

## Singapore Red Cross and the Health Sciences Authority embrace digital-first approach, take World Blood Donor Day celebrations online

- *Launch of Blood Donor Hall of Fame to appreciate and recognise champion donors and community bloodmobile organisers*
- *New digital initiatives include Facebook Blood Donation Tool, Blood Buddy Instagram profile, and social activations to engage youth and digital natives*

**SINGAPORE, 14 JUNE 2021** – The [Singapore Red Cross](#) (SRC) and the Health Sciences Authority (HSA) will be honouring blood donors virtually this year for the second year running, in line with the government’s safety measures to reduce risks of COVID-19 community transmission. In celebration of World Blood Donor Day on 14 June this year, SRC has unveiled a digital-first outreach campaign, comprising a series of digital and social activations, to celebrate and recognise blood donors in Singapore. The campaign aims to reach and engage the next generation of donors through interactive online activations, fronted by the inaugural digital [Blood Donor Hall of Fame](#) and an interactive [Journey of Blood](#), alongside engagements through social media channels such as Facebook and Instagram.

Headlining this year’s World Blood Donor Day celebrations is the first-ever digital **Blood Donor Hall of Fame**, which recognises and honours contributions of blood donors to the National Blood Programme. More than 1,600 champion donors from all walks of life will be featured and presented awards to celebrate milestones - ranging from 25 to 200 donations - in their blood donation journey. In particular, the Blood Donor Hall of Fame will spotlight the inspiring stories of nine individuals and organisations who have demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to the cause.

### **Celebrating champions**

For some of these champion donors, the blood donation journey started in response to calls for blood transfusion by those around them. One of the champion donors honoured this year is Mr Yahya Bin Abd Rahman, 66, recipient of the Medal for Life Award this year - the highest form of recognition of blood donors. His blood donation journey started at the age of 34, when he responded to an acquaintance’s call for blood donation. Since then, he has been a regular donor who has made over 200 donations in the last 30 years. “I’ve been a regular donor for the past 30 years and I will continue to give blood as long as I get the all-clear from my health assessment. It has become a habit for me to donate blood and I would feel that something is missing if I missed a donation,” said Mr Yahya. “Donating blood is one way of giving back to society. You cannot manufacture blood like medicine, so it’s important for people to realise the significance of this act of giving.”

Similarly, Ms Joyce Sng, 43, recipient of the Diamond Award, became a regular donor when her late father required blood transfusion due to health issues. “It made me realise that there are

people out there like him who need blood to save their lives,” said Ms Sng. “You have nothing to lose by donating blood regularly, and at the same time, you are saving three lives with every blood donation you make.”

In fact, Mr Yahya and Ms Sng are just two of more than 1,600 champion donors recognised and honoured by SRC and HSA for making a difference by giving blood, in the Blood Donor Hall of Fame this year.

“On behalf of all blood recipients, the Singapore Red Cross would like to thank all our blood donors and community partners who have contributed to this meaningful cause, to give many a new lease of life. This year, as we commemorate the 20th year of Singapore Red Cross being appointed by HSA as the National Blood Donor Recruiter, it is heartening to also witness the continuous growth of our blood donor population here, from more than 41,000 in 2001 to over 72,000 donors in 2020 - a remarkable 72 percent increase over the last two decades,” said **Mr Benjamin William, Secretary-General and CEO, Singapore Red Cross.**

“Blood donors continued to heed the call to save lives even in the midst of a pandemic, showing how warm-hearted and committed they are. The Health Sciences Authority would like to wish all blood donors a happy World Blood Donor Day, and express our gratitude to all blood donors and our partners for your precious time and dedication,” shared **Dr Choong May Ling, Mimi, Chief Executive Officer, Health Sciences Authority.**

### **Engaging the next generation of donors**

The **Blood Donor Hall of Fame** is just one of several new digital initiatives introduced by SRC this year, as part of their efforts to reach a younger, more technologically-savvy audience amid the ongoing global pandemic. This is also in line with this year’s focus on youth for the World Blood Donor Day campaign around the world, to encourage youth to embrace the humanitarian call to donate blood and inspire others to do the same.

In the lead-up to World Blood Donor Day, a series of social activations have also been rolled out by SRC across social media platforms. These activations aim to encourage individuals to be part of the movement through simple steps, and include:

- The launch of Blood Buddy, SRC’s official blood donation mascot, on Instagram ([@heybloodbuddy](https://www.instagram.com/heybloodbuddy)), to share bite-sized content and facts around blood donation
- A social media competition, where users were encouraged to share their unique, inspiring blood donation stories with Blood Buddy on Instagram, to stand a chance for their stories to be illustrated into a comic strip
- An interactive Instagram ‘this or that’ filter game, a themed Facebook profile frame, as well as themed sticker packs to sustain engagement and encourage individuals to spread the word to their social networks.

In addition to the activations rolled out across Facebook and Instagram, SRC and HSA have also partnered with Facebook to launch the [Facebook Blood Donation feature](#) in Singapore in line with World Blood Donor Day. This feature will connect people who want to donate blood with opportunities to do so, to empower even more Singaporeans to stay connected with SRC for real-

time information such as ad-hoc opportunities to donate blood, so they can contribute to a more stable and sufficient blood supply.

“As we commemorate World Blood Donor Day this year, not only are we celebrating the blood donors for their commitment and contributions, we are also shifting the spotlight towards our next generation of blood donors - the youth who are our future. This is why we aim to reach them through channels and initiatives they are familiar with, to encourage them to take the next step in their blood donation journey, and influence those around them to do the same,” added Mr William.

### **An ongoing journey**

To sustain conversations and awareness around the importance of blood donations beyond World Blood Donor Day, SRC will also be unveiling a virtual **Journey of Blood**. This will provide users with an immersive and interactive educational journey on the blood donation process, from the blood bank to the laboratory. Not only will they be able to interact with Blood Buddy and its surrounding virtual environment, but they will also uncover interesting facts on blood donation and gain a behind-the-scenes perspective on how blood is collected and processed for Singapore’s life-saving needs.

More information on blood donation in Singapore can be found at <https://giveblood.sg/>. Individuals can also follow Blood Buddy at [@heybloodbuddy](https://twitter.com/heybloodbuddy) for the latest blood donation updates.

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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 2021 – “Give blood and keep the world beating” – highlights the essential contribution blood donors make by saving lives and improving others’ health. It reinforces the global call for more people all over the world to donate blood regularly and contribute to better health.

A special focus of this year’s campaign is the role of young people in ensuring a safe blood supply. In many countries, young people have been at the forefront of activities and initiatives to achieve safe blood supplies, through voluntary, non-remunerated blood donations.

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 <https://www.who.int/news->

<room/events/detail/2021/06/14/default-calendar/world-blood-donor-day-2021>

### **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

### **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.