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M'sian youths win Diana Award

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English language and environmental changemakers shine on global stage

CELEBRATING SUCCESS

TWO Malaysians – Tunku Abdul Rahman Foundation scholar Nehemiah Aaron Nathan (*pic*), 25, and nonprofit Youths United For Earth (YUFE) co-founder Max Han, 19 – made the nation proud when they were honoured with the 2023 Diana Award.

Established in memory of Diana, Princess of Wales, The Diana Award is the most prestigious accolade youths can receive for their social action or humanitarian work.

Nehemiah, who is studying electrical and electronics engineering at Universiti Tenaga

Nasional (Uniten), co-founded The EduLab, a social enterprise aimed at improving English proficiency among Malaysian students, especially in the B40 community.

Nehemiah and his friends – Syaarveeni Ashok, Ho Jia Da, Lee Mei Yan and Chan Yew Joe – developed the “Zing! English Card Game”, using a game-based learning approach to help children stay engaged with learning English.

The impact of their work was proven when over 850 children from 15 national primary schools and tuition centres within the



Klang Valley experienced gains in their English literacy.

Nehemiah said he was truly humbled, honoured and thankful to God for the recognition.

“I felt incredibly privileged to represent the nation,” he said in a Uniten press release, adding that the Diana Award is an independent acknowledgment of one’s capacity to drive genuine change.

Han advocates for environmental justice and environmental defenders’ rights in South-East Asia, with YUFE mobilising Malaysians nationwide for

environmental action through storytelling, grassroots projects, and policy advocacy.

He has also launched Malaysia’s largest sustainability mentorship programme that connects undergraduates with environmental leaders globally, resulting in internships, jobs, and eco startups, having led over 70 youths in spearheading campaigns that have reached 30,000 Malaysians.

A total of 189 youths from 31 countries around the world were honoured in a virtual award ceremony on June 30, a day before Diana’s birthday on July 1.

To be eligible for The Diana Award, nominees must be aged between nine and 25, and have been carrying out their activities for a minimum of 12 months;

nominations made by family members are not accepted, according to the award website.

Prince William of Wales and Prince Harry, the Duke of Sussex, delivered recorded video messages to the recipients in memory of their mother.

Congratulating the recipients who overcame many challenges to get here, William said the award recognises the power of people to inspire change.

“Every single young person we are celebrating today has been on their unique journey driven by their own passions, perspectives and life experiences.

“What unites them is their courage, compassion and dedication to improving the lives of others.”