

By Jan Schultz, The Imperial Republican News Editor

We all know the many benefits of giving blood, and the life-saving results that come from an hour or so of your time at a local Bloodmobile.

But, in Imperial and at several other locations in the U.S., local students are also benefiting from your support of a school-sponsored Bloodmobile.

Chase County Schools will host one such Bloodmobile today (Thursday) from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Longhorn gym with a goal of 90 units.

The Red Cross is putting a lot of emphasis on school-sponsored Bloodmobiles, which makes sense. It gets students involved both in planning for the Bloodmobile (and hopefully future volunteerism, too) and in donating themselves early in their lives. It's no secret the Red Cross hopes those young donors will continue to support Bloodmobiles the rest of their lives.

That's important because Red Cross statistics indicate that only about 5 percent of eligible donors, or about 3.3 million people, actually take the time to donate blood each year. That results in about 8 million transfusable products and many are used in life-saving situations. But the need often goes beyond that number.

In addition, though, CCS students who are involved in the school-sponsored Bloodmobiles will receive scholarships as seniors. School Nurse Angie Paisley works with the students in that effort and said since 2007 CCS has hosted Bloodmobiles. Starting then with two, the students now organize four of them each year.

Students who start as sophomores as members of the school's Blood Drive Team and continue to be involved their junior and senior years can be eligible for splitting \$2,500 in scholarships. In addition, the senior year student coordinator earns another \$500 scholarship. And, every unit over the school's goal will add \$1 to the scholarship fund.

In addition, students who have donated blood themselves at least four times are given a red cord to wear at graduation recognizing that effort along with their other academic achievements. About 10 graduates wore them for the first time last year.

Further involvement by working a combined eight hours at the school Bloodmobiles during high school and recruiting first-time donors will also yield a recommendation letter from Red Cross for other scholarships applied for by the student, as well as a chance at a national scholarship drawing.

The Red Cross "Young Minds Change Lives" scholarship program is reaping benefits. We should support those efforts. If you haven't ever donated blood and are healthy, why not consider a donation this week? If you need details, contact School Nurse Paisley at the school.