

Safe nest for poor kids to study better

Varsity's student volunteers help set up conducive learning space at PPR Lembah Subang 2

By KALAIVANI MURUGASAN
metro@thestar.com.my

IDENTICAL twins Villa Sree and Vaishnavi Sasitharan, from Lembah Subang 2 People's Housing Project (PPR), Petaling Jaya, are eagerly waiting for a study space to be set up at their home.

The nine-year-old pupils from SJK(T) RRI Sungai Buloh, said they would spend more time on revisions than play outside once there was a proper learning space for them.

"Now we do our homework and revisions in the living room, which is very noisy.

"We hope to have our own learning space to concentrate better on our studies," said Villa Sree.

Their study space will be set up by student volunteers from Taylor's University Lakeside campus under the NEST project.

It is a collaboration between the university's School of Education and School of Architecture, Building and Design.

NEST is funded by the Real Estate & Housing Developers' Association (Rehda) and supported by Housing and Local Government Ministry.

The project creates a conducive space in low-cost housing units for

school-going children to study and do homework.

It also aims to create awareness among public housing residents on the importance of a learning space in their home and encourage them to create their own learning space based on the DIY Guidelines prepared by Taylor's students.

The NEST exhibition was launched by Petaling Jaya MP Maria Chin Abdullah.

An earlier beneficiary of the NEST project at the low-cost flats is Hazmaini Mohd Aziz, 34, who has four children between four and 11 years old.

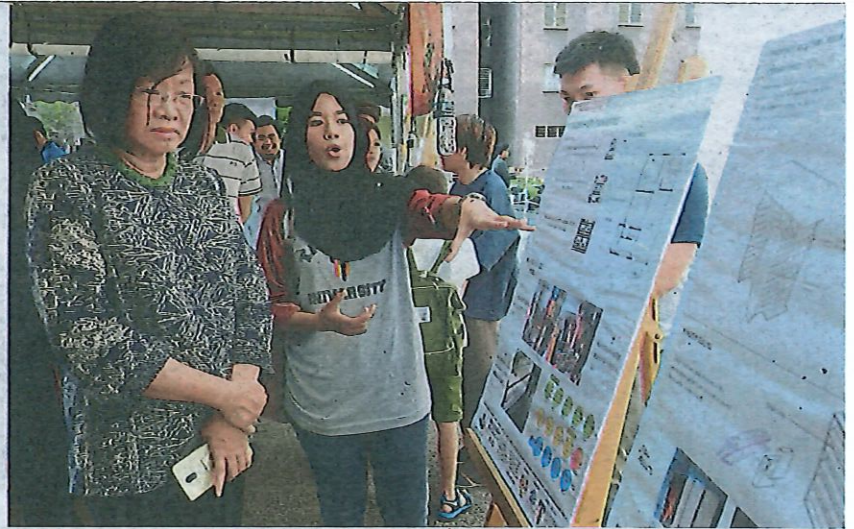
She said her school-going children were now more eager to stay home and study since they had their own learning space since October.

"Previously my children did their homework or revision in the living room or bedroom.

"Now they have a comfortable space to study," said Hazmaini.

Her daughter, Nur Erysha Natasya Mazlan, 11, a pupil at SK Tropicana, said she extended her studying time to two hours after the learning space was set up.

NEST project coordinator and Education Faculty lecturer Hema Letchamanan said having a space of their own at home was vital to



A Taylor's University student explaining to Maria the process of creating learning spaces in PPR Lembah Subang 2.

prevent the children from finding a place outside that could put them in a vulnerable situation.

The team plans to build such learning spaces in 12 units of PPR Lembah Subang 2.

Hema said the project's first phase was carried out last year for 10 families in low-cost flats in Port Klang.

"The project is a success as evident from our frequent follow-up visits to the families since the completion of the project. We selected the beneficiaries for this year in July.

"Subsequently our students visited the homes, consulted the homeowners, proposed the designs and executed their plans over three months," she added.

In tandem with that, an exhibition was held at PPR Lembah Subang 2.

"It was not only to showcase the students' work in the 12 flats, but also to spread the message on how important it was to have such learning spaces at home.

"We had free consultation booth where the residents who were not involved in this project could seek advice and suggestions on how they could create a learning space for their children.



A study space created by Taylor's University students for Hazmaini's children in their PPR Lembah Subang 2 flat.

"We also had DIY boards with step-by-step guide to create the space," she said.

Fellow NEST coordinator Dr Camelia Kusumo, a lecturer from the Architecture Faculty, said the team worked with a limited RM500 budget to create a comfortable learning space for each select-

ed unit at PPR Lembah Subang 2.

"This shows the parents that they do not need a huge investment to create a conducive learning space for their children.

"Our project focuses on families with school-going children, especially those in primary school," she added.