

# SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY MR CHAN CHEE SENG, SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY (SOCIAL AFFAIRS) AND PRESIDENT, JOGGING ASSOCIATION OF SINGAPORE, AT A PRESS CONFERENCE ON THE FAMILIES AND FRIENDS JOG ON SATURDAY, 24 FEBRUARY 1979 AT 12.30 PM AT THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE SINGAPORE ACTION GROUP OF ELDERS (SAGE), BLOCK ONE PODIUM, SECOND FLOOR, MAUDE ROAD, SINGAPORE 8

## FAMILIES AND FRIENDS JOG - 4 MARCH 79

Recently the jogging fraternity in Singapore was taken aback by the comments of Dr Christian Barnard, the heart transplant pioneer, who said that jogging has become a dangerous mania world-wide and that joggers are unnecessarily punishing themselves for some health benefits. With due respects to Dr Barnard who was obviously expressing a personal view-point, I think he may have over simplified things by presuming that all joggers are masochists, punishing themselves to their physical and mental limits.

### Jogging Fanatics

In any country there are jogging fanatics who will carry things to the extreme. But their number is certainly small and I personally do not know of any such jogging fanatics in Singapore. As far as I am aware of, the majority of joggers in Singapore are indulging in jogging in a moderate, rational and pleasant way, and benefiting from it in the process. As you know, we have never set a time limit for completion of minor or major, let alone with marathon jog. We have never created speedy heroes or heroines who have completed first in our jogs. We only care that you have completed it with ease and with no injuries. Sometimes we have even included walking as part of our jogging for this matter.

Exercise physiologists have shown in numerous studies that jogging is one of the best activities to release stress and tension, and improve cardio-vascular and respiratory function. What is more,

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it costs nothing to jog and there are other indirect benefits accruing from it. One of these benefits is in the social sphere. For example, in the Families and Friends Jog over four kilometres scheduled for 4 March '79, the prime objective is to join with friends and relatives for a casual run through parts of Singapore, including the Botanic Gardens and picturesque Orchard Road. The participants can look forward to the camaraderie that the experience affords them and, in all probability, many new friendships will be made through this meeting. That is the beauty and appeal of jogging in which people of all walks of life can come together to share the joy of the simplest and, in a way, the most dignified, of sporting activities.

### Sports Punishment

On the subject of punishment, which Dr Barnard referred to, I would like to say that every sport, especially high performance sports, has its degree of pain, discomfort and risk. Jogging is no exception. For example, we know that beginning joggers frequently complain of tense lower backs, stiff and over muscled hamstrings, rigid spines and tight and sore tendons throughout the legs. We also know that some joggers choose to live in a world of constant pain and repeated injuries, whilst others decide to stop jogging to relieve the stress and discomfort that the activity brings them. Since it is clear that running tends to contract and tighten much of the body musculature, stretching and flexibility exercises are the perfect complement to running. We would, therefore, advise that a balance be struck between jogging and such exercises so that the activity does not fall short of being a complete fitness method. Perhaps the mass media could help the Jogging Association of Singapore by publicising this information for the benefit of those new to jogging.

The Families and Friends Jog is the first event organised for the 1979 season, and I hope many new joggers would come forward to join us. As Dr Barnard himself had admitted in his newspaper column "it seems as if half the human race is doing while the other half is either watching it, hoping to take part or recovering from the effect". It is our fervent hope that our other half of Singaporeans will take to jogging and bring home a more healthy, happy and rugged society eventually.