

Be smart when dealing with waste

THE Petaling Jaya City Council (MBPJ) calls them unsung heroes. These are the 10 individuals who were among several award recipients at a recent event organised by the local authority.

The occasion was the latest instalment of the annual PJ Waste Summit, which the local authority organises to train the spotlight on solid waste management and maintaining the cleanliness of public areas.

Despite its rather awkward name, the programme, now in its fourth year, is certainly not a trashy affair.

For one thing, it recognises the importance of efforts at the grassroots level.

For the 10 who were each given the Unsung Hero Award at the PJ Waste Summit, it is a

validation of their "outstanding green initiatives and community outreach activities".

Most of them are PJ residents who believe in actively contributing to their neighbourhoods.

There is, for example, the woman in Bandar Utama who helps out by alerting neighbours when MBPJ's contractors come around to collect recyclable waste.

Another of the "unsung heroes" is a cancer survivor who does not shy away from confronting those who illegally dump rubbish in her neighbourhood.

A 63-year-old resident of SS22A is always keeping an eye on the work performance of the contractors appointed by the council.

Then there is the septuagenarian in

Damansara Utama who is a mainstay in her community's environment and security-related activities.

Among the award winners is an MBPJ employee who often collects recyclables from the streets after-hours.

He sells the materials and donates some of the proceeds.

The things these recipients do may sound simple and unremarkable, but let's face it - few of us are doing the same.

We can offer any number of excuses as to why we are not taking part in community activities or why we do not lift a finger to do something about the piles of roadside rubbish we see near home, but the fact remains that people like the 10 honoured by the MBPJ are

making a difference.

What they do matters because PJ, like any other urban centre, could do with less waste.

The council handles 600 tonnes of garbage every day.

According to the mayor, MBPJ spent about 20% of its budget this year on the disposal of waste at landfills.

It is understandable that the local authority takes the trouble to put together the Waste Summit.

People need to know how to be smarter and more responsible in dealing with waste. And it helps to have role models.

Whether unsung or not, or whether they have awards to show, heroes are proof that we can do better.