

Headline	Campaign gets the thumbs up		
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Campaign gets the thumbs up

Football in the forefront to educate youth on AIDS prevention

SINCE Protect the Goal kicked off in August, the campaign has been a hit among participating schools, students and parents.

With more than hundreds of students taking part in this one-of-a-kind football coaching clinic, Protect the Goal is now in full swing and seeks to actively continue its objective – uniting the world towards an AIDS-free generation through the power and popularity of football.

The last two sessions took place at Sri Utama International School and SK (L) Jalan Batu with a total of 92 students involved.

National football defender and Armed Forces player K. Reuben was present at both clinics, continuing his role as the campaign's ambassador.

He began both sessions by giving a talk on the awareness and prevention of HIV/AIDS while drawing attention to the importance of the campaign.

"It's really great to see so many kids taking part in this campaign," he said.

"Their love and passion for football inspires me to do what I do best."

The coaching clinics at both schools were led by City Youth Academy head coach, Mohd Sulaiman Gerrard, and his assistants.

"It's obvious that the students here

love playing football. However, it is important to possess the right skills and more importantly, the right attitude, on and off the field," said Sulaiman.

"We aimed to incorporate these core values in our training sessions throughout the campaign."

Parents and teachers were also present at both venues to support the programme.

Sri Utama International School principal Neil Creek gave the campaign a thumbs up for its approach – inter-twining HIV/AIDS awareness with football.

"The interesting thing about Protect the Goal is the way it is approached. Kids need to know the perils of HIV/AIDS. And to see Reuben here, promoting a healthy lifestyle, the importance of staying fit and using football as a vehicle to get this message across, it really sets a good example for our students here," added Creek.

Echoing Creek's thoughts was SK (L) Jalan Batu Parent-Teachers Association chairman Mohd Rashdan Abd Rashid.

Rashdan stressed on the importance of the campaign.

He said Protect the Goal promoted a healthy lifestyle while educating

the young ones on the awareness of HIV/AIDS.

"A campaign like this is essential in keeping our kids in school. Instead of loitering around and indulging in immoral activities, it is good to see our kids getting involved in football and learning the importance of staying fit and healthy," he said.

Hatekah Husain, 44, a parent of one of the participants, was full of praise for the clinic, saying it encouraged students to spend their leisure time wisely.

"I must say that I am happy that my son is here on a Sunday to join the Protect the Goal session. As a parent, my biggest concern is all the vices exposed to our children these days," said Hatekah.

"It is campaigns like this that put my worries to rest, because I know my children can have fun while learning something beneficial at the same time."

Protect the Goal campaign was launched at the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa to educate society on HIV prevention programmes. Globally, an estimated 5.4mil adolescents and young people are living with HIV, and an estimated 1.8mil people are eligible for HIV treatment.



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- 1 Participants from SK (L) Jalan Batu, Kuala Lumpur at the clinic.
- 2 Muhamad Izwanuddin, 6, the youngest participant, receiving his certificate from Asian Football Confederation representative Neil Sta Maria. With them are coach Alan Lim Kok Onn (left) and Mohd Roslan Osman of the Malaysian AIDS Council.