

**. World Blood Donor Day .**

## **Singapore Red Cross and Health Sciences Authority Honour Champion Donors, Launch Community Engagement Initiatives**

**SINGAPORE, 14 June 2022** - On World Blood Donor Day, the Singapore Red Cross and Health Sciences Authority pay tribute to 1,834 Champion Donors and 25 Blood Mobile Organisers for their invaluable contributions to the National Blood Programme in 2021.

Mr Ong Yao Teck, 37, is the youngest among the 23 champions receiving the *Medal for Life* - the highest accolade for donors who have achieved their milestone of 150 donations for females and 200 donations for males in 2021. He is an apheresis<sup>1</sup> donor who started his blood donation journey when he was 16. He achieved 206 donations by 2021. "I am honoured to be recognised together with other award recipients. While I do not have much to contribute in other ways, I have blood! I cannot think of an easier way to contribute to society and save lives, just by sitting down for two hours every month," said Mr Ong.

Mdm Zee Yoke Chun is the only female donor among the 38 donors to be awarded the *Champion of Champions*, for having donated 128 times by 2021. Coming from a family of blood donors, Mdm Zee first learnt about the importance of blood donation when her uncle needed a blood transfusion. She started donating in 1978 and went on to become a regular donor, despite being rejected initially due to low haemoglobin levels. "It is important that donors consciously keep themselves healthy as blood donation requires the donor to be in good health prior to and during their visit. Making changes to one's lifestyle is a commitment and perhaps the most challenging part of being a regular donor," said Mdm Zee. "However, being a regular donor has its perks. I feel that regular donors tend to feel and look better, due to healthier lifestyle choices. We also feel good about ourselves after our donation."

Both donors and other champions share their inspiring journey in the virtual [Hall of Fame](#). To appreciate regular donors, a new award category - the Titanium Award - was introduced this year as a milestone between Champion of Champions and Medal for Life. This category is for female and male donors who have made 135 donations and 175 donations respectively. This

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<sup>1</sup> Apheresis donation allows donors to donate specific blood components such as platelets and plasma and can be done monthly. For whole blood donations, the donation interval is once every 3 months.

year, 35 donors qualify for the Titanium award. Please refer to **Annex A** for the breakdown of the award recipients.

“Each year, almost 30,000 patients in Singapore require a safe and steady stream of blood supply to survive. Dedicated blood donors, including Mr Ong and Mdm Zee are a lifeline to these patients. We hope that more will be inspired by these champion donors’ journey and be part of this life-saving force,” said Dr Choong May Ling, Mimi, Chief Executive Officer, Health Sciences Authority.

### **Engaging youth and community to give blood, save lives**

Singapore Red Cross Secretary General/CEO Mr Benjamin William noted, “A regular donor pool is the cornerstone for a safe and sustainable blood supply. To ensure that we have this pool of regular donors to rely on now and into the future, we need more youth donors to start donating and make it a lifelong habit. Let’s make blood donation a way of life and be a community bonded by blood”.

This June, the iconic *Blood Buddy*, Singapore’s mascot for blood donation since 2005, will step out into the community to call on more people to adopt blood donation as a lifestyle and a social responsibility. The outdoor advertising campaign will demystify blood donation by sharing fun facts and encouraging donors and the community to give blood regularly, at least two times a year.

The public can stand to win memorabilia when they take photos with *Blood Buddy* and tag @heybloodbuddy on social media platforms. SRC will also be launching a stress-ball design competition in June to add to the current stress-ball collection. Details of these contests will be announced on Singapore Red Cross’ Facebook and Instagram pages, as well as @heybloodbuddy Instagram.

The public can download new blood buddy stickers for WhatsApp, Telegram and Instagram from @heybloodbuddy Instagram. Avid gamers can also try their hands on newly released online games - *Blood Bag Rush* and *Iron-Rich Food Dash* - at giveblood.sg.

For deeper youth engagement, SRC will launch an interactive exhibition in August that will travel to campus grounds. The exhibition aims to engage tertiary students on the process of

blood donation, busting popular myths and sharing tips before, during and after blood donation as part of its public education efforts.

### **Commemorative initiatives take on a new spin**

This year, the SRC commemorates World Blood Donor Day with Hong Kong Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service, The Korea Red Cross Blood Services and National Blood Centre of the Thai Red Cross Society with a joint social media post.

*Blood Buddy* will be featured in an upcoming stamp set featuring local mascots. To be launched by SingPost on 17 June, the Singapore Mascots stamp issue will include *Blood Buddy* for the first time.

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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 2022 - "Donating blood is an act of solidarity. Join the effort and save lives" - draws attention to the roles that voluntary blood donations play in saving lives and enhancing solidarity within communities. It is widely acknowledged that the act of blood donation contributes to generating social ties and building a united community.

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.

### **About Singapore Red Cross Blood Donor 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 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

## MEDIA RELEASE



### **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 specialised transfusion medicine testing services in immunohaematology and tissue typing and is actively engaged in the cutting-edge therapeutic research area of cell therapy.

Annex A

**Breakdown of Champion Donor Awards**

<b>Awards</b>	<b>Number of Donations</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Bronze</b>	M: 25 F: 25	777	232	1009
<b>Silver</b>	F: 35 M: 50	259	103	362
<b>Ruby</b>	F: 50 M: 75	133	46	179
<b>Gold</b>	F: 70 M: 100	89	37	126
<b>Diamond</b>	F: 100 M: 125	55	7	62
<b>Champion of Champions</b>	F: 125 M: 150	37	1	38
<b>Titanium</b>	F: 135 M: 175	33	2	35
<b>Medal for Life</b>	F: 150 M: 200	22	1	23

**Breakdown of Bloodmobile Organiser Awards**

<b>Gold</b>	9
<b>Merit</b>	16