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SPEECH BY MR YATIMAN YUSOF, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY (FOREIGN AFFAIRS), AT THE CHARITY WEEK 1986 CERTIFICATES PRESENTATION CEREMONY ORGANISED BY YOUTH CHALLENGE AT ROYAL BALLROOM, PAVILION INTER-CONTINENTAL HOTEL ON FRIDAY, 23 JAN 87 AT 8.00 PM

It is a pleasure to note an increasing number of caring youths in our modern society today. There are more young people who show themselves to be more charity conscious.

While many youths - especially those in their late teens and early twenties - would very much prefer to spend their spare time and night hours dancing away at discotheques, it is comforting to know that there are also some others who are willing to commit their talents, skills and time to help some of these over-indulgent disco-goers and "do-nothing-hang-about" to redirect their lives and better manage their time.

Youth Challenge, for example, started by young people to look into and improve on the lifestyle and situations of young people, is commendable in this aspect.

I would like to see more such groups being formed as both the young and old have important roles to play as citizens of Singapore.

It is in the interest of the country that the more fortunate ones help the less privileged. If a set of working parents do not have the time to look after their children when they are at their offices, their neighbours who are at home must make it their obligation to help care for them.

Groups to keep company with latch-key kids could also be formed. In most cases, all these children want are someone whom they can talk to. Being all alone, they can develop insecurity. They also become bored.

In many instances, those left entirely on their own, without a show of care or a bit of communication from the world outside their HDB flats, start to pick up unsociable habits. They become alienated and some even show destructive tendencies.

But be the help groups formed assist in providing a service, or raise funds, it is important that they remember to maintain a good, warm relationship with those they are involved with: This means those they are working hand-in-hand with, and those they are collecting funds for.

Fund-raising efforts have ceased to be "once a while" affair. The scale - in terms of time, frequency and amount of money involved - is fast enlarging, hence making the task a regular one.

Fund-raising groups should not be excessively aggressive in their approach - be it to the potential donor, or the charity organisation that they are collecting for. This is because high-handed approach in charity work often put off people from supporting projects instead of turning on their conscience and emotions to donate generously.

Human management and inter-personal relationship are important ingredients of success in fund-raising projects. While the organiser may feel he has to put in a lot of effort into a "thankless" job, he should also remember that humility - not immediate publicity and recognition - will get him further on the road.

A fund-raising group should learn all they can about the charity and its beneficiaries they intend to help before embarking on any donation collecting projects, especially those involving intricate, multiple co-ordination and co-operation.

Once a suitable scheme that is agreeable to both the organiser and the would-be recipient charity is found, details on how to go about it should be discussed. Third parties, such as a hotel, shopping centre, or business firm, that will be donating the use of its premises, volunteering its manpower or sponsoring gift items for sale in aid of the charity, should also be involved in the planning and discussion. This will help eliminate misunderstandings in the future, especially during the crucial times when the project is going on. Nothing spoils a project more than stubborn-headed styles and directions that cannot be reconciled among those involved.

In charity work, it is not the "I" that matters but the "who" that will ultimately benefit from the scheme that counts. Always keep this in mind. Then arm yourself with a smile, say please and thank you, and you will definitely get more self-satisfaction in raising money for the less fortunate. And they are the ones who will be most appreciative of your efforts.

I believe that all 45 of you who spent your precious December school holidays and 33 individuals and organisations that came forward to support Charity Week 1986 for the National Kidney foundation found your involvement as not only challenging and meaningful but also satisfying and fulfilling.

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