

| | |
|-----------|-------------------|
| Newspaper | New Straits Times |
| Date | 19/09/2012 |

PRIME NEWS



'Program Kenali Anak Kita Petronas' patron Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali receiving a souvenir from Pengasah president Datuk Mohd Yunus Pathi at the programme's launch yesterday. With them is Petronas senior manager of corporate affairs Datuk Mohammad Medan Abdullah. Pic by Mohd Azren Jamaludin

'Parents hold key to stop drug abuse'

NST-19/09/2012

EDUCATE THEM: Be aware and teach children to stay away from drugs, says Dr Siti Hasmah

AKIL YUNUS
KUALA LUMPUR
akil@nst.com.my

PARENTS play a critical role in ensuring that their children do not resort to substance abuse, Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali said yesterday.

Dr Siti Hasmah, wife of former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, said drug addiction should not be seen as a disease because it was a personal choice.

"Drug abuse is completely preventable and curable if properly ad-

ressed from the beginning.

"The key to this is awareness, especially among parents. They must know their roles well, seek counselling, and learn how to manage time with their children," she said after launching the *Program Kenali Anak Kita Petronas* (PKAKP) here.

Dr Siti Hasmah, a patron for the campaign, said Petronas had exercised an important part of corporate social responsibility by protecting the youth against the drug scourge.

"Despite the strict penalties imposed on those found guilty of taking and trafficking drugs, the social ill is still on the rise here.

"Children must be taught to stay away from these activities through education and programmes like this."

She said a softer approach was required to rehabilitate drug addicts.

Petronas' senior manager of corporate affairs Datuk Mohammad Medan Abdullah said the company had invested close to RM1.6 million in the first phase of PKAKP.

"Going forward until 2014, we have contributed another RM2 million. We hope to expand this programme to Sabah and Sarawak as substance abuse is a very serious issue there, too."

He said the main focus of their programmes were parents, and not just children, because a strong family unit was the first step in the prevention of drug abuse.

Drug rehabilitation organisation Pengasih said it had managed to rehabilitate many addicts in the 22 years since its inception.

"We have treated more than 5,400 drug addicts and 70 per cent of them are fully rehabilitated and doing well with their lives today.

"Some of them have even joined Pengasih as members," said its president, Datuk Mohd Yunus Pathi, who was present at the launch.

He said the organisation was focusing its efforts on prevention as much emphasis had been given to rehabilitation.