



ORANG ASLI SCHOOL STUDENTS GO CASHLESS

PAGE 12

Share news on events or programmes at your school together with high resolution photos and captions to: schooltimes@nst.com.my



SCHOOL ADOPTION

Orang Asli students go cashless in school

BY HANNA SHEIKH MOKHTAR

STUDENTS at Sekolah Kebangsaan Bukit Lanjan, Damansara — a majority of them being Temuan Orang Asli — buy food and drinks at the canteen using their smartcards. They no longer need to bring pocket money to school. Since 2014, students at the school had been receiving a cash-

less allowance of RM60 per month via their MyKasih student smartcard from Dialog Group Berhad (Dialog).

MyKasih Foundation, a charity organisation under Dialog that aims to help underprivileged Malaysians through food aid and education, has to date contributed close to RM400,000 to SK Bukit Lanjan in the form of cashless bursaries

and other support for the students and school.

MyKasih Foundation trustee, Siti Khairon Shariff, said: "Dialog and MyKasih began reaching out to Damansara Perdana's Temuan Orang Asli community back in 2014 when Dialog moved into its new head office building, located a mere 2.2km drive from the school.

"This is the first Orang Asli school which Dialog began supporting through the MyKasih 'Love My School' student bursary programme — adopting 70 students, which was half of the school's student population back then.

"The MyKasih 'Love My School' programme provides students with cashless bursaries. Each primary school student will receive a monthly spending allowance of RM60 which they can draw upon using their MyKasih smartcard to pay for food and drinks at the school canteen."

Apart from the monthly meal allowance, students at the school also receive a one-off Back-to-School cashless shopping allowance of RM250 to purchase schooling essentials at Giant Kota Damansara (one of MyKasih's partner retail outlet under the 'Love My Neighbourhood' food aid programme).

Feedback from the school teachers indicate that the children are healthier since the adoption programme and that attendance has been improving steadily. The students seem more confident, happy and participatory as they've got their own uniforms for class and sports activities.

Administrative senior assistant of SK Bukit Lanjan, Rohani Othman said: "With the MyKasih Student Smartcard system, the students learn to manage their expenditure better. The MyKasih programme helps a lot in terms of

providing the students with cashless financial support, to provide food from the canteen and also with school supplies from the designated hypermarket."

The cashless bursaries, coupled with educational study camps and community development programmes with Dialog staff volunteers, has increased students' school attendance from 78.1 per cent in 2014 to 84.4 per cent last year.

This year, Dialog is increasing its support for the school by adopting all 174 students of SK Bukit Lanjan and sponsoring the 21st Century Classroom Transformation Project. This involves upgrading a classroom with ICT infrastructure to enable students to gain access to a wider source of information.

For that, headmaster of SK Bukit Lanjan, Nazri Mash Turki, said: "We are thankful to Dialog for making SK Bukit Lanjan's goal towards 21st century learning a reality through their adoption programme.

"This kind of collaboration will ensure we will be able to reach 21st century education needs successfully. And it makes it possible for our students who are mostly from the Temuan Orang Asli group to improve their lot and become leaders of the future."

MyKasih was founded by Dialog's executive chairman Tan Sri Dr Ngau Boon Keat and his wife, Puan Sri Jean Ngau. It relies entirely on donations from the public and corporate bodies to help fund their many welfare programmes for the underprivileged.



Siti Khairon Shariff (second from left) with, Mohd Nazri Mash Tuki (third from left) and managing director of MyKasih Foundation, Jeffrey Perera (second from right) looks on as SK Bukit Lanjan students try out their notebooks during the launch at SK Bukit Lanjan, Damansara Perdana. PIC BY ASYRAF HAMZAH