

Pine-Richland High School blood drive going virtual due to the pandemic



MICHAEL DIVITTORIO | Thursday, October 15, 2020 1:29 a.m.



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A Pine-Richland High School student-driven blood drive is going virtual this year due to the covid-19 pandemic.

The school usually hosts three to four drives a year for the Central Blood Bank in Pittsburgh. Its latest effort is scheduled for Oct. 25 through Nov. 8.

Senior Max Romano, one of the student committee members, plans to donate.

“Compared to years past, a virtual drive is something new,” Max said. “We are hoping to get as many people to turn up and donate as possible, all things considered.

“I think the multi-day donation window is advantageous, giving more time for people to donate based on their schedules, and the antibody testing is a nice incentive. I think that this virtual drive may turn out to work better than expected.”

Participants can give blood at any Vitalant donation center.

Vitalant will be testing all donors for covid, with results expected in two weeks.

If donors test positive for antibodies, they will have the opportunity to donate convalescent plasma to those fighting the infection if they meet certain criteria.

Those interested in donating can go to vitalant.org and click on “donate now” to make an appointment and find additional information on safety, antibody testing and donating plasma.

People can use Pine-Richland’s school code — HS010058 — to earn credit toward its scholarship fund.

The goal is to have at least 90 people donate. Those as young as 16 can give blood with a signed parental consent form.

“Many local blood drives have been cancelled and the need for donors is higher than ever,” said Allison Romano, the district’s community coordinator. “This year the student committee will have the additional challenge advertising the blood drive using different strategies than in the past with the new social distancing restrictions in mind.”

Students will be meeting via Zoom to create message for PRTV to educate students on the importance of donating. They also will make morning announcements and hang informational flyers throughout the school and community and use social media to get the word out.

“This year may pose additional challenges, but it provides a good lesson to these students to stay committed to a good cause and they can still make a difference in their community and ultimately save lives,” Romano said. “People are looking for ways to give back right now, and this is an easy way to contribute.”

Go to donateblood.centralbloodbank.org to find other blood drives near you.

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