

URBAN RIVER CONSERVATION ON WHEELS

KUALA LUMPUR, March 2011 – Moved by the ever-growing concerns for the sustainability of Malaysia's fresh water supply, GAB Foundation has embarked on a unique initiative to educate and inspire Malaysians to be more pro-active in safeguarding our urban rivers.

In line with its W.A.T.E.R Project (Working Actively Through Education & Rehabilitation) and in conjunction with the upcoming World Water Day celebrations on March 22, GAB Foundation recently rolled-out its Mobile River Care Unit (MRCU). As its namesake suggest, the MRCU is an interactive education center on wheels designed to reach out to different communities and to drive home the importance of urban river conservation.

The MRCU is a full size van that comes with a mobile exhibition booth. The booth can be set up on any given location and contains informative panels on urban river rehabilitation and conservation. The booth is also able to accommodate up to 30 seated participants for a presentation on urban river conservation. The presentation is delivered by an expert from the Global Environment Centre (GEC), the NGO that GAB Foundation is partnering with, for the W.A.T.E.R. project.. There is also a mini lab available at the booth where members of the public can "inspect" river water quality.

The MRCU is also equipped with a video game console. Members of the public are invited to try their skill on the specially designed river conservation games. Renuka Indrarajah, Director of GAB Foundation, said, "The MRCU is an extension of our successful river rehabilitation initiative involving Sungai Way in Selangor. It is an ideal platform for us to share our experience and knowledge on river rehabilitation to a wider audience. Ultimately, we want to instill a positive change in mindsets by enabling Malaysians to have a better understanding on the need to care for our urban rivers."

According to Renuka, for 2011, the MRCU will visit schools, communities and businesses along the Sungai Way basin.

GAB Foundation's W.A.T.E.R Project was launched in 2007. In partnership with the GEC, a non-profit organisation with vast experience and know-how on river rehabilitation and conservation, the project involved the adoption of a 2.5 kilometre long stretch of Sungai Way. At the time, the river was heavily polluted.

After significant efforts that included community education and engagement programmes, joint community river clean-ups (*gotong-royong*) as well as active management and monitoring of the river, Sungai Way is today a model for a rehabilitated urban river. In addition to the improved water quality index from a Class IV-V to a Class III, fish species such as catfish and snakehead have now returned to the river. Fauna such as herons and water fowls can also be seen in its vicinity.

"Most Malaysians may not be aware that urban rivers relate to our fresh water supply. Urban rivers including monsoon drains eventually flows into lakes and rivers, which are in turn the

primary source of our fresh water. Hence, when urban rivers are heavily polluted, we jeopardise our very source of water,” explained Dr K. Kalithasan, GEC coordinator for River Care Programme.

“We are pleased to be working hand-in-hand with GAB Foundation once again to bring the importance of urban river conservation to a wider audience. Only via a collective change in mindset and lifestyle can we effectively ensure the sustainability of our fresh water supply,” he concluded.

Commercial or public organisations, Residents’ Associations and education institutions that are keen to have a visit from the MRCU can contact GAB Foundation at 03-78614363 or email us at enquiry@gabfoundation.org

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About GAB Foundation:

GAB Foundation was established in 2007 to carry out Guinness Anchor Berhad’s (GAB) corporate social responsibility initiatives in three core areas – environmental conservation, education and community. Within these three key areas, the Foundation strives to identify causes that not only contribute significantly to empowering and enriching the lives of deserving Malaysian individuals and communities, but also resonate with GAB’s corporate values of striving for excellence, acting with integrity and having a genuine respect for people, society and its diversity.

The management and administration of the Foundation is governed by a board of trustees made up of senior members of GAB’s management team and independent nominees.

For more information on the GAB Foundation please visit www.gabfoundation.org .