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Charity auction with a difference

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AT first glance, the eight women at the far end of the Aseana Cafe seemed to be doing what everyone else at the cafe was doing: sipping tea and enjoying each others' lively company. A closer inspection, however, reveals that all is not as it seems. For starters, there's ne'er a tea cup on the solid wooden table at which the stunning ladies are seated.

Instead, paper, files and organisers - both of the electronic and traditional leather-bound variety - litter the dining table.

This comes as no surprise, though, once one realises that these ladies comprise the Organising Committee (O.C.) of the Darling Child Charity Auction, which Farah Khan - chairperson of the O.C. and president of Mileum Sdn Bhd - is set to make the "event of the year".

To be held on March 28, at Aseana, Suria KLCC, the Darling Child charity auction will be in aid of the Future Mind Centre (FMC) and Institut Tengku Ampuan Afzan (INTAZ), a centre for children with learning disabilities and an institute for underprivileged Muslim children respectively.

The committee had chosen the name "Darling Child" as it reflects what it feels is "the urgency of love for a child", especially a child who is underprivileged in either an economic or a physical sense.

Says Farah: "Every child needs constant care and attention, but more so the one with special needs. What the 10 of us decided to do was to raise some serious funds for FMC and INTAZ because main-stream schools are generally not equipped to deal with these special needs."

To this end, Farah gathered the others - Che Engku Datuk Sri Puan Sri Mahirah, Puan Sri Rosaline Yeoh, Vicomtesse May-Lin de Chezelles, Tengku Nong Soraya, Che Engku Rozeeta, Winnie Lim, Sue Day, Nicole Yap and Lim Meng Hong - and in a month, their concerted efforts promise to make this auction very successful, but more importantly, "lots of fun".

"This is an auction with a difference, thanks to the breadth of items we have so painstakingly sourced. It's not going to be an auction that focuses only on one class of items, say just jewellery or paintings.

"Instead, the items range from paintings to luxury holidays, family heir-looms, designer accessories, maps, dinner vouchers to exclusive restaurants, a game of golf with Tengku Imran and even a dinner for 12 cooked by Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"I don't think an auction of this nature has ever been organised in Malaysia," says Farah.

To make it a truly memorable event that will benefit both bidders and recipients of the funds, the O.C. is making the items auctioned "real value for money".

Aside from this, 100 per cent of the proceeds from the auction will be funnelled into the FMC and INTAZ. The O.C. had initially aimed to raise RM100,000 but with the overwhelming generosity of the donors whom the O.C. approached, it looks as if the Darling Child Charity Auction will bring in a lot more than was initially hoped. Those who want a closer look at the items to be auctioned will have the chance to do so at Aseana, Ground Level, Suria KLCC (tel: 03-382 9988).

There will be an auction box for those who want to bid for any of the items. The lowest bid is RM2,000 and opening bids range from this to RM50,000.

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