

Newsletter



The past few months have been incredibly fulfilling. From July 5th to 14th, 2024, I had the distinct privilege of attending the St. John's Grand Council meeting in Cardiff, Wales, UK. This prestigious event convened Priors and Chancellors from across the globe, fostering vital discussions aimed at advancing the global mission of St. John.

As we look ahead, I am eagerly anticipating the Singapore F1 in September, where our First Aiders will once again be on standby, ready to provide essential support.

➤ **Prof. Sean P. Rozario, KStJ**

Chairman,
National St John Council of Singapore

Prior of the
Priory of Singapore



One of the most memorable moments of the trip was the honour of meeting Prince Richard, Duke of Gloucester, who graciously serves as the Grand Prior of St. John.

On Singapore's National Day, August 9th, 2024, our First Aiders played a critical role in ensuring the safety of those attending the

Parade. I visited St. John's command centre during the event and was thoroughly impressed by the seamless coordination and unwavering commitment that was demonstrated in managing emergency operations.



St John Fellowship

Chinese New Year Celebrations with Our Seniors

On 23 February 2024, at 2 pm, the St John Multi-Purpose Hall came alive with an extraordinary celebration of the Chinese New Year, hosted by the St John Fellowship for the seniors from the St John Singapore Dementia Centre. The event was a heartwarming affair filled with joy and camaraderie.

The highlight of the gathering was a captivating performance by the volunteer Guitar Connection Quartet, comprising Michele, Allen, Roland, and Philip. Their rendition of Chinese New Year melodies, Malay folk songs, and classic tunes in both Chinese and English resonated with the audience, drawing smiles and tapping feet.



Among the notable attendees were Professor Sean Patrick Rozario, KStJ, Prior of the St John Priory of Singapore, and Chairman of the National St John Council, alongside other Council members. The seniors from the Dementia Centre, accompanied by their families, caregivers, and Centre staff, formed the heart of the event.



Adding to the auspicious ambiance, Mr. Mah Poh How, CStJ, Advisor to the St John Fellowship, distributed Chinese calligraphy symbols of "福" (fortune) to all present, symbolising blessings for the year ahead.

Amidst singing, dancing, and heartfelt laughter, the celebration radiated hope and resilience, uniting everyone in the spirit of the Chinese New Year. It was a testament to the power of community and compassion in uplifting spirits and spreading joy.

➤ **Mr Eric Chong**
Honorary Secretary
St John Fellowship



The Asia-Pacific Youth Competition (APYC) is an annual event where St John members from the region gather to compete with and forge friendships with one another. This year, teams from Dunman High School and Nanyang Girls' High School, who were champions in the Ambulance Adult and Nursing Adult categories respectively for the National First Aid Competition (NFAC), represented Singapore at the APYC held in Hong Kong.

During the Competition on Day 2, our teams were cheered on by Brigade officers and supporters who travelled to Hong Kong as a show of support. Despite an impressive show of grit, skill, and teamwork in the First Aid and Home Nursing, the top honours went to teams from other countries. The same evening, the teams enjoyed a scrumptious Fellowship Dinner, where they exchanged handmade souvenirs with counterparts from Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, Malaysia and New Zealand.

On the subsequent days, the delegation visited some of Hong Kong St. John Ambulance's facilities, including the Sheung Shui Ambulance Depot and Tai Po CRU First Aid Post. This 5D4N trip was an eye-opening experience that went beyond the competition itself.

While competing on the international scale was both a privilege and a reward for the teams for their performance in NFAC, the main takeaways for both teams were the exchange and friendships formed with friends across the borders. Despite the different cultures, backgrounds and experiences, all APYC participants shared a common sense of compassion and service. It was a treasured opportunity for St. John members to come together as one, and this event was one which strengthened the international St. John community.

Participating in the APYC not only allowed our cadets to grow both personally and professionally, but also gave them the opportunity to embrace the diversity of the international St. John community. As they return home, they carry with them not just the memories of their team and friendships, but also the inspiration and knowledge to continue their journey of service and leadership, even beyond St John.

➤ **Ms Lin Jiahui**, 2nd Officer
Team Manager
Nanyang Girls' High School

➤ **Ms Seow Jia Ying**, Senior Staff Sergeant
Team Manager
Dunman High School



National First Aid, Home Nursing, & Foot Drill Competition 2024

The 2024 National First Aid, Home Nursing and Foot Drill Competition (NFAC) was held at Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP) on 27 April 2024. Each District was represented by their best who have qualified by emerging as Champions or Runners-Up in the District FACs.

With NYP volunteers roleplaying as casualties, Brigade Senior Officers leading the charge for casualty simulation and a conducive competition environment, NFAC 2024 saw the execution of highly realistic and challenging cases.

In return, there were significant improvements to the overall First Aid, Home Nursing and Foot Drill standards compared to 2023 – a testament to the progress the Brigade has made this past year.

The Organising Committee would like to express its gratitude to all competitors, trainers, supporters, judges, volunteers and Nanyang Polytechnic for making NFAC 2024 a success. We also greatly appreciate Professor Low Cheng Hock and Professor Christopher Goh for gracing our event as Guests-of-Honour.

➤ **Dr Arturo Neo**
Assistant Chief Commissioner
Chief Judge, NFAC 2024

Ambulance Adult

* Champion	Dunman High School
* 1st Runner-Up	Hwa Chong Institution
* 2nd Runner-Up	Chung Cheng High School (Main)
Best in First Aid Long Case (Two-Way Tie)	Chung Cheng High School (Main) Dunman High School
Best in First Aid Short Case	Hwa Chong Institution
Best in TOC (Two-Way Tie)	Gan Eng Seng Secondary School Peirce Secondary School
Best in Foot Drill	Hwa Chong Institution
Best in CPR (Four-Way Tie)	Anglo-Chinese School (Independent) Chung Cheng High School (Main) Dunman High School Gan Eng Seng Secondary School
Best Leader (Two-Way Tie)	Dunman High School Hwa Chong Institution

Ambulance Cadet

* Champion	Dunman High School
* 1st Runner-Up	Chung Cheng High School (Main)
* 2nd Runner-Up	Dunman High School
Best in First Aid Long Case	Hwa Chong Institution
Best in First Aid Short Case	Dunman High School
Best in TOC (Three-Way Tie)	Anglo-Chinese School (Independent) Dunman High School Hwa Chong Institution
Best in Foot Drill	Hwa Chong Institution
Best in CPR	Anglo-Chinese School (Independent)
Best Leader	Hwa Chong Institution

Nursing Adult

* Champion	Nanyang Girls' High School
* 1st Runner-Up	Chung Cheng High School (Main)
* 2nd Runner-Up	Dunman High School
Best in First Aid	Nanyang Girls' High School
Best in Home Nursing	Nanyang Girls' High School
Best in Foot Drill	Chung Cheng High School (Main)
Best in CPR	CHIJ St Nicholas Girls' School
Best Leader	Nanyang Girls' High School



Nursing Cadet

* Champion	Dunman High School
* 1st Runner-Up	Chung Cheng High School (Main)
* 2nd Runner-Up	Nanyang Girls' High School
Best in First Aid	Dunman High School
Best in Home Nursing	Dunman High School
Best in Foot Drill	Chung Cheng High School (Main)
Best in CPR (Two-Way Tie)	Chung Cheng High School (Main) Dunman High School
Best Leader	Dunman High School



Faces of St John Singapore **Uncle George**

*A Senior Ambulance Officer Leading the Way
in Emergency Medical Services with the
St John Responder Unit*

George, one of our esteemed Senior Ambulance Officers, serves as a crew leader for our Emergency Ambulance Service. His journey with the St John Responder Unit (SJRU) began when it was still known as the Emergency Response Unit from 2002 to 2007, and he has been a dedicated member ever since.

For those who don't know you yet, could you tell us a bit about yourself?

I started with St. John as a cadet during my secondary school days at Rangoon Secondary School (previously under District C Area 6). After completing my N levels, I was unable to continue with my O levels. Subsequently, I joined the Singapore Armed Forces as a regular with the Medical Services. In 1999, I joined the Officer Training Course after leaving the services.

I then pursued my NITEC in Nursing, followed by a Diploma in Nursing. During this period, St. John started a community services field known as the Emergency Response Unit (ERU), where I continued to volunteer my services. This unit is now known as the St. John Responder Unit.

What motivated you to join the unit, and what has kept you going over the years?

I decided to join the unit as I found that I could continue rendering services to provide care for the community. Additionally, I wanted to share my knowledge with juniors who might share the same interests.



How do you keep your skills sharp, and how has the unit helped in that?

I make it a point to regularly attend courses and seminars to ensure my skills are up to date. The unit offers various courses where I participate either as a trainer or a trainee. Recently, I completed Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) and Advanced Medical Life Support (AMLS) courses. These not only enhance my ability to contribute to the unit but also advance my professional skills.

What message would you like to share with our readers who might be considering volunteering but haven't yet made the decision?

For those who are interested in joining us but have not yet decided, you can attend our regular introductory sessions to the unit. Junior members can also approach adult volunteers during on-site medical coverage.

What have been some of the most rewarding experiences you've had while volunteering with SJRU?

I have made and kept many friendships forged, the times we are on site attending to members of public who are unwell or injured (serious or minor), and it was also fulfilling that I could continue to impart my knowledge to the juniors.

***'Uncle' George is a familiar face at our Public Duties.
If you see him around, don't hesitate to say hello!***

Editor's Note

We are excited to introduce a new section in our newsletter, "**Faces of St. John Singapore.**" This space will spotlight the inspiring stories and experiences of our volunteers, shared through personal reflections and interviews.

In our inaugural feature, we sit down with **George** from the St. John Responder Unit and **Jonathan Chan** from the St. John Brigade to delve into their journeys, motivations, and the impact they've made within our community.

Jonathan Chan

Meet Dr Jonathan Chan, a Deputy Superintendent and National Medical Officer with St John Brigade.

Dr Jonathan Chan was a cadet with the Anglican High St John Ambulance Brigade. Currently, he works as an Emergency Medicine Consultant. He shares how SJS has shaped and impact his life journey.



Jonathan (Front row, third from left) and his squadron as a Secondary 1 cadet

I was a freshly minted student in Anglican High School undergoing orientation when I attended the CCA fair with half a mind to join a uniformed group with the intention to be well prepared for my inevitable National Service. The National Cadet Corps (NCC) with obvious affiliation to the Armed Forces seemed to be a natural choice, or the Scouts, of which I had been a cadet when I was in primary school.

But when the black and white clad members of the St John Ambulance Brigade strode confidently onto the parade square with drill boots clicking in sync, berets pulled rakishly over their eyes and executed a flawless formation drill routine, my attention was captured. By the time I walked through their booth and was regaled with the tales of first aid duties and of learning to make crucial decisions under stress, I was hooked.

The annual cycle of ramping up for first aid competitions and then preparing for camp became an integral part of school life. We sacrificed our recess time for drill practice

while our friends gawked at us, greeted our seniors with "good morning, IC!" even outside CCA time with awe and not a little bit of trepidation, and chose our school shoes based on which brands could make the loudest bangs during footdrill (Northstar was a particular favourite). Thursday evenings were spent waxing our epaulettes and polishing our boots to that perfect shine, anticipating the inevitable uniform inspection when the Friday CCA timeslot rolled around.

“ But when the black and white clad members of the St John Ambulance Brigade strode confidently onto the parade square...my attention was captured.

Most importantly, we honed our first aid skills, poring over increasingly dog-eared manuals and then testing ourselves against any scenario our instructors could give us.

Once we were fully fledged first aiders, we carried an unconscious responsibility that we were on duty all the time, in school or outside. We attended to schoolmates with minor cuts from broken test tubes in the lab, a comrade from NCC who broke an ankle during CCA time, and stretchered our sportsmen off the field during sports day.

“ We carried an unconscious responsibility that we were on duty all the time

Through it all - the drills, the PT sessions, standing on duty at Chingay, marching at the National Day Parade, the corporal punishment, the dinners at Bedok Interchange McDonald's after CCA - some values were drummed into us irrevocably. That we were in it "all for one and one for all". That punctuality was sacrosanct. That we had to work together to succeed, as surely as a single cadet could not evacuate a casualty on his or her own. That we would push ourselves to the limit of our physical and mental ability and beyond, for the greater good of our casualties and team members (I later realised

this latter sentiment approached unhealthy fanaticism at our tender young age and give thanks that more of us didn't injure ourselves in our enthusiasm). We learned to plan ahead, to consider the limitations of our resources and to communicate well with each other in a crisis, to work through a problem and not to give up through physical discomfort or mental fatigue.

Eventually, it was the greatest honour of my secondary school life to be handed the post of Overall Commander as I passed into Sec 4, to lead my squadron in mentoring and training our juniors. As someone who entered AHS extremely introverted and quiet, it was a radical change for me and gave me my first taste of a leadership role, pushing me past what I perceived to be my limitations. It was one of the most challenging years of my schooling days, filled with both laughter and tears but the friendships forged with my squadron mates and with my juniors were steel and last to this day.

It was after passing into Junior College and serving informally as a senior instructor back to my juniors that I realised that I liked to teach and that I was genuinely interested in the medical material. Not to win competitions, but to make training more interesting for my cadets and truly for the service of mankind. In considering future career choices, my myopia was too severe to sign on with the SCDF as a paramedic and so I set my heart on being a doctor in the Emergency Department.



Jonathan (centre) as an instructor in JC1

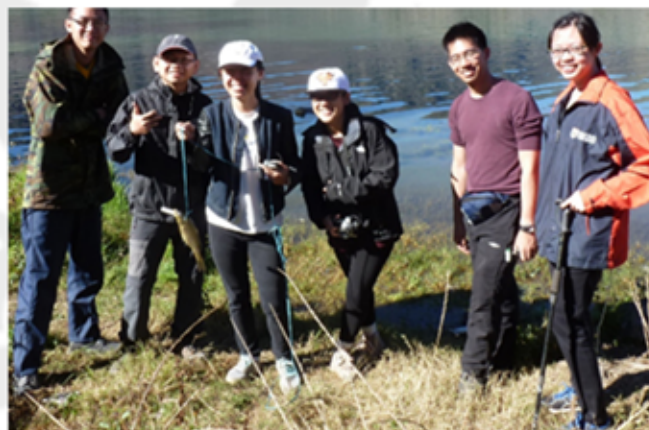
Fast forward 16 years from Junior College days and I am now an Emergency Physician standing in the front lines, leading my team and training my juniors, watching out for each other and pushing myself for the greater good of the community. The values and crisis-management abilities which were seared into us as cadets stood me in good stead through my housemanship, my National Service (which, as it turned out, was far less difficult than AHSJAB annual camp) and residency training to the present day. I still occasionally polish my dress shoes by hand with an orange cloth as a means of stress relief.

My squad mates continue to keep in contact. We meet up regularly, have attended each other's weddings (indeed, my competition team were my groomsmen for my wedding), and have gone on mountain climbing expeditions together, continuing to enjoy reminiscing our days as cadets which left such

a deep impact on our formative years and on who we are today.

Finally, I continue to participate in public duties on a voluntary basis, with the St John Responder Unit at the Race Against Cancer, and with the medical team at the Formula 1 Singapore Grand Prix which works alongside St John. I have seen how the efforts of our leaders in the reorganization of St John has led to a more value-added experience to our young cadets, where enthusiasm is met with structured learning so as to produce a capable first aider in a systematic manner, as opposed to the sheer amount of physical training, corporal punishment and rote learning of the old days.

I am grateful to my seniors who have led the way before me, my squadmates who journeyed through fire with me, and my juniors – those who were in school with me, and the young cadets whom I still meet during duties today, who inspired and still inspire me with their enthusiasm and their service to mankind.



Jonathan and his squadron mates at Mt Rinjani, 2015

EDITORIAL BOARD

Editor-in-Chief
Dr Benjamin Tan

Deputy Editor
Dr Wong Wen Kai

Division Editors
Mr Eric Chong
Ms Serene Luo
Mr Christopher Tan

Advisors
Mr Ma Poh How
Mr Timothy Ng

The St John Newsletter is published by the National St John Council of Singapore, a registered charity. Advertisement, sponsorship and contribution of articles are welcomed. Opinions and comments expressed by writers in articles do not necessarily have the endorsement of St John Singapore and we also welcome constructive comments and suggestions. Please address all correspondences to: The Chief Editor, St John Newsletter, St John Singapore Headquarters, 420 Beach Road, Singapore 19958.