

EXCLUSIVE PULLOUT WEDNESDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2023



**Star
GOLDEN
HEARTS
AWARD**



Supported by:  **Yayasan
GAMUDA**

SMALL STEPS

Big Impact



Celebrating changemakers who are making Malaysia a better place.

Over 700 nominations  3 months of deliberation  10 final winners

From reducing poverty to rehabilitating endangered species, the recipients of this year's **Star Golden Hearts Award** were chosen for their remarkable impact on Malaysia's communities and environments.

 Turn the page to read their inspiring stories.



Honouring Unsung Heroes

In recognition of companies and individuals who have made a positive impact on Malaysia, 10 organisations and individuals were honoured at the Star Golden Hearts Award ("SGHA") 2023.

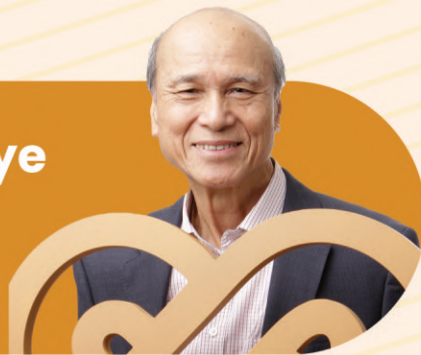
Through a panel of distinguished judges, this year's remarkable recipients were chosen from a remarkable pool of 731 nominations by the general public. The 10 winners also received RM 15,000 each as a token of recognition for their exemplary contributions towards the lives of others and the environment.

Among the winners, the highly sought-after Gamuda Inspiration Award ("GIA") by Yayasan Gamuda was presented to two exceptional social changemakers, **the Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre** and **The MareCet Research Organisation**, both of which received grants amounting to RM 150,000 each.

For more information about the Star Golden Hearts Award, visit sgha.com.my.

Panel of Judges

Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye
(Chief Judge)
Chairman, Alliance For
A Safe Community



Ts. Lim Hui Yan
Head,
Yayasan Gamuda



Esther Ng
Chief Content Officer,
Star Media Group



Ong Jee Lian
Group Chief Communications
and ESG Officer,
Gamuda Berhad



**Syed Azmi
Alhabshi**
Prominent social
advocate



**Vijayakumari
Pillai**
Social work and child
protection consultant



**Shah Redza
Hussein**
Director, Perak State
Parks Corporation and
conservationist



Irshad Mobarak
Naturalist,
conservationist,
educator



**Muhammad Hafizul
Khair Mohd Yusuf**
Manager, Social Entrepreneurship
Unit, Institut Keusahawanan
Negara Berhad (INSKEN)



Join the Good Cause

Participate in the force of doing good with these social changemakers. From volunteering to shopping mindfully, every step matters when you contribute to making the world a better place.

Volunteer

You can make a direct impact by volunteering with a social changemaker for a few hours or over the weekend. These social changemakers rely on volunteers for their daily operational needs. There are a lot of organisations that you can choose from, whether it is teaching underprivileged kids, beach clean-ups, tree planting, wildlife conservation projects or street feeding for the poor and homeless.



Donate

Monetary donations are important for charitable organisations to fund projects, campaigns and renovations. Consider donating to a social changemaker that aligns with your personal values. It does not have to be a large amount. You can start off with a small amount.



Shop for others

Many Malaysian brands collaborate with indigenous and B40 communities, providing a reliable livelihood for them. Consider buying essential products or gifts from these brands, while also contributing to their communities. Alternatively, you can look out for products and brands that donate a portion of their proceeds to charitable causes or are locally sourced and environmentally sustainable.



Spread awareness

Share your passion in doing good with friends and family and educate them on how they can make a difference. You can use social media to share information about important issues and the work of the social changemakers, such as their stories, accomplishments and ongoing projects. If you are a content creator, make videos or write about the societal issue you care about and share with your network about the impact of charitable contributions.



Reduce food waste

Be mindful of food waste can go a long way for the environment. Do you know that Malaysians throw away 17,007 metric tonnes of food every day, with 24% of it still suitable for consumption? On your next grocery trip, plan your shopping list and buy just the right amount of food for your household.

Store your food in airtight containers to keep them longer. You can also organise your older food stored in the fridge based on its shelf life by placing the one with shorter shelf life nearer to your reach.



Saving a keystone species

GAMUDA
INSPIRATION
AWARD
 2023 WINNER

By GERARD GIMINO
 gerard.gimino@thestar.com.my

SANDAKAN: When Wong Siew Te began his pioneering studies on the Bornean sun bears in 1998, he had first-hand experience on the two significantly different extremes faced by the smallest sun bear subspecies in the world.

Aside from developing passion for the animals while studying them in the wild, he learned about the various roles played by the sun bear in the forest.

At the same time, Wong was in for a rude shock – he witnessed sun bears kept illegally as pets in horrific conditions. The animals were kept in tight cages in private homes and oil palm plantations as exhibitions, among others.

The bear's mother would also have to be killed for the cub to be captured.

Apart from this, the sun bears also faced habitat loss due to deforestation alongside being hunted for their gall bladders, paws and bile. Filled with a burning desire to fight for their welfare, Wong founded the Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre (BSBCC) in Sepilok in 2008.

"It reached a point where I felt I had to do something. If I didn't, nobody would," said Wong, who is a wildlife biologist and tropical forest ecologist.

Since its inception, some 69 Bornean sun bears had been rescued by the Sabah Wildlife Department and sent to the BSBCC.

Twelve have been successfully rehabilitated and released back into the wild with another 44 roaming the sanctuary.

"All bears at the centre are orphans as poachers kill the mothers to get the cubs," he said in an interview.

The BSBCC, Wong said, spans some 5ha, with 2.5ha specifically for the bears to roam with the land owned by the Sabah Forestry Department and the Sabah Wildlife Department.

Wong said the BSBCC had the objective of conserving sun bears through a holistic and pragmatic approach.

This includes improving animal welfare, education, research, rehabilitation, ecotourism, community conservation, anti-poaching and forest connectivity to help the bears secure their future.

It also has adoption programmes where the public can financially support the bears at the centre.

"When the project first started in 2008, we had an ambitious plan to build the centre from scratch. We needed lots of funding and expertise to design the centre.

"Everything was challenging and difficult but I consider myself lucky as we got support from the Sabah government," he said, adding that the federal government also assisted with others who helped in the fundraising process.

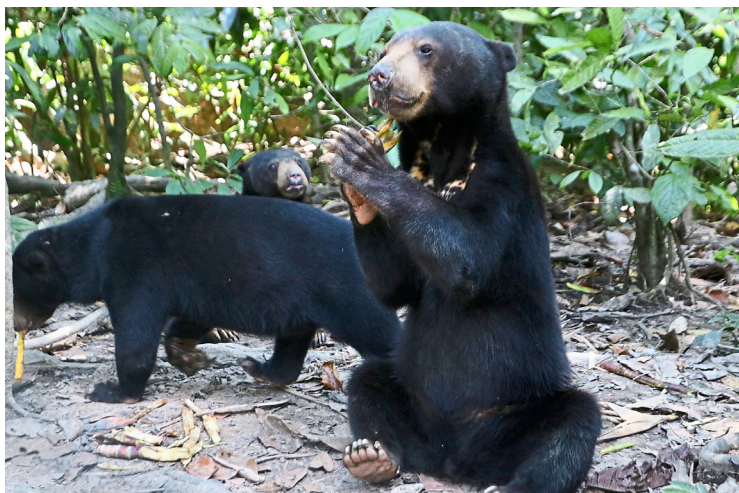
The Bornean sun bears, Wong said, were the smallest bear sub-species in the world and unique to the Borneo region.

A full grown adult male weighs between 45kg and 50kg. When standing, they are about 1.2m tall. Females grow to between 30kg and 35kg, standing at 1m.

"They are small compared to the Malayan sun bear which grows up to 100kg for males and stand at 1.7m tall," he said.



Wong interacting with one of the rescued sun bears at the centre. 69 Bornean Sun Bears have been rescued since the centre began operating in 2008. — Photos by FAIHAN GHANI/The Star



Bornean Sun Bears at the Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre (BSBCC) in Sandakan, Sabah. It is the smallest bear sub-species in the world. BSBCC is one of the winners of the Star Golden Hearts Award 2023.

Wong said the Bornean sun bear were omnivorous and the most arboreal bear species in the world, adding that the animals played many important ecological roles.

"They are very important in the seed dispersal process where they eat fruits, disperse the seeds and trees grow.

"Apart from that, when they eat termites, they control the termite population as some (termite species) are known to attack live trees," he said.

He added when sun bears feed on earthworms, the bears would plough the soil and enhance the soil nutrients and prepare it back for plant growth.

"When feeding on stingless bee hives, they create cavities on trees which would be used by other animals such as hornbills or other tree cavity nesters.

"Their presence in the forest benefits both plants and animal species. They are a keystone species. This is what makes them so special. We cannot lose them," Wong said.

On the BSBCC's role in reintroducing sun bears back into the wild, Wong said it was difficult to release rescued adult bears as they are accustomed to a human environment and depend solely on humans for food.

Rescued cubs have better prospects of being reintroduced to the wild, he said.

"We begin bonding with them from a young age and act as their surrogate mother as the mother is most often killed for the cub to be captured.

"Once the relationship is established, we bring them into the forest and allow them to have a connection with the forest," he said, adding that this process could last up to a year.

"Their instinct usually kicks in once they see an ant or termite nest. We need to give the cubs the opportunity when they are still little," he added.

Once the cubs reach about 20kg, they are raised in the BSBCC's forest enclosure where they can forage and climb trees.

"The point is to give them a natural environment so they can perform the behaviours and important skills to take care of themselves.

"Once they reach adulthood at about four or five years and can fend for themselves, we will choose the ones with the highest chances of survival to be released," he said.

The released bears will also be fitted with a satellite collar for tracking purposes.

On the BSBCC's future plans, Wong said they hoped to expand some of the wooden fences in the forest enclosures, alongside adding additional viewing platforms for visitors.



Wong with life-sized cutouts of various bear species around the world at the Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre.

"We hope to create more jobs on the ground and improve locals' livelihoods to the point where they don't have to poach," he said.

There is also a long-term research and rehabilitation project on the cards at the Tabin Forest Reserve in Lahad Datu on wild and released sun bears there.

Wong also said he was hopeful of raising awareness to Malaysians and the global community towards the centre and its works.

For its efforts, the Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre is named as one of the 10 winners of the Star Golden Hearts Award 2023.

It is also named as a recipient for the prestigious Gamuda Inspiration Award, bringing home an extra grant of RM150,000.

Wong said the extra grant would further boost their efforts in conservation works and research projects.

"Conservation works are quite challenging. With this grant, we can do more holistic and pragmatic work on the ground," he said.

WATCH THE VIDEO
 TheStarTV.com



Braving the elements **for research**



An Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin seen swimming next to Marecet Research Organisation's boat during their research at Perak waters. — Photos by CHAN TAK KONG/The Star

GAMUDA INSPIRATION AWARD

2023 WINNER

By JUNAID IBRAHIM
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KUALA SEPETANG: With the scorching tropical sun beating down, waves challenging even the sturdiest vessels, and unrelenting rain, these unfavourable conditions could easily break the spirit of the most determined researcher.

However, marine scientist Dr Vivian Kuit and her team stood firm, determined to search and study the marine mammals – that many do not know exist – in the Perak waters here.

The team of six people, consisting of interns and volunteers guided by a GPS and local skippers, sails through the sea near Perak coast for hours to spot the unique marine mammal with one goal which is to study their behaviour for conservation purposes.

“In order for us to conserve a species (of animals), we need to understand what their conservation needs and also find out which species are the most threatened.

“Through our research, we use a scientific analysis to determine the (marine mammals) distribution pattern, what area do they use for feeding or nursing and what are their movement patterns.

“With this, we can better understand their conservation needs and figure out the measures to conserve the species,” said Kuit, who had been conducting the research since 2013, in an interview.

She said many people are not aware that Malaysia is blessed with marine mammals that are thriving along the coastal areas.

According to Kuit, among the species that are on Marecet Research Organisation's radar are the Indo-Pacific humpback dolphins, Irrawaddy dolphins, Indo-Pacific finless porpoises, dugongs and Bryde's whales.

She said these endangered marine



Indo-Pacific humpback dolphins spotted in the waters of Perak during the research held by Kuit and her team from Marecet Research Organisation.

mammals are crucial to be protected as they are very important to the marine ecosystem.

Due to lack of awareness and knowledge about marine mammals, several species are prone to facing human-wildlife conflict.

“Depending on the level of protection, the marine mammals may have higher risk to issues such as overfishing, which reduces the prey availability in our waters.

“The problems of marine pollution causes accidental ingestion by the cetaceans, which causes death to these marine mammals.

“One of the main threats which also affects all marine mammals globally is the by-catch problem which is the accidental entanglement in fishing gears,” said Kuit, who is also the scientific officer at Marecet.

She said as part of the mitigation effort, Marecet through her research is distributing acoustic pingers, a device that will be attached to the fishing nets and emit a high frequency sound to warn marine mammals.

Kuit said it is still in the trial stage and if the effort is proven to be successful, she hopes to expand the initiative nationwide.

As Malaysia's marine mammals are understudied, Kuit said researchers struggle to find the best way to avoid dolphins

from getting trapped in fishing nets.

“There are not many studies that work on mitigating by-catch for the species in Malaysia.

“Currently, we need to establish whether this device is effective in the long term. Some species may become accustomed after a longer period of time,” she added.

Established in 2012, Marecet is committed to studying and conserving marine mammals in Malaysia.

The team, co-founded by Dr Louisa Ponnampalam and Fairuz Jamal, consists of a competent and passionate team of researcher-conservationists, focusing on increasing scientific knowledge through research, conservation-based outreach and education, strengthening policies and developing capacity for this field of work.

Kuit's research in the waters of Perak was just one of several others conducted throughout the peninsular of Malaysia.

She said there are also researches on marine mammals conducted in other areas such as Bryde's whales project in Langkawi, Kedah and dugong project in Johor.

She added that since the establishment of Marecet, over 1,000 Malaysians have benefitted from the volunteering opportunities.

Marecet had also reached out to over 20,000 people within the last decade in efforts to widen the knowledge on



Kuit has been doing the research on marine mammals in Malaysian waters which include whales and dolphins since 2013.

marine mammals.

“As Malaysia has a very long coastline, we hope that more habitats would be recognised as important marine mammal areas.

“We hope the survivability of these endangered marine mammals can also be improved,” she said.

For its efforts, Marecet Research Organisation is named as one of the 10 winners of the Star Golden Hearts Award 2023.

It is also named as a recipient for the prestigious Gamuda Inspiration Award, bringing home an extra grant of RM150,000.

Marecet co-founder Fairuz Jamal described the win as a pleasant surprise and that it had come at the right time as they are planning to do more activities next year.

“All these years, we have been focusing on dolphins and near-shore habitats. For the last two years, we started to study whales in Malaysia.

“So I think we will expand on this and come up with more interesting findings,” he said.

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 TheStarTV.com



Bringing the turtles back



Sea turtles foraging through the sand and racing back to the ocean after emerging from their nests.

By **ALLISON LAI**
allison@thestar.com.my

KUALA TERENGGANU: It is a sight to behold whenever turtle hatchlings forage through the sands and emerge from their nests.

The vigour of new life and natural instincts are often why they race to the ocean because if they don't, they will die of dehydration or become food for birds, crabs and other animals.

With only about one in every 1,000 turtles surviving to adulthood, that is why several concerned individuals founded the Lang Tengah Turtle Watch (LTTW) to protect turtles' habitats and help save them from extinction.

Principal officer Dr Long Seh Ling said such conservation efforts are critical because there have been no recorded nestings of leatherback turtles in Terengganu since 2017, despite Rantau Abang beach recorded 10,000 leatherback turtle nests yearly in the 1950s.

"Terengganu's icon used to be a leatherback turtle but now, it's a Nemo because we lost our turtles."

"I come from a generation where I couldn't see leatherback. So, if possible, we want to preserve our heritage."

"We cannot afford to lose our hawksbill, green and olive ridley turtles," she said.

LTTW is a Malaysian turtle conservation organisation with project sites in Lang Tengah Island, Tanjong Jara Resort and Chakar Hutan Beach in Terengganu.

The project sites in Lang Tengah Island and Tanjong Jara Resort are home to the endangered green turtles and critically endangered hawksbill turtles, as listed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

"The driving force behind LTTW is Hayati Mokhtar, whose land surrounding Turtle Bay on Lang Tengah Island with pristine landscapes and marine life, has degraded over time."

"She wanted to save the turtles because people actually could collect the eggs for consumption and sale at the time."

"It propelled her to take action to preserve the once-pristine landscape of her childhood," Long said.

The LTTW promotes sea turtle collaboration in the areas of monitoring, research, conservation and management.

Their reach extends to education and public awareness with a focus on local communities, tourism operators and tourists.

They emphasise the sustainable viability of their initiatives through community empowerment as well as educating and uplifting the community to restore the balance between sea turtles and their delicate habitats.

Long said night patrols, turtle monitoring, coral restorations, beach and underwater clean-ups, outreach and training



Conservationists digging out turtle eggs that were not hatched or where the turtles did not emerge on their own from the nest at the Chakar Hutan Turtle Conservation Centre.

programmes, empowering communities and livelihoods, and adoption programmes are among the seven main initiatives.

The primary strategy for protecting the mostly green turtle population entails nightly patrols by nine former poachers who have joined the LTTW team to monitor the island's nesting beaches between March and October.

"At Chakar Hutan Beach, we patrol the beach to monitor it."

"If we encounter a nesting mother, we will collect the eggs and relocate them to the hatchery nearby," she said.

To date, 2,264 nests of endangered green turtles, critically endangered hawksbill turtles and painted terrapins have been saved.

In turtle monitoring, Long said the team looked after the eggs for about two months for green turtle eggs and three months for painted terrapin eggs to hatch.

"We make sure that the hatching success is good," she added.

For the hatchlings, Long said most releases take place at night and under red light to minimise disturbance to the turtles from June to October. To date, they have released over 118,000 green and hawksbill turtle hatchlings into the ocean.

"By protecting the species, we are also protecting their habitat. That's why we conduct beach and underwater clean-ups to remove marine debris."

"We also started restoring the coral reef area because that's where the turtles feed and take shelter," she said, adding that broken coral fragments are grown back in a nursery at Turtle Bay before being out-planted into natural reefs.

Since 2018, 757 corals have been saved and grown in the nursery, and 405 corals were transplanted.

In its outreach programmes, Long said LTTW's most recent project at Chakar Hutan Beach provided an opportunity to collaborate or engage local communities because it is a public area.

"The local people who live there actually come and learn more about turtles and understand the conservation efforts," she said.

During the day, Hashim Ismail, 72, a former forest ranger, guards the turtle hatchery at the beach, which has up to 300 green turtle nests per year, to prevent poaching.

"The beach is also where hatchlings are released from dusk to dawn, which the public may be able to witness."

"Turtles will sometimes come and nest at night," said Hashim, who is fondly known as Pok Hashim.

Long said LTTW actively purchased turtle eggs from 12 local licence holders since 2016 to empower the community and their livelihoods.

"The public can also contribute by adopting a nest, a turtle or a coral through our official website as this will help make sure as many hatchlings go out to the ocean as possible," she said.

Debunking many common misconceptions about the importance of preserving sea turtles, Long said turtles are critical in maintaining ecological importance.

"They are both predators and prey. As a predator, leatherback turtles used to control the jellyfish population."

"So when you take one predator out, then it will affect the balance," she said.

Aside from funding, Long stressed the importance of people's and stakeholders' cooperation.

Moving forward, LTTW will continue to fund its initiatives through a variety of means, including adoption programmes,



It is important to preserve sea turtles to maintain a balance in marine lives because only about one in every 1,000 turtles survive to adulthood.



The thing about conservation is that you're always wondering if you're doing enough, and are we racing against the clock, said Long.



Tanjong Jara turtle conservation project manager Nur Isandra Shazlynn Shamsul Azmil showing two terrapin hatchlings.

turtle tourism activities, paid volunteer programmes and donations.

Besides grants from local sponsors, Long said they will also look for funding abroad, especially from the global turtle community.

She added that LTTW intends to participate in more information-sharing, training and capacity-building activities at the International Sea Turtle Symposium next March.

"The thing about conservation is that you're always wondering if you're doing enough."

"Even if you have the money, you might not be able to bring back an extinct species. So whatever efforts need to be done, it has to be prior before they go extinct," she said.

For its efforts, Lang Tengah Turtle Watch is named as one of the 10 winners of the Star Golden Hearts Award 2023.

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TheStarTV.com



Impacting lives, one at a time



A total of 33 students enrolled at Hostel Rose Kudat so that they could attend school more conveniently while allowing them to focus on their studies.

By **JUNAID IBRAHIM**
 newsdesk@thestar.com.my

PETALING JAYA: After witnessing the stark realities faced by the rural communities in Sabah some 15 years ago, retired businessman Jimmy Lei decided to return to Malaysia and set up a foundation.

Prior to this, Lei had settled down and spent many years doing business in Australia.

The 70-year-old Sarawak native shared that during a trip with his wife to the neighbouring Bornean state years ago, he saw school kids drenched in rain just to return home from school.

“One of the unforgettable things that we saw when we visited some of the villages, which were several hours drive from Kota Kinabalu, was these children walking home in the rain.

“They were wearing primary school uniforms walking by the roadside at about 3pm or 4pm.

“But morning school finishes at around 1pm, so they should already be at home,” he said.

Lei said when he spoke to them, he found out that they were still walking home due to the long distance to school.

“When I asked them, they also told me that they had yet to eat lunch.

“This got me thinking – how can we make things better for them?” he said.

It was then Lei had a lightbulb moment and vowed to help the children by providing them with a dormitory nearer to the

school, so that they do not have to walk for hours.

He sold his business in Australia and used the money to fund the first primary school hostel in Kampung Talantang, located in Kota Marudu, some 130km north of Kota Kinabalu.

Determined to create change, Lei founded Starfish Foundation Malaysia with the firm belief that “every small action can create a ripple of transformation”.

Asked how he got the inspiration for the name of the foundation, the former industrial chemist said it was rooted in a motivational tale about a young little girl, who tossed stranded starfish back into the sea – one at a time – after an overnight storm.

In the story, the girl was asked by a man if she could actually save thousands of the sea creatures, doubting her efforts, to which the girl picked up one starfish after another and said: “I can save this one. And this one.”

Lei said the moral of the story became the main philosophy the foundation is holding on to, which is recognising that they could not help the whole community but they could certainly make a significant impact on individual lives.

When he started the foundation, he said it did not come without challenges.

Lei said that one of the challenges was convincing the parents to let their children stay in the hostels.

“At first, it was quite hard because the parents were having reservations.

“They asked why do you want our

children to stay in the hostel? Do you want to make them work? Where are you from? You’re not even from Sabah.

“I told them – we just wanted to help and make sure their children go to school to get a proper education,” Lei said.

He recalled that when they started, only a few children came to stay at the hostels, and one of them was then 10-year-old Habron Jason.

Lei said Habron’s story stood out as the boy has proven that with the proper environment, one would be able to achieve success.

“When he first enrolled at our hostel – Jasmine Talantang – he was in Primary Three.

“He was very small-sized and malnourished. We found out that his average school attendance was only about 35%.

“When we looked at him, at first glance, we thought there was not much that we could do to help,” Lei said.

However, Habron proved otherwise – he achieved full attendance, grew healthily and even received an award during his final year in primary school for being the most improved student.

“By the time he finished Primary Six, during the final prize-giving assembly, he received an award from the headmaster for being the most improved student in the entire school,” he said.

“So given the right opportunity, right environment and right help, we can do wonders.

“Imagine if we can help hundreds of



A group of students discussing and comparing notes during a tuition lesson at the hostel.

Habron. Wouldn’t that be fantastic?” Lei added.

Habron, now 19 years old, is pursuing his studies in pharmacy at a local college in Sabah.

Aside from empowering the children through education, Starfish Foundation is also increasing its efforts by helping local communities to elevate themselves financially.

“In Kota Marudu, the Marudu Bay, there are a lot of ikan bilis (anchovies).

“We are hoping to engage some of the villagers in processing the ikan bilis into gift packs.

“If you pack it nicely, it will be an excellent gift. We want to do this in a hygienic manner to sustain this process but we also need to help them with marketing,” Lei said, adding that selling farm products was also another way of helping the locals.

He said another business they were venturing into was the production of roselle jam, which the foundation will provide marketing assistance.

For its efforts, Starfish Foundation Malaysia is named as one of the 10 winners of the Star Golden Hearts Award 2023.

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Children at the Hostel Rose Kudat are also taught to grow crops for daily consumption in the hostel aside from generating income.



Supporting indigenous communities



PACOS Trust empowers the rural communities in Sabah to convert daily items such as baskets into handicrafts.

By **GERARD GIMINO**
 gerard.gimino@thestar.com.my

KOTA KINABALU: When Anne Lasimbang participated in a study on poverty in Sabah more than three decades ago, something stood out to her – the state of rural indigenous communities.

Being in areas such as Pitas and Kudat was a real eye opener as Lasimbang witnessed communities without access to clean water, dilapidated schools, lack of teachers, as well as high dropout rate among students.

“I came from Penampang. More or less things were okay here. For the study, we were sent to Pitas and Keningau and we noticed the big gap.

“This triggered us. Seeing how we are indigenous people ourselves, we had to do something.

“Being young back then, we just went in to do the work without hesitation,” she said.

Lasimbang, her sister Jannie and Felix Tongkul took the plunge and began their community work informally in 1983.

Some 10 years later, the Partners of Community Organisation in Sabah (PACOS Trust) was formed with a focus on supporting the rural indigenous communities alongside empowering them with the knowledge and resources to live comfortable lives.

PACOS Trust has since expanded throughout Sabah, from Pulau Banggi in the north, up to Pulau Sebatik of which half the island belongs to Indonesia.

Lasimbang, who is currently the executive director of PACOS Trust, said it was a community-based organisation and that they worked through a network.

“When we begin working with communities, a group is formed. Eventually, the group becomes an organisation, allowing it to be registered.

“For example, a group in Kampung Kiau in Ranau formed their own group, even winning various awards and managing their village well,” she said.

Lasimbang also said there were various initiatives taken up to empower the indigenous communities for a better future.

Among them include socioeconomic development programmes where farmers are taught agroecology measures to ensure their livelihoods and food security.

“We later realised marketing the produce was another challenge as most of



Students at the Guwas Kopezison Centre (GKC) during a class. The GKC was kick-started by PACOS Trust and focuses on providing out-of-school youths agroecology and entrepreneurship skills training.

these villages are located deep in rural areas.

“The idea of food processing then came forth where the crops such as ginger and turmeric could be collected at the PACOS centre and sold at towns nearby,” she said.

The communities were also taught ways to refine their daily items, Lasimbang added.

“Here, items such as big baskets used by the indigenous communities during harvest activities can be redesigned and utilised as handicrafts,” she said.

Land rights and resource management programmes were also initiated by PACOS Trust to raise awareness among the rural indigenous communities on their rights.

“We want to ensure the indigenous community does not lose their land.

“Land is life to the indigenous people. This is the source where they can plant crops and sustain their livelihoods.

“Those with traditional knowledge on looking after rivers are also empowered towards strengthening river ecosystems around them,” Lasimbang said, adding that some of these practices have been adopted by the state government alongside communities utilising river

conservation or tagal systems as ecotourism sources.

Another venture taken up by PACOS Trust was kickstarting the Guwas Kopezison Centre (GKC), otherwise known as the “school of life”.

The GKC is a centre for out-of-school youths, focusing on agroecology and entrepreneurship skills training.

It is also aimed at enhancing food security and economic progress within communities.

Activities taught here include rearing tilapia, livestock, composting, as well as planting various produce.

The GKC is currently running its third intake of students with the first two batches having been employed or contributing back to their villages.

Lasimbang also emphasised how PACOS Trust took education seriously with various community-learning centres (CLC) all around Sabah, focusing on early education for children from indigenous communities and other empowerment activities for women and youth.

“Hopefully, we can be an inspiration to others, so more organisations or groups can do the same work we are doing,” she said.

Separately, CLC coordinator Rufina Koyou said the education aspect focused on teaching young children to read, write and count.

“This ensures the children are ready when entering primary school,” she said.

For women and youth, the centre acts as a meeting point for communities to come together and share knowledge with one another.

“Here, the women learn how to make crafts or process foods.

“Youths can learn more about their mother tongue as well as traditional knowledge,” she said.

There are currently 25 active CLCs with six of them playing the role of early education centre for children.

More than 50,000 children have come through the CLC's doors since 1993.

For its efforts, PACOS Trust is named as one of the 10 winners of the Star Golden Hearts Award 2023.

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Lasimbang interacting with students at one of the early education centres handled by PACOS Trust. PACOS Trust is one of the winners of the Star Golden Hearts Award 2023. — Photos by FAIHAN GHANI/The Star



A passion project by **The Star** and **Yayasan Gamuda**, the annual **Star Golden Hearts Award** celebrates selfless Malaysian unsung heroes who make a positive impact on society and promote unity among the people.

This year's **Gamuda Inspiration Award** was awarded to the **Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre** and **The MareCet Research Organisation**.

GAMUDA
INSPIRATION
AWARD

LANG TENGAH TURTLE WATCH

Safeguards sea turtles from extinction through vigilant protection and community involvement.

THE ASLI CO.

Empowers indigenous mothers with the ability to generate income from their home-based modern handicraft production, in supporting their children's education.

BORNEAN SUN BEAR CONSERVATION CENTRE

Provides care and rehabilitation to rescued sun bears while increasing public awareness about the endangered species.

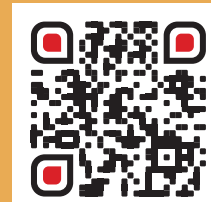
KELAB ALAMI

Empowers a community to participate in and benefit from development through citizen science, alternative incomes and the protection of their natural environments.

THE MARECET RESEARCH ORGANISATION

Advocates conservation efforts and research on marine mammals through extensive education and volunteering programmes.

Watch the
ten winners
in action



PACOS TRUST

Champions the rights and empowerment of indigenous communities through diverse programmes.

BUKU JALANAN CHOW KIT

Creates a safe learning environment opportunity for at-risk children in the Jalan Chow Kit area, by improving their life skills through education.

GRAZE MARKET

Combats food waste through food surplus initiatives while making affordable food accessible to all.

JAPSON WONG

Marine biologist turned artist who upcycles waste materials into imaginative art and sculptures while championing environmental awareness.

STARFISH MALAYSIA FOUNDATION

Uplifts the marginalised communities in Sabah and Sarawak from poverty through education and agriculture programmes.

Helping hands for Orang Asli



Lim (left) and Wee, founders of The Asli Co social enterprise that empowers Orang Asli mothers to earn a stable income to support their families. Photos by — ART CHEN/The Star



Suraya (right) and her friend, Antik As, working on sewing the lavender eye pillow under The Asli Co social enterprise initiative.

By ALLISON LAI
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HULU SELANGOR: The adage “teach a man to fish and you feed him for a life-time” holds true for Suraya Abdullah, who not only empowered herself but also impacted her loved ones.

From being a housewife, she went on to earn a steady income by sewing various lifestyle products such as eye pillows, tummy pillows and masks.

“Life was difficult prior to this, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic. My husband, who worked at an oil palm estate, was laid off.

“We had no money to buy groceries and other necessities,” said the 31-year-old in an interview.

Her son, who was in primary school at the time, was on the verge of dropping out due to the family’s financial situation.

Fortunately, her plea, along with those of many other Orang Asli in the village, caught the attention of Lim Xin Yu and Jason Wee, the “white knights” who launched The Asli Co with several villagers in late 2019 to help them earn a living by making succulent pots.

Suraya became acquainted with the social enterprise and learned to sew using a sewing machine to make fabric face masks, which The Asli Co began selling in its online store after changing its business model in the aftermath of the pandemic.

“They came and taught me the methods and gave me the equipment and raw materials to start sewing and earn money.

“From having nothing, now I have learned a skill to provide for my family and send my son to school,” she said.

Suraya said when orders were high, she could earn up to RM5,000 a month.

“The best of all, I can do this on my own time while still look after my family,” Suraya added.

Lim, 38, a designer, and Wee, 36, who was in business development and operation, said they first wanted to help the Orang Asli village after joining a charity group and building houses for them.

“We discovered that many children were dropping out of school and decided to do something.

“So we asked how much was needed to support a kid in school for a month and were told it was about RM150 to buy



Suraya (right) sewing the lavender eye pillow under the tutelage of Lim (second right) while Antik As (second left) and Wee get the fabric sorted out.

school supplies and food,” said Lim.

Despite it being an affordable sum, Wee said they wanted to do more.

“How many children can we help if we donate in our own capacity?

“That’s how we decided to start a company,” Wee said, adding that they had only one product at the time and three mothers from the village participating.

Following the pandemic and a change in the business model, Wee said their hand sanitiser and fabric face masks received an overwhelming response through online sales.

“This enabled us to hire more Orang Asli staff, who are in charge of packaging, administration, online marketing, raw material preparation and quality control.”

Currently, The Asli Co offers over 20 products and works with over 65 mothers from eight Orang Asli villages in Selangor, Perak, Negri Sembilan and Pahang, providing them with raw materials, equipment and wages.

As the duo continued to explore new opportunities and expand their product range, Wee said Lim came up with the idea for the lavender eye pillow when her

mother had trouble sleeping during the movement control period.

“I discovered it online and attempted to make it for my mother, which worked and helped her sleep better.

“So when we offered this product online in 2021, it was an instant hit as many people were having the same issue due to stress.

“We sold over 50,000 units, providing jobs and income to the Orang Asli women,” she said, adding that it was still one of their top products at present.

Moving forward, Wee said their main concern was consistently providing job opportunities for Orang Asli mothers.

“We want this project to be sustainable over time. We considered this when designing the products, determining pricing and structuring training,” said Lim.

As for Wee, profitability was crucial for any business to remain viable.

“If it couldn’t sustain, the company would fail. We are not looking for donations. We want to be self-sufficient through the sale of our products,” he said.

As a social enterprise, they said the main challenge was keeping a steady flow



The lavender eye pillow has been one of The Asli Co’s best selling items since it was introduced in 2021.

of work for Orang Asli mothers.

“It is uncertain if they would receive large orders, so consistent monthly earnings is crucial,” said Wee.

To address this, their strategy included expanding the global market reach.

They intended to export their products to countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom, providing Orang Asli mothers with a sustainable income while meeting the demands of an international clientele.

Lim and Wee, who have since left their jobs to focus on the social enterprise, also founded Ajar Society, a non-governmental organisation that provides free tuition to Orang Asli children in the villages.

They currently offer classes in Bahasa Malaysia and English with plans to expand into Mathematics and Science in the future.

“This educational support serves to elevate the children’s academic performance while providing them with a conducive environment to complete their school-work,” said Lim.

They also urged individuals and corporations to help the Orang Asli community by reaching out and contributing to the improvement of their livelihoods.

For its efforts, The Asli Co is named as one of the 10 winners of the Star Golden Hearts Award 2023.

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Green warriors to the fore



Serina (sitting left) teaching postgraduate students from the National University of Singapore about the importance of seagrass meadows. — Photo by Tenn Joe Lim



Serina (third from left) explaining seagrass fruit to the guests during one of the excursions. — Photo by Michelle Yip

By **JUNAID IBRAHIM**
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PETALING JAYA: In the heart of a rapidly developing coastal region in Johor, one organisation is standing as a beacon of hope for the environment and the communities that call it home.

Kelab Alami, an environmental education club, has been on a remarkable journey since its inception in 2008 with a profound mission of empowering local communities and bridging the gap between developers and the environment.

The club's journey began as a humble initiative to educate children from fishing villages in Tanjung Kupang about the richness of their natural surroundings, says its co-founder and principal advisor Dr Serina Rahman.

"Our whole purpose is to help the youths realise that the things they see (biodiversity at Tanjung Kupang) all the time is special.

"We want to share this knowledge with the children and give them a scientific structure to it.

"They already knew a lot from young as children of fishermen," she said.

As the local children gathered valuable data and knowledge about their natural surroundings, they unintentionally became the environmental conscience of the region.

Developers who were eyeing the area for growth soon recognised the importance of the youths' insights.

Serina said during meetings between developers and the local community, these young citizen scientists played a vital role by providing crucial information about the biological coastal habitat of the region.

In 2014, as development in the area escalated, Kelab Alami's objectives evolved.

She said the head of social development at IRDA (Iskandar Regional Development Authority) advised them to take a more proactive approach in participating in the development process, emphasising the importance of community involvement.

"We were told to build a community that would be able to speak to stakeholders about the habitats, to engage with them, to make sure that they get to participate in the development and get alternative incomes from it to continue researching and studying the environment.

"So that was how it began. Then, it went through many cycles. Eventually, we established a good rapport with the developers all around us," she added.



Contemporary gamelan ensemble Rhythm in Bronze had an immersive seagrass experience as part of their research for their recent performance Seruan Setu: Secret Gardens of the Sea. — Photo by Michelle Yip

Serina said the club has also successfully established relationships with developers such as Forest City and other stakeholders in the region.

The club members have become a bridge between the community and those who aim to make changes in the area.

Through their efforts, Kelab Alami has managed to generate substantial awareness about the uniqueness and importance of the coastal habitat.

Their work has attracted volunteers, interest from universities and positive relations with businesses in the region.

Throughout the years, Kelab Alami has also garnered a number of recognitions from local and international organisations which include Iskandar Malaysia Social Hero Award for Environmental Preservation in 2014 and 2016, securing grants from Johor Port Authority and French Embassy in Malaysia, among others.

Serina also said with the grants that

"Our whole purpose is to help the youths realise that the things they see (biodiversity at Tanjung Kupang) all the time is special."

Dr Serina Rahman

have been awarded to the club, it would help them to further sustain their good efforts, especially in terms of expanding their human resources.

She said Kelab Alami is also conducting several other initiatives to ensure a steady

flow of income such as organising education.

"We do curated field trips for individuals and schools. Since I'm also a lecturer, we are able to provide coaching sessions while also bringing university students down to learn things.

"We're in a unique position in which we can teach and offer training to corporations as well," said Serina, who is also the Malaysian Ambassador for Citizen Science Asia.

For its efforts, Kelab Alami is named as one of the 10 winners of the Star Golden Hearts Award 2023.

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 TheStarTV.com



A voice for stateless kids

By MAHADHIR MONIHULDIN
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PETALING JAYA: Nine-year-old Yazid (not his real name) is a stateless child who doesn't have a blue identity card despite being born and raised in Malaysia by Malaysian parents.

This is due to his drug addict mother who was in and out of jail while the whereabouts of his biological father is unknown.

As a result, Yazid won't be able to enter school which requires formal documentation and this will leave him without a proper education, vulnerable and at risk of repeating the vicious cycle of poverty.

There are many stateless children like Yazid who require educational support and assistance to escape poverty and live a better life.

This is where veteran teacher Siti Rahayu Baharin, 42, decided to open Buku Jalan Chow Kit (BJCK) with the mission to provide affordable education for stateless and underprivileged children.

"BJCK began as a non-governmental organisation in 2015 with a humble initiative to teach underprivileged children at various locations via a remote street library," she said in an interview.

Eight years later, BJCK is now a full-fledged school in Chow Kit, Kuala Lumpur, with 12 dedicated teachers and 130 students from around the community, of which 50% of them are stateless children, Siti Rahayu said.

"My life story started in a small town in Megat Dewa, Kedah, where my parents, who despite not being very well educated, were determined to send me to university.

"This taught me the value of education. When I moved here, I saw many children living in the streets without receiving a formal education.

"This inspired me to open BJCK to teach and guide them towards a better life," she said.

Siti Rahayu, who is married with a 17-year-old daughter, said BJCK is a safe space for children to learn and grow without fears or worries of outside life.

"BJCK classes, in collaboration with Arus Academy, consist of academic subjects such as Mathematics, Science, Bahasa Melayu, English, Geography and History, together with a project-based learning method which aims to build a survival-literate children.

"We have 130 children, aged between seven and 18, and operate from Monday to Friday from 9.30am to 4pm," she said.

Siti Rahayu also said that 50% of the students have learnt to read, write and count, do simple maths and progress in their academic syllabus.

"BJCK also has three stateless children, aged 17 to 19, who are registered as private SPM candidates," she said.

Aside from that, BJCK has a Road to Citizenship programme to assist stateless children and parents in applying for Malaysian citizenship with the help of social workers and pro-bono lawyers.

"This secures their rights to education and healthcare," she said.

BJCK executive director Amin Khalili Zolkepley expressed love and appreciation for the kids in the school, saying they are a blessing for him and his team of teachers.

"I love teaching and helping them grow into responsible adults," he said.

Amin expressed his appreciation for the parents, mainly living around Chow Kit and Segambut, who have been willing to send their children to school and for extra classes.

"This would not be possible without them and our team of teachers who are dedicated to teaching the kids," he said.

Amin added that he wishes BJCK will become an independent learning institution that provides more opportunities for underprivileged children and parents to



Buku Jalan Chow Kit (BJCK) is a full-fledged school in Chow Kit, Kuala Lumpur, with 12 dedicated teachers and 130 students, of which 50% of them are stateless children. — Photos by CHAN TAK KONG/The Star

lead better lives.

"We wish to collaborate with local communities, government agencies and corporate entities to secure vital resources, funding and expertise.

"We would also like to increase the reach of our programmes for marginalised children and families in Chow Kit by exploring options like setting up additional learning centres and programme enhancements," he said.

On a related matter, BJCK has a community employment programme which aims to employ community parents or children who are at least 18 years of age to gain income by working with the organisation, Amin said.

"Currently, we have four individuals from the community who work as kitchen helpers, janitors and general workers. With this, they are able to earn an income and support themselves," he said.

BJCK staff Athifah Roslan, 28, said she loves working with the children as they have been very cooperative and supportive of the programmes.

"It really doesn't matter if the children have an IC or not, they are still fun to be around," she said.

Athifah, who studied food biotechnology, also praised BJCK for their flexible working environment.

"The team is quite understanding. Whenever I'm sick or have an emergency, they'll let me work from home or take off," she said.

When asked what she hopes the children can accomplish in the future, Athifah wishes all stateless children will receive proper documentation and gain the right to education and healthcare.

For its efforts, Buku Jalan Chow Kit is named as one of the 10 winners of the Star Golden Hearts Award 2023.



Amin said he loves spending time with the kids and want to see them succeed.



Buku Jalan Chow Kit began as a non-governmental organisation in 2015 with a humble initiative to teach underprivileged children at various locations via a remote street library.



Giving new life to old items



Wong (left) giving the thumbs up while working on one of the 3D lifesized artworks. Wong is one of the winners of the Star Golden Hearts Award 2023.

By GERARD GIMINO
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PETALING JAYA: When Japson Wong travelled to Semporna, Sabah, for work in 2008, he did not expect the experience would change his life forever.

A marine biologist by profession, Wong worked closely with communities there for eight years, focusing on educating the locals who were mostly fishermen, on planting seaweed as an alternative source of income.

Upon returning to Kota Kinabalu in 2016, Wong not only gained better knowledge on the seaweed plantation process but also building skills from the communities there.

"The fishermen there make their own boats. This is where I picked up some handy skills," the 39-year-old said in an interview.

His time in Semporna saw him witnessing many waste materials such as plastics and wood washed up on the islands.

"This inspired me to get my hands dirty and try upcycling," he said.

This soon blossomed into a whole new purpose where Wong combined both his handy skills and interest for upcycling to create his own wedding decorations.

Soon after, Wong tried selling upcycled crafts at flea markets.

This included robo-lamps where these were designed as robots with excess PVC pipes or elbows obtained from factories and later, fitted with bulbs.

"Initially, I only wanted to decorate my house with these lamps but found out that such creative works also spark an interest in the public," he said, adding that the products were successfully sold out.

"About 10 years ago, nobody knew what upcycling was about. When I mentioned it, people thought I was cycling up Mount Kinabalu for charity.

"This motivated me to do more to educate the public and locals especially that upcycling is not something new but already very popular in other countries," he said.

From making robo-lamps, Wong later set his sights on bigger things.

What followed was a collaborative project dubbed "Wonders of the Wilderness – The Ocean (WOW1.0)" in 2022 and held at the Sabah Art Gallery.

The one-year long exhibition comprised more than 20 lifesize 3D marine sculp-



Wong showing one of his marine-life sculptures made of polycarbonate at the TAME Centre.

tures such as whales, whale sharks, turtles, manta rays and hammerhead sharks.

The whale shark sculpture is 31ft long with the whale being 40ft long.

"We highlighted these animals as they can be found in Sabah's waters. We want to highlight the biodiversity in Sabah.

"All of them are either from different areas or pass through its waters," he said.

Apart from marine wildlife, Wong also completed a giraffe sculpture that is currently placed in a mall in Kota Kinabalu.

Explaining the process, he said it took about one month to complete each sculpture.

Wong said polycarbonate collected from factories is the main building material for these sculptures.

Apart from polycarbonate, he would also gather rejected materials from factories as well as going to businesses and collecting used signboards for free.

"We use these items as we want people to learn about the value they can bring alongside educating the public on nature," he said.

Another initiative Wong took up was founding the Tanjung Aru Marine Ecosystem (TAME) centre.

The centre was initially established in 2020 to raise awareness on the marine ecosystem.

Today, TAME has expanded to include educating the younger generation on composting with upcycling and recycling processes, as well as having an education cor-

ridor comprising insects, preserved marine wildlife shells and others.

Among the insects are the Madagascar Hissing Roach, Dubia roaches, scorpions and white mice.

The TAME centre is also home to other non-governmental organisations in the area.

"We are not the leaders here. We are all working together hand-in-hand with everyone contributing towards the same cause while also creating an environment where we can all support each other," Wong said.

The centre also acts as a collection point for Type 2 and Type 4 plastics, as well as glass for upcycling purposes.

After cleaning them, the items are then shredded into even finer pieces and put through several machines.

"Chairs, clocks and many others have been made using these products. People are usually attracted to the panels, which are akin to plywood, and can be upcycled into various different things.

"This is a good start to let people understand the process of how plastic is being recycled," he said, adding that the machines, management of the centre and product sales and marketing were run by various NGOs, respectively.

Also greeting visitors at the TAME Centre would be its signature glass wall, comprising 24,840 glass bottles.

"It took us about four months to build. The most time consuming process was col-



Wong giving the thumbs up while at a workshop in Langkawi.

lection. All the bottles have also been contributed by the community and locals themselves," he said.

Moving forward, Wong said there was the goal of forming an upcycling community, noting how his time in doing so saw him crossing paths with some specialising in paper and others pallet wood.

"We want to team up so we can do bigger projects and form an association.

"Besides, we also want to enter school to educate and form a club," he said.

Wong also said there was still room for improvement on the upcycling scene, adding that it was the way forward especially when doing things through a social enterprise concept.

"We want to use art to generate conversation, and if possible, help others to create businesses," he said.

Wong said plans are in the pipeline for another WOW exhibition, featuring a forest theme.

"This time, we want to have a canopy walk with animals, insects and flowers," he said.

For his efforts, Wong is named as one of the 10 winners of the Star Golden Hearts Award 2023.

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Putting an end to **food waste**

By **MAHADHIR MONIHULDIN**
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PETALING JAYA: From young, entrepreneur Clara Wan Li Shan's mother has always told her not to waste food because it can easily feed others in need.

Decades passed and her mother's advice has inspired Wan to open one of the first surplus food markets and cafes in the country – Graze Market and Graze Eatery.

Registered under Saving Graze Sdn Bhd, Graze Market sells imperfect fruits and veggies that still taste fresh and tasty to cook and enjoy with family and friends, Wan said.

"Our fruits and veggies are imperfect for minor external reasons such as they might be too small or big, crooked in shape, have colour or scarring issues.

"But they still taste fresh. We buy them from farmers because they would otherwise be disposed of which is a big waste.

"It is estimated that farmers use some 30% of their income to plant these crops in their farms," said Wan, 36, who once worked at a non-governmental organisation which helps low income communities.

Her team of nine employees will contact farmers everyday and ask what imperfect produce has to be discarded, so that they can buy them at discounted rates, bring them back to their market and sell them at affordable prices to the public.

"Our mission is to reduce food waste and provide affordable, premium and healthy food for the people," she said.

Graze Market also sells their own signature items processed from surplus fruits and veggies to extend their shelf life.

"Our Green Curry Paste is made of surplus chili padi while our Steamboat Chili is made of red chili.

"We also sell strawberry jam, peach jam and orange marmalade. Our best seller Pesto Sauce is made from excess coriander. All these items are sold from RM11 to RM23 at both our market and cafe," she said.

In March this year, Wan and her team took it one step further and opened Graze Eatery cafe which serves mouth-watering dishes made from surplus ingredients.

Graze Market co-founder Shirley Chan Xue Li, 37, said the cafe gives surplus food a second chance by cooking and serving them in the best way possible.

"Our team of experienced cooks serve Western and Asian fusion dishes that are highly praised by customers.

"Most people say they are incredibly yummy and didn't even realise they were



Chan (left) and Wan said they want to help feed underprivileged families and reduce food waste in the country. — Photos by ART CHEN/The Star

made from surplus ingredients," she said.

Chan added that their best selling dish Pesto Spaghetti, from RM18 to RM20, is made from Pesto Sauce and can be eaten with meat, seafood or vegetables.

"It's super tasty and gives a chance for the people to support local farmers and marginalised communities," said Chan, who helped to set up Saving Graze with B40 groups in mind.

Saving Graze has supported 45 farmers and distributors by giving back about RM1.6mil in purchases.

It has also provided food aid to more than 8,000 beneficiaries from B40 communities, children and senior citizen homes, refugee groups, persons with disabilities and foreign workers.

A recipient of the food nutrition programme, Nur Sharzi Bashar, 40, said her third child loves eating fruits, vegetables and meat, ever since he was encouraged

to eat them during the programme.

"My third child's weight, body mass index and general health improved dramatically after receiving nutritious food aid from Saving Graze.

"The feedback from other families have also been positive as they have benefitted tremendously," said Nur Sharzi, who sells street food for a living.

Nur Sharzi was also a beneficiary of the group's Gerai-Up Programme which assists 15 women from three B40 communities in their food and beverage business through a grant worth RM11,000.

"With the grant and business training I received, I have been able to open two stalls in Lembah Subang and Bukit Cherakah which have been profitable in general.

"I owe it all to Clara and Shirley for helping me to open my business and feed my children," she said.

When asked what future goals await Saving Graze and her team, Wan said she wants to expand the business abroad and be recognised as Malaysia's No.1 brand that promotes food surplus as a means to end food waste.

"This is my mini solution to the bigger problem of food waste that requires support from many people and stakeholders.

"And I do it because my mum taught me to never waste food on your plate," Wan said.

For its efforts, Graze Market is named as one of the 10 winners of the Star Golden Hearts Award 2023.

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Graze Market also sells their own signature items processed from surplus fruits and veggies to extend their shelf life.

Thank you

to our winners, partner, judges, participants and volunteers for making the **Star Golden Hearts Award 2023** a success.



10

unsung heroes recognised



Over

190

communities helped



Over

500,000

lives improved