

## DIOCESAN NEWS

## Donors line up to give blood in tragedy's wake

By Rob Cullivan and Mike Latona  
Staff writers

As he sat with several other Nazareth College students in the Otto Shults Center, Matt Morris said he hadn't planned to donate blood when the school originally announced it was hosting a drive Sept. 13.

Then, on Sept. 11, like millions of other citizens, he saw the vivid television news reports about the terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington, D.C. As health officials pleaded with the public to give blood, he quickly changed his mind.

"I'm type O, so I thought it was really important to come down," said Morris, 20, a sophomore who hails from Machias, south of Buffalo. Unlike other blood types, type O may be used by any patient regardless of his or her own individual blood type.

At least 85 people had shown up to donate blood by 4 p.m. Sept. 13 at Nazareth College, Rochester, according to Rachel Platt, an American Red Cross volunteer. That was about 90 more than had originally made appointments for the drive.

"This is a wonderful place, the kids have been wonderful," Platt said.

Sybil Miller, spokesperson for the New York-Penn Region of the American Red Cross, was equally heartened by the response at blood-donor centers across the region. As of Sept. 14, she said, more than 8,000 units of blood had been collected over a four-day period — more than twice the normal rate.

"It's been incredible," Miller commented. The New York-Penn Region covers 62 counties in New York state and northern Pennsylvania, including all 12 counties in



Andrea Dixon/Staff photographer

Long lines of people wait in sweltering heat outside of the Red Cross in Buckman's Plaza in Greece Sept. 12 to donate blood following Tuesday's terrorist attacks. The wait grew to nearly 6 hours.

the Diocese of Rochester.

In fact, numerous would-be donors were turned away because they either didn't meet the donor criteria, or the blood-donation sites had collected their capacity for the given day. Other donors endured long waits because type Os took priority, or because walk-ups had to wait for scheduled appointments to be completed.

"It was hard to accommodate everyone. People stood out and waited two to three hours. We told many people you can't give today but please try again," Miller said.

Indeed, Miller said, there is still a crucial need for blood and people should continue to contact the Red Cross to schedule ap-

pointments. That toll-free number is 1-800-GIVE-LIFE.

"We are still asking people of all blood types to come out and donate," Miller said, explaining that the Red Cross always needs reserve supplies of blood, especially in light of the possibility of further disasters. "Their blood donation this week is just as important a month from now, two months from now, a year."

Tragedies of this magnitude are highly unusual even for the Red Cross, Miller said: "It's unprecedented because the event on Tuesday was unprecedented."

Miller said the Red Cross sent 1,000 units of blood to New York City within

hours after the World Trade Center attacks. This, she pointed out, was made possible by the existing blood supply.

As of Sept. 17, she said, the New York-Penn Region had sent no further blood supplies to New York City or other areas touched by the disasters because they, also, have gotten overwhelming donor support.

Miller said that more than 2,000 brand-new donors were added to the New York-Penn Region's list. Normally, only about 4 percent of all eligible donors in the region actually give blood.

"This is a dream come true for the American Red Cross. Unfortunately it took this tragedy, but the blessing of that is we have new people we can call upon should the supplies need to be replenished," she said.

Those who are unable to donate blood should consider making a financial contribution to the Red Cross, Miller suggested.

"I also remind people to pray for peace," she said.

Last week's sudden need for blood donors came within weeks after the Red Cross began issuing pleas for additional blood donors due to Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease, the human equivalent of mad cow disease. Ironically, the need for donors had been especially urgent in the New York City area where 25 percent of the blood supply was expected to be cut.

People who have traveled or lived in the United Kingdom for more than three months between 1980 and 1996, who have received a blood transfusion in the U.K. since 1980, or who have spent six months in any European country since 1980 will no longer be eligible to give blood.

The restrictions were due to take effect Sept. 17 but have been delayed until mid-October due to the Sept. 21 terrorist attacks, Miller said.

## Muslims condemn attacks as well as bigotry

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

Saliha Hacibektasoglu, a Turkish Muslim immigrant, began weeping as she spoke about her fears in the wake of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington, D.C.

A married mother of three children, including a 6-year-old boy and an 8-year-old girl, Hacibektasoglu is a Rochester resident who has been a U.S. citizen for 14 years. She said she had received a menacing phone call by people who "were yelling and screaming" the day after the attacks, and also had to assuage her daughter's fears of going to school.

She noted that her head scarf, which she wears as a Muslim woman called to dress modestly, could make her a target for anti-Muslim bigots.

"I'm exposed to the same outside terror and terror inside the country," she said as tears rolled down her face. "So how do I protect my children?"

She was one of about 200 people who attended a standing-room-only discussion about "An Islamic Response To Terrorist Acts" at Medaille Lounge in Nazareth College, Rochester, on the afternoon of Sept. 13.

The forum was sponsored by the college's Department of Religious Studies, International Studies program and Office of Multicultural Affairs. Speakers were Dr. Salahuddin Malik, professor of Middle Eastern history at Brockport State College; Dr. Mohammed Shafiq, imam of the Islamic Center of Rochester and adjunct professor of religious studies at Nazareth; and Dr. Sharon Murphy, professor of international studies at the college.

Hacibektasoglu is one of an estimated 7 million U.S. Muslims who, along with millions of citizens of Middle Eastern descent, may be sharing similar fears of a bigoted backlash as the nation's citizens deal with the anger and emotions surrounding the attack.

Several reports told of Muslims, mosques and Islamic centers throughout the country being the subject of intima-

tion and terror. In one instance, for example, six bullets shattered the window of an Islamic center in Texas. In another instance, Chicago police stopped 300 people from marching on a mosque.

At the forum, Shafiq credited the Rochester community for its support of his center. He noted that many churches and religious leaders, including Bishop Matthew H. Clark, had contacted him and told him they would extend any assistance the center needs.

As of Sept. 17, Brighton Chief of Police Tom Voelkl said there had been a few minor instances of verbal harassment directed at the Islamic Center, and on the street at a Jewish person, but that there had been no reports of physical violence or vandalism directed at Muslims or Jews. He added that Brighton police are constantly monitoring the security of the Islamic Center as well as several Jewish synagogues and other Jewish sites.

Shafiq, who made numerous public appearances throughout the week, repeatedly referred to Christians, Jews and Muslims as "children of Adam and Eve," and noted that U.S. Muslims were as devastated by the Sept. 11 attacks as the rest of the nation's citizens. Nonetheless, he noted, some citizens still look upon Muslims with suspi-

cion. "There are certain people who are ignorant and don't know that we are all in pain and suffering in this country," he said.

He added that he was suffering "a double pain" because of the bigotry and fear patriotic Muslims were experiencing. He noted, for example, that he told his daughter that it was OK for her to not wear her head scarf to work because she feared drawing unwanted attention.

"I can't sleep for three nights," he said. Shafiq also expressed distress over the perception that Islam is somehow a religion of violence.

"Anyone who kills an innocent person, this is a blasphemy in Islam," Shafiq said.

He added that he supported going after whoever committed the attacks and punishing them.

In his remarks, Malik echoed many of

Shafiq's sentiments, adding that, because of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Muslims are seen as anti-Jewish, when, in fact, Jews have enjoyed far better relations historically with Muslims than they did with Christians.

Malik also said that the attack on the World Trade Center's twin towers killed "Christians, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Sikhs" and others of all faiths who worked there. He pointed out that even if the terrorists were Muslims, they must not have cared about their brethren in the faith if they did, indeed, orchestrate the attacks.

"They must have known that many Muslims were going to die," he said.

Murphy added that the news media doesn't identify the religious belief of non-Muslims when they commit acts of murder and terror. For example, she said, Timothy McVeigh, executed this year for his role in the Oklahoma City bombing, was a Catholic.

"If these people who did these things on Tuesday were Muslims, they were not good Muslims in the same way that Timothy McVeigh is not a good Catholic," she said.

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