

For Immediate Release

MOTTAINAI! Let's Go Green on Oct 24 – Malaysian Environment Week

A CSR community campaign on resource conservation by Panasonic Malaysia

Subang Jaya 24 October 2009 – MOTTAINAI! One hundred children from Subang Jaya, USJ and Shah Alam got a taste of what it's like to Mottainai for a good cause today.

The participants of this event were kept busy learning more about how to Recycle, Reduce and Reuse, while enjoying a few games and activities which filled the surrounding area with lots of excited laughter.

The children are the second batch of young Malaysians to participate in Panasonic Malaysia's pilot project– "Mottainai", a community-driven campaign to raise children's awareness of resource conservation especially in Recycling, Reducing and Reusing.

Today, in conjunction with Malaysian Environment Week, Panasonic Malaysia gave the kids a taste of what it's like to be eco-friendly by introducing Mottainai to them. Members of the Zone 4 Residents Committee of USJ1 in Subang Jaya and residents were also given a chance to learn more about Mottainai and how it can be easily practiced at home or at work.

What is Mottainai?

The expression "Mottainai!" can be uttered alone as an exclamation when something useful, such as food or time, is wasted. The word closest to Mottainai in English is "What a waste!", "Do not waste!"

The participants will be introduced to the animated character “Mottainai Grandma” from a book of the same title by Japanese author Mariko Shinju. In the drawings, Grandma looks a little stern with her hair up in a bun and cane in hand. She will appear when someone do something “Mottainai” to remind them not to waste. And there's no avoiding her eyes.

"Mottainai!" she says to her grandson, who is brushing his teeth. "One cup of water is enough!"

Throughout the half-day event, participants and guests alike were given ideas on how they can conserve water, electricity and even food.

Panasonic Malaysia Corporate Communications & Branding General Manager Azizah Wahid said: “An interactive Mottainai teaching will be presented to the children to get them participate and engage on Mottainai learnings”.

“The program which was launched in September this year is the continuation of the company’s corporate social responsibility on education and environment at the grass root level targeting the pre-school children”.

“We are happy to be able to reach out to the participants today. Through the Mottainai approach and understanding, we hope children and adults alike will find it fun and remember them through activities conducted,” she said.

“Forty of the children here today participated in our debut program a month ago. They made us proud when they performed at the launch of Panasonic Malaysia’s Power of Innovation exhibition on October 1 2009 at Mid Valley Exhibition Centre”.

Azizah added that: “We will continue promoting Mottainai and instill it in our younger generation through the program we have today. It is never early to give the children a head start and we believe learning should be fun and exciting to keep them interested.”

“Our key facilitator Cik Normah Nordin a renowned fine arts artist, theatre activist and child development educator takes the lead in getting the kids all jived up in the various activities planned out for them. Assisting her is Encik Aiman Roslan a music, filming and broadcasting practitioner”.

About Mottainai

Mottainai is thoughtful Japanese word to think about our gifts that come from nature or persons who make our products. Mottainai is best described in English as “What a waste!” and “Do not waste!”. It refers to a situation in which something of value is being wasted or used without careful consideration or a sense of regret concerning waste when an object or resource is not properly utilized.

Kenyan environmentalist Honorable Professor Wangari Maathai of Kenya, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004, has promoted the word Mottainai as an eco-friendly word which could express 3R in English as "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle". Mottainai also includes 4th R which is Respect.

Maathai visited Japan for an event related to the Kyoto Protocol in 2005. At this time, she learned this word through coverage of the event in the Mainichi Shimbun newspaper. She was impressed by the depth of similarity between the Japanese meaning of the word and equivalent concepts in English and Swahili concerning people's responsibility to respect the earth through frugality and conservation.

Since learning the word, she has promoted its adoption in the international lexicon as a symbol of the traditional worldwide concept of respect for the environment. She has used the word in numerous speeches on a world lecture tour, and while addressing the UN Commission on the Status of Women, she led the audience in a repeated chant of Mottainai.

The concept and story of Mottainai is presented in Mariko Shinju's the author of "Mottainai Grandma". She has sold more than 400,000 copies, reminding Japanese about the tradition of Mottainai, of not being wasteful. She wrote the book because her 4-year-old son didn't understand why it was so important to finish his food.

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