

SPEECH BY MR BENJAMIN WILLIAM, SG/CEO, SINGAPORE RED CROSS, AT RED CROSS YOUTH FLARE CONFERENCE ON 14 JANUARY 2017 AT VICTORIA SCHOOL

**Dr Janil Puthucheary, Minister of State, Ministry of Education
Mr Ow Kwok Leong, Deputy Director Uniformed Groups, Ministry of Education,
Character & Citizenship Education Branch
Mr David Chua, CEO of National Youth Council
Parents and Youth Officers
Red Cross Youth Cadets, Youth Leaders and Volunteer Instructors
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Good morning, and welcome to the Red Cross Youth (RCY) FLARE Conference. I wish to thank Dr Janil taking time out from his busy schedule to be our Guest-of-Honour at this inaugural Conference.

I would like to extend my appreciation to our guests from Ministry of Education, Character & Citizenship Education Branch Mr Ow Kwok Leong, Deputy Director Uniformed Groups and Ms Naomi Akamatsu, Organisational Development Delegate of IFRC for joining us at the conference. I would also like to thank Mr Lim Boon Kong Andrew, Principal of Victoria School for their generous sponsorship of their school to make the event possible.

Today, we have with us 310 cadets, 100 youth officers and 40 proud parents. Many of our youth would have been on the Red Cross journey for some time now - most more than a year. In the first two years, the youth learnt about our service to humanity - locally and globally. They also learnt a number of lifesaving first aid skills and blood donation knowledge.

As our youth progress through their educational journey, they will enter another phase in their Red Cross journey where they now embark on giving back. The RCY will empower each of you to give back to the society - whether it is to your family, your school or alma mater, your community and country. It will indeed be a “values-in-action” journey for you.

New Leaders, the Volunteer Instructors

The Volunteer Instructors scheme is one such way of giving back. Having graduated from secondary school, the VIs will provide leadership for the Red Cross units, serving as big brothers and sisters, mentoring younger members as they too grow and mature in their own Red Cross journey. Today, we welcome our 18th batch of Volunteer Instructors. Let us give some encouragement to these young men and women as they take on these added responsibility by giving them a big hand of applause. I am confident you will do well.

Developing Humanitarian Leaders

In line with FLARE, which stands for “Fostering Leadership and Resilient Endeavours”, this conference shall both inspire you and equip you with a new skill-set in order to maximise your Red Cross journey. At the same time please use this platform to share your creative ideas and best practices, so that we can all benefit from your positive energy and shared experiences.

As leaders, you will share your vision with unit members and motivate them to achieve a common goal. You will have to lead by example by displaying qualities such as perseverance and teamwork. Each of you need to maximise your potential by working on your weaknesses and leveraging on your strengths, and spur on others to do the same.

To recognise your efforts, we will launch a new leadership badge. But remember, the badge is only a “passport” to prepare you for greater responsibilities ahead. You will need to live up to the values and attributes that enabled you to attain the badge. And you must demonstrate your leadership and service readiness everyday.

Parents, you can take pride in your child’s achievements. Please continue to lend your support - first as your child takes charge as leader of his or her unit, and in future as pillars of society and as humanitarian leaders.

Building Community Resilience

With the ever present security threat and state of global terrorism, the work of enhancing community resilience is even more relevant today than ever before. Through our blood donor recruitment programme and our first aid advocacy and training, we contribute towards two key national frameworks - the SG Secure and Total Defence.

Last year, the International Red Cross Movement launched the global “One Billion Coalition for Resilience” transformative initiative, to mobilise a billion people to take steps towards strengthening resilience by 2025. Over at the Singapore Red Cross, we are ramping up our outreach to volunteers and beneficiaries to boost our support for vulnerable groups in our community. Soon this will include new initiatives, such as a day activity centre in the city, a home monitoring service for elderly, and other social enterprises. I look forward to your partnership in our endeavour to build community resilience in Singapore, and make a significant contribution regionally and globally to such efforts.

Conclusion

As I mentioned earlier, you are the future pillars of our society. Be a role model and take the lead in a community service initiative, or two. Don't wait, because someone out there could be cheered by your smile or could have his life transformed by your one kind act. Humanity is in your hands. And there is so much good you can do.

Have an enjoyable and insightful conference.

Thank you.