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# MILLER-KEYSTONE

## BLOOD CENTER

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Miller-Keystone unveils program to recognize high-school blood donors at graduation**

### *The red cord signifies lifesaving gifts to the community*

BETHLEHEM, Pa. – At next year’s high school graduation ceremonies throughout the Lehigh Valley, there will be a new addition to the traditional cap and gown: the red cord. Miller-Keystone Blood Center has announced a new program to honor graduating seniors for their participation in life-saving blood donation programs during high school. High school graduates who qualify will be given a red recognition cord to drape around their necks over their gowns to denote their role as blood donors and/or blood drive volunteers.

Increasing demands for blood already exceed the number of blood donors. As the population ages, this demand for blood will only increase. In order for our community to ensure that a safe and constant stream of blood is available for premature infants, accident victims, cancer patients and others in need, more and younger blood donors will be needed. As the only blood center that supplies our area’s hospitals and meets the local need for blood, Miller-Keystone Blood Center is continually recruiting blood donors and organizations to hold blood drives. High schools are particularly important to this effort as high school drives encourage these young adults to contribute to community by becoming blood donors at an early age and hopefully develop a habit and commitment of becoming a life-long blood donor. According to Catherine Palumbo, Director of Donor Recruitment, Miller-Keystone Blood Center, “We are thrilled to be able to put this program in place to recognize these students for their commitment to others and to saving lives in our community.”

To qualify for the red cord, students 17 years of age and older must register to donate blood four or more times during their high school career. These donations can be made at their high school blood drives, a community drive, or at one of Miller-Keystone's donor centers. Miller-Keystone requires students to be at least 17 years of age to give blood even though nationally the age was dropped to 16 in 2008, because donor safety and comfort are Miller-Keystone's primary concerns. Students ineligible to give blood can volunteer to assist on a minimum of four blood drives during their high school career. They can help recruit donors, become donor aides or work in the canteen, as examples. Volunteer hours must be approved and verified by a school sponsor and Miller-Keystone.

Miller-Keystone Blood Center and the participating high schools will work closely to identify all graduating students eligible for the cord. Each student who qualifies will receive a certificate and the red recognition cord.

Current participating high schools are: Emmaus High School, Moravian Academy, Tamaqua High School, Blue Mountain Academy, Pottstown High School HOSA, The Hill School, Berks Career and Technology Center – East, Bethlehem Catholic High School, Boyertown High School, Career Institute of Technology, Coventry Christian School, Daniel Boone High School, Governor Mifflin High School, Hamburg Area High School, Liberty High School, Nazareth Area High School, Pine Forge Academy, Pottsgrove High School, Reading High School, Tulpehocken High School, Upper Perkiomen High School, Allentown Central Catholic High School, Dieruff High School, Salisbury High School, and William Allen High School.

For more information or to participate in the high school recognition red cord program, please contact Marsha Springel, Donor Resources Manager at 800-223-6667.

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