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Campaign targets young

By Chia Yan Min



This year's Speak Good English Movement aims to reach out to young people by engaging them on their own terms - via social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and blogs.
 --PHOTO: SPEAK GOOD ENGLISH MOVEMENT 2009

THIS year's Speak Good English Movement aims to reach out to young people by engaging them on their own terms - via social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and blogs.

The movement also has a new tagline - 'Impress. Inspire. Intoxicate.', with the key message that good communication skills transcend the use of correct grammar and vocabulary.

'We are targeting this age group in particular this year because many youths are not very motivated to improve their English,' said Mr Goh Eck Kheng, Chairman of the Speak Good English Movement on Monday. 'They think that they can get by on poor English as long as they are understood by their peers.'

Mr Goh added that this mentality was uncovered in a survey conducted in August last year by the movement. The survey of 1,243 Singaporeans aged 15 to 39 found that 41 per cent do not see any need to speak proper English.

This attitude was especially prevalent among those in their late 20s. Nearly half of those aged 25 to 29 said they felt their English was already up to scratch, and there was no need for improvement.

As part of the movement's initiative to target young people, a drama series, 'Six Lives', which follows six friends as they learn the importance of good communication while planning an event, will play out entirely online.

Other activities include a series of free English workshops to be conducted by the British Council in October at Woodlands Regional Library, as well as the Inspiring Teacher of English Award organised by The Straits Times and Ministry of Education, that recognises outstanding English teachers in schools.

The Speak Good English movement, launched in 2000, is now in its 10th year.

Mr Goh, who has been chairman of the movement for the past two years, said while the movement has done much to create awareness, much more needs to be done to improve the actual standards of English here.

'We hope the movement will go beyond the institutional, so that each Singaporeans can be a partner in it, and help those weaker in English to improve,' Mr Goh said.

More information about the movement can be found at www.goodenglish.org.sg.