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A YOUNG EXPLORER'S DREAM

INTERVIEW THE EXPERTS



Q&A

By Gerald Chuah

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WE LIVE IN a man-made world of concrete jungle, traffic jams, and technological wonders; and sometimes we forget about the beauty of nature and the importance of conserving it.

For young explorer Ravyna Jassani, she believes that to lose nature is to miss out on everything that is worth seeing.

"There is nothing more beautiful than nature at its best. Humans can create the most amazing buildings and infrastructure in the world, but it can never compare to anything you see in the wild, that was not tampered with by humans.

"I only hope that my generation and all the future generations to come, will realise how beautiful our planet is, and why it is so important to conserve and protect it."

Ravyna who loves adventures and the great outdoors recently had her dream come true by participating in the Pangaea Borneo project in February 2011.

Describing her experience, she said: "It was one of the most memorable experiences I have ever had, and definitely an experience of a lifetime!"

About the project, Ravyna said the organisers stayed true to their main objectives to Explore, Learn and Act as she got to sail around the coast of Sabah with nine other YEPs from around the world on the most amazing boat she has been on, the 'Pangaea'.

"We scuba dived, learnt how to sail, snorkeled, hiked up an extinct volcano, did reef checks, beach clean ups, visited a turtle sanctuary, and a coral and pearl harvesting farm, and learnt from the experts about marine life."

She also met her idol Mike Horn, an African explorer and athlete who circumnavigated the globe along the equator in June 1999 to October 2000,

Ravyna Jassani



in the spectacular adventure called "Latitude Zero."

During the 17-month journey, Horn hiked, swam, canoed, biked, and sailed a total of 46,670 km.

After the Pangaea Borneo project, now Ravyna is second time lucky as she got selected for the 10th YEP Selection Camp to be held in Switzerland from September 25 to October 5. During the 10-day camp at Mike Horn Expedition Centre in Chateau-d'Oex, she will participate in a wide range of activities - both physical and mental to equip her with skills and knowledge for the next YEP Expedition, and also to help her communicate her experience with her peers around the world.

The Mike Horn team also assesses candidates on a variety of traits such as personality, team working skills, and interview skills. Other activities include survival and First Aid courses, paragliding, environmental and sustainability education and sailing among other things.

In this Q&A, Ravyna talks about her love for the environment and what we can do together to make this world a better place.

Q: What do you love about the environment, and what did you learn from your Borneo adventure?

I have always loved the environment but it was only the past couple of years that I have actually taken action. This year I organised the Earth Hour Youth Fest 2011 with the help of Pangaea and the Mike Horn team as well as other organisations.

Something I am really passionate about is Sharks. I am really concerned over the whole issue about shark finning. So many million of sharks are killed every year, and Malaysia is one of the top 10 shark finning nations in the world.

It is really sad how 90 percent of sharks in Malaysia have already disappeared and the only way to overcome this is through awareness and education.

Ever since the Borneo project, I feel I have changed as a person. I feel more confident and motivated to make a difference.

Q: Why are you inspired by Mike Horn?

One of the reasons I am inspired by Mike Horn is because he is living his Dream. He followed his dream even when it was hard, stayed committed to his passion, and made his dream his Life and now he is a world famous Explorer.

That is inspiring to me because nowadays people take the easy route and tend to forget their passions and dreams and end up doing something else.

It is also really inspiring how Mike started the Young Explorers' Program to motivate and encourage youth people to care for our planet by giving us an amazing platform to Explore, Learn and Act to make a difference.

Q: Tell us about the Earth Hour Youth Fest 2011 which you organised.

After I came back from the Pangaea Borneo Project, I felt very motivated and eager to make a difference. As Earth Hour was just around the corner, I thought I would do something in conjunction with that.

My initial plan was to make it a small event with about 20-30 people. However, thanks to Pangaea and the Mike Horn team, two local environmental organisations Friends of Kota Damansara (FoKD) and MYGreen Scouting, and with the support of my family and friends; the event turned out to be a huge success! Held at Padang Kota and Sunway Giza, over 120 youths participated in activities such as planting 50-60 trees, organised a compost workshop, eco band, flash mob, made exclusive T-shirts and bookmarks and got Sunway Giza to turn off most of their lights!

Q: How did you get chosen for the 10th YEP selection camp in Switzerland?

The YEP programme started at the end of 2008 where young adults aged 15-20 from every continent were invited to join Mike on his initial stage of a momentous four-year journey.

From all the applications 40 people were short listed, and only 16 were selected.

I am lucky to be selected for the 10th YEP Selection Camp, and if I do well, I will be one of eight young explorers who gets to join Mike Horn for an Expedition of the Everglades National Park in Florida, and the Gulf of Mexico.

I think all those who are keen on applying for the camp and expedition, really have to show and prove to the team that they are passionate about the environment, and they will make great ambassadors for Pangaea. Currently, there are two expeditions left, and the application window for the 11th YEP Expedition to the Amazon River Basin is now open!

To apply one has to complete an application form from www.mikehorn.com/en/yep, and make a video.

Check out Ravyna's qualifying video at <http://bit.ly/mV2nZB>.



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