

**WELCOME REMARKS BY
SINGAPORE RED CROSS SECRETARY GENERAL,
MR BENJAMIN WILLIAM AT THE RED CROSS YOUTH 70th ANNIVERSARY,
LAUNCH OF YOUTH HUB AND RED CROSS JUNIOR @ COMMUNITY
AT THE RED CROSS TRAINING CAMPSITE ON 3 SEPTEMBER 2022**

Mr Edwin Tong, Minister for Culture, Community and Youth; Second Minister for Law
Adviser to Marine Parade GRC GROs; Member of Parliament for Marine Parade GRC

Fellow Council Members, Friends of the Singapore Red Cross,
and the Red Cross Youth Family

Residents of Opera Estate

Ladies and Gentlemen, Boys and Girls

A very good morning. It is my pleasure to welcome all of you to the Red Cross Youth 70th Anniversary celebrations. I thank Minister Edwin Tong for taking time off his busy schedule to grace this event as our Guest-of-Honour.

2 Today, we recognise our Red Cross Youth members - past and present - for their contribution towards fulfilling the humanitarian mission of the Singapore Red Cross. Over the last seven decades, the RCY has helped shape the lives of thousands of youth, and has started many youth on their personal humanitarian journey. The activities and programmes have imparted essential skills and sound humanitarian values to our Red Cross Youth,

playing an important part of their character development. It also helps to hone their leadership skills, and builds teamwork and perseverance.

3 Many of our youth have returned to provide leadership, not only to RCY but to SRC as a whole. One such example is our Council Member, Dr Zaidi Ariffin. Zaidi joined RCY as a Cadet, rose through the ranks, and now serves both as a Deputy Director of Red Cross Junior and Chapters, as well as an SRC Council Member. He will share with us his meaningful Red Cross journey following my remarks.

Ode to RCY Heritage

4 70 years ago, the Red Cross Youth started as the Junior Red Cross, with just 48 cadets from Raffles Girls School in the pioneer unit in 1952. Over the years, as the RCY grew from strength to strength, its community service was intrinsically linked to the evolving needs of Singapore. In the 1960s, our Cadets assisted in the hospitals, complementing the healthcare workers. When Hotel New World collapsed, the alumni were deployed to offer support to families whose loved ones were trapped in the rubble. The term psychosocial support might not have been coined then, but they did just that - staying close, handing out hot drinks, putting blankets on the elderly, and supporting them when bad news was delivered to them. In the 1960s, the Red Cross Training Campsite was established at Tanah Merah as a place for the youth to learn and bond. A few moves later, we established the campsite here at Jalan Khairuddin in the 90s, hosting youth camps, as well as team-building and training activities.

Launch of the Youth Hub

6 Today, we will unveil the Youth Hub, as a key part of this campsite, not so much as a space to look back on achievements but to inspire our youth to look forward. It must serve to help our youth see themselves as a driving force to find solutions for the many humanitarian challenges ahead of us - from climate change, to global pandemics, to mental well-being, to building community resilience. Elements like the Humanitarian Trail, an experiential learning experience comprising activity-based stations to facilitate a deeper understanding and appreciation of SRC's humanitarian work, must lead to youth wanting to embark on a lifelong humanitarian journey of their own. The challenges societies will face in the coming years will be daunting, even existential. Our youth must be ready to play a key role in helping us overcome these challenges. RCY is ready to play its part in inspiring and guiding our youth along these lines.

RCY: The Way Forward

7 RCY has always been adaptable, adjusting its activities to keep in touch with the times. Hence going forward, the Red Cross Youth will shift the focus of its curriculum activities and programmes to include climate change and sustainability; championing psychosocial support and mental wellness, community resilience, including playing a more strategic role to make blood donation a vibrant movement in our community, especially amongst our youth. RCY must champion humanitarian innovations - be it technology, entrepreneurship or even in processes.

Nurturing Young Humanitarians

8 Part of being innovative also means that we are trying and initiating new platforms to reach more young people and to reach them younger. We launched Red Cross Junior to reach children in Kindergarten and Childcare Centres. RCJ enables us to build a pipeline of young humanitarians, and give young children an introduction to community service. To reach youth from schools that do not have an RCY unit, we will build a network of Red Cross Youth Clubs, as well as to launch the Red Cross Junior @ Community, for children aged five and nine years old. This will also help us to reach the expat children and youth who are not in our regular school system. We welcome all children, and their families, to embark on an exciting humanitarian journey with us.

9 Finally, I wish to call on our RCY members to lend your youthful vigour, creativity and imagination to do good, and to catalyse positive change in your community. We have integrated the Red Cross Youth to provide a seamless transition as you progress up the educational ladder; from Red Cross Junior in pre-schools; Links in primary schools; Cadets in secondary schools; Chapter Members in Tertiary Institutions; to Volunteers for the Singapore Red Cross when you grow into adulthood. We are here for you, as we have been there for countless youth over 70 years, and we will help you realise your potential.

10 To our stakeholders, youth leaders and families of RCY members, thank you for your enduring partnership! Together for Humanity!