



MORE THAN 1,600 BLOOD DONORS RECOGNISED AS HEROES

National Blood Programme celebrates World Blood Donor Day 2012 with carnival dedicated to the voluntary 'heroes' who give blood to save lives

Singapore, 16 June 2012 – In celebration of World Blood Donor Day 2012, the National Blood Programme honoured individuals and corporations with a celebratory event today at the Singapore Flyer.

Attended by more than 6,000 blood donors and their families, the Champion Blood Donor Ceremonies were respectively graced by Dr Amy Khor, Minister of State, Ministry of Health and Mayor, South West District; Dr Teo Ho Pin, Mayor, North West District; and Associate Professor Fatimah Lateef, Member of Parliament, Marine Parade GRC. A total of 1,644 donors were awarded, including 42 Champion of Champions¹ donors and nine Medal for Life² winners. A total of 36 Bloodmobile Organisers were awarded for organising blood drives collecting more than 100 units of blood.

Dr Khor said, "World Blood Donor Day pays tribute to individuals who voluntarily and regularly donate their blood without expectation of any reward, except the knowledge that they have helped to save lives and help those in need. For many patients, blood donors are their lifeline. On this occasion, we salute the blood donors for their selfless contributions."

Celebrating Heroes

Held annually, this year's theme is 'Every Blood Donor a Hero', which celebrates the silent, unsung heroes who save lives every day with their blood donations. Mr Tee Tua Ba, Chairman of the Singapore Red Cross, said "'Every Blood Donor is a Hero' focuses on revealing the care, concern and love that each individual has for humanity. Blood donors are the real heroes who put the needs of others before their own. Only 1.8 percent of Singapore's residential population are blood donors. We encourage more Singaporeans to come forward to give to those in need."

Ms Angie Al-Johary, the only female recipient in the Champion of Champions awards category for females, donated blood 125 times over more than 30 years, considers it a personal achievement whenever she donates blood. Women make up about one third of blood donors in Singapore.

She adds, "What the world needs are everyday heroes who are willing to come forward to save lives and to make that difference. It is indeed humbling to know that my blood will go towards helping someone and I hope to be able to do this for as long as my body allows me to do so."

To celebrate those who make a difference to our lives, the Singapore Red Cross is encouraging people to be part of a newly-launched a year long campaign to honour their heroes on its Facebook Page. Themed "Unmask your heroes", it builds on the overall global campaign theme by recognising that the simple act of giving blood goes beyond qualifications and social status, and can be viewed from both a donor as well as a perspective of a recipient. In doing so, by turning donors into heroes, the theme hopes to raise the perceived importance of donation in a way that would be easy for everyone to understand.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.facebook.com/scredcross>

Reaching Out

At the event, blood donors enjoyed fun-filled activities, games and food with their family. Dr Khor also launched a new digital educational tool - the blood donation e-guide. Co-developed by the Singapore Red Cross and Coca-Cola Singapore, the e-guide will be shown at outreach activities such as school talks and road shows, to share the importance of regular giving, the blood donation process, and how blood is used. "Coca-Cola is glad to have a role in producing the blood donation e-guide to help the

Red Cross more actively engage the public and reach out to new donors,” said Ms Gill McLaren, General Manager, Coca-Cola Singapore.

More than 100,000 units of blood are needed to meet the transfusion needs of patients every year, equivalent to more than 350 units of blood a day. Blood goes to those having medical emergencies such as accident survivors; individuals undergoing major surgeries such as organ transplants; patients with cancers and blood disorders like leukaemia and lymphomas or severe anaemia; and even newborns with conditions. With an ageing population, more advanced life-saving medical procedures, and new hospitals being established, more blood will be needed every year.

Leukaemia survivor Sulaiman Bin Suradi, 21, was diagnosed with the blood disorder when he was 10. The blood recipient shared, “The frequent top-up of blood or platelets helped to stabilise my condition, thereby enabling me to continue with treatment. Blood donors turn lives around, not just for patients, but for their families and the community at large as well.” Today, he shares his personal experience at outreach events in appreciation for the selfless donation by blood donors.

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¹ Champion of Champions – Males donating more than 150 units of blood; females donating more than 125 units of blood

² Medal for Life – Males donating more than 200 units of blood; females donating more than 150 units of blood

About World Blood Donor Day

World Blood Donor Day is dedicated to individuals who voluntarily and regularly donate their blood without any reward, except the knowledge that they have helped to save lives and helped those in need. 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 2012 is ‘Every Blood Donor a Hero’. The simple act of giving blood turns anyone into a hero, because donating saves lives. There are no qualifications, no social status. Anybody can be a hero. By turning givers into heroes we raise the perceived importance of donation in a way that is quick and easy to understand.

Worldwide, at least 90 million units of blood are donated each year to save lives and improve health. 62 countries have achieved voluntary blood donation, up from 39 in 2002. In Singapore, blood donation is voluntary and non-remunerated; there is a need to reiterate the importance of voluntary blood donation and to encourage more people, especially young people to make blood donation an integral part of their lives.

About the Health Sciences Authority’s Blood Services Group

The Health Sciences Authority’s Blood Services Group, as the national blood service, secures the nation’s blood supply by ensuring a safe and adequate blood supply. It operates the Bloodbank@HSA and Bloodbank@Woodlands. 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.

About Singapore Red Cross Blood Donor Recruitment Programme

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.

The SRC focuses on three 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

Please refer to [Annex A](#) for more information on blood donations.

How to make a blood donation

Blood donation can be made at the Bloodbank@HSA (11 Outram Road, Health Sciences Authority, Singapore 169078), Bloodbank@Woodlands (900 South Woodlands Drive, #05-07 Woodlands Civic Centre Singapore 730900) or at a community bloodmobile. To make an online appointment to donate blood, log on to www.hsa.gov.sg/donorcare. To find the location of community bloodmobiles, log on www.donorweb.org.

Annex A

FACT SHEET

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 leukaemia patients, the haemophiliacs, the thalassaemia patients, patients with bleeding disorders, and also patients undergoing major surgery.

Every day, more than 350 units of blood are required by all the hospitals in Singapore for patients requiring blood transfusions. It is crucial for more healthy individuals to come forward to help save and sustain the lives of the vulnerable. Blood donors can give three to four donations a year regularly. Every day, Singapore needs at least 450 blood donors to come forward to donate blood at the bloodbanks or at bloodmobiles, so as 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.

Different types of blood donation

Whole Blood Donation

Whole blood donation is the collection of a packet of blood directly from the veins of the blood donor. Every blood pack of standard volume collected will be processed into red blood cells, platelets and fresh frozen plasma. Each of these can be used individually for separate patients. Optimising blood usage and benefit through blood component processing technology, each pack of donated blood can potentially be used to help three patients.

Platelet Donation

Platelets transfusions are frequently given to patients who are unable to make enough platelets in their bone marrow and dengue patients with a drastic drop in platelet count, to prevent serious bleeding. Plateletpheresis is a special blood donation process that allows you to give one blood component- platelets, which are the tiny cells that help to stop bleeding. There is plentiful supply of platelets in the blood and very large numbers can be donated with no ill effects. This process takes about 60-90 minutes to complete and you can donate platelets once every four weeks. With just five days' storage life, platelet donations are delivered quickly to the patients who need them. O+, A+ and B+ donors are required.