

DIVEHEART FOUNDATION | DIVING FOR THE DISABLED

PRESENTATION AND DEMONSTRATION AT THE TWI FACILITY IN SHAH ALAM, KUALA LUMPUR

BY **KIDS SCUBA**



Diveheart is a non-profit organization, founded in Illinois in 2001 by Mr Jim Elliott. His vision was to build confidence, independence and self-esteem through scuba diving in children, adults and veterans with disabilities.

This vision has been accomplished through many international exhibitions and demonstrations; one of the latest being held at the TWI Technology Sdn. Bhd facility in Shah Alam, Kuala Lumpur Malaysia on the 24th March 2016, with Mr Jim Elliott (founder of Diveheart) and Ms. Tinamarie Hernandez (Executive Director) in attendance.

This memorable event was hosted by Mr Ernie Moskini, Regional Manager for TWI SEA and his Executive Director, Mr Darus, who provided the facility, including the 10m x 10m x 6.5m deep pool, seminar room and canteen facilities.

Kids Scuba Director and PADI Instructor, Hj Syed Abdul Rahman, works extensively with children, teenagers, orphaned youths and adults with disabilities in Malaysia, and was instrumental in organizing the disabled volunteers, scuba diving equipment and local media coverage. His PADI qualified Kids Scuba Dive Team acted as attendants.

The seminar commenced with a welcome addressed by Mr Darus, the Executive Director of TWI who introduced the Diveheart Foundation President, Mr Jim Elliott who had come to Malaysia from the US for the first time. This was followed by a scuba diving exercise with each of the disabled volunteers.

BlueWater Engineering (M) Sdn Bhd provided a unique opportunity for the disabled diving team to experience commercial diving equipment used in the offshore oil and gas industry.

Mr Reudavey and Mr Charles Rowe, from BWE (M), presented the introduction and familiarization of the equipment to the divers. Each disabled diver, in turn, was suited and seated in a purpose built cage, which was then lowered into the pool via an overhead crane. They all experienced the underwater view through a Kirby Morgan 18 diving mask, which communicated with the diving supervisor on the surface. Mr Jim Elliott of Diveheart accompanied each of them in the cage.

Charles Rowe acted as an additional standby diver using a Kirby Morgan 17 dive helmet with mounted light and video camera to

capture this unique experience for each of the divers.

Representatives from Malaysia TV1, TV9 and Radio IM4U were also present to conduct interviews as well as capture footage of the event.

The presentation was closed with Mr Jim Elliott expressing his heartfelt thanks to the Kids Scuba dive team, TWI, Blue Water Engineering and the media for making it all possible.

The underlying message established from this event, is that people with disabilities have both the willingness and capabilities of carrying out the tasks just as those without disabilities. This in turn builds confidence and self esteem to further expand their horizons in their lifestyle and career opportunities and choices – inshore commercial diving, environmental projects become a possibility.

Congratulations and thank you to the stars of this event, who variously live with polio, blindness, and neuro-muscular disorders:

- Ms Tan
- Ms Chin
- Ms Jackie
- Mr Steven