

MAGAZINES



X-Ray Mag #86

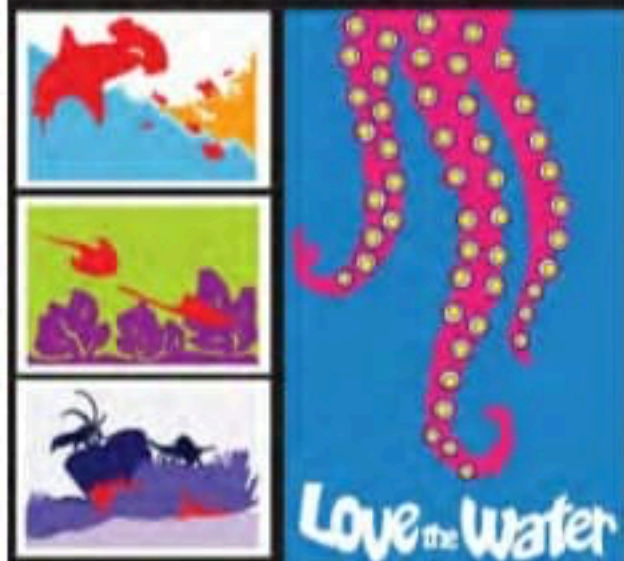


In March 2018, Diveheart Borneo was launched, with the support of Premier Marine Scuba Center. The Diveheart Adaptive Buddy Diver Training program (left) in Kuching, Malaysia, was the first of its kind in the Borneo region.



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Diveheart Malaysia making waves and expanding

Diveheart Malaysia has been making waves since the organization started regular, monthly, in-pool scuba training programs for persons with disabilities (PWD) trained by Diveheart Ambassador and founder and director of Kids Scuba Malaysia, Syed Abd Rahman, who worked closely with the rehabilitation unit for spinal cord injury (SCI) patients of the University Malaya Medical Center (UMMC) in Kuala Lumpur.

After months of intensive underwater therapy training involving the sport of scuba diving, the first batch of four SCI patients from UMMC graduated as PADI scuba divers on Tioman Island in Pahang in October 2016, with the assistance of

Kids Scuba Diveheart volunteers and Jim Elliot, president and founder of Diveheart, who flew in from Chicago to conduct Diveheart training and oversee the PWD open water dives.

It all started in 2012, when Rahman met Elliot for the first time at the Diving Equipment and Marketing Association (DEMA) show in Orlando, Florida, to discuss an interest in scuba training for persons with disabilities in Malaysia. Four years later, in March 2016, Elliot was invited to Malaysia by Rahman and the late Charles Rowe. Rahman and Rowe hosted Elliot and Tinamarie Hernandez, Executive Director of Diveheart. The two conducted a Diveheart Scuba Experience in Kuala Lumpur with some individuals with disabilities in a swimming pool environment, assisted by Rowe and dive professionals from Kids Scuba.

Milestones

Since 2016, the Malaysia International

Dive Expo (MIDE) has extended its full support to Diveheart Malaysia, and the organization has been featured in the last three years at the annual show, which is held at the Putra World Trade Center in Kuala Lumpur (read more about MIDE 2018 on page 87). At this year's MIDE, Diveheart SCI PWD divers from UMMC were recognized and invited to come up onto the stage to share their scuba diving experiences as persons with disabilities, becoming role models for the local disabled community in expressing their Diveheart message: "Imagine the Possibilities!"

In August 2017, Diveheart Malaysia was invited to train a team of dive professionals from the University Malaysia Terengganu (UMT), a marine research university in the east coast region of the country, for the Diveheart Adaptive Diver Buddy Course. UMT then became the first university in Malaysia to have a qualified Diveheart Adaptive Diver Buddy (ADB)



Team.

When Rahman visited the Diveheart world headquarters in Chicago in November 2017, Kids Scuba was recognized as a Diveheart 5-Star Dive Center

Diveheart Ambassador and founder of Kids Scuba Malaysia, Syed Abd Rahman, with PWD PADI scuba diver Riza Faisal (top center); and with president and founder of Diveheart, Jim Elliot (left) at the DEMA Show in Orlando, Florida, USA in 2012

in acknowledgement of its generous support and dedication to the Diveheart mission in enhancing the lives of individuals with disabilities through the sport of scuba diving, and for its excellence in providing high quality adaptive diver training in Malaysia. This was truly an achievement for a dive center in Asia, supporting water therapy and underwater sports involving scuba diving.

In December 2017, Diveheart Malaysia and Kids Scuba Dive Team Malaysia, led by Rahman, went to world-renowned Sipadan Island in Sabah to conduct the Diveheart Open Water Diving Program. One of the organization's graduates, PWD PADI scuba diver Riza Faisal, enjoyed the beautiful dives of Mabul and Sipadan Islands, assisted by many Diveheart volunteers and dive professionals of Borneo Divers Mabul Resort. Faisal

news

Diveheart Malaysia and Kids Scuba Dive Team Malaysia, led by Rahman, went to world-renowned Sipadan Island, assisted by Diveheart volunteers and dive professionals from Borneo Divers Mabul Resort (right). Diveheart Malaysia was invited to train a team of dive professionals at the University of Malaysia Terengganu (below and lower left). UMT then became the first university in Malaysia to have a qualified Diveheart Adaptive Diver Buddy Team.



said it was "truly an amazing, awesome underwater zero-gravity experience".

Another milestone saw Diveheart Borneo in Malaysia launched in March 2018, with the support of Premier Marine Scuba Center, a PADI dive center in Kuching, Sarawak, led by Ernest C Teo. During the Diveheart Adaptive Buddy Diver Training Program, six scuba divers who are medical professionals and rehabilitation physiotherapists from the Kuching General Hospital were trained by Rahman as Diveheart Adaptive Dive Buddies. The Diveheart Adaptive Buddy Diver Training program in Kuching was the first of its kind in the Borneo region.

About Diveheart

Diveheart is an organization that was started in Chicago, USA, with the objective to help build confidence, self-esteem and independence in the lives of children, adults and veterans with disabilities

through scuba diving, scuba therapy and affiliated activities. The program strives to instill the "can do" spirit in participants, to inspire them to take on challenges which



they might not have considered before. Using the zero gravity of the underwater environment as well as the adventure paradigm, the organization helps participants believe that if they can scuba dive, they can do anything.

Diveheart is a non-profit organization, whose slogan is "Imagine the Possibilities", aims to provide and support educational scuba diving programs that are open to any child, adult or veteran with a disability, in

the hope of providing both physical and psychological therapeutic value to that individual. The organization works with individuals who have diverse disabilities, including physical and developmental disabilities, vision and hearing impairments, amputations, post traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injuries, and more. With the program, participants have discovered "the forgiving, weightless wonder of the water column, which provides the perfect gravity-free environment for those who might otherwise struggle on land".

Sponsors and support

Diveheart activities are driven by dive agencies and volunteers, facilitated by dedicated dive centers, and funded by sponsors and caring friends. The PADI Asia Pacific office in Sydney, Australia, extended PADI scholarships to the selected PWD Diveheart candidates from the UMMC to be certified as PADI scuba divers, trained under the direct supervision of Rahman of Kids Scuba.

For the specialized scuba training involving persons with disabilities, the Diveheart programs provide supplemental instructions, guidelines and protocol to handle people with disabilities such as visual-impaired, hearing-impaired, amputee, paraplegic and quadriplegic individuals. One of the ADB participants in Borneo, Ms. Caroline said, "The program made us realize how brave and challenging it can be to dive with these special abilities and that good team work is needed."

For those who are interested in being trained as an Adaptive Diver Buddy or a Diveheart volunteer, please contact Kids Scuba PADI 5-Star Dive Center located at Tropicana Kajang Heights Recreational Hub, about 30 min-

utes from Kuala Lumpur, or telephone Syed Abd Rahman at +6019-3176705 or email at: syed.rahman@diveheart.org. Diveheart volunteers are not necessarily required to be scuba divers, as there are many areas both in and out of the water in which they can be of assistance. ■

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