



Media Release

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CBCO *Salute a Veteran* blood drive to also raise money for Ozarks Food Harvest *Blood donors given choice of exchanging participation gift for the opportunity to feed families across the Ozarks*

SPRINGFIELD—Ozarks Food Harvest and the Community Blood Center of the Ozarks (CBCO) are partnering together again. Participants in CBCO's 15th annual *Salute a Veteran* blood drive, now through July 3, have the opportunity to decline the patriotic event t-shirt, and CBCO will donate participation gift costs to Ozarks Food Harvest.

When *Salute a Veteran* blood donors forego their participation t-shirt, they are helping provide twelve meals for hungry families across 29 Ozarks counties. According to CBCO, participants will also have the opportunity to write a note of thanks or a greeting to a Veteran. Donors are asked to provide the address for the Veteran the card will be mailed to, and CBCO will pay for postage and distribution of the card. *Salute a Veteran* takes place at **all** CBCO blood drives and donor centers in the region, and occurs at a time when blood shortages often occur.

"We hold this drive to honor our Veterans for the sacrifices that they made to keep us free," said Don Thomson, CBCO executive director. "Our donors have already shown their commitment to serve area patients. The new food bank initiative will give those donors an additional opportunity to extend their lifesaving resolve. I hope that folks will continue the tradition to give life to their community and honor Veterans by taking part in this special event."

Ozarks Food Harvest and CBCO first partnered together last December during the 15th annual *Miracle of Giving* blood drive, which resulted in four out of every five CBCO donors opting to forego their own gift of a t-shirt or ice scraper for a chance to feed area families. Nearly \$5,000 was collected for The Food Bank. A cash donation will be made to the Northwest Arkansas Food Bank for the blood drives held in CBCO's service area in Arkansas.

It takes approximately 275 blood donations each day to meet the needs of local patients, according to CBCO officials. To learn more about the 15th annual *Salute a Veteran* blood drive, call (800) 280-5337 or go to www.cbco.org.

Ozarks Food Harvest is the only food bank in southwest Missouri, serving more than 350 hunger relief organizations across 29 Ozarks counties. The Food Bank reaches more than 155,000 individuals and distributes nearly nine million pounds of food annually—made possible due to its network of charities and direct-relief programs such as the Weekend Backpack Program™, Kids Cafe® and the Mobile Food Pantry™ program. Learn more at ozarksfoodharvest.org.

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