



WORLD BLOOD DONOR DAY 2015 HONOURS GENERATIONS OF DONORS AS SINGAPORE CELEBRATES GOLDEN JUBILEE

- Number of youth donors has increased by 27% since inception of National Blood Programme in 2001
- Over 220,000 units of blood needed by 2030
- Youth donors called on to help address the needs of a fast-ageing Singapore

Singapore, 6 June 2015 – The Singapore Red Cross (SRC) and Health Sciences Authority (HSA) honoured 1,554 Champion Donors at the 12th World Blood Donor Day (WBDD) (世界献血者日) celebrations today. Graced by Minister for Health, Mr Gan Kim Yong, the event also recognised 262 blood mobile organisers (BMOs) (流动献血站的组织机构) who play a crucial role in growing the blood donor pool in Singapore.

As Singapore celebrates its Jubilee Year and looks towards the next 50-year milestone, SRC and HSA are also calling on more youths to succeed the current generation to become future life-long donors. Over the years, they have successfully rallied youth support to sustain the country's blood supply. The number of youth donors has grown from 16,091 in 2001 to 20,452 in 2014.

“It is heartening to see the continuous support which the National Blood Programme has received over the years. Blood is a precious healthcare resource that only selfless and altruistic people can provide. We hope that our youths will be inspired by the actions of the previous and current generations and come forward to donate blood,” said Mr Tee Tua Ba, Chairman, Singapore Red Cross.

With an ageing population, the need for blood will continue to rise. Singapore currently needs 13 units of blood every hour and 316 units of blood every day. At present, the projected demand for blood for the year is over 120,000 units. It is estimated that the number of blood donations have to be expanded by almost two-fold by 2030 to meet future blood demand.



Generations of blood donors

A man who understands the need for blood is recipient turned champion donor 58 year-old Mr Ang Lian Seng. The Logistics Operations Director at a local company was involved in a near fatal accident in 1975 that resulted in a severely fractured hip.

“I am alive today because I received blood at the right time. Without sufficient blood stocks in the hospital I would have met a different fate. Now that I am healthy, donating blood is my way of giving back to society,” said Mr Ang who received the Medal for Life award at WBDD 2015 for donating blood 206 times.

Understanding the importance of maintaining a steady blood supply, Mr Ang has also encouraged his 27 and 35 year-old sons to become blood donors themselves, saying, “With an ageing population in Singapore, it is important for the younger generations to replace us in order to maintain sufficient blood stock as demand increases.”

In the recent years, the Singapore Red Cross has turned its focus to youths. Awareness programmes including social media engagement and mobile apps have been introduced to inculcate blood donation habits from a young age. This aim is to ensure the long-term safety and sustainability of Singapore’s blood donor pool in the next 50 years and beyond.

Exemplifying this is 21 year-old National Serviceman Mr Benjamin Ang. As the youngest champion donor, Benjamin was awarded the Bronze Award for donating blood 37 times since the age of 16. As a young biomedical science graduate who interned with National University Hospital, Benjamin has personally seen the need for blood and the difference it makes in the lives of patients.

“I believe that we, as the future of this nation, owe it to ourselves and each other to give back to society. A steady pool of donors will ensure that we have an adequate blood stock readily available for those that need it the most,” urged Benjamin whose father is a champion donor and whose older brother is working his way to achieve the Bronze Award himself.

Blood Mobile Organisers (BMOs) also play a pivotal role in donor recruitment as 63% of first time donations are made at a mobile blood drive. Keppel Volunteers, a BMO merit winner this year, have been continuously supporting the National Blood Programme collecting 511 units of blood in 2014, up from 383 units in 2012. The efforts of civic organisations and corporations are especially crucial in maintaining Singapore’s blood supply.



Consistent increase in demand for blood

The demand for blood has been increasing at a rate of between 3-5% annually to meet the transfusion needs of patients in Singapore. Those requiring blood transfusion include road traffic accident victims, cancer patients, patients undergoing surgery and patients with blood disorders.

World Blood Donor Day is a global event that aims to raise awareness of the need for regular donors to meet the increasing demand for blood and to honour those committed to donating selflessly and regularly.

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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. This year's theme is *A Community Bonded by Blood* and highlights blood as the common thread that connects our community of blood donors

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

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 therapy.