The holiday season is just around the corner, and the American Red Cross asks everyone to support its mission by giving something meaningful–hope for those in need. A blood donation is a gift that doesn't cost a thing.

Recently, Superstorm Sandy forced the cancellation of hundreds of blood drives along the East Coast, resulting in a shortfall of thousands of donations. While blood drive operations are being restored in the affected areas, the need for blood donations continues.

Blood donors have generously stepped up to help in the aftermath of the storm, and the Red Cross reminds eligible donors to continue their support by scheduling an appointment to give blood. There may be no greater gift to give this year than one that can help disaster victims, like those of Superstorm Sandy.

Upcoming blood donation opportunities:

Perkins County–Nov. 21 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Perkins County High School, 740 Sherman Ave. in Grant, Neb.

How to Donate Blood

Simply call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit redcrossblood.org to make an appointment or for more information. All blood types are needed to ensure a reliable supply for patients. A blood donor card or driver's license or two other forms of identification are required at check-in. Individuals who are 17 years of age (16 with parental consent in some states), weigh at least 110 pounds and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood. High school students and other donors 18 years of age and younger also have to meet certain height and weight requirements.