

# Providing 'special needs' creative platform

As a child, Mr Muhammad Arshad Fawwaz Mohamed Ali loved to show off his performance skills in singing, dancing and magic tricks.

Mr Arshad, who has autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, realised that there was a dearth of platforms for people with special needs to showcase their creativity.

With his mother's support earlier this year, he set out to create a virtual show, titled Inclusivity 4 All, reaching out to local celebrities like Gurmit Singh and Fauziah Laily for their support.

"I thought to myself, 'what if I am not the only one who felt like they needed a good chance and platform?' I wanted to give talented people with special needs a space to show how good they were," said Mr Arshad, 23.

The first edition of the show, posted in May on Hari Raya Aidilfitri, garnered over 1,000 views on Facebook and YouTube.

For his efforts to promote inclusivity during the pandemic, Mr Arshad was given the special commendation award in the People of Good category at the President's Volunteerism and Philanthropy Awards ceremony at the Istana yesterday.

After the success of his first show, Mr Arshad went on to post two more editions of Inclusivity 4 All, promoting community causes such as animal welfare, and raising funds for the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Going forward, he aspires to take on a project linking local celebrities with individuals with special needs through a creative mentorship programme.

"Getting this award has been a surreal experience, and through this I want the public to recognise that people with special needs can be good contributors to society," said Mr Arshad.