***Letter 1:***

I’ve donated blood for many years. In fact, I’m what some in the industry call a “milestone donor” since I’ve donated more than XX gallons of blood. The truth is, though, that I’ve received more through helping to save lives in this way than has ever been taken from me.

The need is real: every two seconds, someone needs a blood transfusion. That includes not just accident victims, but also patients receiving cancer treatments, giving birth, or facing conditions such as sickle cell disease, where steady transfusions can lessen painful side effects.

But as important as blood is to all of us, just three percent of Americans donate blood each year. Those statistics are according to data released by America’s Blood Centers, whose member blood centers collect60 percent of our nation’s supply.

January is National Blood Donor Month. I thank the many people who already give blood and encourage all eligible donors to roll up their sleeves and join me in this important cause.

***Letter 2:***

Many people believe that victims of an unexpected car crash or someone facing surgery require the most blood transfusions in America. However, data shows that it’s people like me: cancer patients. According to data released by America’s Blood Centers, 25 percent of our nation’s blood supply is used by those battling this disease.

I say this because this month is National Blood Donor Month, a time to recognize the roughly three percent of the population who roll up their sleeves each year and help save lives. I want to publicly thank those whose donations have helped save mine through my many treatments.

People who I will never know have selflessly given me a lifesaving gift time and time again. That means more time with my loved ones and a fighting chance to beat this disease. I’m deeply grateful, and I hope all those who read this contact their local blood center and give generously. You never know whose life you’ll be saving.

***Letter 3:***

I’m one of roughly 100,000 people living with Sickle Cell disease in America. It’s a hereditary blood disorder that necessitates frequent blood transfusions to combat painful symptoms. Getting blood so regularly means that what I receive must match more than just my blood type - it must also be from donors with similar ethnic backgrounds.

This National Blood Donor Month, I want to thank the three percent of the population that donates blood. The life-saving gift you’ve so selflessly given has been a lifeline to me and others dealing with this and similar diseases.

Just three percent of Americans give blood, and less than 20 percent of all donations come from communities of color. That’s according to data released by America’s Blood Centers, whose community blood centers bring in 60 percent of our nation’s supply.

I hope everyone in our community will take a moment this month, find a local center, and donate blood. Many people are depending on you.