

DOGGIE DAY OUT @ D'PARK

Malaysia's first ever dog-friendly park is officially open and this step brings great hope to all animal lovers. **Keshia Kan** talks to three key icons that have an active role in the wave of making Malaysia a dog-friendly place.

THE MUCH ANTICIPATED launch of the Canine Sportzclub Obedience Training Program was officially held on the 20th of December in 2009 at Central Park Bandar Utama. Unbeknownst to most residents in the Bandar Utama area, Central Park is Malaysia's first dog-friendly park, with activities and events that cater not only to residents and visitors, but also to pets both big and small.

The Canine Sportzclub Obedience Training Program is essentially a training school for dogs but training and classes extends to instilling positive values and responsibility to pet owners alike. Training in this facility does not only inculcate submission in dogs, but also strengthens the relationship and bond between pets and their owners- resulting in a loyal friendship between man and his best friend that goes beyond the intimidation of fear and basic conditioning.

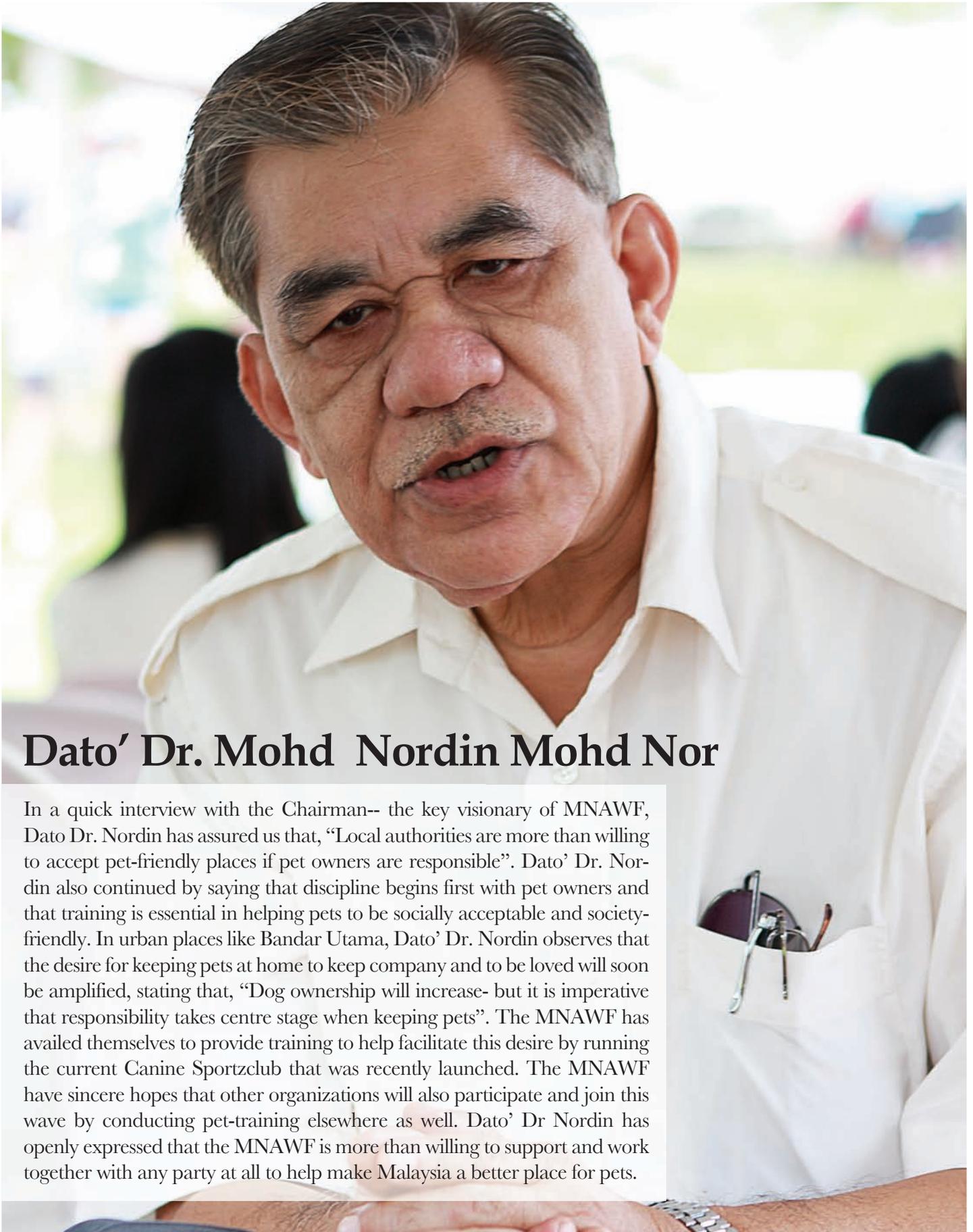
The launch was officiated by Chairman of Malaysian National Animal Welfare Foundation (MNAWF), Dato' Dr. Mohd Nordin Mohd Nor, kicking off first with a demonstration of what the Canine Sportzclub will be doing for the community. After a rousing commence, 10 dogs with their owners carried out a wonderful synchronized display of responsive play and commands with each other.

A demonstration by the children of Ti-Ratana also warmed the hearts of the crowd as the dogs in the spotlight were discarded strays that were rehabilitated and trained—showing that even mutts can be a loving member of the family. All training courses are, of course; conducted by experienced instructors, each handling only 10 dogs at a time and only apply humane methods of training in line with the philosophy of the society.

Of course, the humans were not left out of the bustling festivities—a health care talk with professional veterinarians gave advice and aid to members of the public who attended. Free health checks were provided for the darling canines and useful information were shared on how to properly care for dogs. Pet owners were reminded that their dogs behavior were merely a reflection of their owners responsibility over them. The MNAWF continued by assuring the audience that their role was to support pet owners in taking up responsibility for their dogs so that society may soon be able to accept dogs as pets to be a part of everyday life, and not to be feared or despised.

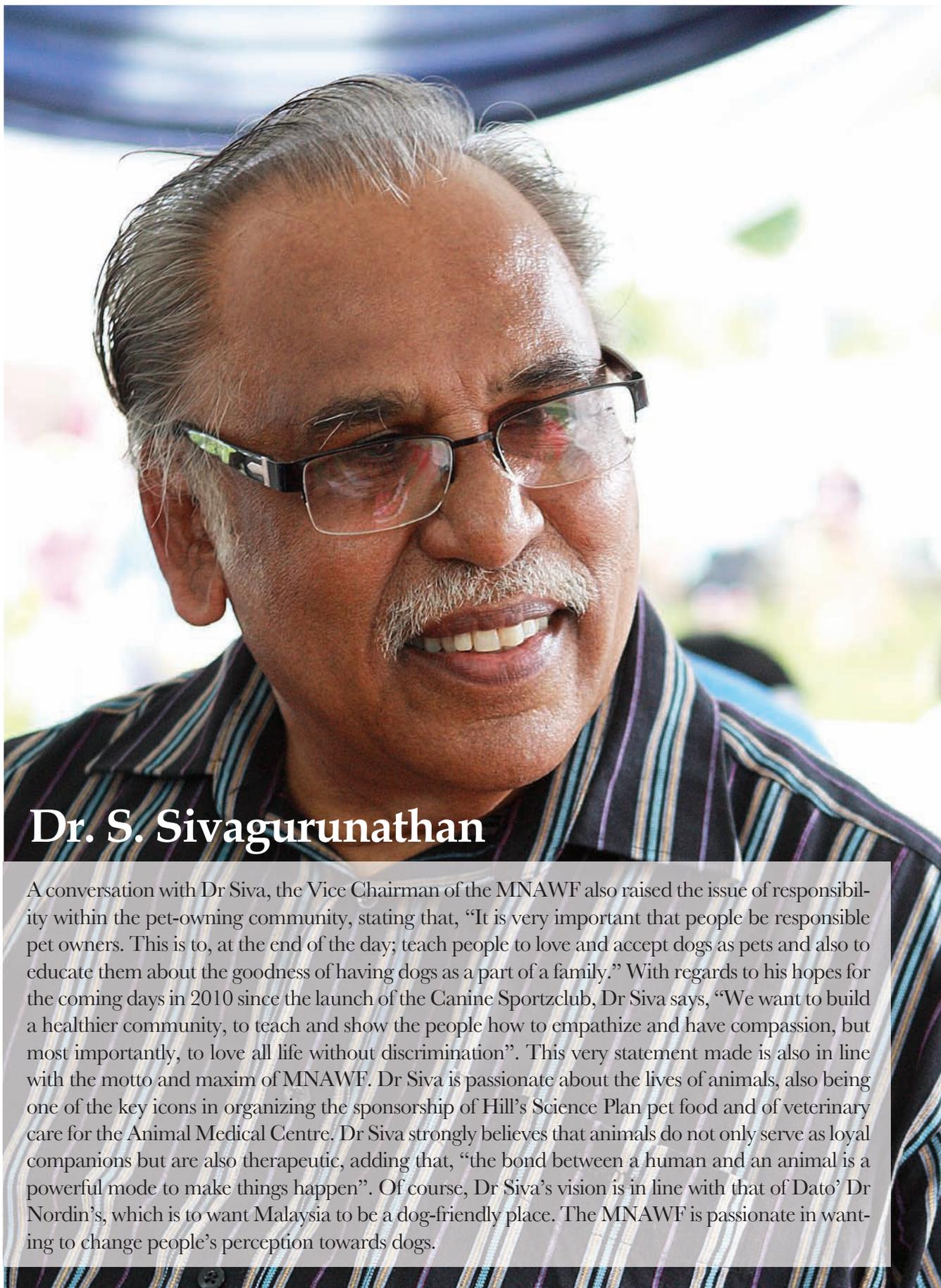
The scene on that day was adorned with brilliant displays of adorable dogs in costumes to match the Christmas theme. At the end of the event, just before noon, a best dressed canine was crowned and everyone was encouraged by the support of MNAWF. Pets and owners alike had an enjoyable time being in a place that was safe and encouraging for both them and their dogs. We look forward to the progress of the Canine Sportzclub in time to come!





Dato' Dr. Mohd Nordin Mohd Nor

In a quick interview with the Chairman-- the key visionary of MNAWF, Dato Dr. Nordin has assured us that, "Local authorities are more than willing to accept pet-friendly places if pet owners are responsible". Dato' Dr. Nordin also continued by saying that discipline begins first with pet owners and that training is essential in helping pets to be socially acceptable and society-friendly. In urban places like Bandar Utama, Dato' Dr. Nordin observes that the desire for keeping pets at home to keep company and to be loved will soon be amplified, stating that, "Dog ownership will increase- but it is imperative that responsibility takes centre stage when keeping pets". The MNAWF has availed themselves to provide training to help facilitate this desire by running the current Canine Sportzclub that was recently launched. The MNAWF have sincere hopes that other organizations will also participate and join this wave by conducting pet-training elsewhere as well. Dato' Dr Nordin has openly expressed that the MNAWF is more than willing to support and work together with any party at all to help make Malaysia a better place for pets.



Dr. S. Sivagurunathan

A conversation with Dr Siva, the Vice Chairman of the MNAWF also raised the issue of responsibility within the pet-owning community, stating that, “It is very important that people be responsible pet owners. This is to, at the end of the day; teach people to love and accept dogs as pets and also to educate them about the goodness of having dogs as a part of a family.” With regards to his hopes for the coming days in 2010 since the launch of the Canine Sportzclub, Dr Siva says, “We want to build a healthier community, to teach and show the people how to empathize and have compassion, but most importantly, to love all life without discrimination”. This very statement made is also in line with the motto and maxim of MNAWF. Dr Siva is passionate about the lives of animals, also being one of the key icons in organizing the sponsorship of Hill’s Science Plan pet food and of veterinary care for the Animal Medical Centre. Dr Siva strongly believes that animals do not only serve as loyal companions but are also therapeutic, adding that, “the bond between a human and an animal is a powerful mode to make things happen”. Of course, Dr Siva’s vision is in line with that of Dato’ Dr Nordin’s, which is to want Malaysia to be a dog-friendly place. The MNAWF is passionate in wanting to change people’s perception towards dogs.



Mr. Alfred Cheong

Last but not least, an insight from Mr Alfred Cheong, the Manager for Bandar Utama City Corporation Sdn. Bhd has shown that the community around the Bandar Utama area is keen on working together with MNAWF. Mr Alfred Cheong expresses, “I am happy with the work that Canine Sportzclub has been doing every Sunday with their trainings and the provision of support for dog owners. I hope that with the launch of the Canine Sportzclub, more people will be educated and slowly be more receptive of the idea of a dog-friendly park”. Mr Alfred feels that Central Park is indeed an ideal place for families and friends. “Children used to fly kites here. Then, pet owners started to bring their dogs. At first it was a problem because dogs left a lot of litter, and owners never bothered to dispose of it. But now with the Canine Sportzclub, I hope that it will educate the people to be more responsible pet owners.” says Mr. Alfred. Central Park is a work in progress, with its continuous efforts in building up permanent structures that will be even more pet-friendly. Mr Alfred highlighted that they would be more than happy to assist NGOs in their efforts to make Central Park a better place for pets. “Bandar Utama is more than happy to help the community and we hope that the new signboards put up will be able to help guide pet owners when they come to visit the park”.