

Grassroots Social Media Tactics Continue to Revolutionize Blood Donation

Word of mouth – in this case social networking – is still the best form of advertising

AUSTIN, TX–July 3, 2008– The Austin Twitter community has taken it upon itself to overcome the holiday blood shortage in the Austin area.

The group used the microblogging service [Twitter](#) to round up blood donors to meet the holiday need for blood at the [Austin Blood and Tissue Center](#). They called companies around Austin who provided free movie tickets, computer stickers, restaurant gift cards, pint glasses, and a six foot sandwich to measure donations – a “sammichometer”. They wrote [blog posts](#) and called TV stations. Over 50 people within the Austin Twitter community offered to donate blood, many of whom have never donated before.

All of this was coordinated in a matter of three days.

The [Austin Social Media Club](#) and the [501Tech Club](#) are sponsoring the event to raise awareness for both social media and the local need for blood. They are encouraging all participants to sign up for [Takes All Types](#), a service that notifies donors of local blood shortages via SMS, social networks, and even fax. Executive Director Ben Bergman commented “the Austin Tweetup is a brilliant example of how this technology enables those who are passionate about a cause to rally people in a powerful, grassroots way.”

[David J. Neff](#) and [Michelle Greer](#) helped coordinate the push to help the Austin Blood and Tissue Center. “Social media tools like Twitter and blogs are powerful mobilizers of people. We recognized that and knew the Austin community cared enough to make something like this happen. We are truly surrounded by incredible people,” said David.

All people in the Austin area, Twitter users or “non-Twitterers” are welcome to join in for the first ever Blood Drive Tweetup from 10 am-4 pm at the Blood and Tissue Center at 4300 North Lamar. There will be food, prizes, a birthday cake, custom stickers for the event, live streaming online and plenty of people wanting to make a difference for the Austin community.

If you are not able to make it, the livestream of the event as well as the code to embed the livestream in your site will be available at [David J. Neff's blog](#).

Takes All Types (www.TakesAllTypes.org) is using its applications on sites like Facebook (www.apps.facebook.com/takesalltypes) and MySpace to build the first universal blood registry, not unlike the National Bone Marrow Registry. Further, Takes All Types alerts users when their local blood center needs their blood type so they can donate when it's appropriate and most needed. These precise and efficient approaches provide a novel means to call local donors and volunteers to immediate action.

For more information, go to www.twitter.com and message @michellegreer or @daveiam. You can also leave any questions as comments at www.michellesblog.net or <http://www.fispace.org>.