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spotlight

# Passionate about our environment

**F**or many teens in the current generation, caring for the environment is often deemed 'uncool' or rather lame. But for this one group of nature-loving teens who have brushed off criticism from their peers and devoted their free time to nature, caring for the environment is second to none.

That is why they are all members of Yayasan Anak Warisan Alam (YAWA). YAWA educates the younger generation to love and care for the environment through various activities such as an Eco Coastal Cycling Expeditions, Eco Survival Sailing on 'Fajar Samudera' from Lumut to Penang, and visits to forest reserves. All the time, these youngsters keep track of their movements and nature studies to present their findings at the annual TUNZA International Youth Conference which will be held in Daejeon in South Korea this August.

YAWA members are mostly school-going kids, who are all nature lovers inspired by family members or friends. Muhammad Isa Ishak, 14, recently joined the foundation after his brother, Muhammad Sulaiman Ishak, encouraged him. His brother has been a member since age six.

Young Dania Mohd Adzmi joined because her father is one of YAWA's directors. The foundation also includes members who are handicapped. These youngsters are determined to help the environment any way they can.

What I found amazing talking to these teens

NiEXTERS Malik Hisyam and Nur Afiqah, had the opportunity to interview some young environmentalists who were on a nature walk at the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM) in Kepong. They shared their experiences here.

is the way they are so focussed on playing their part to save our planet from the ill effects of man-made problems. While most teens would spend their free time playing video games, watching TV and hanging out with friends, these youngsters say they have little time for themselves. They are more intent on saving the planet. — By Malik Hisyam Zaihan, 15, Setiawangsa

Committed to changing young lives, the Yayasan Anak Warisan Alam (YAWA) or 'Children's Environmental Heritage Foundation' is a non-profit, non-government organisation that aims to instill love and care for the environment in young people.

The initial name of the organisation was Junior Environmental Group of Malaysia (JEGOM) but JEGOM changed its name to Yayasan Anak Warisan Alam and it was registered as a foundation in 1996.

YAWA is now networking with local and international bodies to nurture continuous positive development in young people throughout the different stages of their life.

Almost 100 projects have already been done by YAWA involving hundreds of kids. Their latest focus is on the ocean and its importance to every living thing on this earth. The ocean has been the global garbage bin for centuries; yet, the ocean is the richest source of food and minerals.

On August 17, YAWA will send a group of teens to represent Malaysia in South Korea at Tunza –

programme for students based on nature. I am not really into nature. But I salute all those who join YAWA because when I see how passionate these students are about nature, I realise how important it is to preserve it.

If anybody is interested in joining YAWA, just log in to [www.yawa.org](http://www.yawa.org) and register to be a member. For more information, just e-mail them at [info@yawa.org](mailto:info@yawa.org). — By Nur Afiqah Azizan, 11, Bangi

