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Girls' wish list for 'life full of respect'

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FOUR teenagers presented a declaration of Malaysian young women's wish list to the Inspector-General of Police Datuk Seri Mohd Bakri Omar during "A Girl's Day Out" event recently.

Charlotte Ann Patrick, 18, Wong Sen Yi, 14, Nur Izzati Zafirah, 17, and Siti Aishah Mohd Shahrin Merican, 14, took turns to read out the declaration which contained the requests before handing it over to Mohd Bakri.

The wish list included requests for the police to ensure the safety of young women in public places by increasing patrols, intervening in cases of domestic violence and protecting the welfare of female prisoners.

The declaration was put together after discussions with young women in the country through the collective efforts of various non-governmental organisations, namely Women's Aid Organisation (WAO), All Women's Action Society Malaysia (AWAM), Amnesty International, Sisters in Islam (SIS) and Malaysian AIDS Council (MAC).

Joining these organisations were the producers of the television series 3R (Respect, Relax, Respond) and its hosts - Azah Yasmin Yusoff, Low Ngai Yuen, Kartini Kamalul Arifin and former host Rafidah Abdullah.

The two-day "A Girl's Day Out" event took place at Mid Valley Megamall. With the theme "It Begins with Respect", the event was launched by 3R executive producer Datin Paduka Marina Mahathir.

In her speech, Marina said women should be proactive and start learning ways to stop the violence against them.

"Lately, cases of violence against women were on the rise. Women should know what to do to stop and avoid from being abused," she said.

"One way is to get in touch with the various non-governmental organisations related to women to gather as much information as possible on the issues of violence and self-defence."

The climax of a month-long series of events, "A Girl's Day Out" was organised in conjunction with the International Women's Day celebration.

The two days were packed with activities like "Urban Protection Tactics with 3R", performances by artistes, a demonstration of muay Thai and exhibition booths set up by the NGOs and sponsors including Kotex, Lactacyd, Maggi and Nestle.

The event was aimed at empowering women and raising awareness on women's issues besides sending a strong message that a safe environment "begins with having self-respect and respect for others".