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600 orphans to take part in educational camp in November

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - Some 600 orphans, from all over the country, will attend a 21st century educational camp in November, aimed at exposing them to information technology and inspiring them to excellence.

Orphans with average and above average academic performance will be selected for the five-day assembly to be held at Universiti Teknologi Mara campus in Shah Alam.

The camp, which begins on Nov 20, will be the second by the Yayasan Kebajikan Anak-Anak Yatim Malaysia (Yatim) and the university. The first was in 1996.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is Yatim's patron.

Themed Generasi IT, Generasi Bervisi (IT Generation, A Generation With Vision), the event is supported by the New Straits Times Press (M) Berhad, Utusan Malaysia, Sistem Televisyen Malaysia and Radio Televisyen Malaysia.

"The camp will expose the orphans to IT so that they do not fall behind in education," said joint organising chairman Professor Adnan Alias at a Press conference in Balai Berita today.

Adnan, who is also the university's deputy rector (student affairs), said the orphans would get a hands-on experience using computers and the Internet and learn effective studying system.

Also present were the camp's joint organising chairman, Ahmad A. Talib, who is also the NST group editor, Yatim's managing director Azeem Aras and joint deputy chairman Adnan Hashim.

Adnan said the age level was most suitable to cultivate a desired mindset before the students proceed to higher learning institutions.

"We will also follow the development of the participants until they reach Form Five to evaluate the camp's effectiveness in exposing them to IT," he said.

He said the outcome of the evaluation would provide valuable feedback to the organisers to plan more effective learning methods in the future.

The camp will be conducted by 24 semester six students of the university's Advertising Department in the Mass Communication Faculty, supported by 50 teacher counsellors from all over the country.

The selection of the orphans for the programme will be carried out with the co-operation of the State-level and district-level Education Departments.

The highlight of the camp will be the Majlis Semarak Kasih held on the last day, where the participants will meet Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who will be the camp's patron.

Ahmad appealed to the corporate sector to come forward and contribute for the good cause.

He believed many companies and individuals were able to contribute, especially now that the country's economic situation had improved.

Azeem said that the programme would, among others, enable the orphans to have a closer look at the country's rapid development, especially in the capital city.

"We realise that some of these orphans who live in rural areas have never even been to towns in their own States, let alone Kuala Lumpur," he said.

He said programmes such as this was a new way of helping the orphans to chart their future.

This is unlike in the past, when helping the orphans was strictly

associated with providing them with food only.

The corporate sector or individuals who intend to contribute in cash or kind to the programme can contact the university's Mass Communication Faculty at 03-5563895 or Azrul Hasan of the sponsorship secretariat at 010-2828676 or fax 03-5596397. They can also write to the Web room 1238, Mass Communication Faculty, Universiti Teknologi Mara, Shah Alam, 40450, Selangor.

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