

Corporations, individuals donate RM11.5m to new foundation

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Brighter future for orphans

By Sharifah Fatimah

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — A brighter future lies ahead for the nation's orphans, especially in terms of their academic development, with the launching of the Malaysian Orphans Welfare Foundation by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today.

With the help of caring corporate bodies and individuals, the foundation managed to collect RM11.5 million at its inauguration.

The biggest donation was made by the foundation's adviser Tun Daim Zainuddin, who gave RM2 million to the trust fund.

Those who donated RM1 million were the Berjaya Group of Companies, Berjaya Group chief executive officer Tan Sri Vincent Tan, Renong Berhad, Datuk Halim Saad's foundation — Yayasan Saad, Advance Synergy Group of Companies, G Team Consultants, Multi-Purpose Holdings Bhd, Technology Resources Industries Bhd chairman and chief executive Datuk Tajuddin Ramli, and Idris Hydraulic (M) Bhd managing director Ishak Ismail.

Other donors were Shamuddin Abu Hassan (RM250,000), Hong Leong Bank (RM100,000), Rashid Hussein Berhad (RM100,000), Perusahaan Otomobil Nasional (RM20,000), Ban Hin Lee Bank (RM10,000), Bank Bu-

miputra (M) Bhd (RM10,000), Stephens Properties Sdn Bhd (RM5,000), Bank Industri (M) Bhd (RM3,000), Datuk Lim Yan Hai (RM1,000) and MSS Travel (RM1,000).

There were several anonymous donors.

Also present at the launching ceremony, held at the Pusat Islam here, were some of the foundation's future beneficiaries — children from orphanages in the Klang Valley including the Tengku Budriah Home and the Pure Life Society.

The children, who were among the audience, received a pleasant surprise at the end of the ceremony when Dr Mahathir, who is the foundation's patron, invited them onto the stage.

To add to their joy of meeting the Prime Minister, they also got to pose for a group photograph with him.

Whether the orphans realised it or not, the foundation, whose launching they witnessed today, is poised to offer vast opportunities which their predecessors could only dream of.

Chairman of the foundation's board of trustees, Datuk Ahmad Sebi Bakar, said the setting up of the foundation was another way for the business community and those who have benefited from the nation to express their gratitude to their

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Chance for 100 to study in KL

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benefactors.

He said the foundation would, for a start, select about 100 orphans who do well in this year's Primary School Assessment Test (UPSR) to attend Form One in good schools in the city.

"We will get in touch with welfare homes all over the country to select those who obtained good results in the UPSR and bring them to the city."

The foundation would continue sponsoring the education of these students until they reach university level, he added.

As for the donations received by the foundation, Ahmad Sebi said the money would be invested to enable it to expand its services to the nation's orphans in the future.

He added that the foundation had also applied for land from the Selangor State Government to build a hostel complex for orphans studying in the city.

Meanwhile, the foundation's executive board administrative chairman, Azeem Aras, said the foundation would act as the much-awaited umbrella organisation to co-ordinate the educational needs of all orphans living in Government and privately-run or-

phanages all over the country.

"At present we do not even have records of the number of orphans living in welfare homes and orphanages," he said, adding that officially there were only 44 registered welfare homes in the country.

Azeem said the foundation would hold a convention next year to gather representatives from all orphanages in the country to work out a systematic way to help them.

Besides Daim, National Unity and Social Development Minister Datuk Napsiah Omar is also an adviser to the foundation. Other members of the board of trustees are Datuk Ahmad Nordin Md Zain, Md Amin Md Hashim, G. Gnanalingam and Lim Hong Liang.

The foundation also has a five-member executive board which comprises Datuk Raja Aman Ahmad (the funds and investment chairman), Prof Abu Bakar A. Hamid (education chairman), Ahmad Sebi (selections chairman), Rasanubari Asmaramah Baharum (welfare chairman) and Azeem Aras (administrative chairman).

The foundation was incorporated on April 3 last year under the Companies Act 1965.