CRISTIANO RONALDO: #BETHE1DONOR WITH ME

Blood is an essential component for life, but many people do not think about it until the need is critical.

Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo – one of the top soccer players in the world – is well-known for his passion on the field. Now he's taking that passion off the field in pursuit of a different kind of goal.

Each year 234 million major operations are performed worldwide, many involving blood transfusions or treatments resulting in a continuous need for blood donations. While 108 million blood donations are collected each year, only a fraction of the world's eligible people are donating. For those who need a transfusion, the need is great given that blood has a short shelf life and does expire. An adequate, reliable supply of blood can only be assured through a stable base of regular, voluntary, unpaid blood donors.

That's why Abbott and Real Madrid soccer star Cristiano Ronaldo are partnering to bring even more attention to this important cause. Regarded as one of the top soccer players in the world, Ronaldo will serve as the first global ambassador for the BE THE 1™ donor movement to inspire and motivate young people around the world to regularly donate blood and potentially help save a life.

It's a cause that's close to his heart.

Ronaldo first gave blood after seeing his teammate's son was sick and was in need of a donation. Since then, he has continued to donate regularly and avoids any activities that would even temporarily prevent him from doing so.

"As young people, often we feel limited in the difference we can make," said Ronaldo, who serves as forward for Real Madrid and Captain for Portugal's national team. "I saw firsthand the challenges my teammate was going through. When I realized I could make such a difference by doing something that was so quick, easy and relatively painless, I couldn't imagine not doing it. That's why I'm enthusiastic to be partnering with Abbott to bring awareness to the importance of blood donation and to encourage people around the world to become lifelong blood donors and help save lives."
As a global leader in infectious diseases and diagnostics, Abbott's testing instruments screen more than 50 percent of the world's blood supply. As a result of careful donor selection and testing, millions are safely given blood transfusions every year. In addition, through its Global Surveillance Program, Abbott continually works to identify new viruses and diseases, as well as newly-emerging strains of HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C, in order to incorporate detection of such viruses into the blood screening process and keep the blood supply safe.

"Blood can touch lives in many ways. However, one concern in many parts of the world is we don't have an adequate blood supply. In parts of the world where we currently have an adequate blood supply, we have trouble sustaining it. In order to ensure that people in need of blood, get blood, we need people around the world to commit to donating blood on a regular basis," said Louis Morrone, divisional vice president and general manager, Transfusion Medicine, Diagnostics Products, Abbott. "The '#BeThe1Donor' effort puts the power of better health and saving lives into the hands of people around the world."

Please visit these resources to learn more about blood donation:

- To join the BE THE 1™ donor movement and find a blood-donation center, visit: www.bethe1donor.com
- Connect with us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/bethe1donor or by using #bethe1donor
- Press release: Abbott Teams Up with Soccer Star Cristiano Ronaldo to Inspire Young People to Donate Blood
- Infographic: Blood Donation Facts
- Infographic: The Story of Your Blood