

Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY PRESIDENT S R NATHAN AT THE 1999 SJAB ANNUAL GENERAL INSPECTION ON 26 SEPTEMBER 1999 AT 5.00 PM AT THE NANYANG POLYTECHNIC

Officers & Members of the St John Ambulance Brigade

Ladies and Gentlemen

1. I am pleased to be your Reviewing Officer of the 1999 Annual General Inspection.

2. For the last 61 years ago, since the first division of the St John Ambulance Brigade was formed, the Brigade has upheld the tradition of "Service to Mankind". Members of your Brigade have moved beyond their founding role and have been volunteering their services to nursing homes, hospitals, and the transportation of the sick and needy. Your health screening for the public in association with the People's Association is commendable as it will help detect health disorders early for timely treatment to be provided. I applaud the ever-ready spirit of your members to serve the public, regardless of race or creed, in so many ways.

3. Last year, the St John Ambulance Brigade put in 57,600 man-hours of public

duty. And for the first 6 months of this year, the Brigade had already done over 28,000 man-hours. Among the Brigade members who have put in these hours are many young people. I am very happy to see our young people learning about kindness, volunteerism and altruism. I hope that the lessons learnt will stay with you for life.

4. I am told that over the last two years, the Brigade has embarked on a pilot project with the Joo Chiat Community Club and the Siglap Community Club to teach first aid to residents. To suit the needs of the constituents, you have made innovative changes to the first aid syllabi. The Brigade is also training school teachers in first aid, focusing on handling common problems such as fainting, simple wounds, strains and sprains and wheezing attacks. These are all useful contributions to our Society.

5. I am also pleased to learn that the St John Ambulance Brigade will be participating in the mass education programme recently launched by the Ministry of Health to improve the survival chances of acute heart attack patients. This will be a very useful contribution to Society, as Singapore's survival rate among heart attack patients of 2.5% is unacceptable, compared to USA and Sweden's 20+%. Ministry of Health aims to train one person in Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) in every family by the year 2005. With this, a heart attack patient can receive CPR before the ambulance arrives. That 3 to 4 minutes interval, before the ambulance arrives, can be critical for survival.

6. Last but not least, I congratulate all award recipients. You deserve this recognition for your contributions to the community. May I wish you and all Brigade members success in your projects and, more than that, satisfaction in the knowledge that your community service is helping many people.

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