

# Month-long celebration of harmony

At least 80 activities planned for National Orange Ribbon event

By ANG YIYING

THE orange ribbon is back.

A month of celebrations kicked off yesterday, centred on this symbol of warmth and friendship among different racial and religious groups.

An 18-day drive was launched to collect 201,000 pledges in support of racial harmony, an effort to be led by the youth and extended to everyone.

At least 80 community activities will be held during the month-long National Orange Ribbon Celebrations.

The organisers of the Singapore Youth Olympic Games (YOG) 2010 will also ride on the event to reach out to the community and rally volunteers for the sporting event next year.

The orange ribbon debuted on a national level last year, in an effort initiated by OnePeople.sg, the national body that champions racial harmony.

In order to hit the target of 201,000 pledges, members of the public are invit-

ed to make their own personal pledges in writing or online. The 201,000 figure is a nod to the 2010 games.

At the launch of the event yesterday at Evergreen Secondary School in Woodlands, OnePeople.sg chairman and Central Singapore District Mayor Zainudin Nordin said the celebrations start with the youth because they are the future flag bearers of racial and religious harmony.

The adviser to the Singapore YOG organising committee, North East District Mayor Teo Ser Luck, noted that the values embodied in the orange ribbon were in sync with those of the Olympic spirit: "The YOG, as you know, is not just about sports. It's about the culture, it's about inculcating the right educational values - values of respect, values of friendship, values of excellence. We think this event itself showcases what Olympism is about."

Mr Zainudin added that sports was also a way to cut across barriers of race, religion and language.

The activities this month include a July 18 carnival at which a structure, made up of written pledges folded into paper stars, will be unveiled. Organisations and individuals have committed to making 90,000 pledges so far.

Evergreen Secondary students Salonee



North West District Mayor Teo Ho Pin being shown the website of the National Orange Ribbon Celebrations, where visitors can view and make pledges in support of racial and religious harmony. ST PHOTO: LIM WUI LIANG

Sanjay Nemade and Sharifa Shahira Hazrath Muhd Faizal, both 14, have pledged to respect the cultures and beliefs of others. Sharifa, who is of mixed Chinese-Indian-Malay-Arabic heritage, said her background has given her an insight into different cultures, but she and her friend think Singapore still has some way to go to achieve total racial harmony. She noted that in most schools, students preferred to hang out with those of the same race, and speak to one another in their own mother tongues.

The public can make their pledges on slips of paper available from the OnePeople.sg headquarters in Toa Payoh and the five community development councils.

Pledges can also be made and read online at [orangeribbon.onepeople.sg/2009](http://orangeribbon.onepeople.sg/2009)

Online pledges will continue beyond July 18.

[ayiying@sph.com.sg](mailto:ayiying@sph.com.sg)

## Orange Ribbon events

### ■ NATIONAL ORANGE RIBBON CELEBRATIONS 2009 CARNIVAL

Multi-cultural performances, chances to try ethnic foods, cultural and sporting activities, and the unveiling of a structure made up of folded paper stars by Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew.

**When:** July 18

**Venue:** Bishan Active, at Bishan Street 23, from 4pm to 8pm

### ■ CEILING ARTS @ NORTH WEST

Student-created art pieces along the

theme of racial harmony, hung from the ceiling.

**When:** July 19

**Venue:** IMM shopping centre, from 5pm to 7pm

### ■ RACIAL HARMONY FOOD FESTIVAL

A food fair and carnival at the Singapore Federation of Chinese Clan Associations (SFCCA).

**When:** July 19

**Venue:** SFCCA, 397 Lorong 2, Toa Payoh, from 10am to 4pm.

For more, call OnePeople.sg on 6259-4116 or visit [www.onepeople.sg](http://www.onepeople.sg)