

**SPEECH BY GUEST-OF-HONOUR MCCY MINISTER EDWIN TONG
AT RED CROSS YOUTH 70th ANNIVERSARY
AT THE RED CROSS TRAINING CAMPSITE ON 3 SEPTEMBER 2022**

Mr Benjamin William, Secretary General and CEO of the Singapore Red Cross

Members of the Singapore Red Cross and Red Cross Youth

Residents of Opera Estate

Ladies and Gentlemen

Boys and Girls

1. Good morning.
2. I am happy to join you today as we celebrate the Red Cross Youth's 70th Anniversary.
3. Over the past seven decades, the Red Cross Youth has made significant contributions to the community, both locally and regionally.

4. The Links and Cadets¹ participate in community service, provide first aid services at school events, and raise funds for social services run by the Singapore Red Cross.
5. The Chapter members² from our tertiary institutions spearhead ground-up projects such as the annual Project R.I.C.E+ where they mobilise rice and other essentials for vulnerable communities in Singapore.
6. They also play an important role in enhancing community resilience: share first aid and home safety tips in the heartlands, advocating blood donation to peers, organising blood donation drives and providing first aid coverage at national events.
7. As Red Cross Youth members engage in this wide array of activities, they are inevitably exposed to the diverse day-to-day situations that will enrich them and help them develop lifelong values and shape their character and growth.
8. Such initiatives also help us build a kinder society in the spirit of care and compassion that will in turn make Singapore stronger as a society.

¹ Links are RCY members in primary schools. Cadets are RCY members in secondary schools.

² RCY members in tertiary institutions are known as Chapter members.

9. I am heartened that RCY is empowering youth through active citizenry, and I am proud our youth are stepping up as agents of positive change.
10. The Red Cross Youth has evolved with time, refreshing its curriculum and introducing new initiatives to stay relevant.
11. In recent years, the Red Cross Youth has expanded; launching the Red Cross Junior in preschools, as well as, establishing an inclusive RCY Club for youth with and without intellectual disabilities at APSN Delta Senior School.
12. These initiatives help forge strong bonds amongst the youth as they interact and learn together.
13. To champion youth innovation, the youth organise symposiums and conferences to exchange ideas on social inclusion and sustainable humanitarian action.
14. More recently, the Red Cross Youth rolled out Y-Buddy, a programme to train youth leaders and youth officers³ in the area of psychosocial support and psychological first aid, to help our members play an important role in peer support and engendering an overall better mental health environment.

³ Youth Officers are Teachers-in-Charge of RCY units in schools.

15. I commend the Red Cross Youth for staying true to its mission of advancing youth development.
16. I am happy to note that over the last two years, Red Cross Youth also responded to the COVID-19 pandemic - showing appreciation and distributing meals to the frontline workers, and cheering on the elderly by penning messages for care packs.
17. At the height of the outbreak, the youth took upon themselves to spread word on the importance of vaccinations, and more recently, they engaged the community on dengue prevention.
18. Through engaging in these activities, and providing opportunities for reflection, our youth are encouraged to see themselves as a part of the larger community, and how they can make a meaningful difference regardless of their age.
19. Today, I am pleased to witness two more milestones in the journey of the Red Cross Youth, namely the launch of the Youth Hub and Red Cross Junior @ Community.
20. Since the Red Cross Training Campsite was relocated to Jalan Khairuddin in 1991, it has been a notable landmark in Joo Chiat Estate's rich heritage.

21. With the launch of the Youth Hub, children and youth living in Joo Chiat can look forward to participating in community engagement initiatives and holidays programmes spearheaded by young humanitarians at the shared space.
22. Joo Chiat residents can also appreciate the various projects championed by the Red Cross Youth at the Humanitarian Trail.
23. I encourage parents to enrol their children in Red Cross Junior, so they can benefit from thoughtful activities to express love and care, empathy and compassion, from a young age.
24. I hope the contributions of the Red Cross children and youth, and the children and youth of Opera Estate and Joo Chiat, will inspire future generations.
25. To all RCY members, do continue to support the humanitarian mission of the Singapore Red Cross.
26. I am glad to know that many adult volunteers of the Singapore Red Cross came through the ranks and continue to serve as leaders in the Red Cross Youth, sharing their valuable experience with students and young adults.

27. I hope that many more of you here will do likewise.
28. I would also like to commend the efforts of the teachers and volunteer-leaders in the Red Cross Youth in developing the potential and talent of youth members.
29. Please continue the good work of nurturing every Red Cross Youth member and inspiring these youths to become leaders in the society.
30. In closing, I wish you all a happy 70th anniversary, and many more years of service to humanity.
31. Thank you.