

**SPEECH BY MR ZAINUDIN NORDIN, CHAIRMAN, ONEPEOPLE.SG
AT CAMPTEEN: YOUTH RACIAL HARMONY AMBASSADORS
PORGRAMME FINALE ON 18 NOVEMBER 2011 AT ONEPEOPLE.SG**

Good Afternoon,

Fellow Board Members

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Students

It is my pleasure to welcome all of you to the Finale of CampTeen, OnePeople's flagship Youth Racial Harmony Ambassadors Programme. First, let me congratulate our Ambassadors for successfully completing the Camp. I hope you enjoyed your learning experience over the past four days, and have made new friendships to last a lifetime.

2 Let me share with your some background about Camp Teen. We started CampTeen way back in 1994 for young people of all races to interact, bond and forge friendships. Since then, the programme has grown from strength to strength. I am pleased to say CampTeen has

now evolved as a leadership programme, where youths are given opportunities to spearhead racial harmony efforts.

3 This year's CampTeen slogan, *Color Your Life* offers us a lot to ponder upon. Learning something new, exploring an unknown journey and making acquaintances gives us a whole new life perspective, and be etched in our memories forever. Such experiences revitalize us. Can you imagine what would life be without Facebook, Social Media or You Tube? Think about it. Any discovery that adds value brings color to our lives. The same holds true about our multi-racial society. Can you imagine if we all were of the same race? If we all have similar likes, dislikes and beliefs and act the same way. Where will we find our nasi lemak, yong tofu, chicken rice or prata? The beauty about diversity is it enriches our lives.

4 Now, there is an increasing focus on Integration. Often, the debate is about gaps between locals and new citizens, as at times, there is an apparent clash of cultures. My take is this. We should adopt the 'pillars of solidarity' that you have just created on our walls; in our everyday lives. We should look at our rich heritage, multicultural way of life, shared values and common aspirations, as forces that binds our community, be it locals or new citizens. These pillars of solidarity are

what we stand for. So rather than talking about the gaps, let's make the first move. Let's build these pillars in every school, every community, every neighborhood and in every individual. This should be your mission.

5 History has shown us that youths have the potential to bring great change. Some of you would have heard of the story Anne Frank. Anne Frank was one of over 1 million Jewish children who died in the Holocaust during the Second World War. While in hiding, Anne at the tender age of 13, started writing in her diary about her hopes, fears and experiences of the persecution of Jews by the Nazis. After her death, her father made great efforts to publish her diary. The diary has since become an iconic symbol of the Holocaust. Subsequently, her story was made into plays and films to demonstrate the plight of children who were sent to gas chambers and concentration camps during the German occupation. Anne's diary is widely acclaimed all over the world. Her story has moved even great leaders such as John F Kennedy and Nelson Mandela who drew inspiration from this young girl's fight to the very end of her life.

6 Another more recent example, of youths who have steered change, is Divine Bradley. At the age of 17, Bradley noticed there were

no safe places for young people to meet in the streets of Brooklyn with the rising drug problems and violence in the area. He then opened up a small space in his house, in his basement, for youths to gather. He got youths off the streets and involved them in community initiatives. Today, Bradley is the founder of “Team Revolution” renown for empowering lives of disadvantaged youths. Bradley has also gone on to lead several other breakthrough youth engagement initiatives and risen as a community leader among the African American communities in the US just in his 20s. Bradley received wide recognition from the US government for being a role model in bringing change to the lives of underprivileged youths.

7 As Ambassadors, you can make a difference. Engage your school mates or friends by sharing your learning journey; go online, draw support and be the catalyst in our racial harmony movement. When you go back to your schools and you see acts of racism or prejudice, challenge these acts. If racism rears its ugly head online, stamp it out. Make a stand against injustice. And just like Anne and Bradley, you can make the world a better place.

8 I would like to share with you a quote from German writer Johann Wolfgang, “Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not

enough; we must do". Our past CampTeen members who are here with you today are shining examples of this quote. You would have recognised them as your co-facilitators. Each year they devote their time and energy engaging youths like you in Camps such as this, and walk their talk as Racial Harmony Ambassadors. I hope you too will follow in their footsteps.

9 I am eager to hear from you today. I understand you have been buzzing on Facebook on your experiences. I also gather you have come up with interesting community project ideas. I challenge you to translate these ideas into reality and look forward to you continuing your journey beyond this Camp, and cherishing new friendships.

10 In closing, I would like to thank National Integration Council, Singapore Totalisator Board, Kwan Im Thong Hood Cho Temple and H-Two-O for their generous sponsorships. I would also like to convey our appreciation to Social Creatives, Ground Up Initiatives and Maritime Experiential Museum and Aquarium for their support. Finally, I would like to thank all our Youth Wing Facilitators, participating schools and organisations and each and every one of you for making CampTeen 2011 a success.

I wish you a pleasant day ahead. Thank you.