

Stories of our youth

FOUR young Malaysians tell S. INDRA SATHIABALAN the stories behind their contributions to *Negaraku*, The Best 1Malaysia Stories On Air. The stories will be screened over Astro Channel 318 in conjunction with Merdeka.

► **VS Dubashan Subramanian**, 26, from Klang, combined his passion for animation, music and advertising to make the animated short film *Astro Brings Out The 1Malaysia Story In Me*. It revolves around the creation of a 1Malaysia sculpture (by three spheres representing the major races) which is attacked. An Astro helicopter comes to the rescue in time.

"This video was inspired by my mother who passed away 1½ years ago from brain cancer. I have many friends from all races and sometimes I would have problems with them. When I told my mother, she would say 'Son, always remember and bear in your heart, show your love to others as you expect love in return. At the end of the day, we are all human'. I took this as an inspiration of humanity to create my story of 1Malaysia."

"After watching my short film, I hope viewers of all ages throughout Malaysia would keep the 1Malaysia spirit burning in their hearts," said Dubashan.

He feels that unity is important for the races in the country. As to why he chose to spread his message via animation, Dubashan said that he is reaching out to Malaysia's future generation – the children. "Sometimes children understand animation, music and cartoons better than words or pictures. I'm sure our young Malaysians would understand and enjoy my story."

Dubashan holds a certificate in architecture from Kolej Komuniti Sabak Bernam, diploma in architecture from Politeknik Ungku Omar, Ipoh and is pursuing a Bsc. Housing Building & Planning (Architecture) at Universiti Sains Malaysia in Penang. He works part time as an interior designer, logo and product designer.



► On seeing that there was no real positive postings on YouTube for Malaysian teenagers, **Mohd Zulhelmie Zulifen**, 26, who hails from Nilai decided to make a video on the young Malaysians' aspirations. The mechanical engineering student at UiTM, Penang, finished his short film a year ago.

"It is called *Satu Remaja Satu Malaysia*. I was watching TV when I saw this ad calling for entries for Astro's MyStory and I realised that my film fitted what they wanted perfectly," said Zulhelmie.

The film features many young people of different races standing against the backdrop of KLCC to express their aspirations for Malaysia.

"Some of them are my friends, others are strangers whom I approached on the spot. I hope that people who watch my film will be able to see that young people have the right to speak their mind," said Zulhelmie who is tired of young people constantly being branded as troublemakers and slackers.

Zulhelmie hopes to eventually take up a filmmaking course and plans to continue making short films.



► **KL-boy Ryan Tan**, 25, is a producer/script-writer in charge of producing promotional short films for UCSI University. Each of his four short films for MyStory was made for a different occasion. *1Malaysia Unity, Peace & Tolerance=Friendship* was made last October. The second, *We Are 1*, was made in November last year. Both were based on the prime minister's 1Malaysia concept.

The third, *Home*, was made for Chinese New Year and *1Malaysia Mother's Day* was for Mother's Day in May.

Though some of his stories aren't explicitly about 1Malaysia, Tan begs to differ. "1Malaysia is about friendship, respect, love and gratitude. The Merdeka month is a good time for us to show our friendship, respect, love and gratitude to one another as well as pay tribute to those who have sacrificed and contributed in the building of our nation and to make this a better place for future generations. All these sum up the overall message that we are trying to convey through the short films."

He hopes that those who watch his film will learn to be unbiased and embrace one another with love and respect despite our differences. "Learn to be appreciative and grateful always for everything others have done for us," Tan said.

► **MIRI-born, Roy Ajong**, 20, contributed two short films so as "to contribute something to celebrate our independence day".

"*MH is YOU* is a short documentary that depicts Malaysian hospitality in our everyday lives. Malaysian hospitality cannot be seen, but only felt."

Memories (his second film) was inspired by a Malay proverb: *Seperti air yang dicincang tidak akan putus*.

Roy's inspiration comes from life, friends and family. "Hopefully it will inspire others to create something similar."

Roy runs an independent production crew focusing on creating online content in the form of short films. He is also pursuing a degree in mass communication.

