



PRESS RELEASE

EMBARGOED UNTIL SUNDAY, 28 JUNE 2015, 6:00PM

FORMER PRESIDENT AND RECENT STROKE SURVIVOR MR S R NATHAN TO GRACE SINGAPORE NATIONAL STROKE ASSOCIATION (SNSA) EVENT “STRIKING A CHORD FOR STROKE AWARENESS”

1. Stroke, sometimes called a brain attack, affects one in six people in their lifetime. In late-April we learnt that former president, Mr S R Nathan suffered a stroke, and we were all relieved to learn that Mr Nathan is well and continuing to make good progress in his recovery.
2. Every year, there are 9000 people in Singapore suffering from stroke. With our ageing population, there will be a rise in stroke incidence in Singapore. Life is not the same after a stroke. The physical consequences affect mobility and activities of daily living. Following stroke, there may also be cognitive and psychological consequences. Stroke is in fact the most common cause of adult disability in Singapore. In addition, stroke survivors often have to cope with emotional and psychosocial issues resulting from changing roles, dependency on caregivers and limitations due to disabilities.
3. Yet, there is hope. With the care and support from their family, friends, colleagues, and the broader community, many stroke survivors have meaningful and productive lives. The Singapore National Stroke Association (SNSA) provides various services and programmes to support stroke survivors and their families.
4. “To me, being a survivor means to fight on and never give up... stroke is not an end but a life-long journey. I must persevere and be patient in overcoming the challenges and struggles along the way. To help myself, I joined SNSA for support,” said Michelle Chin, a stroke survivor in her 60’s.
5. In addition, the SNSA aims to raise awareness of stroke with three main messages. Stroke is an emergency and it is important to recognise stroke symptoms and present immediately to hospital in order to receive acute treatment. We should all know how to reduce the risk of stroke. There are many stroke survivors in Singapore and as a community we can help support them as they cope with life after stroke.

6. The Singapore National Stroke Association organises an annual signature event meant to raise public awareness of stroke in Singapore and funds for our charity to support and grow our services in order to benefit the growing number of stroke survivors in Singapore.

“Striking a Chord for Stroke Awareness”

7. SNSA’s Charity Gala 2015, **“Striking a Chord for Stroke Awareness”**, will be held on Sunday, 28 June 2015, 5pm – 8pm at The Esplanade Recital Studio. We feel deeply privileged that Mr S R Nathan, the former President of Singapore, and a recent stroke survivor himself, will be our Guest-of-Honour. Please find Mr Nathan’s Message in Appendix A.

8. The evening will see Tanya Sen, a talented vocalist who has performed internationally, enchant the audience with well-loved songs from famous musicals by composers such as Stephen Sondheim, Andrew Lloyd Webber and George and Ira Gershwin. Tanya will be accompanied by pianist Sharon Ham.

9. There will be a pre-recital tea reception from 5-6pm at the Past 2 Present café where our guests which will include stroke survivors and their families, SNSA volunteers, donors and supporters as well as healthcare professionals will mingle and interact.

ABOUT THE SINGAPORE NATIONAL STROKE ASSOCIATION

The **Singapore National Stroke Association (SNSA)** is the national support group for stroke survivors and caregivers. Registered under the Societies Act in December 1996, SNSA was granted Charity Status in November 1998. SNSA is an Institution of Public Character a member of the National Council of Social Service. SNSA was formed 19 years ago by the very people we serve – stroke survivors and caregivers, with guidance from doctors and other healthcare professionals.

The SNSA has 3 missions; to support stroke survivors and their families, to raise stroke awareness and to be an advocate for stroke in Singapore.

SNSA's programmes and services include:

Befriending Services: At hospitals, our volunteers interact with recent stroke patients, providing support and a listening ear, sharing experiences and offering hope and encouragement during their recovery.

Stroke Clubs: Monthly sessions include talks by healthcare professionals, sharing sessions and social activities, providing a platform for stroke survivors, their caregivers and healthcare professionals to meet, interact, and receive support and information.

Social Integration Outings: These outings to public places in Singapore are aimed at promoting the reintegration of stroke survivors back into the community. **Public**

Education: SNSA conducts talks and forums and produces educational material to increase stroke awareness. **Stroke Advocacy:** SNSA participates in various focus groups and discussions as an advocate for stroke survivors.

LIFE (Learn, Interact, Flourish and Engage) After Stroke: This programme aims to enhance the wellbeing and quality of life for stroke patients, through meaningful interaction, group activities and talks by doctors, nurses, and allied health professionals, and self-empowerment.

Stroke Self-Management Programme: This programme aims to educate, equip and empower stroke survivors to manage their own health.

SNSA depends fully on the generosity of individual and corporate donors for financial support. We warmly welcome you to join us in our mission to support stroke survivors and their caregivers so that they can continue to lead meaningful and productive lives.

ABOUT TANYA SEN

Tanya Sen is a soprano whose repertoire includes opera, musical theatre and jazz in several European and Asian languages. She is a graduate of Oxford University, where she received classical training from Bronwen Mills. She also studied at the Bel Canto Institute in Italy, and with coaches from the New York Metropolitan Opera. Tanya has performed at solo recitals and concerts in Singapore, India, UAE, the UK and the US. She is an award-winning performer and is passionate about making music to support social causes.

MESSAGE IN SUPPORT OF STROKE SURVIVORS AND CAREGIVERS
BY MR S R NATHAN
SUNDAY, 28 JUNE 2015

“Stroke” is a brain attack and it has been around since time immemorial. Although medical treatment of stroke has changed over the years, many of the issues surrounding caring for a stroke patient are not new.

In the 1950’s, when I joined the medical service as a young medical social worker, my daily duties focused on helping patients suffering either from stroke or tuberculosis. My role as a medical social worker was not medical treatment which the doctors and nurses managed. Rather, my task was to try to find appropriate means to discharge a stroke patient from hospital in order to clear the bed, so that the next patient needing it could occupy it.

We were then living in poor housing conditions in Singapore. Many patients shared a room or open space in the home but fortunately their families often rallied together to care for them. However for the seamen from China and labourers from India who had suffered a stroke, I found myself rather helpless. Their accommodation was usually a bunk, and landlords were not ready to take them in, hence finding a place for them after discharge from hospital was often a nightmare.

Times have changed. Today we are fortunate to be in a much better position with good education, housing and healthcare. Yet, despite these, stroke continues to strike many in Singapore – young and old, healthy and weak, rich and poor.

In Singapore, we have advanced facilities in acute hospitals, community hospitals for step-down care, rehabilitation day centres and homes for aged and aged sick. These institutions provide the medical treatment by doctors, nurses, therapists and other staff for those who suffer a stroke. Mine is a case in point. Fortunately, there was a hospital that could immediately receive me and treat my condition.

Others may not be so lucky. They might take longer to get to a hospital when stroke strikes — and this can delay treatment leading to poorer outcomes. Some may not recognise their symptoms as stroke, some may not realise that stroke is an emergency and some may not know what to do.

My volunteering to join this Singapore National Stroke Association event this is to remind my fellow Singaporeans of the dangers of stroke and the importance of recognising stroke symptoms and going to a hospital immediately when stroke strikes, in order to receive early diagnosis and treatment.

There are doctors, we need more. There are nurses and caregivers – we need more. The Singapore National Stroke Association also needs more volunteers in their mission to support stroke survivors and their caregivers, raise stroke awareness and be a voice for stroke survivors in Singapore. There are many ways

you can help. My appeal to all — young and old — is to see what you can do to support this cause, whether it is through volunteering, donating or spreading stroke awareness to your family and friends, so that we can work together towards a more aware, compassionate and supportive community.

SR NATHAN
Former President of the Republic of Singapore