



MALAYSIA



10th September - 22nd September 2023



Malaysia Excursion



With the group hovering around 10 students weekly Malaysia planning meetings after school were implemented and included:

- Planning the trip itinerary, liaising with Klang Apex Club and Klang Special School
- Fundraising – sausage sizzles, sponsorship letters, selling workshop made chopping boards, assisting Eileen with the awesome trivia night and Dee with the wonderful art exhibition
- Malaysian guest speakers on customs, culture and etiquette
- Logistics including birth certificates, passports and all appropriate ID
- Finding a new hotel, booking flights
- Malaysian food experiences – creating some tasty Nasi Lemak, Beef Redang and much more
- Buying Australian themed gifts for Klang Special School & Orang Asli Tribal Village children

Prior to 2020, the program really has become a finely tuned, jam-packed trip of a lifetime for the Port students. The visit ensured cultural, educational and fun experiences throughout the time they are away whilst primarily engaging as much as possible with Klang Special School students. This year’s trip proved to be no different, with an action packed 12 days.

Malaysia Timetable 2023

Day/Time	Sun 10 th	Mon 11 th	Tuesday 12 th	Weds 13 th	Thurs 14 th	Friday 15 th	Saturday 16 th	Sunday 17 th	Monday 18 th	Tuesday 19 th	Weds 20 th	Thurs 21 st	Friday 22 nd
7am (Leave Hotel 8am daily)		Showers/Breakfast at Hotel	Showers/Breakfast at Hotel	Showers/Breakfast at Hotel	Showers/Breakfast at Hotel	Showers/Breakfast at Hotel	Showers/Breakfast	Showers/Breakfast	Showers/Breakfast	Showers/Breakfast	Showers/Breakfast at Hotel	Showers/Breakfast at Hotel	Showers/Breakfast at Hotel
8am to 9am	Meet at School 7-45am Travel at 8am airport Check In 9am	8am Hotel Breakfast with any Apex crew Money Change	9am Klang School Welcome Tour	9am Klang School Activities	8am Klang School Activities	8am Travel to Slim River Orang Asli Village	GOPENG Rainforest White Water Rafting	GOPENG Rainforest Caving	GOPENG Rainforest Activity	Batu Caves	Sunway Lagoon	9-30am Klang school	9-30am Klang school Morning Tea
9am			Morning Tea	Morning Tea	Morning Tea	Morning Tea	Morning Tea	Morning Tea	Morning Tea	Morning Tea	Morning Tea	Morning Tea	Morning Tea
10am to 11am	Check in and Board	11am Pulau Ketam	Klang School Activities	Klang School Activities	Klang School Activities	Slim River Orang Asli Village	GOPENG Rainforest WWR	GOPENG Rainforest Caving	GOPENG Rainforest Activity	Kings Palace	Sunway Lagoon	Klang school	Klang school
1pm		Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
11-40am Depart to KL	Fly	Pulau Ketam	Klang School Activities	Klang School Activities	Travel to KL Central Markets &	Travel to Gopeng Rainforest Kellies Castle	GOPENG Rainforest Abselling waterfall	GOPENG Rainforest Village Tour	Travel back to Klang	Driver to Advise	Sunway Lagoon	Bukkit Tinggi Mall, Klang	3pm Leave Port Klang
4pm - 6pm	Arrive KL 5-20pm Collect bags	Stock up on snacks	Showers, relax & freshen up time	Showers, relax & freshen up time	Petronas Towers 5pm	GOPENG Rainforest Check in	GOPENG Rainforest Abselling waterfall						Flights Leave KL Friday 22 nd @ 6-45pm
6pm to 10pm	Arrive at hotel approx. 7pm Check in to rooms Meal/Unpack	Dinner 7pm Little India	7pm I-city/ Temple	Palace / Taman Rakyat walk Steamboat dinner	Petaling St Markets Dinner at Markets	GOPENG Rainforest River swim Evening activity Night Hike	GOPENG Rainforest Evening Activity Blow Dart Shooting comp	GOPENG Rainforest Evening Activity ???	6pm Satay Dinner at Hawkers Market	Out with Apex	Relax at Hotel Take away dinner	7pm Farewell Dinner (Apex, school staff and students @ Klang Club)	NOTE Arrive Perth Saturday 23 rd Sept @ 12-30am Home & own bed
12pm		Lights Out	Lights Out	Lights Out	Lights Out	Lights Out	Lights Out	Lights Out	Lights Out	Lights Out	Lights Out	Lights Out	Lights Out

The Malaysia 2023 Crew



Staff: Mike Gilbert & Dionne Garvey

Students: Natalee Fisher Strettlles, Maya Fowler, Chelsea Arnold, Jack Headland , Jordan Davies, Brody Haworth, Gus Sambrailo, Diana Lorenzo – Perez, Danesh Hachemi- James.

Leaving Perth

Fifteen boxes of donations, nine student and staff suitcases, and cabin luggage all headed to the airport to be checked in and finally bound for Malaysia. The bus was loaded up, and a very excited group of students and staff were embarking on their journey. The group looked awesome in their newly designed 2023 Malaysia polo shirts.



Danesh did his best to get us all arrested, but the federal customs police looked after us all well. Batik Airlines proved to be a great option, thanks to our Apex friend Sanjay who is a pilot for Batik and got us a great deal on flights.



The hot and humid weather of Malaysia hit our faces as soon as we left the airport terminal doors. Luckily the bus company had remained in business and Sri Travel and Tours awaited our arrival with a fabulous bus, with plenty of room for all the boxes and suitcases.



Day 1 – Our new home – Check-in to Crystal Crown Hotel & Pulau Ketam

After a good flight it was time to settle into our new home for the next 12 nights, a new hotel called the Crystal Crown in Port Klang. A busy Port about 5 times bigger than Fremantle. The hotel looked great and boasted a pool, something we hadn't had before. Not centrally located like Little India, but we had our driver locked in for every time we needed to move about.



We stocked up on a essential items, water for the rooms and some snacks before heading off to Pulau Ketam for the first tour of the excursion.



A 45-minute boat ride landed us on Pulau Ketam, literally translated, means “Crab Island”. It is a small island located off the coast of Klang. The island was easily accessible from the Port Klang jetty by ferry. The “floating houses” that come to view as we approached the island is a sight to awe us Perth city slickers.



Perching casually on long wooden stilts, these dwellings are suspended about one to ten metres above sea level and serve the local community that fish and farm the local produce.



Pulau Ketam offered a unique opportunity for the team to witness and experience the lifestyle of fishermen and to try out the amazing seafood.



After full on day, and the fun of Pulau Ketam it was back to the hotel to freshen up then out into Little India to take in the busy vibrant and colourful streets whilst trying out some of the local foods and of course a bit of shopping! The girls even delved into some Henna hand and arm art.



Natalee is not so sure about the Dosa she is presented with. Dosa is a thin South Indian crepe made from fermented batter of ground black lentils and rice. Dosa's are generally served hot, often with a chutney, sambar or masala.



It's great for Dee and all the students to see some of the vibrancy and sounds of Little India. Mike also takes time to catch up with Life Member of Klang Apex Club Thava who welcomes the 2023 group.



Day 2 & 3 – Klang Special School & I- city

Klang Special School is an integral part of this annual excursion. Every year Port students, staff and all of our supporters make a huge difference to the lives of many of the orphan children there. They enhance Klang School by providing new equipment and facilities, by donations of toys, games and educational items. This year the team with the support of family, friends, businesses, Port staff and other students were able to donate approx. \$12,500 (35,000 Malaysian Ringgit) that equates to 8 orphan students sponsored. Students and our extended supporters should all be so proud of this achievement and the difference it has and will make to their lives.



The trip has created so many long-lasting memories for all concerned and the 2023 group have been ambassadors to Australia and Port School.



Mike & Dee were delighted to see Port students fully engaged and embracing the activities with the special school students and their level of interaction with them. It was fabulous to see the smiles that they brought to the faces of the young people there when they joined in.

There were many special moments and close bonds made this year and you can see for yourselves from these pictures the smiles on both Klang and Port students faces tell the story for you all.



The staff at the school have welcomed us back with open arms and despite a few staffing changes it was great to be able to see some old faces as well as meeting many new. After four years, the Klang students are a few years older and have changed, but many remembered Port School, and Venu who is in the Sheltered workshop along with many of his friends were so pleased to see us all.



Whilst there, students donated some teaching resources, toys and equipment to the teachers and students which was much appreciated.



Port students undertaking activities with the Klang kids



Danesh is pictured with a very young boy whose parents have sadly abandoned him, fortunately he is in a care home and Port and Klang Apex club are assisting with his place at Klang Special School next year. If you would like to help these less fortunate young people in Malaysia, please email Mike Gilbert (Malaysia Coordinator) mike@portschool.wa.edu.au - every donation big or small helps a little.

Students were keen to have a look around the Klang School sustainable garden. Previously, Port students have helped plant new seeds and vegetables in the schools sustainable garden that they not only use for their own food and meals, but also sell to shops and the local community.



The garden has flourished over the last several years with chilis, zucchini, spinach, bananas, papaya, moringa, corn, bok choy to name just a few things.



Later in the evening, the crew headed to the very ornate Sri Mahamariamman Hindu temple at I-city Shah Alam.



The Sri Mahamariamman Temple is the oldest Hindu temple in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Founded in 1873, it is situated at edge of Chinatown in Jalan Bandar (formerly High Street). In 1968, a new structure was built, featuring the ornate 'Raja Gopuram' tower in the style of South Indian temples.

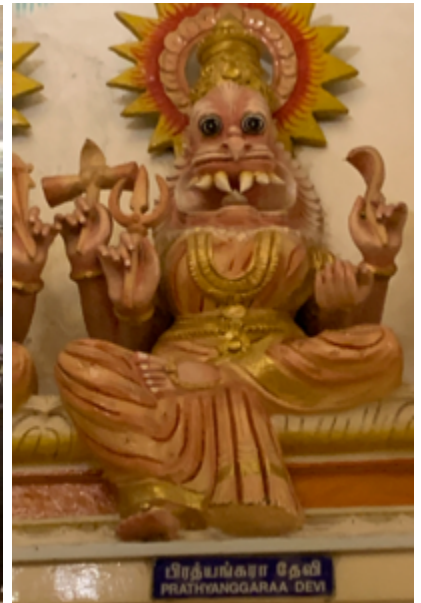


From its foundation, the temple provided an important place of worship for early Indian immigrants. It is now an important cultural and national monument.

As always, there was a very warm welcome from the members of the temple and we were encouraged to take a look around after taking off our shoes and washing our feet.



Staying with tradition, you have to walk around clockwise, otherwise its deemed bad luck.





After the temple, students took in the lights of the colourful i-City with an amazing array of shapes, colours and sizes and, of course, a bit of fun on some of the rides and attractions at I-City!

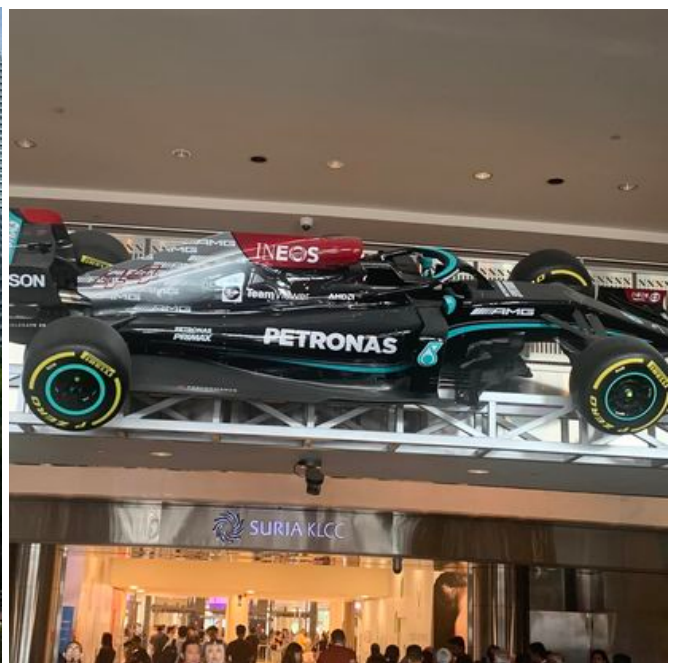


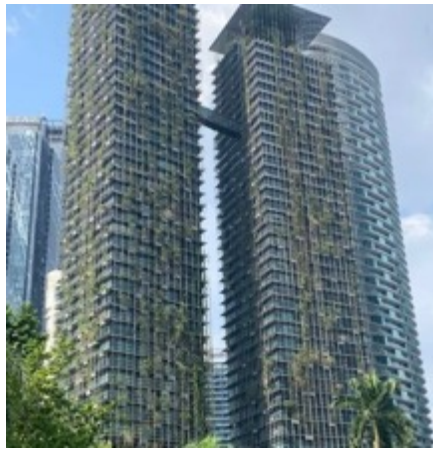
Day 4 – Petronas Towers, Central Market & Petaling St Markets

The tried and tested trip to KL (Kuala Lumpur) is always a winner, the amazing architectural Twin Towers wowed our student's and they were able to head up to the skybridge and the observation deck, despite a few wobbly legs, it was an awesome experience for everyone.



The towers were designed by Argentine architect César Pelli. Planning on the Petronas Towers started on 1 January 1992 and included rigorous tests and simulations of wind and structural loads on the design. Seven years of construction followed, beginning on 1 March 1993 with the excavation. This involved moving 500 truckloads of earth every night to dig down 30 metres (98ft) below the surface. The 88-floor towers are constructed largely of reinforced concrete, with a steel and glass facade designed to resemble motifs found in Islamic art, a reflection of Malaysia's Muslim religion.





Petaling Street is a Chinatown located in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Haggling is a common sight here and the place is usually crowded with locals as well as tourists. The area has dozens of restaurants and food stalls, serving local favourites such as Hokkien mee, Ikan Bakar (barbecued fish), asam laksa and curry noodles. Traders here are mainly Chinese but there are also Indian, Malay, and Bangladeshi traders.



Port students had a look at all the fake goods, as well as experiencing the smells and culture of the numerous stalls.



Traders start to fill Jalan Petaling from midmorning until it is jam-packed with market stalls selling everything from fake designer handbags to jackfruit.



Roasted chestnuts & fresh Rambutan at the market stalls



Day 5 – Slim River Orang Asli Kampung

After an action-packed few days at the school and around Kuala Lumpur, it was time to head off for some more cultural experiences in the Cameron Highlands, stopping at Slim River Orang Asli Village (Kampung) and Kellies Castle on the way to our now regular spot in Gopeng Rainforest.



Port students had food hampers, toys, musical instruments and games to donate and villagers put on a warm welcome with music, song, dance and a feast of traditional foods.





The village children were fabulous and loved their new hats and toys. Port students even played some games including soccer, musical chairs, head n tails as well as coconut bowling and hoop the cockerel (yes your read that correctly)!!



Day 5 – Kellies Castle & Arrival at Gopeng Rainforest Resort

Kellie's Castle is located in Batu Gajah, Kinta District, Perak, Malaysia. A Scottish planter named William Kellie Smith built the unfinished ruined mansion. Kellie's Castle was meant to be a home away from home for William Kellie Smith in the 20th Century. Being far away from home, Kellie desired his new residence to be reminiscent of his home back in Scotland. The castle is perched on top of a hill in what used to be a rubber plantation estate.



William Kellie Smith was an interesting man who was popular with his South Indian workers. Kind at heart, he erected a Hindu shrine for his workers on the castle premises. As a token of appreciation, his workers erected a statue of Kellie complete with a white suit and hat. Construction of this unique castle began in 1915. However, it came to an abrupt halt with Kellie's sudden death in 1926. The solitary castle looks almost surreal in these wild plantations of Perak and it projects a strong personality and an aura of mystery.



After a hot and sticky day on the road, we all arrived at Gopeng and our accommodation for the next few nights. Gopeng is set in the tranquility of the Cameron Highlands and is truly idyllic.



Gopeng is a small town located about 18km south of Ipoh & 16km north of Kampar in Perak State, Malaysia. It is about 200km north of Malaysia's capital, Kuala Lumpur.



The rainforest is blessed with rich natural environmental surroundings. With many crystal clear rivers, streams, local and native villages, orchards, nearby caves, waterfalls, flora and fauna, it is a harmonious blend of nature and diversity providing the perfect getaway to nature and eco-adventure.



While trekking in the nearby Malaysian rainforest, we were rewarded with the unique sightings of the world's largest flower, the rare Rafflesia, beautiful Rajah Brooke butterflies, giant stick insects and many others. This vast area is a paradise for nature lovers and adventurers to explore further.



Day 6, 7 & 8 – Gopeng Rainforest – Adventure Activities - Ulu Geroh Waterfall Abseiling

Our first full day consisted of white water rafting and abseiling down a waterfall certainly not for the faint hearted!!!



On the river, students had the thrills of tackling rapids and paddling down clear water amidst lush rainforest and passing some old rehabilitated tin mining sites. Having had heavy tropical rains the day before meant the waterfall really was in full flow, which made it a challenging descent for all those brave enough to give it a go.



Students being put through the challenges of the Kampar River rapids!!!



An exhausting day abseiling down waterfalls and on the river, its always fun to have a truck ride back to camp through the jungle whilst dodging the overhanging palm leaves.



Later that afternoon after a much needed lunch and rest, we headed to the nearby Ulu Geroh Orang Asli Settlement to have a tour around and learn about traditional village life.



Most of their dwellings, called "wind screens," are made from jungle materials, such as bamboo, wood, leaves, sticks, and rattan.

A very simple dwelling usually consists of a small and rather narrow sleeping platform. However, others, such as the Temiar, live in longhouses. Every longhouse has a number of divisions or compartments, each with a separate hearth or fireplace.



Students were treated to some traditional food, tour of their homes, learned about their native ways as well as having fun learning to shoot a blow pipe in a very competitive and thrilling competition.



Chelsea took out the contest with Natalie in a very close second place. To finish, they all tried out traditional fishing using just a bamboo, line and hook.



Day 6, 7 & 8 continued Gopeng – Gua Tempurung Cave

Before leaving Gopeng, it was time for some caving at Gua Tempurung. A great addition to this year's excursion was certainly a challenge but also a very big hit. These amazing limestone caves at first seemed a bit tourist like, however that was levels 1 & 2. Level 3 turned hard-core and put students through their paces having to crawl through muddy wet water to get through the cave system.



Tempurung Cave (Malay: Gua Tempurung) is a cave in Gopeng, Perak, Malaysia, it is concealed within this limestone massif is an intricate system of caves of various dimensions honeycombed inside the limestone hills.



It is popular among spelunkers, or caving enthusiasts. More than 3 km long, it is one of the longest caves in Peninsula Malaysia.

Part of it has been developed as a show cave with electric lighting and walkways and there are a range of tours of different lengths and difficulty.



A fine river cave, the river passage runs about 1.6 km through the hill. There are three very large chambers and some spectacular stalactites and stalagmites as the students navigated their way through the guided twists and turns of this spectacular cave system.



It's always sad to say goodbye to Gopeng and our awesome hosts David and Janice, what starts off as being nervous reservations turns into staff and students not wanting to leave the tranquility, action and adventure of the Cameron Highlands rainforest resort.



Day 9 - Batu Caves, Istana Negara (Kings Palace) & Independence Square

Batu Caves is a limestone hill that has a series of caves, and cave temples in Gombak, Selangor, Malaysia. It takes its name from the Sungai Batu (Batu River), which flows past the hill and also it is the tenth (Pattu in Tamil) limestone hill from Ampang. Batu Caves is also the name of the nearby village.



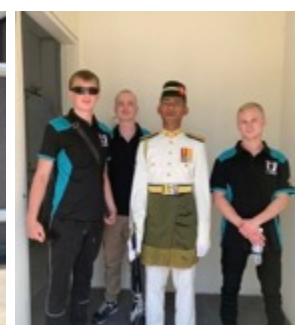
The cave is one of the most popular Hindu shrines outside India and is dedicated to Lord Murugan. It is the focal point of the Hindu festival of Thaipusam in Malaysia.



We were lucky enough to take a drive by the Kings Royal Palace (Istana Negara) and a few of the students fancied themselves as the newest members of the Royal guards.



The Istana Negara is the official residence of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, the monarch of Malaysia. It is located along Jalan Tuanku Abdul Halim in Segambut, northwestern Kuala Lumpur. The palace opened in 2011 and replaced the old Istana Negara, which was located in central Kuala Lumpur.





As we headed into central Kuala Lumpur, we passed some of the historical buildings on the way to the Petronas Twin Towers. The Sultan Abdul Samad is a late nineteenth century building located along Jalan Raja in front of the Dataran Merdeka (Independence Square) and the Royal Selangor Club in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.



The building originally housed the offices of the British colonial administration, and was known simply as Government Offices in its early years. In 1974 it was renamed after Sultan Abdul Samad, the reigning sultan of Selangor at the time when construction began.



Day 10 – Sunway Lagoon

After a very busy schedule, it was time for some fun and relaxing at Malaysia's largest theme park. Sunway Lagoon is like Adventure World on steroids with a water park, wildlife park, thrill-seeking rides and Nickelodeon-themed park all in one place.

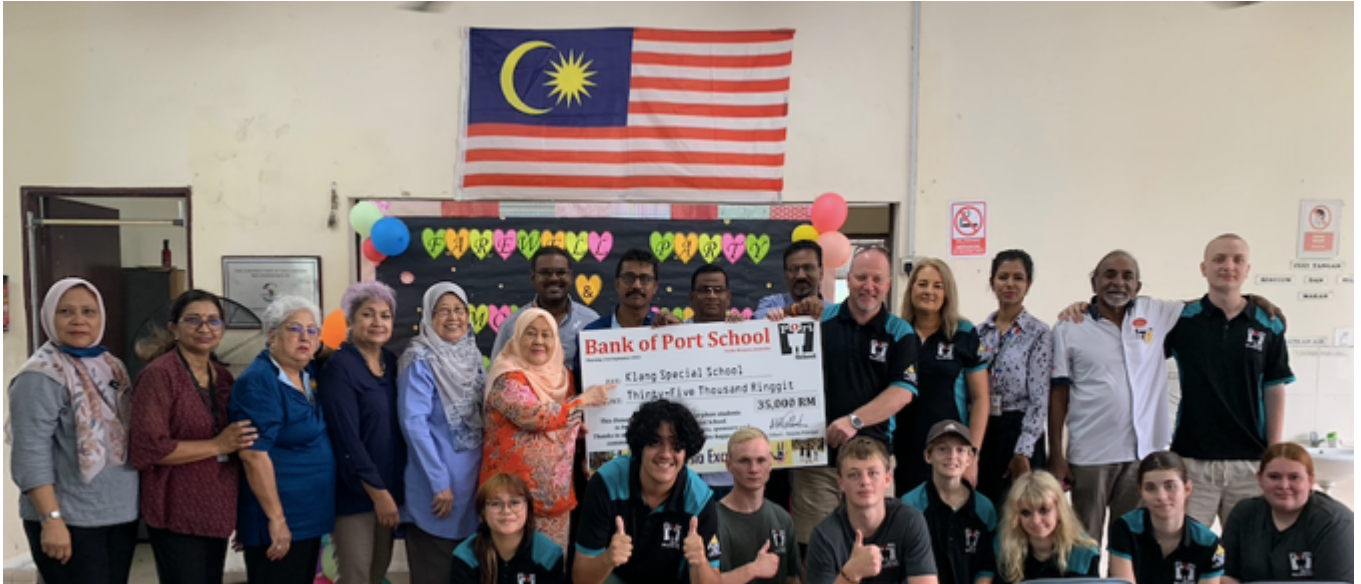


From slides to rides and archery to paintball and bikes, Mike and Dionne did not see the students for the whole day!!



Day 11 – Klang School – Farewells and Donations

Klang School proved to be a very special place for us all once again this year and sadly it was time to start saying our goodbyes. However, our wider Port community had once again achieved something very special in being able to donate 35,000RM, approximately \$12,000 that would sponsor orphan students to attend Klang Special School once again. On top of that students took over a lot of equipment and resources for the school



Memories have been created, emotional tears have been shed and lifelong friendships, and stories are ingrained in the minds of all the 2023 Malaysia crew. These photos being shared in this newsletter, tell a small tale of how that has happened and come about and how this 2023 crew have made it a very special excursion for everyone concerned.



Klang School offers a variety of programs to the special needs students starting with the Early intervention program which offers educational programs to under 6 year olds. Then there is the school program, which focuses on 7 – 17 years olds and is broken down into 4 levels.



There is also the vocational program that introduces: Sewing, Handicraft, Living skills, Academic (Mathematics, Malay, English and Social Moral) and other activities such as Swimming, Computer Skills, Recreational Activities, Chess Club, Horse Riding, Educational Outings and Sports.



There is also a specialty service such as the physiotherapy room that offers invaluable and often unaffordable resources to the students and their families through volunteer physio's that aim to help improve their student's quality of life and mobility.



Lastly there is the Sheltered Workshop program targeted toward students that have completed the vocational program. There is a probation period of 3 months with paid work offered including: assembling, packaging, labeling, sorting, quality control, loading and unloading of goods.



And lastly the trip to Malaysia would not be possible without trying some of the awesome food, Chinese Steamboat, Satay, Banana leaf curry, Dosai, Ice Kachang (Ais Kacang) to name just a few dishes



Thank you to everyone

As always, this excursion is not possible without support from individuals, groups, and businesses as well as our friends and community in both Perth and Malaysia. The friendships, partnerships and support has once again been amazing and we hope we have mentioned all of those involved below, as well as capturing some of the highlights from the Malaysia 2023 journey.



Selangor & Federal Territory Association For The Mentally Handicapped (SAMH)
Serving The Mentally Handicapped Since 1964

Adrian Boyling
Andrea Tenger
Anne Gee
B. Russell
Chelsea Arnold
Dennis Colbung
Eileen Vlahovich
Ian Dixon
Jill Ansell
John Jenkins
Kate Dunn
Louise Ruyg
Michelle Timms
P. Cadd
Suresh Murthy
Tim Murphy
Busselton Apex Club

Andrew Bone
Ann Hamblin
Ann Jones
Brett Kelly
Chelsea Hainsworth
Dorrie Sherwin
Emily Green
Ian Cantley
Joy Cromwell
Jim & Julie Sumpter
Leeanne Willows
Marcia Ryan
Molly Donaldson
Port Staff
Sanjay Thaker
The Gilbert Family
Northern Ladies Craft Group

Andrea Stacey
Andre Horsley
Ben Crappsley
Christine Vicary
Dan Duggan
Elise Haygarth Farrer
Harry Hummerston
Jade F
Julie Richmond
Klang Apex Members
Louise Elscott
Michelle Horrocks
Nicole Buck
Port Students
Thelma Cluning
The Sherwood Family

