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Student gets green award for bid to preserve P. Ubin

She started online archive of info on how to protect Ubin's ecology; 3 others also win award

By Radha Basu

WITH three generations of her family having lived there, Ms Tan Peng Ting has a special interest in preserving Pulau Ubin, one of Singapore's few remaining retreats of mangroves, forests and rich wildlife.

This year, the 23-year-old geography student from the National University of Singapore started an online archive of personal stories, articles and information on the island's ecological fragility and what can be done to protect it.

Ms Tan and three other green enthusiasts were presented the Bayer Young Environmental Envoy Award yesterday for single-handedly initiating environment projects.

Ms Tan hopes that her online archive, Pulau Ubin Stories, at habitatnews.nus.edu.sg, will chronicle the changes in Pulau Ubin for posterity.

'The home my mother grew up in is not there anymore,' said Ms Tan, whose family left their tiny hamlet in 1965.

Fellow award winners Tee Boon Chong, 25, and Yap Cheah Chang, 20, took the same philosophy of self-help and applied it to recycling.

For two years, Mr Tee, an engineering student at the Nanyang Technological University has run a paper-recycling project in his hostel.

Whenever the time came for students to vacate their hostel rooms, Mr Tee remembers university garbage cans overflowing with waste paper.

'Sometimes the discarded exam notes and textbooks would get wet in the rain and be transformed into useless masses of waste,' he said.

Mr Tee got the university authorities to set aside a small area in the hostel's



Environmental envoys (from left) Mr Yap, Mr Tee, Ms Ng and Ms Tan have won trip to Bayer's headquarters in Germany to see the environmental protection measures adopted by the industry and the German authorities. -- LIANHE ZAOBAO

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computer room, where students could dump their unwanted paper, to be collected by university staff and sold for recycling.

Mr Yap, an engineering student from Nanyang Polytechnic, teaches the benefits of recycling to children who come for Buddhist studies at the Bright Hill Monastery.

The fourth winner, Ms Ng Wai Ling, 22, an engineering graduate from Ngee Ann Polytechnic, helped organise several environment awareness programmes on campus.

All four have won a trip to Bayer's headquarters in Germany where they will get an insight into the environmental protection measures adopted by industry and the German authorities.

Reiterating the Government's reduce-reuse-recycle motto at the Bayer awards ceremony, Minister of State for Education Chan Soo Sen said: 'We need to realise that the earth's resources are limited and will be depleted in time, and so think of ways to sustain their use.'

That's the same message Singapore's four green envoys are also trying to spread, in their own small ways.

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