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Shelter turned into a 'green haven'

NATION

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By Clarissa Chung



Giving back: The student volunteers posing with their handiwork. With them are adviser Zalina Abdul Ghani (third from left) and Tenaga Nasional Foundation director Datuk Dr Shaari Md Noor (fifth from right).



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SHAH ALAM: For residents of Darul Wardah here, they are grateful to have a safe place to call it "their haven".

The home, which houses 26 women and six babies, aims to provide refuge, moral support and spiritual guidance to young Muslim women.

During a recent visit to the shelter, a group of 13 volunteers from Universiti Tenaga Nasional took it upon themselves to do something more. They livened up the premises by upgrading the simple garden into a flourishing one for the residents.

Team leader Muhd Faiz Fikri Ismail, 21, said the residents deserved to be given a second chance.



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"We also felt they may not necessarily get the much-needed support from the community due to social stigma arising from their troubled past," said Muhd Faiz said.

Kickstarting the project in March, the volunteers sought assistance from the Agriculture Department to get herb and vegetable seeds such as chillies, spinach and turmeric.

To irrigate the garden, they built a pond using recyclable materials, complete with a sprinkler system. Solar panels were sourced online so that more lighting could

be installed at the home for better security.



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"It's not just about beautifying the garden. The residents here are cut off from the outside world.

"They have no mobile phones, no television and the home is their world. We believe this garden plot will help improve their mental health," Muhd Faiz said.

He said residents could occupy themselves with activities such as fish feeding.

"They can also plant herbs and vegetables in their own backyard instead of having to buy them," he said.

The fruits of their labours were clearly seen when the management of the home and its residents expressed their gratitude.

"The residents are now spending more time tending to the garden," he said.