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A Thanksgiving Story - An Impact of Blood on Four Generations

Honolulu – Growing up seeing his father proudly donate blood, Gordon Bruce decided to become a blood donor and carry on the tradition. Little did Gordon know that, after years of donating to help families he would never know, his altruism would eventually bring life to his own family.

Gordon's daughter, Lauri Rasmussen, was impacted by blood but in a different way. At 16 years old, Lauri discovered she had blood-related health issues during a physical exam. Lauri was able to keep her health in check until her first pregnancy. Without transfusions of intravenous immunoglobulin (IVIg), a blood product derived from plasma, Lauri would not have been able to give birth to three baby boys.

But the pregnancies weren't easy, and it wasn't just Lauri who needed blood. During her first pregnancy, Lauri's baby needed a platelet transfusion before birth. The blood donation didn't come from just any donor. It came from Lauri's father, Gordon. For the first time ever, Gordon was able to know who his blood donation would help – his own grandson. "I've been donating for years, but to go through the whole donation process (from collection to transfusion) was really neat." Gordon's platelets helped stabilize his grandson Kameron, who was born shortly after the in utero transfusion.

While her second son, Kory, was in her womb, Lauri learned Kory had a low platelet count as well. He received platelet transfusions while being monitored in intensive care after birth. Fortunately Lauri's third baby, Kelvin, didn't require transfusions; however, this is likely a result of the increased blood products Lauri received during her third and most difficult pregnancy.

For this family, blood has been a unique uniting factor across four generations: from a father and son, proud to selflessly give blood, to a mother and her children, grateful for the life-sustaining blood donations they received from known and unknown donors.

Now two decades later, the family will reconnect with blood in a new way. Gordon has now donated over 120 pints of blood and Lauri is a proud mother of three, the oldest of whom, Kameron, is now 21 years old and a blood donor himself. The three generations of family members will join together at Blood Bank of Hawaii's Dillingham Donor Center to reflect on the importance of blood donation and the impact on their family. Gordon, Lauri and her husband

Noel, and their children Kameron, Kory and Kelvin will share their story and greet donors in honor of Thanksgiving.

Although the holidays are a time made busy with traditions, family and friends, there is still someone who needs blood every two seconds. You never know who that could be, but it may be your own flesh and blood. Gordon, Lauri and their family hope that sharing their story of a lifetime will inspire more people to become blood donors this holiday season and help families like theirs.

About Blood Bank of Hawaii

Founded in 1941, Blood Bank of Hawaii (BBH) is a non-profit organization committed to providing a safe and adequate supply of blood, blood products and related transfusion services to Hawaii's patients. BBH is licensed and regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, accredited by AABB, and a founding member of America's Blood Centers, the nation's largest network of community-based blood programs. For more information, visit www.BBH.org.

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