

Over 500 Muslim students, youth receive awards from Mendaki

Malavika Menon

More than 500 Muslim students and youth received awards for their achievements from self-help group Yayasan Mendaki yesterday.

The annual event, which was held virtually this year, celebrates students who have displayed an exceptional academic performance or excelled in a different area of life.

Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs and Mendaki chairman Masagos Zulkifli, who was the guest of honour at the event, applauded the recipients for their achievements and urged members of the community to stay connected with Men-

daki so they may receive information and support that will help them prepare for what lies ahead.

Said Mr Masagos: "Given the uncertain times, some of you who graduated recently may be facing difficulties securing your ideal jobs. As a resilient community, I encourage you to keep an open mind and leverage available opportunities, such as the SGUnited Traineeship programme, to gain experience, enhance your skills and build your networks and portfolios."

Four recipients were recognised for their contributions to the community. They received the Anugerah Gemilang Mendaki (Pinnacle Award) for embodying char-

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acter, competence and citizenry. Among them was Mr Muhammad Ismail Shogo Sahul Hamid, a trained befriender at inmate rehabilitation initiative Family and Inmates Through-care Assistance Haven (Fitrah).

Mr Ismail, 26, is currently pursuing a traineeship at the National University of Singapore's (NUS) Centre for Family and Population Research.

As an undergraduate student reading political science at NUS last year, Mr Ismail was keen on understanding criminality and the ground realities of convicts.

He signed up for Fitrah's training programme, juggling the sessions

with his studies.

Before Covid-19 disrupted operations, Mr Ismail conducted home visits, assessing inmates' needs and working with incarcerated individuals and with families who have members on death row.

Contrasting his experience in the classroom and at the grassroots level, Mr Ismail said: "When we study rehabilitation or reintegration in university, we take a theoretical approach, but through Fitrah, I was able to understand the issues on the ground and gather a new perspective about how to help these vulnerable groups."

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