



Dog lovers from Kajang, (from left) Pratap Parameswaran Gopal, 35, and T. Lakshmi Devi, 42, with their dogs, Bison, Princess and Roxy having a good time at Dogathon 2019.



Zoe the schnauzer was the Small Breed category champion in the 1.5km dog race.



Dogs and their owners awaiting the flag-off for the dog race. — Photos: YAP CHEE HONG/The Star

Unleashing their love for man's best friend

Over 700 dogs and their owners enjoy fun-filled day at annual canine gathering

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MORE than 700 dogs and their owners had a fun day out at Dogathon 2019 which was themed "Superhero Doggos".

The biggest annual canine gathering in Malaysia was organised for the 22nd time by Universiti Putra Malaysia's Veterinary Medicine Faculty students.

At 8.30am, the 1.5km dog race, the event's main highlight kicked off with participants and their leashed pet canines racing to the finishing line.

There were also many booths selling products and services related to dogs, one of which was the Dog Wheelchair Malaysia booth managed by 34-year-old Wong Che Wey, who was with his paralysed dog, Frosty.

The technical automotive trainer wanted to do something worthwhile for his birthday last year and decided to volunteer at an animal shelter.

"There were many dogs for adoption and I knew Frosty stood a very slim chance of being adopted and may be put to sleep. So, I adopted him.

"Pet wheelchairs from the United States cost a hefty RM2,000 each, so I built one on my own. I know more people would need it, and started advertising my services on Facebook.

"I have built about 100 units so far and the price is between RM250 and RM350 each, depending on its



There were also dogs up for adoption.

size," he said.

There were also other activities for dogs like Dog Maze Run and photo opportunities with their favourite superhero logos. There were also dogs up for adoption and a dog-petting area.

The faculty's dean, Prof Dr Mohd Hair Bejo said Dogathon, which started in 1997 was a platform to address the issue of stray dogs.

"Over the years, we have still maintained the main mission as well as raising funds for various related projects.

"Through this event, we want to create awareness in the Malaysian Animal Welfare Act 2015 which came into effect in 2017.

"We also stress on the impor-

tance of good animal welfare. It is important to reduce stressors on animals, allowing them to express their natural behaviour.

"For example, all dogs that come to the event area have to go through basic medical screening to ensure they are healthy and safe to be in a public space.

"We also have a special care team which can answer any medical questions.

"There are activities for the dogs, which is important for them to lead an active lifestyle as well as bonding with the owners.

"Visitors can also explore the booths to know what the pet industry has to offer," he said.

Dogathon 2019 ambassador



One of the games was to find the dog that could escape the maze in the fastest time.



(From right) Prof Mohd Hair and Thanuja with Pang and his dog Will who was the Big Dog category champion in the dog race.

Thanuja Ananthan said events like this proved dogs were accepted in our multicultural country.

"It has been organised by a veterinary faculty of a local university for many years successfully," she said.

Also present at the event were Meowdog TV presenters Andrew Tan and Xiao Yu Ewe.

More than 2,000 people attended the event, some with their pet dogs while others came to enjoy the atmosphere and see the congregation of the many breeds.

Jaysern Pang, 38, from Serdang, whose Siberian Husky named Will

won first place in the race said he came just to have a good time.

"It is not about the race, but about the cause. I adopted Will three years ago. He was rejected by buyers as he did not look like a typical Husky puppy. However, he grew to become a handsome dog.

"This is my third year participating in the race. It so happened we came in third place in our first race, the second in our second race and today, the champions on our third race!

"It is a good platform to raise awareness on stray dogs as it attracts a strong crowd," he said.



Wong and his paralysed dog Frosty who inspired him to make affordable wheelchairs for disabled pets.



All dogs were subjected to basic health screening before being allowed into the event area.