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To be safe on girl's day out

Sharifah Sakinah Aljunid

TV3's `3R' programme celebrated the recent International Women's Day with `A Girl's Day Out' event to highlight women's efforts against violence. SHARIFAH SAKINAH ALJUNID writes.

SINGER Reshmonu, actor Ako Mustafa and Akademi Fantasia's Vincent Chong cooked chicken, sewed buttons, folded laundry and changed diapers in full view of more than 2,000 young people in the exhibition hall of Mid Valley Megamall, Kuala Lumpur, recently.

It was "Men At Work", a segment which showcased the celebrities' multi-tasking skills at TV3's 3R's (Respect, Relax, Respond) "A Girl's Day Out" event.

The energetic team of the award-winning television programme had been busy organising activities in conjunction with International Women's Day 2004 this month.

The theme of the event was "It Begins With Respect", which highlights women's efforts against violence.

3R co-executive producer Lina Tan said that "A Girl's Day Out" highlights the right of women to go out and enjoy themselves without fear.

Each of the programme's hosts, Azah Yazmin Yusoff, Kartini Kamarul Arifin and Low Ngai Yuen (who is in the family way), plus ex-host Rafidah Abdullah (back from Britain with a master's degree in scriptwriting), delivered monologues depicting sexually-related crimes.

In a segment to demonstrate self-protection techniques, the "war cries" of Azah and Kartini were drowned by cheers from the audience, spurring the two women to lash out more kungfu-style kicks, breaking planks in clean halves in the process.

Next was a declaration by the muhibah team of Nur Izzati Zafirah, 17, Wong Sen Yi, 14, and Charlotte Ann Patrick, 18, who conveyed their hopes of increased safety and gender sensitivity to Inspector-General of Police Datuk Sri Mohd Bakri Omar, who was present that day.

The young audience listened intently to their peers expressing their wishes on behalf of the nation's young women.

Bakri said the police would try their best to "grant" every wish gathered from discussions between several non-governmental organisations and young women nationwide.

The wish list was the result of the collective effort of the 3R team with Amnesty International, All Women's Action Society, Sisters In Islam, Malaysian AIDS Council and the Women's Aid Organisation.

Also part of the "A Girl's Day Out" event were pro-active booths and performances by singers such as Ning Baizura, Nora and Ferhad as well as young talents featuring all-girl bands.

On the first day of the two-day event, a cheerleading competition was held with Assunta Girls School, Selangor, coming out tops.

This event was supported by the Ministry of Women and Family Development and was largely sponsored by Kotex.

Also present were 3R executive producer Datin Paduka Marina Mahathir, ministry secretary-general Datin Faizah Mohd Tahir, Women's Development Department director-general Norasmah Samsudin and NGO representatives.

Wish list to the police

THE following is the wish list of young women to the police:

1. Increase patrolling of isolated roads and back alleys near schools as well as public parks and parking bays. We have the right to move freely

without the fear of being attacked.

2. Take prompt action in cases of domestic violence. The law should be on our side and we don't want to be told that such matters are personal and thus require no outside intervention.

3. Treat us with empathy and take our reports of sexual harassment, or other crimes, seriously. We ask you to listen without prejudice, regardless of our attire, backgrounds and relationship with the accused.

4. Acknowledge that we still have rights even when detained. So please do not take advantage of our situation and do not misplace our trust in the law.

5. Include gender education as part of basic police training, so more people will be aware about women's issues and support our efforts for gender equality. By displaying strength for the good of country and not be oppressive, we hope the police force will set good examples to Malaysia's young men.