Eye opening experience for students

UNIVERSITI Tun Abdul Razak (UniRazak), one of Malaysia's leading private universities in innovation, leadership and entrepreneurship, recently held a homestay programme for its international students at Kampung Mukut, Tioman Island, Johor.

Held from March 25 – 27, the homestay programme was part of UniRazak's Corporate Social Responsibility programme and involved about 50 members of UniRazak's International Student Society.

It was led by UniRazak Centre for Student Services manager Mohammad Roshdi Samsudin.

The programme was organised with the aim of providing exposure and experience to UniRazak's international students on the lifestyle and traditions of the villagers and fishermen in the Kampung Mukut area.

Under this programme, ran in collaboration with the villagers of Kampung Mukut, the students obtained hands-on experience of the villagers' daily activities and learned about the villagers' culture and tradition.

Another aim of UniRazak's homestay programme was to overcome the feelings of homesickness experienced by the international students.

By creating and offering this programme, the students were able to occupy their free time with memorable experiences which they can later share with their friends and relatives when they return to their home country.

On March 25 the participants arrived at Jeti Mersing and boarded the ferry to Tioman Island at 8am; after a slightly choppy journey they arrived at Kampung Mukut at 11:30am. Some were a little seasick and no doubt felt better to be on firm shores.

The villagers had a welcoming ceremony for them, which was a camaraderie-filled affair in which the students got to know their foster families.

After a short rest they shared lunch together and the Muslims went for their Friday prayers.

The rest of the afternoon was spent in peaceful exploration of the island and rest, until 5pm when the students and villagers gathered in the town hall for some fun-filled games and outdoor activities.

The next day the participants had a quick briefing on the day's events and went out to sea for a few hours of ocean-fishing, an enjoyable if somewhat queasy experience.

This was followed by more outdoor games, lunch, Solaatul Zuhur (Zuhur prayers), a few hours of rest, and more games. The participants played Boling Kelapa (coconut bowling), Jolok Sarang Tebuan and Lari Dalam Gunu (sack racing).

They then performed Solaatul Asr (Asr prayers), had some free time to themselves, performed Solaatul Maghrib (Maghrib prayers), and had dinner.

On their final day of UniRazak's homestay programme, the students gathered with the villagers for some morning exercises and the programme's closing ceremony.

The village head, Aris Hj Ali Bakri, thanked the university for choosing Kampung Mukut for their homestay programme.

He said that although the stay was brief, the villagers were honoured and delighted to host the students and spend time with them.

Oyedele Abdullahi Shola, the student representative, expressed the students' gratitude to their foster mothers and fathers for the special treatment provided.

He said the programme was extremely interesting for the international students as they saw and learnt how village residents live their lives and expressed the hope that UniRazak would implement the programme again.

• For more information look out for the UniRazak advertisement in this StarSpecial.
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