

Igniting Passion for Chemistry: IKM Southern Branch and UTM's Inspiring Outreach Events

Fostering curiosity and a love for science is vital to shaping future innovators and leaders. The Malaysia Institute of Chemistry (IKM) Southern Branch and Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) have long embraced this mission through their vibrant outreach initiatives. In 2024, these organizations made waves with two remarkable events that brought Chemistry to life for diverse audiences across Johor: the annual Karnival Kimia Malaysia Johor (K₂M Johor) and the Fun Fiesta@SIGS. These programs reflect a shared vision to make Chemistry more accessible, engaging, and impactful, uniting students, teachers, and communities in their journey of discovery.

Chemistry Beyond the Classroom: Nurturing Curiosity Through K₂M Johor and Fun Fiesta

The Karnival Kimia Malaysia Johor (K₂M Johor), held on the 26th of October, 2024, at UTM, has been a cornerstone of science education outreach since 2010. This year's event welcomed 568 students and 55 teachers from 31 schools across Johor. It featured a variety of activities, including hands-on experiments, lectures, and engaging competitions like Chemistry in the Farm, Periodic Table Game, 3 Minutes Chemistry, and more.

Just a month later, on the 23rd of November, 2024, the excitement of science spread to Fun Fiesta@SIGS, hosted at Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan (P) Sultan Ibrahim Johor Bahru. This event extended the impact of IKM and UTM's outreach, with an interactive booth showcasing Chemistry to approximately 500 visitors of all ages. Activities such as Lava Lamp, Oobleck, and Make Your Own pH Paper captivated audiences, demonstrating the magic of Chemistry in everyday life. Both events emphasized the



importance of experiential learning, where students and participants actively engaged with science in ways that made it fun, relatable, and impactful. These programs broke the mold of traditional classroom instruction, replacing it with interactive experiences designed to ignite curiosity and foster a deeper appreciation for Chemistry.

Empowering Educators and Strengthening Communities

A hallmark of these outreach initiatives is their focus on empowering educators alongside students. During K₂M Johor, the Johor Innovative Chemistry Teacher Award recognized teachers who used creative techniques to make Chemistry engaging for their students. This award served as a reminder of the vital role educators play in inspiring young minds and





encouraged them to continuously refine their teaching methods. At the same time, K2M Johor hosted a laboratory safety seminar to equip science teachers and laboratory assistants with essential skills for conducting safe and effective science practicals. Similarly, the interactive booth at Fun Fiesta@SIGS engaged families, creating a multi-generational dialogue about the wonders of Chemistry. These efforts extended the reach of science education beyond schools, making it a community-wide initiative.

A Shared Vision for the Future

The synergy between K2M Johor and Fun Fiesta@SIGS demonstrates IKM Southern Branch and UTM's unwavering commitment to bringing Chemistry into the lives of as many people as possible. These events are not standalone successes but integral parts of a larger mission to cultivate scientific curiosity, promote innovation, and make science education inclusive and inspiring. Feedback from both programs highlights their success in achieving these goals. Students left with a renewed passion for science, while educators felt equipped and motivated to implement new ideas in their classrooms. Parents, too, gained a deeper appreciation for the role of Chemistry in everyday life. As IKM and UTM look to the future, their dedication to outreach will undoubtedly continue to flourish. By uniting communities through engaging and meaningful science initiatives, they ensure that Chemistry becomes a vibrant and accessible part of everyone's journey of learning and discovery.

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