



WITH A HEART IN HIS HAND, Dick Vahling (above) stretched back on the lounge as he gave blood at The Gateway on Thursday. Alyssa Montgomery (below) held out her arm for the volunteer from the American Red Cross to get her donation started.



Men, women and students donate blood

Some stretched out on cots across the arena, others sat and had a snack while latecomers waited their turn.

The American Red Cross blood drive at The Gateway last week brought people into town from all over Decatur County to help give life to those in need. The drive started at 11 a.m. and ended at 4:30 p.m., with people coming and going all day.

Donors started at a front table where they received reading material about donating blood, then were tested to make sure their iron level was all right. Next it was on to one of the many cots set up to give the blood.

After donating, each person was offered something to drink and eat, including cookies, sandwiches and chips.

Kim Talkington, donor recruitment representative, said the Red Cross had a goal of 70 donors, but only got 63 units. Sixty-eight people showed up, but five weren't eligible. She said they had hoped for more

since they collected 93 pints at a drive at the high school in November.

Mrs. Talkington said the American Red Cross used to come to Oberlin twice a year, but the collection crew actually comes four times a year now. The need for blood keeps increasing, prompting an increase in drives.

The donations aren't keeping up with the need, she said. This region, which includes the state of Kansas and the Oklahoma panhandle, is aging and that increases the need for blood. The average person, she said, donates twice a year, although they can actually donate six times.

Mrs. Talkington said they need to educate people and get them to understand why they should and how they can donate.

There are really very few restrictions, she said. A person is never too old to donate as long as they are feeling good. There are a few medications which make some ineligible, but not many.



VOLUNTEER Bob Jones (left), with the American Red Cross, got the bags ready for people to donate blood while Ashley Brown (above) had a snack after donating.