

29/08/1999

Child prodigy Zenaida Sofia gets big boost

M.K. Megan

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - Sixteen-year-old child prodigy, Zenaida Sofia Salih Lowe, is now a step closer to pursuing her Bachelor's degree in Astrophysics, thanks to Telekom Malaysia which has offered her a scholarship worth about RM500,000.

Zenaida is expected to begin her four-year course at the Dartmouth College in New Hampshire, the United States, next month.

Telekom chairman Datuk Md Radzi Mansor presented the scholarship to Zenaida at Wisma Telekom today.

Zenaida is an all-rounder who is endowed with analytical and interpretative abilities that belie her age.

Radzi said the scholarship was awarded to her not only because of her capabilities and academic excellence, but also because she had the potential to be a Nobel Prize winner.

"Our Prime Minister's (Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's) vision to have a Malaysian win the Nobel Prize by the year 2020 is achievable through Zenaida," he said.

Radzi said he was confident Malaysia could produce more students like Zenaida if parents were committed to bringing up their children.

Zenaida's mother is the former director of Universiti Sains Malaysia's Archeology Research Centre, Professor Datuk Zuraina Majid and her father is Datuk Dr Vincent Salih Lowe, former USM dean of postgraduate studies.

Radzi said Zenaida would be bonded to Telekom Malaysia upon her completion of the course.

"We want to encourage our scholarship recipients to come back and serve us and the country.

"She can serve us in many areas including at Universiti Telekom, Universiti Multimedia and Telekom Malaysia Research and Development department.

Zenaida had received various offers from reputable universities in the United States to pursue her degree.

Telekom Malaysia made the offer after the Ministry of Education singled her out as an exceptionally outstanding student and the appropriate recipient for the scholarship offered by the Telekom Malaysia Foundation.

The Foundation has, since its formation in 1994, given out RM175.8 million worth of scholarships for various programmes locally and abroad.

About 1,200 recipients have completed their studies while another 1,300 are still studying.

Zenaida said she was happy to be offered the scholarship and to enrol in Dartmouth College because only five per cent of the seats are allocated for international students.

"The scholarship means a lot to me and I will do my best," she said.

Zenaida, the 1996 recipient of the Tunas Harapan award and a computer whizz, chose Dartmouth College as it was known to be the most computer-connected campus.

(END)