

# *Singapore Government*

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## **SPEECH BY PRESIDENT S R NATHAN AT THE BOYS' BRIGADE SHARITY GIFT BOX OPENING CEREMONY 2000 ON THURSDAY 30 NOVEMBER 2000 AT 7.45 PM AT SUNTEC CITY**

Mr Peter Foo, Brigade President

Dr Robert Loh, President of National Council of Social Service

Mr John Lim, Chairman of BB Sharity Gift Box 2000

Members of The Boys' Brigade in Singapore

Ladies and Gentlemen

My wife and I are happy to join all of you in this evening's ceremony to launch this year's Sharity Gift Box. The Boys' Brigade's tenacious and tireless effort in sustaining this project, which is now in its 13th year, is indeed commendable.

2. From a simple idea of collecting some Christmas gifts for the less fortunate in Singapore, the Sharity Gift Box project has grown beyond its original modest targets – from 7,000 gifts at the time of its inception in 1988, to 300,000 gifts worth an estimated \$2.4 million last year. This excellent achievement is a

reflection of the efforts put in by the Boys' Brigade.

3. More than just helping to spread the festive cheer to the less well-off and help meet some of the many welfare needs in our midst, this project has also benefited and enriched members of the Boys' Brigade. Its more important objective, of teaching your BB members to care for, and share with the less fortunate, is indeed laudable. It reflects The Boys' Brigade's focus on character development and inculcating a spirit of service to society among our youths.

4. As a nation, Singapore continues to enjoy good economic growth and prosperity. Like in any other society, there will always be some in our midst who are left behind, sometimes due to circumstances beyond their control. Physical and mental disabilities apart, there could simply be cases of people who have been dealt more harshly by the hand of fate. Today, we are certainly not lacking in the means to help those in such need. But the test for us, and the measure of us as a nation and a society, is whether we will be found lacking in the spirit of charity and giving.

5 I am heartened that our fellow Singaporeans are, by and large, a charitable people. The consistent and growing support that Singaporeans have given to this Sharity Gift Box project, as well as many other worthy causes, gives us reason to be hopeful. However, more can, and should, be done. The successful in our midst must set the tone and help shape society. Not only individuals, but also our corporate citizens need to play a role.

6 I am happy to learn that several public-spirited corporate citizens have partnered The Boys Brigade in this project. Among them, Centrepont Shopping Centre and Great Eastern Life deserve special mention for their generous and consistent support to this project since its inception 13 years ago. They have come forth, not only in monetary terms, but also, in involving their employees in this project. I appeal to all, both individuals and other corporate citizens, to come forward to support the Sharity Gift Box, and help build Singapore as a caring and gracious society.

7 Finally, on behalf of all Singaporeans, I want to thank the members of The Boys' Brigade, for their tireless effort in running the Sharity Gift Box project. I understand that more than 2,000 BB Boys have helped run the project this year. To the BB Boys, who have chosen to give up their school holidays to make this Christmas different for the less fortunate in Singapore, I say, "Well done! You have done your parents and your schools proud. Please keep up the good work

and Singapore will indeed become a better home for all of us.”

8     Thank you and have a Merry Christmas!

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