



# Coffee Memorial Blood Center

*Amarillo, Texas*

600 units of blood.

That's what Coffee Memorial Blood Center must collect every week to help meet the needs of 30 different healthcare facilities in the Texas and Oklahoma panhandles.

But that mission was getting harder to accomplish in a too-small facility without enough space to accommodate the center's full staff. Meanwhile, the need for life-saving blood and its components showed no sign of letting up.

## HISTORY AND SYMPTOMS

Coffee Memorial got its start in a doctor's office over 50 years ago. Steady growth resulted in moves to three progressively larger facilities. But by 2003 it was clear Coffee Memorial needed a larger and more comprehensive facility. They had outgrown their 12,600 sq. ft. building and were leasing additional off-site office and storage space.

Coffee Memorial wanted to gather all 105 workers and their entire operation under one roof and needed a facility that could adapt to continued growth.

Like other nonprofit healthcare organizations, Coffee Memorial requires professional facilities and equipment to provide patient-centered care and meet a host of regulatory standards. At the same time, they are mindful of their nonprofit status and careful how they invest donors' contributions. So, Coffee Memorial looks for partners who share their patient-centered approach and have experience in healthcare.

Two years before construction began, Coffee Memorial selected Nurture by Steelcase to provide research-based industry insights, collaborate with the team working on the new facility, and deliver furniture for an optimal healthcare environment.

## DIAGNOSIS

"Even though our older building was smaller, it was organized in a piecemeal fashion. Nothing matched. The right people weren't together. We didn't have the right adjacencies. Plus we had another dozen people working in another building a half-mile away. It just wasn't as functional as it needed to be," says Jim Rutledge, PhD, president and CEO.



**A WELCOMED WAITING AREA** Coffee's new waiting area welcomes donors with its warm residential feel and comfy lounge seating.

The leadership team worked in different parts of the building. Communication between executives was lacking. Even regular training sessions for the staff had to be held outside the center since there wasn't space on-site.

The staff also needed larger and more appropriate spaces for meetings with patients. While patients aren't treated at a blood center to the extent they might be at a hospital or clinic, they still have important needs. For example, the center's medical director often meets with blood donors to discuss sensitive, confidential issues. "You get a call from a blood center doctor, whether it's good news or bad news, people are scared. You need a place where you can put people at ease," says Mary Townsend, PhD, medical director.

Coffee Memorial also needed a larger, more effective lab space for its round-the-clock operation, and a larger donor collection space that was welcoming and comfortable for blood donors.



**A DONOR AREA WITH A VIEW** The new blood drawing area greets and comforts donors with generous natural light and panoramic views to the outdoor gardens.

The new facility would emphasize that this is a community blood center by providing space and support for a wide range of professional seminars, meetings, and public functions. The space had to reconfigure easily for different meetings throughout the day.

Professional, flexible, patient-centered – yet practical. “We didn’t want donors walking in here saying, ‘Hey, I thought this was a nonprofit.’” says Rutledge.

## TREATMENT

When blood donors began arriving at the new 30,400 square foot center in January, 2007, Rutledge knew Coffee Memorial had hit the mark. “People were very impressed. They could see it’s a state of the art facility, obviously. They said ‘It’s beautiful, but it’s not luxurious.’”

“We’ve done a lot of research on how environments impact the healing process, and we talked about what a waiting area could be, how the blood drawing area

could welcome and comfort donors, and a lot of issues healthcare organizations have to deal with,” says Libby Larson, area healthcare manager for Nurture.

Donors feel welcomed the moment they enter the new blood center. “Donors are our customers, and they love the new space,” says Townsend.

“I compare it to the feeling you get in a nice coffee-house,” says Larson. “The waiting area has comfy wing chairs, soft chairs and loveseats. The donation area has large, relaxing donor chairs, and the space is warm and inviting. It’s filled with natural light.”

After donating blood, donors can lean back and watch big plasma screens above the windows or stroll through walking paths in the outdoor garden.

Staff workspaces are bright and welcoming, too.

In the lab, for example, Pathways® Privacy Walls with opaque glass allow light to filter into the workspace. Modular Lab Bench frames, worksurfaces and storage

provide an efficient laboratory solution, even without upper storage.

“Overhead storage makes it harder to see other people and to talk to them” says George Littlejohn, manager of laboratory services. Lower cabinets provide plenty of room for storage. Above the worksurface, Slatwall and worktools help keep worksurfaces clutter-free. (See “A Hardworking Lab” sidebar.)

Adjacent to the lab, Littlejohn’s office uses classic Payback™ desks and storage pieces for performance, flexibility, and an affordable price point.

Executive offices are grouped together in the new facility, and provide workspaces for the CEO, medical director, and VP of operations matched to their workstyle.

Rutledge works at a desk and credenza, with visitor chairs at hand for whenever a meeting’s called. Joe McCormick, operations vice president, also employs



**FORM AND FUNCTION** Executives’ offices were designed with user input to match their individual workstyle. This solution features guest chairs at hand for whenever a meeting is called.



**A TRULY “MULTI-PURPOSE” ROOM** Mobile training tables and chairs and moveable walls are the perfect combination for conference rooms that can be configured and reconfigured to meet a variety of needs.

guest seating: a loveseat and two chairs. “I have a lot of people in my office throughout the day,” he says.

Medical director Townsend planned an office with three distinct areas. Her desk puts “everything at my fingertips.” She also has a small conference area with a table and four chairs for meetings. For one-on-one discussions, “I have a sofa area where donors can come in and relax. It feels more like home.”

Like the executives, Coffee Memorial’s staff provided input on the design of their own workspaces. “We have a very diverse workforce,” says Rutledge, and the furniture solutions and space solutions reflect the staff’s needs and workstyles. “The combination around the building of permanent and moveable walls, the different furniture choices: you might not see this design in a magazine, but it works extremely well.”

The conference space also reflects a combination of diversity and performance. Moveable Privacy Walls, Train™ training tables that reconfigure easily (and flip

up to nest) plus Think® task chairs and Walk-and-Talk™ interactive white boards, work together to create a practically unlimited variety of meeting spaces. Coffee Memorial can outfit one big room or three smaller ones, which support any event. From staff meetings to video and audio conferences, webinars and other internal events, they've hosted them all.

## OUTCOMES

The conference facilities have also helped raise the blood center's profile in the community.

"We have organ donor groups use the facility, a toast-masters meeting every Friday, jazzercise, a group that comes in and does massages for the staff once a month, a long list of groups and events. It's amazing how much use that area gets. It's a very useful part of the operation for us," says McCormick.

"Not by any stretch of the imagination could we have had this kind of activity in the old building. The Steelcase furniture has just been tremendous. It's so easy to move and reconfigure. We're a community blood center, and that's one of the things we wanted very badly to do, to provide this kind of facility for the community," says McCormick.

The new center helps build bridges with the professional community, too. Townsend cites a group of pediatric nurses who used the space for training.

"Every day in healthcare organizations, nurses reach for a bag of blood, and it's like reaching for a Tylenol. In the course of a very busy day they don't have time to think about where it came from. When you bring them on site to our facility, they can make a connection

to where that blood came from, and how safe it is. It helps create a new understanding for them."

The group, the Texas Association of Neonatal Nurse Practitioners, sent Townsend a gracious thank you note. The nurse who wrote it came to the meeting from Houston, a fourteen-hour drive.

It's said that a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. Sometimes a new space is the reason it begins.



**TIMES CHANGE** Much of the space features moveable walls which can easily be moved and reconfigured as the need for available space changes over time.

## A HARDWORKING LAB

George Littlejohn called on his 25 years of experience working in laboratories to plan the new lab for Coffee Memorial.

“We had more space to work with in our new building than in our old labs, but we didn’t want any wasted space. We had to make this more efficient and use the space well. We also had to have adequate lighting, and a floor that’s hermetically sealed, like a surgical suite.

“We designed this lab about four different times,” says Littlejohn, manager of laboratory services.

“I’ve been in a lot of labs and I’ve never cared for the plastic components. The colors become outdated, and when something breaks and you have to replace it, you have a lot of different colors in the lab.”



**LESS CLUTTER, MORE WORKSPACE** The combination of shelves and slatwall help keep things organized and off of the worksurface, reducing clutter inherent in many labs.



**OPEN COMMUNICATION** Lower cabinets provide plenty of room for storage and the absence of upper storage makes it easier for workers to collaborate together.

Since the lab had to hold up under three shifts and fifteen different workers, the constant work of a blood center, and be adaptable to future growth, selecting Lab Bench was easy. “We like the quality. The clean design. The product is functional, and the maple finish and phenolic resin worksurfaces are tough.”

Having Slatwall with worktools poised over the worksurfaces is a big plus: “Everyone really likes it. A lot of labs are cluttered, but here there’s a place where everything can be organized and stored.”

As with anyone who spends long hours at work, aesthetics are important to lab workers, too. “The maple finish and the black worksurfaces are just gorgeous. It’s a timeless look. I don’t think the look will ever go out of date.”

After just one year in operation, Littlejohn has begun to plan an expansion of the lab. Ten-foot high Pathways Privacy Walls are moveable, as are all Lab Bench components, so he has plenty of options. “The design of the Lab Bench will be easy to disassemble and put back together, too.”

## TEAM

Coffee Memorial Blood Center, Amarillo, TX  
 General Office Supply, Amarillo, TX  
 Nurture by Steelcase, Grand Rapids, MI

## PRODUCTS

### Architectural Products

- Pathways Privacy Wall by Steelcase

### Carts

- Phlebotomy Carts by Softcare

### Desks

- Arbor by Steelcase
- Garland™ by Steelcase
- Payback™ by Turnstone
- Smoke™ by Turnstone
- Unison™ by Steelcase

### Fabrics & Textiles

- Seating Fabrics by DesignTex
- Wallcoverings by DesignTex

### Seating

- Collegium® by Steelcase
- Dearborn™ Lounge by Steelcase
- Domino by Turnstone
- Jenny® Lounge by Turnstone
- Kart® by Vecta
- Leap® by Steelcase
- Player® by Steelcase
- Protege® by Steelcase

- Springboard® by Turnstone
- Terrazzo™ by Steelcase
- Think by Steelcase

### Storage

- 1700 Series by Steelcase
- Lateral Storage by Turnstone
- Mobile Storage by Turnstone
- Tower Too™ Storage by Turnstone
- Universal Storage by Steelcase

### Systems

- Detour™ Screens by Metro
- Kick® by Turnstone
- Lab Bench by Steelcase
- Template™ by Metro

### Tables

- Train™ by Vecta

### Technology

- Walk-and-Talk Interactive Whiteboards by PolyVision

### Worktools

- FYI™ Monitor Arm by Details
- Slatwall by Details
- Worktools by Details

For more information about Coffee Memorial Blood Center, visit [www.thegiftoflife.org](http://www.thegiftoflife.org)