



## Media Release

### More Than 1,600 Blood Donors Honoured On World Blood Donor Day In Singapore

#### Medal of Life Award Also Presented For the First Time To 200-time Donor

**Singapore, 13 June 2009** – More than 1,600 blood donors were honoured in Singapore at the annual World Blood Donor Day [WBDD] celebrations held today at the Jurong Bird Park.

Guests of Honour Mr Khaw Boon Wan, Minister for Health; Dr Teo Ho Pin, Mayor of North West District and Mr Inderjit Singh, Member of Parliament for Ang Mo Kio GRC presented awards to recipients at three ceremonies held earlier today.

For the first time, a Medal For Life award was presented to Mr James Law, a 61-year-old donor who has donated blood since he was a national serviceman about 40 years ago. He is also the first Champion of Champion blood donor honoured in Singapore. *“Blood is the life source that flows in every person, and it can be shared to help others. It is our duty as a service of altruism to other individuals, to the general community and to our nation ”* said Mr Law, who donates platelets at the blood bank every month.

At the award ceremonies today, beneficiaries also expressed their gratitude to blood donors for helping to save their lives. Mr Firdaus Abdullah, a 17-year-old student at Ngee Ann Polytechnic, was diagnosed with leukemia when he was 11 years old. Now cancer-free, he recalled the need for regular blood transfusions to fight his illness. *“Each unit of blood product that I received in my days of sickness was a symbol of goodwill and boundless charity that showed life-givers such as you truly cared for me,”* he shared.

Mr Karthick Karthigayan, another blood recipient who sustained burn injuries in his national service days, also expressed his thanks to the blood donors. He is now an active individual and also an advocate of blood donation. *“Each unit of whole blood collected can save up to three lives, so each and every one of your donation is invaluable to this end.”* said Mr Karthigayan.

More than 10,000 blood donors and their families turned up today at the WBDD event. They also participated in carnival games and some even had their photos taken at the Talent Scout Campaign, where they could appear in future campaigns by the Singapore Red Cross' Blood Donor Recruitment Programme.

WBDD is a day celebrated annually to thank blood donors and to create wider awareness on the importance of blood donation and need for safe blood. In 2009, the global theme for WBDD placed a renewed emphasis on improving the safety and sufficiency of blood supplies through the achievement of 100 percent voluntary non-remunerated donation of blood and blood components.

## **SINGAPORE RED CROSS & HEALTH SCIENCES AUTHORITY**

### **13 JUNE 2009**

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#### **▪ About the Singapore Red Cross**

As the National Blood Donor Recruiter, the Singapore Red Cross is part of the world's largest humanitarian network, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, which comprises 181 Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies around the world, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The Movement's work is based on the seven fundamental principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality.

For more information on the National Blood Programme, log on to the Singapore Red Cross' website at <http://www.redcross.org.sg/>.

#### **▪ About the Health Sciences Authority (HSA)**

The Health Sciences Authority (HSA) applies medical, pharmaceutical and scientific expertise through its three professional groups, Health Products Regulation, Blood Services, Applied Sciences, to protect and advance national health and safety. HSA is a multidisciplinary authority. It serves as the national regulator for health products, ensuring they are wisely regulated to meet standards of safety, quality and efficacy. It operates the national blood bank, Bloodbank@HSA, securing the nation's blood supply. It also applies specialised scientific, forensic, investigative and analytical capabilities in serving the administration of justice. For more details, visit <http://www.hsa.gov.sg/>.

#### **▪ About HSA's Blood Services Group**

The Blood Services Group (BSG) of HSA, as the national blood service, secures the nation's blood supply by ensuring a safe and adequate blood supply and providing specialist transfusion medicine services.

BSG operates the Bloodbank@HSA, and it is responsible for collecting, processing, testing and distributing blood and blood products to all hospitals in Singapore, both public and private.

As the national blood service, it provides specialised services in transfusion sciences such as immunohaematology and tissue typing. Its transfusion medicine specialists also provide professional advice and consultations to clinicians in Singapore and the region, so as to promote the best practices in clinical transfusion medicine and to ensure that every blood donation is optimally and safely used.

Bloodbank@HSA is located at the HSA Building at 11 Outram Road, Singapore 169078 (directly opposite the Outram Park MRT Station). Blood donors are welcome to call the Bloodbank@HSA at 6213 0626.

## **RED CROSS BLOOD DONOR RECRUITMENT PROGRAMME**

### **Background**

Singapore Red Cross (SRC) was appointed as the National Blood Donor Recruiter in April 2001. Together with our partner-in-service, the Blood Services Group of the Health Sciences Authority, we aim to collect sufficient safe blood for the transfusion needs of all our hospitals. In order to ensure a healthy and constant supply of blood at all times, we need to increase the current number of regular blood donors from 1 to 2 per cent of our total population by 2010.

### **Our role as the National Blood Donor Recruiter**

The SRC focuses on 3 main functions in the National Blood Programme:

- Recruitment and Retention of blood donors
- Promotion and Education to increase public awareness on the importance of blood donation
- Organisation of mobile blood donation drives in the community.

### ***Overview of the current blood supply situation***

Blood is needed not only to save lives in times of emergencies; it is also needed to sustain the lives of patients who require regular blood transfusions in the hospitals. These are the leukemia patients, the hemophiliacs, the thalassaemia patients, patients with bleeding disorders, and also patients undergoing major surgery.

Everyday, 250 to 300 units of blood are required by all the hospitals in Singapore for patients requiring blood transfusions. It is very crucial for more healthy individuals to come forward to help save and sustain the lives of these vulnerable people. Blood donors can give 3 to 4 donations a year regularly. We need at least 300 to 400 blood donors to come forward to donate blood at the blood bank or at the bloodmobiles everyday in order to meet the requirements of the hospitals and to have enough to maintain a healthy stock level for emergencies.

SRC seeks to inform and educate the public on the importance of a constant supply of blood to help ease or prevent acute shortages during festive periods, school breaks and also in times of emergencies by increasing the current bloodstock from 3 days to a healthy level of 6 days.

### **Youth involvement in National Blood Programme**

Currently, Youth donors age 16 to 25 make up 40% of the total voluntary blood donor population, but this is less than 5% of the total youth populations in this age band. In order to help Youths make a difference in our society, SRC launched the Youth Donor Club in March 2006, to encourage more young people to embrace blood donation as an integral part of their lives. This youth to youth programme was established to inform and educate young people on the

importance of blood donation in saving lives as well as the importance of being a responsible blood donor.

The roles of YDC members are as follow:

- Be a role model. Advocate voluntary non-remunerated blood donation.
- Be a community motivator. Give youths a reason to donate.
- Be a donor recruiter. Help to ensure a constant and adequate supply of safe blood.
- Be a peer motivator. Encourage youths to pick up social responsibilities.
- Be a carer of the giver. Provide a platform for personal and health enrichment.