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Inova Hosts Blood Drive Block Party



By [Ryan Lytle](#)
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Inova Blood Donor Services hosted a block party in an attempt to raise awareness of blood donations in Sterling on Saturday.

The event offered donors a mix of music, food and the opportunity to give back to the community.

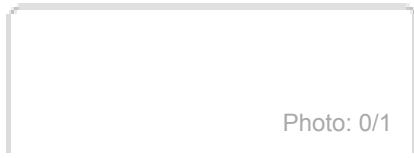
"Because the summer time is typically very bad for blood donations, we had to come up with an idea to have people come in," said Inova Senior Account Manager Sandi Bourget. "So our marketing department came up with the idea to throw a block party to target the younger audience to come out and donate."

Anyone over the age of 16 years old is eligible to donate blood at the Inova Blood Donor Centers.

"As the baby boomers are getting older, we're going to need more blood so we need to try to get the younger people in a habit of donating," Bourget said.

The summers for most blood donation centers are usually a trying time for many reasons, which made an event of this type a logical idea.

"People are traveling and schools aren't in session so we aren't doing the school donations," said Inova Assistant



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Director Rebecca Hileman. "So we thought we'd take a chance and do this."

Inova offered a \$10 gas card to the first 100 people to register and donate at the event and, by mid-afternoon, it looked as if these cards would be gone.

"Our overall goal was to collect 200 units of blood," Hileman said. "My senses are that once people see what's going on and are having a good time, hopefully, they will take out their phones and call a few friends to come out. You can donate, save a few lives and just hang out for a while."



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An inside view of the Inova Blood Mobile at the Blood Drive Block Party in Sterling Saturday. ([Ryan Lytle](#))

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Though the event took place to give people an incentive to donate blood, the real message was to spread the word of how important blood donations are during all times of the year.

"We really are the life blood of the community," Hileman said. "The blood that we collect stays in this area, and we provide 90 percent of the blood used to transfuse patients in the Greater DC metro area. All of that comes from our donors. It has an impact that's local."

Inova Blood Donor Services volunteer Ric Martin has been donating blood for 36 years and called the Sterling location his "home away from home." He agreed that it was imperative people come out and donate blood to save lives. As he put it, Inova will always be in need of blood.

"You know, the last time we had more blood than we could use was a few days after 9/11," Martin said.

With such a need for blood donors and the scarcity of donors during the summer, the block party came at the right time.

"This was a perfect time to have the block party," Bourget said. "Because it's nice outside. People can donate then go outside to listen to the bands."

For more information on the Inova Blood Donor Services, visit inova.org/donateblood.

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