



NATIONAL BLOOD PROGRAMME HONOURS BLOOD DONOR HEROES AT ITS 10TH WORLD BLOOD DONOR DAY

- Blood donations increased from last year and by almost 80% in the past decade
- Singapore Red Cross launches youth-centric campaign, “Release The Hero Within You”
- New microsite gives real time information on blood stock requirements, makes blood donation more convenient

Singapore, 8 June 2013 – The National Blood Programme celebrated the tenth anniversary of World Blood Donor Day (世界献血者日) by recognising 1,473 individuals and 32 corporate/community Bloodmobile Organisers (BMOs) (流动献血站的组织机构) for their invaluable contributions.

15 Medal for Life¹ awards (终身奖状) were given out this year, up from nine winners in 2012, making it the highest number recorded since the programme started in 2001.

Over the last 10 years, blood donation in Singapore has increased by almost 80% from 66,000 units to more than 118,000 units, inclusive of apheresis² donation, in 2012.

The National Blood Programme aims to collect 126,000 units of blood – 114,000 units of whole blood and 12,000 units of apheresis this year to meet the transfusion needs of patients in Singapore.

Youth outreach: Release the hero within you

Youth donors make up a significant part of the blood donor pool in Singapore. In 2012, 32 per cent of donors were aged 25 and below. The aim is to increase this to 35 per cent by 2014. To empower and encourage more youths to donate blood, the Singapore Red Cross launched the “Release the Hero Within You” campaign.

After polling close to 300 youths to find out what resonates most strongly with them, eight *heroes* have been specially designed and will be released throughout the year as part of the campaign. Each *hero* represents a character with a distinct personality that blood donors can identify with.

The first *hero*, ‘Starblaze’ was unveiled by the Guest of Honour, Minister of State, Ministry of Trade and Industry, and Mayor North East District, Mr Teo Ser Luck, and Singapore Red Cross’

¹ Medal for Life – Males donating more than 200 units of blood; females donating more than 150 units of blood



Chairman, Mr Tee Tua Ba. The responsible 'Starblaze' is energetic, playful, caring and always ready for action.

"All good habits should be cultivated from a young age, and there is no deed more heroic than regular blood donation" said Mr Teo, "Every unit of blood could potentially save three lives, and everyone who can donate should do so on a regular basis and pass on this gift of life. We are after all connected by blood."

Digital outreach: Red Cross Connection

In order to encourage more youths to make blood donation a part of their lives, the Singapore Red Cross has given their digital presence a boost with the launch of the *Red Cross Connection* microsite. The site makes blood donation more convenient as it comprises real time updates and information on the blood bank's blood stock requirements and needs for specific blood types. Other features include a calendar of upcoming blood drives, closest blood bank locations, as well as information about the blood donation process.

Information from the microsite can be linked and shared on the user's social media networks, such as Facebook and Twitter. "With *Red Cross Connection*, information can be readily accessed by people on the go. We have designed the microsite to empower tech-savvy youths with information at their fingertips, to motivate them to make blood donation part of their lifestyle and to share their lifesaving act with their social networks as agents of positive change," said Mr Benjamin William, Secretary General of the Singapore Red Cross.

The *Red Cross Connection* microsite is now live and can be accessed from all devices with a web browser. For more information about *Red Cross Connection*, please visit <http://connect.redcross.sg/>.

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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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

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.