Singapore, 24 June 2005

NTU STUDENTS REACH OUT TO COMMUNITY IN A BIG WAY

This weekend, NTU students will fan out across the island to reach out to the community and help the less privileged through three dynamic student-led initiatives. Vibrant Blood, Project Challenge Your Limits (CURL), and Ignite! will see students displaying their initiative and leadership qualities to help give back to the community.

Vibrant Blood is a three-day blood drive organized by the NTU Chapter of the Red Cross Humanitarian Network. Vibrant Blood aims to raise 600 units of blood, which will go towards meeting the need of having at least 200 blood donations per day required by the blood bank. Now in its second year, this project seeks to increase the awareness of the importance of blood donation among youths. This year’s Vibrant Blood consists of a nation-wide video competition, a blood drive and stage performances with a mini bazaar. The three winning video entries will be screened at today’s opening ceremony.

Says Wong Jia Whei, a second year student from NTU’s Nanyang Business School and special project chairman, “We were very encouraged by the positive response from the public at last year’s event, and have thus decided to hold our second outreach programme. We would like to continue to educate the public and reduce the misconceptions and myths of blood donation among young people.”

Currently in its third year, highlights of Project CURL 2005, organised by students of NTU Welfare Services Club (WSC), include an attempt to break the Guinness World of Records for the longest popiah, and a raft relay marathon competition. Project CURL 2005 sees the marshalling of some 650 volunteers from NTU, secondary schools, junior colleges and corporate companies; and beneficiaries such as the Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped and Singapore Association for the Deaf.

Volunteers and beneficiaries have been working jointly for a month, designing and building their own rafts. In the process, they have learnt from one another through intensive interaction, as well as forge friendships in a fun and enjoyable way.
Says Loh Yuanhe, a third year student from NTU’s School of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering and chairperson of Project CURL 05, "This is the most exciting CURL programme yet, and we look forward in challenging ourselves to come up with fun yet meaningful community service projects that benefit both volunteers and beneficiaries. We seek to challenge the mental and physical limitations of the participants. At the same time, we are creating a channel for community service beyond conventional volunteering activities."

Another special project by NTU WSC students is IGNITE! 2005, an annual event which aims to raise awareness of the plight of the disabled and elderly. The event comprises a two-day exhibition, concert and mini-carnival.

NTU WSC students have introduced a new Volunteer Attachment Programme into IGNITE! this year, where some 40 secondary school students spend time interacting with the elderly from Grace Orchard. The Volunteer Attachment Programme will culminate in a Food Hunt in Chinatown, where the elderly and student-volunteers enjoy local cuisine, and more opportunities to interact and bond.

Says Mr Chen Qingwei, a second year Environmental Engineering student and Chairperson of IGNITE! 2005, 'It has been a rewarding experience marshalling the secondary school volunteers in the Volunteer Attachment Programme. We hope IGNITE! can help encourage understanding in the public on the plight of the disabled and elderly, and realize how our beliefs and prejudices towards them are sometimes quite misplaced."

*** END ***

About Nanyang Technological University

Nanyang Technological University (NTU) is an established international institution in tertiary education.

Our university has a distinguished lineage with roots that go back to 1955. We began as Nanyang University, a private university set up with donations from people of all walks of life, from Singapore and the region. The university grounds, Yunnan Garden Campus, was donated by the Hokkien Clan Association as part of this campaign.

We were reborn as Nanyang Technological Institute, established on the same campus in 1981 with government funding to educate practice-oriented engineers for the burgeoning Singapore economy. In 1991 we became Nanyang Technological University with the absorption of the National Institute of Education.

Today, we are a research-intensive university ranked among the top 50 universities in the world. We have a strong engineering college ranked among the best globally, a business school with one of the top 100 MBA programmes in the world, an internationally acclaimed National Institute of Education, one of the best communication and information schools in Asia, and a biological sciences school at the forefront of Singapore’s life sciences initiative.

Undergraduate enrolment will swell from 17,500 to 23,500 with the establishment of three new schools – the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, School of Art, Design and Media, and School of Physical and Mathematical Sciences.
A traditional strength of the university is the high employment rate and high remuneration received by its graduates. The university is now in the process of realising its New Undergraduate Experience initiative with a comprehensive curriculum, wide choices of options for students, vibrant campus life and international experience. Strong international relationships and collaboration programmes is a hallmark of the university. This includes the Singapore-MIT Alliance, Singapore-Stanford Partnership, Cornell-Nanyang Institute of Hospitality Management, Singapore – University of Washington Alliance in Bioengineering, Global Immersion Programme with Peking University, Tsinghua University, Shanghai Jiaotong University, University of Washington and Georgia Institute of Technology, among many other programmes in US, China, India, Japan and Europe.

For more information, visit http://www.ntu.edu.sg/