

# Furry wonders

Canines lead the way as MBPJ celebrates World Animal Day.

**C**ANINES once again rocked my world in ways I never imagined possible. It happened at two events in the local community recently. From the looks of it, I was not the only one who was left spellbound by the amazing waggy-tailed wonders.

The Petaling Jaya City Council (MBPJ) celebrated World Animal Day last Saturday. The event was held at a local football field not far from the MBPJ headquarters.

Nearly two dozen dogs of various sizes were specially invited to lope around the area and entertain a crowd of more than 250 who turned up at the event.

The theme of the programme was responsible pet ownership. The council's aim was to educate dog owners on being more caring towards their pets.

To drive home the message, the Malaysian Kennel Association provided working dog breeds such as Rottweiler, Doberman, German Shepherd and Bull Terrier – wrongly labelled as dangerous by some – as furry ambassadors.

The dogs immediately went into action the moment they arrived. Four of them were appointed to escort the VIPs to their seats. They did it without a whimper of protest as they soaked in the attention.

There was no snarling or growling – only lots of tail wags. In fact, many of the participants found the dogs irresistible and cuddly – even those who were initially uncomfortable with their presence. Quite a few of them even



**Wheel Power**

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reached out to pat the dogs as they walked by, whilst others stopped for a photo shoot.

A group of disabled people who have been receiving therapy from their own pets, were pleasantly welcomed with licks of love when the special ambassadors came around.

Although the dogs were initially curious about the wheelchairs and white canes, they quickly accepted these as part and parcel of the special people that they were meeting that morning.

The dogs didn't mind at all when some of the blind participants touched their tails or ears.

It was a joy to watch the faces of wheelchair users and those with walking difficulties lighting up with a smile at the antics of MBPJ's special team.

Needless to say, no one was hurt that day or came away with even a scratch.

Meanwhile, a week earlier, I was at University Putra Malaysia's Dogathon – its 16th annual event to date. With its Halloween theme or in this case "Howl-O-Ween", participants took part in a number of spine-chilling activities such as walking their dogs through the "Valley of the Undead", confronting "Dracula's Coffin" and running into "Werewolves on Wheels".

The organisers of the event, who are students of UPM's veterinary faculty, did not forget to include disabled persons in their programme.

They reserved parking bays for disabled



**See, I'm nice:** A Rottweiler proved how friendly it was at MBPJ's World Animal Day celebrations last Saturday.

drivers. This was placed nearest to the awareness booth run by the disabled. The students made sure that the reserved area was not occupied by the able-bodied.

The portable wheelchair-friendly toilet was well thought out and placed nearest to where most of us were. Thumbs up to the organisers for going the extra mile.

There were special refreshments for the handicapped, too. A special group of volun-

teers were assigned to help the disabled. Even though the ground was soggy, the volunteers offered to push us to the various booths to make sure we had a good day.

As a result of their careful planning, all of us had a great time.

There were more wheelchair-users and blind participants at this year's Dogathon.

It is often kind gestures like these which make a big difference.