64,400 teams. Team Sheep Dog shot ahead of such names as "Ford Motor Company," "Kansas City Chiefs," "Rotary International," "U.S. Army," and "U.S. Navy."

But while these other teams have hundreds of members, Sheep Dog's only has 17.

How have these 17 people out-donated other, bigger teams hundreds to one and impacted 19,000 lives?

The Team's ranking as of March 3rd, 2024.

Platelets.

Unlike whole blood, which can only be given about every two months, platelets can be given multiple units at a time, up to 24 times per year. Some donors, like Julie Schaller and Jeneen Boudrie, often give three units of platelets and one of plasma in a sitting. When those two joined Sheep Dog's team, the impact score increased by thousands of lives. Boudrie said,

“If I could help our veterans and first responders, even as little as it may be, I would like to do what I can. My sister-in-law was dispatch... I have the utmost respect for our first responders and service men and women.”

Platelets are the blood component that ensures proper clotting so bleeding stops. Their shelf life is short, and they are not easy to get. According to Brett Crystal, Social Media Associate and administrator of the Platelet Donor Facebook group, “Every 15 seconds someone needs platelets...there is a constant, often critical, need for new and current donors to give to keep up with hospital demand.” He also noted that Red Cross is at a 5-year low for platelet donors.

It takes hours to extract platelet cells from a donor's blood, using a procedure called plateletpheresis. Needless to say, it takes a special kind of person to want to sit motionless for so long with needles in their arms on a regular basis.

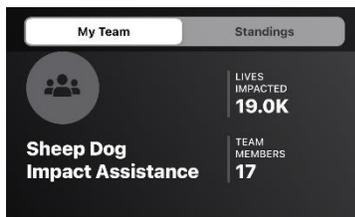
Thankfully, those people do exist, and they have an admirable dedication to their altruistic mission. A few have embraced this giving as part of their lifestyle and have donated for decades.

Bob Hungerschafer started giving platelets at age 16 in 1973. Now, half a century later, he has given 2,827 units (considered equivalent to 353 gallons). He may be the top donor his age in the world.

The son of a soldier, Hungerschafer chose to use his incredible record of sacrifice to point to the plight of veterans and first responders who have suffered trauma.

“This is a worthy cause,” said Hungerschafer, “Not many people have to see the type of things they do. Some don’t get over it.”

When Jim, Bob, Brett, Julie, Jeneen, and a few others like them joined the team, their exponential impact illustrated just how special a thing it is to make plateletpheresis a part of your routine. They also showed in a real way how much they appreciate the service of first responders and the military.

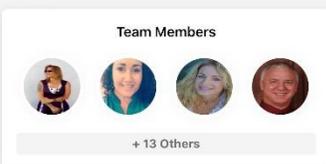


Service to others is a proven way to find healing and freedom from past trauma. Regular platelet donation is one great example of Continued Service. If you have a desire to try something different and help a stranger in need, maybe it’s time to Get Off The Couch and into a donation chair!

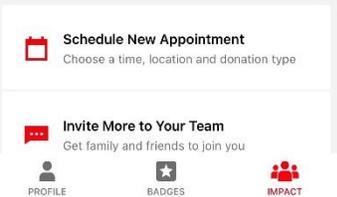
Each donation can help save more than one life



Anyone who would like to join Sheep Dog’s blood donation team to keep the momentum going can tap this [this link](#) on their smartphone. Whether you have given blood many times or never before at all, there is no time like the present to step forward.



Let’s go for top 10!



The Team's small but consequential membership as of March 3rd, 2024.