



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **NATIONAL BLOOD PROGRAMME HONOURS MORE HEROES ON WORLD BLOOD DONOR DAY 2014**

- **HEALTH MINISTER LAUDS BLOOD DONORS FOR SAVING 32,000 LIVES IN 2013**
- **TWO OF SEVEN CATEGORIES SAW RECORD YOUNGEST CHAMPION DONORS**

**Singapore, 7 June 2014** – More blood donors were recognised for their efforts for donating blood regularly at this year’s World Blood Donor Day (世界献血者日). The National Blood Programme honoured 1,610 individuals, and 32 corporate and community Bloodmobile Organisers (BMOs) (流动献血站的组织机构) at the Champion Blood Donor Recognition Ceremony, graced by Guest-of-Honour, Minister of Health Mr Gan Kim Yong. This is up from 1,473 Champion Blood Donor awardees last year.

### **Record number of Youngest Award Winners**

This year’s World Blood Donor Day saw a record number of winners who are the youngest in their respective Champion Blood Donor categories. With 153 donations, 34-year old Raymond Chong is the youngest ever Champion of Champions<sup>1</sup> winner. The Diamond<sup>2</sup> category also saw its youngest winner.

“I am heartened that donors are starting their blood donation journey early and giving more regularly. Given our aging population, a key priority for the Blood Donor recruitment programme is to mobilise more youth donors and to encourage them to make blood donation a lifelong passion and mission,” said Mr Tee Tua Ba, Chairman of the Singapore Red Cross.

Mr Joel Chang, 23, is one of the youngest Bronze<sup>3</sup> award winners this year. He first started donating blood when his father took him and his siblings to the blood bank. “I started with donating whole blood when I was 18 years old but switched to apheresis donation about three years ago. Blood will always be regenerated and I believe that this is a matter of giving to those in need,” he said.

The youngest ever female winner in the Diamond category with 100 donations is Ms Amick Teo, 40. “The blood donation drive in my polytechnic first piqued my interest and I thought I should try since it was for a good cause. That was how I started, and donating blood has since become my little way of giving back to the society, to help save lives,” Ms Teo said.

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<sup>1</sup> For males who donate blood 150 times and above and females who donate blood 125 times and above.

<sup>2</sup> For males who donate blood 125 times and above and females who donate blood 100 times and above.

<sup>3</sup> For males and females who donate blood 25 times or more.



## **Increasing Youth Blood Donor Population**

To meet the increasing demands of blood donation, the Singapore Red Cross and the Health Sciences Authority aim to collect 129,700 units of blood – 116,200 units of whole blood and 13,500 units of apheresis<sup>4</sup> – and increase the total donor population by 4 per cent in 2014. This translates to an average of at least 400 units of blood collected daily.

The Singapore Red Cross will continue engaging and encouraging more youths to become regular blood donors this year. More than half of the first-time blood donors in 2013 were youths aged between 16 to 25 years old. This year, Singapore Red Cross aims to bring the percentage of youth blood donors to 35 per cent of the total blood donor population, from 31 per cent in 2013.

### **A Campaign for Youths, by Youths**

Singapore Red Cross continues to recognise the efforts of youths who increase blood donations through creative means. Republic Polytechnic won the Bloodmobile Organiser (BMO) Merit Award for harnessing more than 260 donations over three drives. For example, Republic Polytechnic managed to increase blood donations by 24 per cent by engaging their peers on social media platforms and developing an animated website as part of a creative donor recruitment campaign. (<http://youremytype.businesscatalyst.com/>)

The Singapore Red Cross hopes to empower youths and instil a culture of regular blood donation. “We encourage their creative efforts in increasing awareness of the need for more blood donations”, said Mr Tee Tua Ba, “We want the youths to be strong advocates of blood donation among their peers and family members.”

As part of last year’s *Release the Hero within You* campaign, *heroes* were specially designed for the *Red Cross Life Force Team*. Seven heroes have been launched in succession since last June, and a contest was held for youths for the design of the eighth and final *hero*, *Cobalt*, which was unveiled today.

*Cobalt’s* designer, Ms Youn SoEun, 24, a recent graduate, jumped on the opportunity to submit her design when it was announced on Singapore Red Cross’ Facebook Page. “Given *Cobalt’s* personality, I designed him to look like a futuristic cyborg. I have always found the idea of superheroes interesting, and coupled with the good cause of encouraging more people to donate blood, I found the design process very meaningful,” shared Youn.

World Blood Donor Day is a global event aimed at raising awareness of the need for regular donors to meet the increasing demand for blood and to honour those committed to donating altruistically and regularly.

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<sup>4</sup> Donation of blood platelets or plasma. A donor can make an apheresis donation every month, up to 12 times a year.



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### ***About World Blood Donor Day***

World Blood Donor Day is dedicated to individuals who voluntarily and regularly donate their blood to help save lives. It also aims to create wider awareness of the importance of voluntary blood donation and encourage more people to become regular blood donors. The theme for 2013 – “Give the gift of life: donate blood” – focuses on the value of donated blood to patients, not only in saving lives, but also in helping people live longer and lead more active lives.

Worldwide, at least 90 million units of blood are donated each year to save lives and improve health. 62 countries have achieved 100 per cent voluntary blood donation, up from 39 in 2002. In Singapore, blood donation is 100 per cent voluntary and non-remunerated. Through the World Blood Donor Day, we reiterate the importance of voluntary blood donation and recognise the altruistic contributions of our blood donors. Importantly, we want to encourage more people, especially young people to make blood donation an integral part of their lives.

The annual World Blood Donor Day is sponsored by four international organisations: The World Health Organisation (WHO), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the International Federation of Blood Donor Organisations and the International Society of Blood Transfusion.

For more information please visit <http://www.who.int/worldblooddonorday>

### ***About the Singapore Red Cross Blood Donor Recruitment Programme***

The Singapore Red Cross (SRC) was appointed 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.

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

- Recruitment, Retention and Recognition 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
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### ***About HSA’s Blood Services Group***

The HSA’s Blood Services Group, as the national blood service, secures the nation's blood supply by ensuring a safe and adequate blood supply. It is responsible for collecting, processing, testing and distributing blood and blood products to all hospitals in Singapore. It also provides specialist transfusion medicine services in immunohaematology and tissue typing and is actively engaged in the cutting-edge therapeutic research area of cell processing.