

## 12 youngsters picked to participate in three-month community programme



TWELVE students from SMK Pulau Indah here are all set to steer their yachts and brave the strong winds and currents in learning how to sail.

The boys and girls have been shortlisted from a pool of 30 to take part in a 12-week community sailing programme fully sponsored by Westports Malaysia and the Royal Selangor Yacht Club (RSYC).

Aged between 13 and 17, all of them were beaming when they received their letter of acceptance to the programme at the RSYC clubhouse recently.

For Muhammad Nor Syazrin Muhammad Idris, 14, he is inspired to become a professional sailor and represent the country in this water sport when he grows up.

“I love outdoor activities and I hope that I can do well in sailing,” Syazrin said yesterday, adding that he learned swimming from his friend two years ago and fell in love with it since.

Nurzaileen Shamira Mohd Zaidi, 14, said she enjoyed the briefing and selection days on the water prior to the shortlisting, adding that it was something new that she would otherwise only dream about trying.

“We were given briefings related to steering and handling of the boat, points of sail and other knowledge.

“Then, we were each on a boat with sail to experiment and try out what we have learned while our instructors kept a close watch behind us,” she said.

Syazrin said although they only spent about 30 minutes on the sea trying to sail their boats around the buoys, it was a unique experience he will never forget.

Another student, Nurul Aina Noor Arifin, 14, said she hoped to follow in the footsteps of her professional sailor father who had been bringing her along in many of his sails since she was small.

RSYC sailing secretary Jeff Harris said the programme was aimed at enabling young boys and girls to participate in the sport of dinghy sailing, while promoting sailing at grassroots level to search and train new talents.

“The students will be trained by qualified sailing instructors from the RSYC on safety, seamanship and sailing at its venue throughout the programme.

“They will be exposed to some basic knowledge and experience in handling a boat before moving on to learn a range of sailing skills and how to sail confidently.

“Then they will continue to rigging, launching and sailing an Optimist or Byte yacht in any direction,” he said, adding that a mini regatta will also be held with the students racing against each other at the end of the training.

Westports Malaysia marketing department head Vijaya Kumar Puspowanam said being jointly involved in the programme was part of the company’s corporate social responsibility.

“We are pleased with this programme and we hope that the children will make use of this opportunity to learn how to sail a yacht.

“Sailing is a thinking sport that inculcates confidence, refines decision making skills and trains the students’ agility.

“I was informed that it costs between RM10,000 and RM12,000 to train a person. I hope the students really learn and have fun,” he said.

School principal Jamaludin Saad said that he hope the students would someday do well and be successful in this sport.

“The programme is not just about sailing. It’s also about building character, confidence and leadership skills for the students.

“We hope the students will realise their potential and further develop it,” he said.