



3 March 2008

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## **Joely Bear Appeal Celebrates 40<sup>th</sup> Life-saving Session**

The Joely Bear Appeal is holding its 40<sup>th</sup> blood donor session at the Borehamwood & Elstree Synagogue on Sunday, 16 March 2008. The National Blood Service will be presenting a cake to the charity to thank them for their contributions over the past 13 years. There will also be children's entertainment (including a bouncy castle and facepainting), refreshments, and car parking provided as locals are encouraged to roll up their sleeves and give a life-saving pint at this meaningful event.

Based in Elstree, The Joely Bear Appeal was launched in 1994 by Leigh and Lisa Renak in memory of their son Joel. He had died at age four after a courageous battle with a rare form of liver cancer. Since its inception, the charity has worked to provide facilities to make stays in hospitals more comfortable for young cancer patients and their families. They also provide grants for research into the treatment and detection of cancer in children.

Recognising the importance of blood in treating cancer, the appeal is also a staunch supporter of the NBS. Blood drives are organised thrice a year, and to date, over five thousand people have attended the blood donation sessions. More than nine hundred have also enrolled as new donors from these events. These have helped supply the 750 units of blood that hospitals in Hertfordshire use every week.

NBS spokesperson Melissa Pang commented: "A lot of people think that blood is used just

for emergencies like car accidents, but there are many who require transfusions over an extended period, such as cancer patients. A lot of their healthy blood cells are destroyed during chemotherapy, and blood products like platelets aid recovery by replacing these lost cells. If you haven't given blood before, make an invaluable donation at the Joely Bear Session. You will be potentially saving up to three lives."

Daniel Renak, on behalf of The Joely Bear Appeal said, "On Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2008, we will host our 40<sup>th</sup> Blood Donor Session. It will be a milestone event to which all are invited. With a supervised bouncy castle, face painting and crèche for the kids, refreshments and parking -all of which are provided by us free of charge-, people have no excuse not to turn up and do their bit!"

If you are between 17-60 years of age, in general good health, and weigh over 7st 12lbs, give blood on:

**Sunday, 16 March 2008**  
**Borehamwood & Elstree Synagogue**  
**Croxdale Road**  
**Borehamwood, Herts**  
**WD6 4QA**  
**09:30 to 16:30**

To make an appointment, call the 24-hour National Donor Helpline on **0845 7 711 711** or visit [www.blood.co.uk](http://www.blood.co.uk). Regular donors can give blood up to 70 years of age.

**-ENDS-**

### **Photo Opportunity**

Members of the press are invited to the blood donor session at **12.30pm**, where The Renak family will be available for photos and an interview.

### **Images**

Joely Bear Appeal logo (B/W + Colour) + Billy Blood Drop Photo

### **Notes to newsroom**

1. The NBS needs to collect 7,000 units of blood daily for hospitals across England and north Wales.
2. A unit of blood is 470ml.
3. Only four per cent of the eligible population give blood, of which just three per cent are of an Asian, African, or African-Caribbean background.
4. The first Joely Bear Blood Donor Session was held in February 1995

### **National Blood Service**

The National Blood Service is a part of NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT), a Special Health Authority within the NHS responsible for managing the National Blood Service, Bio Products Laboratory, and UK Transplant. NHSBT is responsible for optimising the supply of blood, organs, plasma and tissues and raising the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of blood and transplant services.

**For more information, please contact Communications Officer (North London)  
Melissa Pang on 0208 271 6369 or [melissa.pang@nhsbt.nhs.uk](mailto:melissa.pang@nhsbt.nhs.uk)**