

MHA award for new script for 995 calls

By **JOANNA SEOW**

INSTEAD of asking, “Do you know CPR?”, the team manning the 995 emergency line now tells callers: “We need you to do CPR and we will guide you through it.”

A year after Singapore Civil Defence Force chief medical officer Ng Yih Yng changed the help script in 2012, more than two out of five callers carried out the potentially life-saving procedure – up from one in five previously.

The idea won Colonel (Dr) Ng a platinum 3i Award from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) yesterday. He was one of 165 Home Team officers and students recognised at the ministry’s biennial Excel Fest, which celebrates innovative safety solutions as well as service excellence.

Dr Ng changed the script to encourage callers to do cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) after evaluating tapes of emergency calls and identifying key elements of successful ones.

Callers are typically scared and think the only thing that can help is the ambulance arriving, he added. “But they don’t realise there’re things they can do before the ambulance arrives.”

National University of Singapore undergraduate Carol Cheng picked up an award for her invention of mobile phone application Speed Photofit, which allows witnesses of crimes to create a rough sketch of suspects on their phones and send it to the police. “I’ve made a police report before and the atmosphere was tense. With this app people can complete the sketch at home,” said Ms Cheng, 21.

The app also uses Asian instead of Western features, which most existing Photofit software use, she said. The project was part of the Security Awareness for Everyone programme, which is in its seventh year and open to students from primary through to university level. It will be reviewed by Ms Cheng’s mentor from the Home Team to see if it can be implemented.

A total of 66 officers received MHA Star Service Awards for delivering outstanding service.

Second Minister for Home Affairs S. Iswaran, guest of honour at the event, commended them for their passion and commitment to serving the public.

Mr Iswaran, who is also Minister in the Prime Minister’s Office, highlighted the need for innovative mindsets to stay ahead of challenges.

“We face a safety and security landscape where new challenges, both internal and external, are emerging all the time,” he said. “But there are also new opportunities through technology and process improvements to do our work better and smarter.”

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