

# PM: Encourage spirit of caring among the young

NST - 27/7/2006

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**BANGI:** Malaysians should be inculcated with the spirit of volunteerism to help the less fortunate as a caring society.

Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the young should be encouraged to join uniformed bodies like the Scouts and the Red Crescent Society to do their bit for the disabled and poor.

"By starting them young, they will carry this into adulthood," the Prime Minister said in his speech during the launch of the Heart of the Community, Pulse of the Nation programme in conjunction with the Welfare Department's 60th anniversary.

It was organised by the Women, Family and Community Development Ministry.

Also present were its minister

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Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil, her deputy Datuk G. Palanivel, parliamentary secretary Datin Paduka Chew Mei Fun and Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Dr Ng Yen Yen.

Abdullah said opportunities should be made available to those who were interested in volunteer-

ing their skills and time to help the needy.

"Companies can play their part as well by voluntarily adopting credible associations dedicated to helping out the handicapped and the less fortunate," he said.

He added that such efforts would demonstrate corporate social responsibility.

He hoped that the concept of volunteerism would grow into a social responsibility and spur society to be more caring.

Abdullah said that the old approach to helping the needy was through financial aid.

The current approach was towards capacity-building by providing quality training to ensure their future.

"With training, the disabled will be able to obtain jobs, be independent and at par with their able-bodied counterparts," he said.

Abdullah added that efforts

should be stepped up to ensure that the country's welfare programmes continued to remain among the foremost in the world in the wake of recognition in this respect by the United Nations.

Meanwhile, Shahrizat said that making volunteerism part of Malaysian culture would go a great distance in helping resolve social problems.

She believed that collaboration between the private and the public sector and the local community would be the best partnership to achieve this objective.

On helping the less fortunate, Shahrizat said the ministry would emphasise efforts to obtain living skills.

"The time has come for us to move forward in welfare. We will continue to give what they need, but at the same time, we will help them develop themselves to be independent," she said.