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Aid

REVERSE FOREIGN AID FROM MALAYSIA TO US

By: Salmu Hashim

WASHINGTON, Nov 10 (Bernama) -- Malaysian students at Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa, yesterday gave a spectacular display of Malaysian culture and food to raise funds for the needy in that State, an effort that began in 1987.

Dubbed by the "Des Moines Register" as "reverse foreign aid", Malaysian students have been raising funds for various charity groups.

They had raised US\$14,000 to fund scholarships for four Iowans whose parents struggled to make ends meet during the farm crisis of the late 80's.

This unusual gesture by Malaysian students comes at a time when the United States House of Representatives and the Senate threaten to cut military aid to Malaysia unless it shows that freedom of religion exists in the country.

The move by both Houses followed a remark on Jews by former Prime Minister, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Nurhidayah Azmy, President of the Association of Malaysian Students, told Bernama over the phone yesterday that the group had raised more than US\$1,000 last year which was donated to the American Red Cross.

This year, 125 Malaysian students at ISU joined forces to raise funds for the United Way of Story County, an umbrella organisation for other social service groups in the county, added Nurhidayah, a final year student in Construction Engineering.

Beneficiaries of the Malaysian Cultural Night have so far included the Mid-Iowa Community Action, Ames Youth and Shelter, Heartland Senior Citizen Center, Habitat for Communiy, and ACTORS.

The cultural night is a popular annual event in Ames, featuring Malaysian music, songs, dances, cuisine and a cultural exhibition.

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