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WHO AM I?

An anti-drug ribbon's quest for identity



THE BEGINNING

I met little Amy for the first time in June last year. Seven-year-old Amy pulls me from a corner of her older brother's chest of drawers. Andy tells her that I am a ribbon.

Pointing to the pink ribbon in her hair, Amy says: "But it looks different from this."

Andy tells her I'm special. I'm made of paper and I have an important role.

"This is an awareness ribbon," he says. When Andy was in Primary 1, his teacher had given me to him for the World Drug Day, also known as the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

Andy grabs a safety pin and fastens me to the front of Amy's dress. I catch sight of myself in the mirror: I am small but I stand out in my green and white outfit.

"The green and white colours represent **health, vitality and strength**, and the ribbon signifies the quest for a healthy society that is free from drug abuse," says Andy, recalling what his teacher had shared in class.

A person who takes drugs can be robbed of their health, family — and future. But being a symbol for a drug-free Singapore sounds like a really huge responsibility. After all, I'm only one tiny ribbon...



DRUGFREESG LIGHT-UP

Later that night, Andy and Amy's parents take them to the Marina Bay area. My newfound sense of responsibility weighs heavily on me; it's difficult to enjoy the scenic view of the city.



Scan to see the light-up!

At 7.30pm, the city skyline is awash with the same vivid green and white that has become a symbol of the anti-drug cause. Amy gasps, delighted by the stunning view.

"All these buildings are changing their colours to match your ribbon," Andy tells Amy. "Today is **June 26, the World Drug Day**. It has been observed every year on this day, since 1989. The event happening right now, which started in 2018, is known as the DrugFreeSG Light-Up."

Their father explains: "By using the same colours as your ribbon, it means all these building owners are also taking a united stand against drugs."

Amy gently presses me using her thumb and forefinger before declaring, "It's so cool that we're not alone."

I later learnt that green and white ribbons had been distributed to students as well as the general public since 1996. I am the latest iteration in a long line of anti-drug ribbons.



GRAPHICS: KIMMIE TAN PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

Contest

Answer these three simple questions correctly to stand a chance to win a DrugFreeSG goodie bag and \$12 worth of Grab vouchers! Submit your answers to **CNB_Preventive_Education_Unit@cnb.gov.sg** by June 26, 2020. Winners will be contacted via the e-mail address used to submit the answers.

1. When is World Drug Day?
2. What is the name of the event on June 26 at the Marina Bay area?
3. What do the colours of the anti-drug ribbon represent?

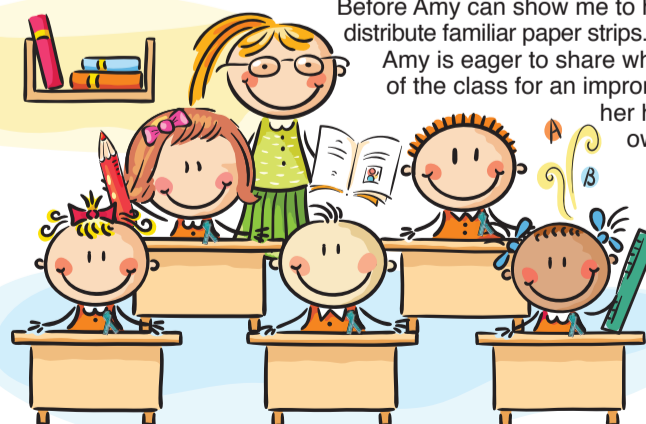
FRIENDS UNITED

After the June holidays, Amy brings me to school to show her friends. She wants them to know about the harmful effects of drugs too.

Before Amy can show me to her friends, their form teacher steps into class to distribute familiar paper strips. They look just like me before I was folded into a ribbon.

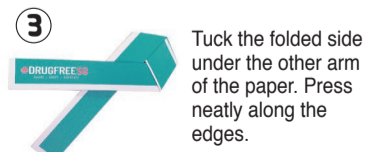
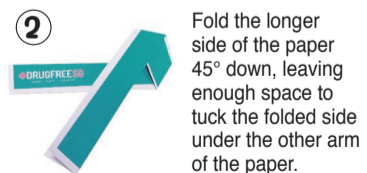
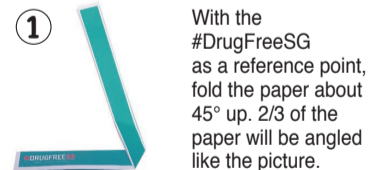
Amy is eager to share what she has learnt; her teacher invites her to the front of the class for an impromptu sharing session. As Amy speaks — with me in her hand — I watch as many other ribbons find their own place with the other children in the class. It gives me hope that these children will learn more about the meaningful cause and, one day, follow Amy's footsteps in spreading the anti-drug message.

As I am joined by more ribbons — and their wearers — each year, I realise Amy and I are not alone in our quest for a healthy society, free from drug abuse.



Fold your own ribbon

Cut out the ribbon strip on the right and fold it into half along the dotted line.



Cut along this line to get your ribbon strip!