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# Plugging into nature

**FIELD DAY:** Youngsters reconnect with Earth and the power and beauty of playing outdoors

You think you have a cool phone application? Try nature. It is way more fun than any digital device...

**Kenny Peavy,**  
teacher and naturalist

**S**QUEALS of delight broke the usual silence of the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) on a recent Sunday morning.

The source was some 18 children from Kampung Bukit Jalil Estate, who were on an excursion sponsored by the Rotary Club of Danau

Desa.

The community service club teamed up with teacher and naturalist Kenny Peavy, who led the environmental education activities and exposed the youngsters to the animals they could discover in the forest and a nearby stream.

In the jungle, the students flipped over decomposing logs to look for worms, fungi, beetles, ants and termites. One lucky group caught a glimpse of a big scorpion before it scurried out of sight and camouflaged itself in the leaf litter.

At the stream, the participants explored under rocks and in dead leaves for tiny fish, dragonfly nymphs, freshwater shrimp and other macro-invertebrates.

After a lunch of mee goreng, they built survival shelters from dead branches and leaves lying on the ground — the highlight of the day as they were able to express their creativity

in making an impromptu shelter from natural materials.

The children were initially shy to sit on the ground or get in the water but once they got started, they did not want the fun to stop, Peavy observes.

"Kids have a natural love for and

attraction to running around in the forest, exploring nature and splashing in a stream but they rarely have the chance to do so nowadays," he says.

He adds that children today are growing up in an increasingly urbanised and developed world where they spend much more time plugged into digital devices and technology than they do outdoors.

"My mission is to reverse that trend; I want to help them rediscover the fun and excitement of playing outside in the forest.

"You think you have a cool phone application? Try nature. It is way more fun than any digital device, and infinitely more interesting," says Peavy.

The children's enjoyment of their outing stands as a testament to the power and beauty of playing outside and connecting with Earth, he adds.

Lim Poh Huh, past president of Rotary Club of Danau Desa, says an experience like this is important for young children.

"This field trip is great fun and a valuable learning experience.

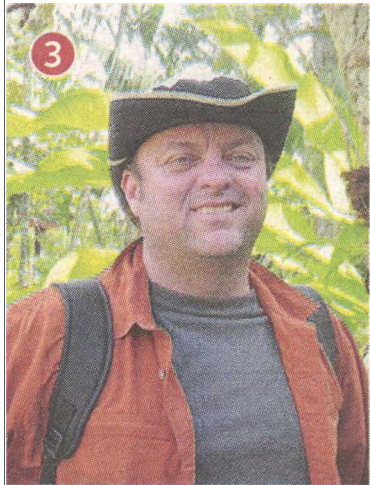
"If the young are to inherit Earth from us, it's best to get involved in caring for it together."

The club provided transportation, breakfast and lunch as well as goodies and prizes for the eager children.

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1. Children have a **natural love** for nature. 2. A participant looks for **forest creatures**. 3. Kenny Peavy wants youngsters to spend more time **outdoors**. 4. Nature is more **interesting** than a digital device. 5. The trip to FRIM was a valuable **learning** experience. — Pictures courtesy of **Kenny Peavy**





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