

TNB's 'Ceria ke Sekolah' helps students

Archival News | New Straits Times | 29/11/2019 | Author: SUZANNA PILLAY | a
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KUALA LUMPUR: IN smiles and chatting animatedly with other pupils around them, 750 students from six schools could barely contain their excitement to receive donations of school supplies from Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB) last week.

Initially known as the Back To School programme, the renamed 'Ceria Ke Sekolah' programme is part of TNB's corporate social responsibility programme (CSR) for B40 students.

They were among 5,000 recipients of the programme nationwide, to which the company allocated RM1 million. Students received school supplies, including uniforms, head scarves, stockings, shoes, school bags and stationery to get them school-ready.

The students were selected from schools in the vicinity of the TNB headquarters in Bangsar here, including Sekolah Kebangsaan Bangsar, Sekolah Kebangsaan Bukit Bandaraya, Sekolah Kebangsaan Bukit Pantai, SMK Bangsar, SMK Bukit Bandaraya and SMK Seri Pantai.

TNB chairman Tan Sri Leo Moggie said the company would distribute the donations to other students from 30 locations in the country by the 2020 school session.

"The programme is part of our CSR, which covers education, socio-economic (including sports) and environmental conservation," he said during the presentation ceremony here.

Present was Lembah Pantai MP Fahmi Fadzil.

Fahmi said the programme would strengthen TNB's ties with the community and ease the financial burden of the target population.

"I am confident that TNB's 'giving back to the community' will help bring about a change in the lives of future generations," he said, adding that it played a part in ensuring that students would not drop out of school due to poverty.

TNB general manager (corporate affairs) Datuk Omar Sidek said since the start of the programme in 2013, the budget for the programme came from a portion of the business tithe (zakat perniagaan).

This was returned from State Islamic Religious Councils (Majlis Agama Islam Negeri) to TNB upon TNB's request, which was intended only for tithe recipients (asnaf). However, since 2017, the budget was obtained from TNB's coffers and recipients from other races were included.

“The main goal of the Ceria Ke Sekolah programme in the next five years is to alleviate the financial burden of B40 families with school-going children. TNB hopes the contribution will nurture the future generation via education in the communities where TNB operates and foster a good relationship between TNB and the community, “ said Omar.

SMK Bangsar Form Three student Abdul Azim Abdul Aziz, one of the recipients this year, said the donation would reduce his family’s financial burden to provide school uniforms and supplies, while fellow student Thivashini Sures, who begins Form 2 next year, is grateful to be a recipient.

SMK Seri Pantai student affairs officer Ramizu Ibrahim was moved by the response from the students selected from his school. He said the students had started receiving help under the programme for the first time last year and the programme was well-received.

SMK Bangsar teacher Mimi Zaheera Zakaria, who accompanied her students to the event, was full of praise for the ‘Ceria Ke Sekolah’ programme.

“Students from the B40 group now have the confidence to come to school in uniforms that fit them. Previously, some of them used to come in hand-me-downs from their older siblings, which did not fit or had faded from the original colour. They were prone to bullying and were teased by other students. Now with their new uniforms and school supplies, they can concentrate on their studies, because they look like other students.”

Mimi also praised the company’s ‘ Program Bantuan Pendidikan B40 TNB.’

“Since it was introduced last year, the academic performance of the B40 students has improved. Their parents understand that it is meant to be spent on education-related activities like additional tuition coaching to help their children cope with the tougher subjects.”

Under this programme, which began in January last year, 54 Form Three students from B40 families from SMK Bukit Bandaraya, SMK Bangsar and SMK Seri Pantai (18 students per school) received RM1,500 per year until December 2020. In January this year, 96 Form Four students, also from the three schools, were included in the programme.

The goal of the programme is to help the 150 students with their monthly expenses. This group of students was also a recipient of TNB’s ‘ Ceria Ke Sekolah’ Programme.

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Source By: New Straits Times