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The Alumni Magazine

Contact

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An aerial photograph of four kayakers on a vast, deep blue ocean. The kayakers are positioned in a loose line, with one white kayak at the top, a yellow one to the left, and two others (one red and one blue) at the bottom. The water's surface is textured with small waves and ripples.

**“ With the
new day comes
new strength
and
new thoughts.”**
- Eleanor Roosevelt

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Graphic Designer & Layout Artist

Sharifah Zaharah Syed Hussein
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Other Contributors:

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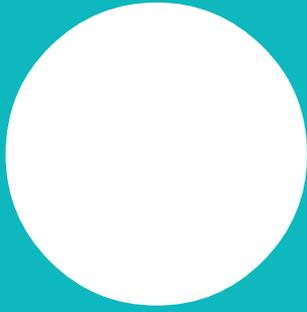
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A**about** Contact

Contact is the medium for OUM graduates to stay connected to their alma mater. Published as a quarterly e-magazine, **Contact** tells the inspiring stories of those who have realised their dreams at OUM.



This Issue

Greek philosopher, Heraclitus, is famed for saying, "The only constant in life is change".

For OUM as well as our community of learners and graduates, embracing change is something we cannot avoid if we wish to move forward and create real progress in our lives.

In this issue, one alumnus who is also still a learner reveals what keeps her going, while four graduates from Kota Marudu and a comic aficionado from Sarawak share their personal success stories.

We also discuss the first animal abuse case to be prosecuted under the Animal Welfare Act. And finally, in conjunction with this year-end issue, we talk about a unique way to reconsider new year's resolutions.

From all of us at Contact, we wish you a Happy 2020!

HIGHLIGHTS:

We Have Moved!

For almost two decades since the early 2000s, OUM had made the premises at Jalan Tun Ismail, Kuala Lumpur, home for the majority of its staff and learners within the Klang Valley. Memories were made and milestones were achieved, and those who have been a part of our journey will surely have some happy remembrances from the time spent there.

However, on 4 November, the University made a move forward by beginning operations at its new Main Campus in Kelana Jaya, Selangor, thus signalling a high-flying start to a more conducive environment for its staff and learners.

Get in touch with us!

Open University Malaysia
Menara OUM
Block C, Kelana Centre Point
Jalan SS7/19, Kelana Jaya
47301 Petaling Jaya
Selangor Darul Ehsan

General Line: 03-7801 1800
Speed Line: 03-7801 2000
WhatsApp: +6012-303 9935 /
+6019-357 9074
E-mail: enquiries@oum.edu.my





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I'm inspired
by the line of strong
women who came
before me

LIVE & LEARN: INVESTING *in her Future*

By Tengku Amina Munira
(tg_munira@oum.edu.my)

Monisha Suresh has a crystal-clear idea about what lifelong learning means for her. After graduating with a Bachelor of Management degree at the 21st Convocation in 2017, she wasted no time in getting back to studying. She is currently still with

OUM, this time enrolled in the Master of Business Administration (MBA) programme.

“Continuous learning is important as it keeps our minds open while helping us to build on what we already

know," Monisha explains. "The more we learn, the better we become at seeing the different sides of a situation."

At 24, Monisha is one of the youngest in her batch, but she has discovered a factor which unites them all: a passion for learning.

"The majority of my peers are middle-aged, and at first, I was taken aback by the age difference. However, once we started talking, I felt really comfortable about sharing with and learning from them."

So why now and why an MBA? Says Monisha, "I'm confident that the MBA will yield a return on investment in my future. It will make me more skilled and versatile, no matter what industry I'm in. I hope it will also put me in better stead to capture the attention of potential employers."

The Johor-born lass works as a human resource officer at an Anglo-Australian multinational company based in Kuala Lumpur and credits the women in her life as her reason for success.

"I'm inspired by the line of strong women who came before me," she says proudly. "Whether mothers, daughters, educators or counsellors, all of them had gone through challenges, pushed forward,

persevered and achieved their dreams. I saw how hard they had strived to make a better future for themselves and their families. They have supported, advised and showed me the way, for which I am truly thankful."

Monisha is particularly wistful about her mother. "She became a single mother when my father left us. She took it upon herself to bring up my sister and me in the best way she could. She always reminded me that education would help when no one else could. This is the reason I try so hard to do well in my studies."

In a few short years, Monisha will complete her MBA. But even then, she won't be done with studying as she plans to enrol in a PhD programme next.

In the meantime, this avid fan of Israeli-American conductor, Itzhak Perlman, finds great solace in playing the violin, a hobby she has had for the past eight years. "Playing the violin is an excellent way to relieve stress and maintain your posture."

In conclusion, she says, "India's 11th President, A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, once said, 'Success is when your signature becomes an autograph'. I hope I can achieve that one day."

WORLD VIEW:

Animal Welfare Now a Priority



“

This is a lesson
to all to refrain from
all forms of cruelty
against animals.

”

By Izyan Diyana Merzuki
(izyan_diyana@oum.edu.my)

A man was recently sentenced to 34 months' jail and ordered to pay a fine of RM40,000 for killing a pregnant cat.

In that incident, the man stuffed the cat into a launderette's dryer which resulted in its death.

This horrid incident is one of many animal cruelty cases reported to authorities, 90 percent of which involving cats and dogs.

Under the new Animal Welfare Act 2015 which came into effect in July 2017, offenders are liable to between RM20,000 and RM100,000 in fines and/or up to three years of imprisonment upon conviction.

Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye, Chairman of OUM Board of Governors and keen animal activist, says, "The harsher sentencing of the man for killing a pregnant cat should serve as a lesson to all to refrain from all forms of cruelty against animals."

"Hopefully, the decision will now encourage the public to report more cases of animal cruelty," says Lee, who is also the patron of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) Selangor.

Statistics by the Department of Veterinary Services revealed an increase of 30 percent in the number of animal abuse cases from 510 in 2017 to 662 in 2018. From January to June this year, 190 cases were recorded with fines imposed

amounting to RM12,500 for five cases that were brought to court.

Though the rise is worrying, it is actually an indication of increasing awareness among Malaysians who are beginning to understand the importance of animal welfare.

"Those who abuse or kill animals are very cruel and have no respect for the sanctity of life and I hope the judgment would provide confidence to the Department of Veterinary Services to bring more cases of animal cruelty to court," adds Lee.

So, what actually drives people to abuse animals?

There are various reasons why some people show aggression towards animals. Animal abusers are often psychologically and mentally ill. They may see animals as objects instead of sentient beings capable of feelings and pain. Failing to understand this basic fact might be one of the triggers of violence towards animals. As a matter of fact, many studies have found that animal cruelty is linked to higher likelihood of violence towards humans too.

There are potentially many more cases of animal abuse that go unnoticed and unreported. The onus is on all of us to do what we can to prevent such cases from taking place. Be responsible, compassionate and do not hesitate to report if you see someone abusing an animal.

WORK & STUDY:

Hello from KOTA MARUDU!

By Tengku Amina Munira (tg_munira@oum.edu.my)

Among the 3,450 graduates at the 23rd Convocation last September, 28 came from the northern Sabah town of Kota Marudu. Four of them share their thoughts on their special day.

"Clutching this scroll is a huge privilege as it is something I have always dreamed of since completing my diploma at a local university some years ago. I have my parents, siblings and beloved husband to thank for as this success would not have been possible without their support.

I hope there will be more graduates from Kota Marudu in the future. To those dreaming of a higher qualification, be it a diploma or a PhD, don't hesitate. You can achieve your ambitions with OUM."



ANGIE IMELDA MINSU, 27
Self-employed
Bachelor of Business Administration

"I was so glad when OUM opened the Kota Marudu Learning Centre in 2014 as it made it possible for me to fulfil my dreams of obtaining a degree. My home is very close to the Learning Centre and I decided to enrol in January 2015.

I found the courses relevant to my job, and I was happy with the learner-friendly study methods. Plus, the programmes are fully accredited. Thank you, OUM!"



JANES BIN KANSIRONG, 44
Assistant Officer, Sabah Farmer's
Organisation Authority
Bachelor of Business Administration

"I had such a positive learning experience! The study methods were flexible, easy and practical. Lecturers and tutors were dedicated and the IT system was top-notch. As I'm a working woman, the weekend classes were a plus too as I could get a degree even while continuing to work full-time.

The graduation ceremony was such an unforgettable moment for me. I had a chance to meet graduates from all over Malaysia. Even though it took a lot for my family to make the journey from Kota Marudu to Kuala Lumpur, it was definitely the trip of a lifetime."



NURUL EZZATUL ATIQAH SUAD, 26
Self-employed
Bachelor of Human Resource Management

"OUM is a learner-friendly university, especially for working adults like me who want to obtain higher qualifications without putting our careers on hold. In addition to the various online tools, the lecturers and tutors were also very helpful, supportive and quick to share their knowledge with learners.

Thank you to all who helped me while I was a learner. Special thanks go to the staff of the Learning Centre who were there for me from the moment I registered to the moment I graduated."



SITI AZRENA ABD MAJID, 28
Self-employed
Bachelor of Human Resource Management

What does the Director say ?

"One thing I have always shared with the people of Kota Marudu is how important education is in creating a brighter future.

At this Learning Centre, it isn't just Kota Marudu folk who can study. Those in Kota Belud, Pitas, Kudat, Pulau Banggi and Ranau also don't need to travel far to make their education dreams a reality."

Robert Abraham Mojolou
Director, Kota Marudu Learning Centre





PERSONALITY:
**Educator
Keeps on
Learning**

**By Izyan Diyana Merzuki
(izyan_diyana@oum.edu.my)**

If you think academics only talk journals, books and serious matters, Dr Ki Yen Ping is here to prove you wrong. A big fan of Marvel movies, her all-time favourite superhero is Spiderman.

"Spiderman is so relatable, and he has a great sense of humour too. He is us in many ways, from going through difficulties in life to juggling work, family, relationship and life goals," shares Dr Ki.

A lecturer at a private university in Kuching, Dr Ki has always been keen about education. She graduated with a Doctor of Education (EdD) this year.

She also holds a Graduate Certificate in Tertiary Learning and Teaching, a Master of Science in Human Resource Development, and a Bachelor of Science degree.

"The most challenging part of the EdD was the two years I spent on writing the conceptual paper and dissertation. I faced challenges during my proposal defence, in which the presentation format was not on the right track."

Adds Dr Ki, "I would not have been able to complete my research without the valuable guidance and advice from my supervisor, Dr Dorothy DeWitt. She really inspired me with her patience and knowledge."

This Sarawakian lecturer says she even had to take frequent journeys from Kuching to Kuala Lumpur to attend weekend seminars. Regardless, the learning experience proved invaluable as it helped shape her principles towards teaching and learning.

"I define teaching as a process of educating students to become better. I believe that learning only occurs when there is a change in behaviour, in which the outcome can either be positive or negative. Learning without any impact is just engaging in idle talk, worthless and useless."

When it comes to learning about life, she believes there is nothing more enriching than travelling.

"The world has a lot to offer. I love to travel and learn about new places, historical buildings, local people and their cultures. Travelling widens my horizons and teaches me to appreciate life."

Dr Ki is currently working on another research project to add to her portfolio. "I am interested in research related to education, learning science, organisational development, e-learning or web-based learning, and research methods and statistics in social science."

She also hopes to make her life more meaningful by immersing herself in social welfare. "The next chapter of my life would focus on giving back to the community and society. I wish to become a philanthropist as I want to promote the welfare of others by donating not just money, but also volunteering, particularly in the aspects of education and health."

POINTERS:

One Word for the Whole Year

**By Azeezah Jameelah Mohamed
Mohideen (azeezah@oum.edu.my)**

The end of 2019 is fast approaching and for one reason or another, some of us will decide that it's time to adopt some new habits or make some changes in our daily lives. January is a natural time to reflect and set goals as it's the start of a new year. However, according to a survey conducted in the United States, a lot of New Year's resolutions are forgotten or discarded as early as 7 January!

If you have been setting resolutions and failing to achieve them year after year, you might be thinking this article will help you to make resolutions that work. Sorry to disappoint you, but no.

Instead, we would like to invite you to do something totally different. Forget resolutions. As you know, insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.

So, come 2020, choose a word instead. Yes, you have read that correctly. Choose one word which

inspires you or which you want to practise in your life. This is what Bill Gates' wife, Melinda Gates, has been doing for years now. For 2018 and 2019, she chose the word "grace". She said, "What I love about grace, at least the way I define it, is that by pulling us up out of ourselves and onto a higher plane, it makes us more open to the world, to new experiences, to each other. It creates connections and encourages empathy."

Sara Weinreb (www.bewell.com) once chose the word "green". It meant four things to her: she wanted to eat more greens (consume more veggies and nourishing food), surround herself with green (spend more time in nature and bring more plants into her home), live a greener life (embrace a low-waste lifestyle) and make more greenbacks (earn more money).

Meanwhile, Pam Sherman (www.democratandchronicle.com) chose "listening" as her word one year.

During that year, she attended conferences to listen to great speakers, listened to her mother differently and also listened to her heart, which helped her to make choices that allowed her to grow beyond her own expectations.

Identifying just one word, instead of writing a long list of what to do and not to do for the new year, has five great benefits – it is simple, easy to remember, overarching, flexible and helps you to focus. You don't have to remember long lists comprising items such as eat more nutritious food, exercise more, lose weight, save more and spend less, learn a new skill or hobby, quit smoking, read more and spend more time with family and friends. Didn't you get tired just reading that? Instead, you can pick just one word and focus on it for the whole year. This is so much better, don't you think so?

Unlike New Year's resolutions which have a "pass or fail" mentality, and more often than not set you up for failure, a word of the year allows for things to go wrong, for times to get tough, and for losing track. You are a human, not a robot, so there will definitely be ups and downs.

Focusing on one word a year is a kinder way to grow. It is a softer way to develop and a gentler guide throughout the year.

Go on, choose a word. Let it help you make 2020 a meaningful year for yourself.





Share your
story.

Calling All
Alumni!

Take the opportunity to be featured in this e-magazine and be an inspiration to others. Write to us if you're interested!

Keep in touch with friends and former classmates. Join the OUM Alumni Official group on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1666065323497165/>

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