



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Senator Griffo's Weekly Column #4: Be A Hero. Donate Blood.

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO January 23, 2014

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With the new year upon us, here's an easy resolution to make and keep: Be a hero and donate blood.

My suggestion requires no special powers or gadgets, but you still may get to save a damsel (or even a Don) in distress.

In one hour – the time it takes to watch an “Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.” episode – you can donate enough to be a superstar in the lives of up to three people.

Who are these recipients?

They're fighting cancer. Most of the 1.6 million people diagnosed last year will need regular blood transfusions during their chemotherapy.

They're accident victims. A person injured in a single-car wreck can require up to 100 pints of blood.

They're burn victims and people undergoing surgery; acquaintances and co-workers; neighbors, friends and family.

Before you can help these people in need, you're going to need to vanquish some villains standing in the way.

Here are some common excuses:

“I don't have time to donate.”

Section 202-j of New York state labor law requires employers to provide time for their employees to donate blood.

“I don't like needles.”

You don't have to look. Bring some tunes, read a book, talk with a friend or just close your eyes. Focus on the fact that you're saving lives.

“If I'm donating with other people, I could get their diseases.”

The Red Cross follows sterile procedures and uses disposable equipment. The needle being used on you is only used once.

Ready to answer the call? You can find make an appointment – or find your closest walk-in donation center – at www.redcrossblood.org/make-donation. If you don't have access to the Internet, call our office at (315) 793-9072 and we'll help.

There's also perks for saving lives. Cookies and juice are routinely available after your donation, and many sites offer other little tokens of appreciation, such as a T-shirt or a voucher for a pound of Dunkin' Donuts coffee.

In recognition of National Blood Donor Month, I'm donating next week. So be on the lookout for me at a donation site near you - this time without the cowl and cape.