

**H**ajjah Nuriah Muammil, a mother of nine grown children says she has always held an 'open house' at her home in Kepyayan since they moved there.

She says it is a tradition to her and she makes sure that it is an annual event for the family.

"In those days, my children were away in school most of the time; so I make sure that during Hari Raya, we come together as a family and celebrate together. It is also a time for us to foster rapport and friendship with friends and families," she shares.

"Nowadays, my children are all adults. My son Muammar is in Britain furthering his studies while his brother Zulfikar an army doctor, is away. They will not be home for Hari Raya. I am sad and I do miss them but I am also happy for them. This shows that they are successful," this strong willed business lady shares.

"I am holding an open house this year in Kepyayan, on the second day of Hari Raya from 11.30pm onwards," she shares.

Fatimah Shara Ahmad Noor, a business woman and politician, from Kota Kinabalu, says open houses are unique to Malaysia, notably Sabah and should be carried out by everybody.

"If we can afford to hold an open house, we should do it. After all it's only once a year and if we are afraid to overspend, then we should do budgeting and spend within our means."

## Open houses

"Even if we do not hold an open house, we still have visitors and we still visit. Maybe it will be on a smaller scale, but we still spend time with our loved ones, relatives and friends," she says.

"This is a time when we can entertain people from all walks of life. Since my extended family comprise of many races, it can be an interestingly colourful event for me. My husband is Chinese, and we have family members who are Kadazandusuns and Malay. Therefore, to me the open house is a wonderful idea. It fosters friendship, strengthen relationships. Everybody does it; Christmas, Chinese New Year, Harvest Festival, Deepavali...It is a Malaysian culture and we should be proud of it," she stresses. Fatimah who has five children of her own, four boys and one girl, says during the Hari Raya she will spend quality time with her family and visit friends and relatives.

"I will hold my open house on November 11, from 11am onwards," she says.

Riani Musib, 33 and her husband Mahidy Jasman, 39, with their nine year old child will be spending time with their parents this Hari Raya.

"I come from Kuala Abai Kota Belud and my husband comes from Lahad Datu, but his parents live in Likas. So during the first day, we will go to my parents' house and spend time there in the morning and then go his parents' house in the afternoon. It is easy for us as we can cover the distance in a day trip."

"They hold open houses. It is traditional for us and we have always held it since I was small. It is good because we will have a chance to catch up with news

from our relatives and friends from all over the village and sometimes those who are living far away but come home for the occasion."

"As for our Hari Raya preparation; my husband and I believe in moderation. We buy a few changes of clothes and I make a few types of cookies. We don't hold our own open house, so our spending is not that much," she shares.

"Open house is our tradition and it should be applied in our community as such," says Mohamad Bahrin Abd Karim, adding that this ensured that there is understanding, friendship and rapport among the people.

"In our community of diverse culture, traditions and religious belief, there is a need for us to understand and respect those differences. This understanding and respect can only be achieved if we understand one another. Through the open houses, this can be achieved," he says.

Bahrin who lives in Likas and has three children says his family holds open house every year during the Hari Raya celebrations.

"Through the open house, we meet many people from diverse culture. We get to meet people and make new friends," he stresses.

Bahrin is a company director.

Musliati Muslimin, who lives in Sepanggar Bay concurs with Bahrin, saying that her parents always holds open houses and she does not see anything negative with it.

"If some people say that it is a waste of money, I think they are not looking at it in the right perspective. We have a choice on whether we want this event to be negative or positive. Personally, I believe that it is just proper for us to hold

open houses."

"Open house is an event when we can entertain our friends, relatives and families. We eat together and catch up on each other's news. We must always remember that our families and friends are not confined to the same religious and racial background as ours; so through such events we are actually getting closer to them; enabling us to understand and value them and vice versa," she opines.

A non Muslim, Gay Lee, 21, shares that she visits her Muslim friends during the Hari Raya because on normal days she has no time to visit them at leisure.

She says she and her family take the opportunity to visit all their Muslim relatives and friends during the Hari Raya celebration. During this time she also takes the opportunity to invite them over for Christmas.

For John Odoi, 37, of Kudat the open house culture is a tradition that should be practised through the generations.

"Political stability comes from understanding and tolerance. In Malaysia, and especially Sabah, the population comes from diverse ethnic backgrounds, ethics and creeds. They also follow different religion," he says.

Through intermarriages and social interaction racial barriers are transcended, he says, adding that these differences are further surmounted through understanding, tolerance and unity.

"That is why visiting one another and taking time off to chat and catch up on each other's news is important. It is more so if the other party is our relatives," he says.

All the interviewees wish their friends and families "Selamat Hari Raya' Aidil Fitri.

So, it seems that most Sabahans agree to the open house concept held during all celebrations and so it is here to stay.

Promoting this as a tourism product especially in the homestay programme is a good idea and should be looked into seriously.

## TOUR GUIDE

### DISCOVER The Wonders Of Sabah, Borneo

This map is  
endorsed and  
supported by:



sabahtravelguide.com



Sabah Tourism Board  
www.sabahl tourism.com



Sabah Chapter of:  
Malaysia Association of  
Tours and Travel Agents  
www.mattasabah.com



The way to  
get yourself  
discovered

For advertising enquiries,  
Call 088-230055 (New  
Sabah Times)  
019-840 2911 (William-  
Sabah Travel)



# STAR presents cake to TYT



**IN CONJUNCTION** with the Hari Raya celebrations, Shangri-la's Rasa Ria Resort and Shangri-la Tanjung Aru Resort (STAR) presented a special cake to the Head of State Tun Ahmadshah Abdullah at the Istana Negeri on Oct 11.

The cake presented to the head of state was 50kg of Royal Carrot cake with three onion-domed shapes designed by Rasa Ria's pastry Chef Daniel Peh.

The domes portrayed a unique character with contemporary designs that visualised the advancement of building technology. The cake came with pelita and ketupat cake, essentials of Hari Raya.

Present during the presentation were Rasa Ria's Director of Marketing, Danny Toh, Communications Manager Regina Sulit and STAR's general manager Ulf Bremer as well as Director of Communications Tulip Noorazyze and Assistant Communications Manager Karen Tukalan-Pinn.