



## News Release

August 15, 2015

**EMBARGOED UNTIL AUGUST 15, 2015, 2PM**

# **ROMP 15: HELPING YOUTHS REALISE THEIR SPORTING ASPIRATIONS AT A GRASSROOTS LEVEL**

- **SEA Games athletes to encourage youth sports participants**
- **ROMP 15 also a volunteer festival powered by the National Youth Council**
- **Minister of State Sam Tan to grace the event and interact with youths**

1 The annual youth sports carnival ROMP 15 will see Singapore's national under-23 football team come to inspire youths to #DreamItBigger in pursuit of their athletic dreams. The Courts Young Lions will conduct a soccer clinic for youths. Guest-of-honour Mr Sam Tan, Minister of State, Prime Minister's Office & Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth, will also grace the event.

2 ROMP is organised by W.A.D! Club, the youth arm of non-profit organisation Harvest Care Centre. ROMP started in 2008 with the aim of engaging at-risk youths through sports. It has since evolved to draw a more mainstream youth crowd, but its objectives remain the same: to build the character of youths through sports, and to promote active learning through volunteerism. ROMP believes that sports is an effective way to keep these youths off the streets and help them lead healthy lifestyles.

3 Gerard Wong, director of marketing & communications at the Football Association of Singapore (FAS), said: "On behalf of the Courts Young Lions, we would like to thank W.A.D! Club for inviting our team to ROMP 15. At FAS, our mission is to enhance lives through the innovative development of competitive and recreational football together with our partners, and we are happy to be involved in an event that reaches out to youth, especially those who are at risk, promotes healthy lifestyles and volunteerism. As a sport, football can be a powerful agent for change, and we hope that the people we get to know at the carnival will not only get to know our Courts Young Lions better and become their fans, but also be inspired to pursue their own sporting and personal dreams."

4 This year, ROMP is supported by the National Youth Fund, which is administered by the National Youth Council (NYC). This is part of NYC's efforts to

develop youths to become rugged and resilient youths who have the passion to contribute to community, and support them in their pursuit of their sporting aspirations.

### **Grassroots objective: To nurture local sporting talent**

5 This is the fourth rendition of ROMP. Coming just two months after Singapore's 28<sup>th</sup> SEA Games, ROMP sees itself as a bottom-up platform that helps youths realise their sporting aspirations at the grassroots level. The organiser's vision is to be responsive to the aspirations and needs of youths, and to find ways to empower and support them to realise their goals. This could be through weekly trainings to help them hone their skills under the guidance of experienced trainers. Such meetings will also be good opportunities for them to pitch their skills against like-minded enthusiasts. ROMP is also a platform for amateur and intermediate sportsmen to take part in a national-level competition.

6 Harvest Care Centre President, Reverend Bernard Foo, said: "Some people consider grassroots sports to be at a lower level, or call them 'amateur sports', but I beg to differ. Sports can be an incredible motivator and enabler. It can help young people develop life skills and can revitalise disadvantaged communities such as those with disabilities or come from at-risk families. This is why we want to drive the growth of youth sports programmes from the grassroots up.

7 "In the last 30 years, governments around the world have been focusing on improving their youth sport policies, because they recognize that these initiatives can improve community health and community involvement. We're very grateful that our Singapore government believes in the power of sport to transform lives, and partners grassroots organisations like ours in sports programmes that affect the lives of underprivileged and at-risk youths. We are also very encouraged by the supportive volunteers and kind corporate sponsorships."

8 In recent interviews with local media, English Premier League executive chairman Richard Scudamore also stressed the importance of stimulating the development of local football, for instance, through the development of community and school-based football<sup>1</sup>.

9 Setting an example itself, it in July brought its Premier Skills programme, a coaching programme which trains grassroots coaches and referees, to Singapore for the first time. It also ran three community football development programmes alongside the Barclays Asia Trophy (BAT) in collaboration with Sports SG, FAS and the Asian Football Confederation (AFC). For a week, 100 Singaporean coaches and referees received expert training from Premier League coaches from Arsenal, Everton, Stoke City and the BAT Tournament Match Officials, giving them the skills

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<sup>1</sup> The Business Times, 15 July 2015, Link [here](#)

and support to develop their own community football projects. Parents and teachers also participated.

### **Building character through sports**

10 About 1,000 youth athletes and volunteers will be participating in ROMP this year. Athletes choose from four sports categories to compete in: soccer, basketball, tchoukball, and pool. ROMP has worked with local voluntary welfare organisations to send teams comprising delinquent youths to participate at the games. It is also open to students from secondary school through university.

11 ROMP might just be a one-day event, but it is backed by a comprehensive sports programme that includes sports clinics and coaching sessions for basketball, tchoukball, soccer and pool. W.A.D! Club also gives youths the opportunity to either volunteer as a coach or register to be coached.

12 ROMP chairman Nigel Lee believes in the benefits of sports volunteerism and participation. He said: “Coaching helps youths to be socially responsible and contribute to the community by giving their lives to a cause. This way, they also get out of their own self-centredness. Meanwhile, participation in a sport teaches them discipline through regular attendance and physical training.”

13 “Engaging youths-at-risk in sports is important because lack of discipline is one reason why many of them get into trouble to begin with. It directs their idle after-school hours and boundless energy to a purposeful activity and keeps them away from bad company by placing them under good mentorship. Team sports also build in them a sense of significance and belonging and develops their self-esteem and character, which is important for later in life,” he added.

14 ROMP 15 comes just after Youth Celebrate! on Youth Day (July 26, 2015) which showcased the vitality of Singapore’s youth and their achievements in sports, arts and the uniformed groups. Youth Celebrate! was themed ‘Celebrating Diverse Talents, Creating Shared Memories and Looking Forward with Confidence’.

### **#VforVolunteer**

15 Organized by volunteers for volunteers, ROMP is one of several activities that come under the #VforVolunteer programme sponsored by the National Youth Council. About 200 volunteers are involved in W.A.D! Club’s #VforVolunteer programme, from schools such as Raffles Institution, Raffles Girls’ School (Secondary), Hong Kah Secondary School, Singapore Polytechnic, Pioneer Junior College and the National University of Singapore.

15 The #VforVolunteer programme stretches across June to August 2015, targeting both mainstream and at-risk youths. The programme comprises activities

such as training sessions to equip youths with the skills needed to plan and implement impactful programmes that achieve the objective of helping the less privileged. Having both a training and execution phase thus ensures that youths are not just equipped in a classroom setting, but can immediately practice all they have learnt on the actual playing field.

16 #VforVolunteer comprises four segments: sports, leadership mentoring, community work and research. Its aim is to not only promote youth volunteerism, but also to radically change the way youths view volunteerism. W.A.D! Club believes that proactive volunteerism can be the next big youth trend in Singapore. It believes in raising up a generation of youths in Singapore who are compassionate and want to serve the less fortunate.

17 Above all, the programme also offers youths-at-risk the opportunity to engage in meaningful and healthy activities through sports and leadership programmes. The entire #VforVolunteer programme is run by 30 committed volunteer youth leaders from W.A.D! Club, together with one staff member from Harvest Care Centre.

### **Media Contact**

For media enquiries or to confirm your attendance at the event, please contact: Lee Meixian (Ms) at 9623 1449; [mx.romp@gmail.com](mailto:mx.romp@gmail.com)

### **Media Opportunity**

To interview two beneficiaries of ROMP, who were participants in past years and today volunteer actively for W.A.D! Club:

#### **1) Pwi Yaoxuan, Ernest, 23**

- Currently studying at SIT-TUM (Bsc in Electrical Engineering & IT)
- Serving as an Army Regular

#### **2) Chia Bing Hong Aaron, 23**

- Studying at UniSIM (Bachelor of Social Work)
- Working at Care Corner Family Service Centre (Woodlands)

### **◆ About Harvest Care Centre and W.A.D! Club**

Harvest Care Centre is a non-profit organisation officially registered with the Registry of Societies since 18 March 2005. We recognise the growing needs of youth, families and the elderly in our society and dedicate ourselves to transforming communities by meeting their needs through relevant services, regardless of their race or religion.

W.A.D! Club (We Are Different!) is the official youth programme of Harvest Care Centre. Set up in 2008, it is where youths are empowered to discover their passions and talents and find their place in a family. Believing that every youth is precious, W.A.D! Club sets out to help every youth discover his or her unique destiny.

### **◆ About ROMP**

ROMP is a youth sports carnival that first started in 2008 with the aim of engaging at-risk youths through sports. It has since evolved to draw a more mainstream youth crowd, but its objectives remain the same: to build the character of youths through sports, and to promote active learning through volunteerism. Whether participants compete as athletes or serve as volunteers, there is the healthy element of self-challenge, teamwork and social responsibility to learn.

ROMP is back for the fourth time after a short hiatus, following previous events in 2008, 2009 and 2011. But that doesn't mean that we were sitting idle from 2012-2014, during which we also organised W.A.D! Games, a smaller scaled sporting event for young basketball, tchoukball, and pool enthusiasts. Past years' ROMP have attracted over 3,000 youths. This year, we are targeting 1,500 athletes and 200 volunteers. Athletes can choose from four sports categories to compete in: soccer, basketball, tchoukball, and pool. It is open to students from secondary school through university.

### **◆ About the National Youth Council, Partner of ROMP**

ROMP is powered by the National Youth Council.

NYC believes in a world where young people are respected and heard, and have the ability to influence and make a difference to the world. Together with its partners, it develops a dynamic and engaging environment where young people can realise their aspirations and play a part in making Singapore an endearing home for all. Please visit [www.nyc.gov.sg](http://www.nyc.gov.sg) for more details.