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“A few years ago, surgeries were actually delayed because there wasn't enough blood.”

— **CLIFFORD NUMARK**, director of donor recruitment for the Southern California region of the American Red Cross



Robert Casillas/Staff Photographer

Clifford Numark, donor recruitment director for the Southern California region of the American Red Cross, talks to Willie Overton during a Torrance blood drive.

BLOOD WORK

South Bay resident keeps donations flowing to American Red Cross

By **Muhammed El-Hasan**
Staff Writer

Clifford Numark's resume reads like that of a man who either cannot decide what he wants to do in life or wants to do everything.

In addition to his law degree, the Torrance resident has a master's in public affairs and another master's in energy and the environment, and a bachelor's in chemistry and public policy.

His previous jobs included reporter, legislative aide, research associate, policy analyst, and an executive in various firms involved in economic development.

Numark also briefly ran his own business consulting firm. He has held more than a dozen leadership positions in community or municipal organizations.

And he's only 38.

"I've got a pretty wide-ranging curiosity in a lot of areas," Numark said during a recent interview.

That curiosity led him to American Red Cross Blood Services.

Since 2003, he has served as the organization's director of donor recruitment for the Southern California region.

Based out of Pomona, Numark has the daunting task of directing his staff to encourage, nudge and beg donors to give blood used at 150 hospitals in Los Angeles, Orange and San Diego counties. More than 400,000 pints of blood are transfused each year at those hospitals.

"It's a leadership job," Numark said. "I lead

RED CROSS

FROM PAGE C1

The most challenging times come in summer and winter when the flow of donor blood from campuses virtually dries up. This causes a major drop in supply since one of every five pints of donated blood comes from college and high school students at campuses.

"A few years ago, surgeries were actually delayed because there wasn't enough blood," Numark said.

In addition, communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS and SARS have forced the Red Cross to further restrict who can donate.

Numark cites among his accomplishments his department's compilation of an e-mail list with 170,000 donors, who are contacted periodically to give blood. That's up from zero e-mails when he joined in 2003.

Numark added that he reduced costs that would normally pay for T-shirts or other items given to donors to encourage their participation. Instead, his staff often passes out coupons, donated by local restaurants, for free food such as pizza or ice cream.

"Only 5 percent of people will donate because you'll give them that item," Numark said. "But in the summer or winter months, we need that 5 percent."

Numark is a "very dynamic leader," said Charles Wilcox, CEO of Red Cross Blood Services for the Southern California region.

"When I think of dynamic, I think of somebody who's very mission driven and who is able to inspire people," Wilcox said. "He is in charge of a group of recruiters who must inspire and motivate, and he has to inspire and motivate them."

In addition to being inspirational and

BUSINESS LIVES

NAME: Clifford Numark

POSITION: director of donor recruitment for Southern California region of the American Red Cross

AGE: 38

RESIDENCE: Torrance

EDUCATION: law degree from UC Berkeley, master's degree in public affairs from Princeton University, master's degree in energy and the environment from the University of Sussex, bachelor's degree in chemistry and public policy from Pomona College

FAMILY: wife, Diane Korman, a senior producer for "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition"

HOBBIES: exercising, bike riding, community affairs

about 270 people in the act of encouraging people to give the gift of life by donating blood."

Numark oversees 35-40 blood drives a day, a complex logistical undertaking. With about 155 employees qualified to collect blood donations,

hardworking, Numark draws on his previous job experience to excel in marketing, from using direct mail to maximizing the call center's productivity, Wilcox said.

"I don't know if I've ever met anyone who's as genuinely community driven as him," Wilcox said.

The CEO was referring both to Numark's Red Cross work and his involvement in community groups.

Some of his positions include Torrance's Parks and Recreation commissioner, vice president of the Torrance Symphony Association and Torrance Historical Society, and director of Leadership Torrance, an organization that promotes civic involvement in young people.

Numark plans to run for a seat on the Torrance City Council next year.

Numark says he learned about public service from being part of a family of teachers.

"Both my parents were teachers and my brother is a professor and sister a teacher," Numark said. "I guess from that, public service was a real strong theme."

In 1987, Numark graduated from Narbonne High School, where he served as editor of the school's newspaper, Green and Gold.

He went to Pomona College to earn a bachelor of arts degree in chemistry and public policy. His thesis focused on alternative fuel vehicles.

He earned his first master's degree, in energy and the environment, from the University of Sussex. His second master's degree, in public affairs, came from Princeton University. He earned his law degree from UC Berkeley.

While at Pomona College, Numark served as editor of the college paper, Collage. He also worked as a stringer for The New York Times.

Numark would later work as a reporter at the Arizona Republic and Anaheim Bulletin.

Numark must know ahead of time which blood drives will have the most donors and which will have the fewest to better distribute his limited staff.

Each blood drive is planned about 12 weeks in advance, with volunteers — known as ambassadors — helping to organize and promote the event, which might be at a campus, work site or house of worship.

"My job is to make sure that when those staff members are at a blood drive, that it's a productive event," he said. "I'll be meeting with organizations who are organizing blood drives or folks who may organize blood drives."

Numark also manages a Red Cross call center that contacts past donors to ask that they give blood again. Managing the enterprise is a challenge "because people don't just give blood spontaneously," he said.

In Southern California, residents do not give enough blood. As a result, the Red Cross must import up to 40 percent of its blood from other regions.

The problem is common in large metropolitan areas for various reasons.

"People have busy lifestyles (and long) commutes," he explained. "A metropolitan area like Los Angeles may not have the sense of community like a small town in the Midwest. One out of three Southern Californians is foreign born, and they may not have a tradition of giving blood."

RED CROSS/C2

From 1991 to 1992, Numark served as a legislative aide for state Sen. Herschel Rosenthal, who represented the Westside and San Fernando Valley.

Numark went on to become a policy analyst and then chief operating officer for the Larta Institute, an organization that promotes entrepreneurship and helps startups.

About six years later, Numark became president and CEO of the San Diego Regional Technology Alliance, which promotes growth in high-technology industries.

From 2001 to 2002, he worked as a management consultant at O'Melveny & Myers. His official title was managing director.

In 2003, he opened his own market research firm called CustomerIntellect, a Los Angeles company to help develop business plans for small technology firms.

Numark ran CustomerIntellect for a short time before the Red Cross offered him his current job.

While Numark works to promote blood donations, his position carries some irony. The Red Cross will not accept a blood donation from him.

According to Red Cross policy, blood will not be accepted from donors who have lived in England for more than three months during the years 1980 to 1996.

The policy was instituted to protect the blood supply from donors who may have contracted a variant of mad cow disease while in England during that period.

"It's a little ironic. But even if you can't give blood, you can give in other ways," Numark said. "I guess you could say it's fitting that I'm the director of donor recruitment because I'm making up for all the blood I can't give."

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