

Zurich Malaysia bonds with Orang Asli as part of its Zurich Community Week

70 Zurich Malaysia employees came together with EPIC Homes to build homes for Orang Asli families in Batang Kali

Ulu Yam, 23 July 2019 – Whenever it rained, Faisal, 13, would have to seek shelter in order to do his homework as the water would leak through the roof of the shack his family stayed in. Such was the living conditions of Faisal’s family, who is the eldest son of Zeek bin Maran and Sari binti Sekat.

In addition to Faisal, Zeek and Sari have three other children; Manisa, 11, Azura, 9, and Asram, 6. Zeek, who earns a living as a factory worker and is the sole breadwinner for his family cannot afford to raise his children up in a conducive home. However, he is determined to provide the best he can for his children so that they can finish schooling and have opportunities for a better life.

Their family has been living in a dilapidated shack in Kampung Orang Asli Gurney in Batang Kali, Ulu Yam. To add to their plight, their house is usually uncomfortably hot and humid during the day, and poorly lit by just a fluorescent tube at night.

This all changed over a weekend as Zurich Malaysia, in collaboration with local social enterprise EPIC Homes, volunteered to build two new homes; one for Zeek’s family and another for Suratman and Rafeah’s family of seven who are also residents in the same Orang Asli settlement.

Suratman and Rafeah have been married for 20 years and have five children ages 8 to 17; Siti Aslina, Samsul, Puteri, Hisyam, and Haira. Suratman puts food on the table by selling forest produce such as fruits and flowers while his wife works as a housekeeping staff. They have been living in a cramped shack. Like Zeek, Suratman too wants to provide a conducive environment for his children to at least complete their secondary education.

A total of 70 Zurich Malaysia employees, from clerical staff to senior management, spent three days alongside the families to build the new homes for them. Each home features a foyer, a hall, three rooms, and a kitchen; providing ample space for the families especially the children when they are doing their homework. The ceilings even have clever spaces for storage.

This initiative is part of the annual Zurich Community Week (ZCW), which is an avenue for Zurich's employees to contribute their time, resources and skills to make a positive difference to the communities in which they live and work.

Stephen Clark, Country Head of Zurich Malaysia, was present during the keys handover ceremony to Zeek and Suratman's new homes. He shared, "Every child deserves a safe and proper roof over their head; it is one of the basic necessities in life. For Zurich Community Week this year, we took the opportunity to address this need for the Orang Asli community as it aligns with our purpose of providing protection for loved ones. It is heartening to see Zurich Malaysia employees giving up their weekend, working under the hot sun for a good cause. Through this process, we ourselves have been so enriched, and rewarded with an invaluable experience."

For additional information and updates on Zurich Malaysia's corporate responsibility initiatives, please visit www.zurich.com.my/csr or its Facebook page at www.facebook.com/ZurichMYS

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