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**SPEECH BY MS CHOY ZHEN FANG, TEACHER, TAMPINES NORTH
PRIMARY SCHOOL, AT THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF SAILSMART
PROGRAMME ON FRIDAY, 19 JUNE 2009, AT 9.00AM AT THE
NATIONAL SAILING CENTRE**

Mr. S. Iswaran, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Trade and Industry, and
Ministry of Education

Mr Low Teo Ping, President of Singapore Sailing Federation and Vice
President of the International Sailing Federation

Friends of the media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good afternoon

Let me tell you about my favourite SailSmart lesson. It is from an activity we do

where we try to teach the Archimedes' Principle, which explains how a boat floats. We ask students, "What do you think will happen when we drop a ball of plasticine into the water?" Unanimously, they will all answer, "It will sink." Then I actually drop the plasticine ball into the water to demonstrate. True enough, the ball sinks.

Then we ask the pupils, "Now, take the plasticine, and shape it in a way so that the piece of plasticine will float." It may take them a few attempts, but almost always, the kids eventually get it: if you make it more of a rectangle, the piece will float. In my opinion, there is no better way to teach the Archimedes Principle.

As a teacher currently teaching at Tampines North Primary School, I find SailSmart a programme like none other. It is one of a kind class, using the outdoors and sailing to teach life skills, science, geography, oceanography, teamwork, resilience and decision making, all through experiential learning.

The SailSmart programme was developed closely with the Ministry of Education science syllabus to add on in a hands-on learning environment. For example, Geography is not offered to primary school pupils, but they learn map reading skills using Google Earth and basic meteorological skills using the National Environmental Agency website. SailSmart complements the

things they learn in their mainstream classrooms.

Students also learn skills that are essential to science: observation, classification, analysis, evaluation and investigation at SailSmart. By learning through activities, such as the scavenger hunt, students are developing these skills while developing their environmental consciousness.

The developers of SailSmart have made an effort to incorporate Social Emotional Learning into the framework to teach pupils soft skills. Educators have long focused on EQ and IQ, but there is another aspect that is rarely thought of, which is adversity quotient or AQ. I believe that it is not only important for pupils to acquire knowledge, but it is even more important that we inculcate in them good values. I have managed to accomplish both objectives through SailSmart. I enjoy the fact that I can make an impact on the children in the outdoors as well as in the mainstream classroom. At SailSmart, students are taught not to give up easily, and to persevere even when the going gets tough. I feel a sense of pride when I see children learn to manage their own feelings, help their friends overcome obstacles and fears, and cooperate with each other.

As teachers, we always try to find new ways for our students to learn.

SailSmart uses inquiry-based learning and problem-based learning methods.

People say that when you teach, you are constantly learning. This could not be more true for the SailSmart. It has been a journey of learning for me. On a personal level, I have rediscovered my love for sailing. I have made new friends and found like minded people who have a passion for the outdoors and teaching. This network has helped me enhance my pedagogy.

SailSmart is much more than an introduction to the sport of sailing. It is an experiential classroom that offers lessons that simply cannot be captured within the confines of four walls. SailSmart is not really about the destination. It is about the journey that the students go through and how they discover, learn and grow throughout the programme.

I hope that more students and Singaporeans are able to benefit from SailSmart.

Thank you.