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Malaysia's Youth provide Dr Jane Goodall with Reasons for Hope

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Today, 36 Malaysian youths aged between 16-25 years of age received the inaugural Roots & Shoots Malaysia Award (RASMA). The prestigious Award initiated together with Roots & Shoots Malaysia's community partner, **Yayasan Hasanah**, with support from **Google Earth Outreach**, involved a rigorous selection process which required the successful candidates to volunteer with at least one of the 15 Partner Organisations across Malaysia, with a focus on the conservation activities within and around the fragmented Central Forest Spine (CFS). The Central Forest Spine (CFS) is a landscape consisting of four main forest blocks – the Central Range, Greater Taman Negara, Cini-Bera and Endau Rompin.

Between them, volunteers logged over 3,200 volunteer hours across 7 states in East and West Malaysia. Activities involved education and waste-management programmes with Orang Asli and local communities, tracking tigers and elephants in rainforests, turtle and sun bear conservation and re-planting endangered species of trees. Volunteers also harnessed technology shared by Google Earth Outreach such as data-collection and virtual reality tools.

"Inspired by the positive influence of Dr Jane Goodall and the Roots & Shoots ethos, this Award was created to instill hope and encourage Malaysian youth to go beyond awareness and bring positive change to their environment and communities," said TP Lim, President of Roots & Shoots Malaysia. "We are profoundly grateful to Yayasan Hasanah and all our Partner Organisations for being a part of the RASMA journey", he added.

The Awards were presented by Dr Jane Goodall to recognise these outstanding youths who translated awareness into action and committed their time towards serving causes that are much bigger than themselves. "The conservation and protection of the CFS in Peninsular Malaysia demands involvement of all stakeholders. As a convener, Hasanah has worked with the government and environmental NGOS, and we are glad to be supporting RASMA, to reach out to the public, especially the youth, on working collaboratively to stop further degradation and deforestation in these ecologically important areas", said Shahira Ahmad Bazari, Managing Director of Yayasan Hasanah.

Incredibly, over 85% of RASMA volunteers have continued to volunteer after the programme. Given this statistic and the inspiring work done by these youth volunteers, Roots & Shoots Malaysia plans to continue the Award programme, opening it to more NGO partners and more volunteer placements.

The authentic experiences of these volunteers, as well as those of other Malaysian eco-centric youths, will also be incorporated into the newly launched *EcoWira* project, a collaboration between **Roots & Shoots Malaysia** and **LeapEd Services Sdn Bhd**. This project, supported by **Yayasan Hasanah** and **The Habitat Foundation**, was launched today. “We are immensely pleased to partner with Roots & Shoots Malaysia in developing this curriculum for the Trust Schools. We are certain that it will engage and delight young people, encourage them to take pride in Malaysia’s irreplaceable natural heritage, and enlist their active participation in the protection of our natural ecosystems and the services they provide,” said Justine Vaz, General Manager of The Habitat Foundation.

“We are delighted to have co-constructed the EcoWira programme with Roots & Shoots,” said Nina Adlan Disney, General Manager, Education Development Division at LeapEd Services, “The project combines the environmental expertise of Roots & Shoots, together with LeapEd’s educational experience of promoting student-centred learning and 21st century international best practices in Malaysian schools.”

The EcoWira project will educate based on the central ethos of Roots & Shoots – sustainable development and its impact on communities, animals and the environment. The locally relevant curriculum will utilise Roots & Shoots’ four-step formula for compassionate leadership aligned with LeapEd’s design thinking learning approach. As with RASMA, EcoWira aims to enlighten and enable Malaysian students to look at the bigger picture when it comes to conservation, as human activity and wildlife ultimately share the same resources.

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About Roots & Shoots

Jane Goodall’s Roots & Shoots is a programme of the **Jane Goodall Institute (JGI)**. The programme, which began in 1991, is about making positive change happen for people, animals and the environment. With more than 150,000 members across 130 countries, the Roots & Shoots network connects people of all ages who share a desire to create a better world. Through service projects, youth-led campaigns and an interactive website, Roots & Shoots members are making a difference across the globe.

The uniquely-designed programme connects people of every age, race, culture, religion and economic background in a vibrant global network, and offers opportunities for every individual to:

- Learn about environmental, animal and humanitarian issues affecting our world
- Share insights, ideas and inspiration for making positive change
- Grow in ways that enrich lives - as individuals, as members of the local community and as global citizens of our world.

The aim of Roots & Shoots Malaysia is to activate the “seeds of goodness” within young people. We **ENGAGE, EDUCATE & EMPOWER** the youth of Malaysia with the tools to embark on service-learning projects which positively impact the environment, animals and/or human communities.

To know more, please visit <http://rootsandshoots.my>

About LeapEd Services

LeapEd Services Sdn Bhd ('LeapEd'), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Khazanah Nasional Berhad, is Malaysia's first homegrown education service provider and trusted social enterprise. LeapEd aims to develop holistic students with 21st century competencies and schools that embed sustainable education practices. With the belief that every child deserves a great future, LeapEd works closely with its strategic partners, Yayasan AMIR and the Ministry of Education Malaysia, in a public-private partnership (PPP) that focuses on whole-schools transformation and student centred learning, to realise the individual potential of every learner.

Since its establishment in 2010, LeapEd has designed and implemented various education models such as the District Transformation Programme-AMAN ('DTP-AMAN'), Islamic School Enhancement Programme ('ISEP'), Ground-up School Transformation ('GUSTO') programme, Program Sekolah Transformasi ('PreSTasi') as well as the nation's pioneering Trust Schools Programme (TSP). These intervention models have since impacted over 71,000 students, 6,000 teachers and 160 schools across 13 states nationwide.

For more information, please visit: www.leapedservices.com

About Yayasan Hasanah

Yayasan Hasanah ("Hasanah") is the impact-based foundation of Khazanah Nasional Berhad ("Khazanah"), the strategic investment fund of the Government of Malaysia. Hasanah was set up as an independent entity on 01 July 2015, building on nine years of Corporate Responsibility (CR) efforts previously driven by Khazanah. As a grant-giving organization, Hasanah goes beyond Ringgit and cents to facilitate an ecosystem of transformation, working in collaboration with multiple stakeholders, infusing a spirit of advocacy and building capacity in five key focus areas: Education; Community Development; Environment; Arts, Heritage and Culture; and Knowledge. Collectively and collaboratively, Hasanah hopes to shift the needle of social and community reform for Malaysians, towards a better Malaysia.

For further information, please visit www.yayasanhasanah.org

About The Habitat Foundation

The Habitat Foundation is a charitable trust based in Penang that funds strategic conservation and research initiatives in Malaysia and Southeast Asia. We partner communities, scientists, NGOs, government agencies, institutions, and other key stakeholders to advance biodiversity conservation, safeguard our irreplaceable natural heritage, and shift our society towards sustainability.

The Habitat Penang Hill is a world class rainforest discovery centre located on the fringes of an ancient rainforest. The park serves as a space to connect people to nature and inspire them to make sustainable choices for the future. The 1.6km long trail of the park also features Curtis Crest, the highest viewing platform in Penang as well as the Langur Way, the longest double stressed ribbon bridge in the world and the only one located amid a pristine rainforest. All proceeds from the commercial operations are pledged to The Habitat Foundation.

To find out more visit: www.habitatfoundation.org.my