

Helping kids get Back to School

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KUALA LUMPUR: SINCE her father passed away two years ago, Mahalaxmi Kovelan has had to depend on the generosity of her relatives to buy new uniforms for the school year.

Her mother, who works at a sundry shop earns around RM1,200 a month and she also has to support a differently-abled child.

Mahalaxmi, 15, is a student at SMK Bukit Bandaraya. She said her family faced financial constraints after the death of her father, and her mother struggles to support her and her sister, who is unable to work due to a health condition from birth.

This year, Mahalaxmi was able to start the new school year with crisp new uniforms, thanks to Tenaga Nasional Bhd's Back to School 2019 programme, which provides school necessities for the underprivileged.

"The hardship that I faced, motivates me further to excel in my studies. I have an ambition to become a doctor. I have been helping to take care of my sister since I was young and I like to help others," she said.

TNB has fulfilled the wishes of many students such as Mahalaxmi.

Muhammad Daniel Hakim, 17, from SMK Sri Pantai also expressed his gratitude for TNB's assistance.

"My parents will buy me one pair of uniform each year. If the uniform is still in good condition, I will reuse it for the next year," he said.

His father works as a lorry driver and he also has younger siblings.

"Having more than one pair of uniforms is very helpful especially if it gets stained. With an extra pair, we don't have to miss school. As a student, we can't miss any lessons as there would be much to catch upon," he said.

Daniel said it is an important year for him as he will be sitting for the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia examination.

TNB also gave them durable school bags which helps them in their studies as they have to carry a lot of books.

Daniel hopes to work in the automotive industry when he completes his studies.

Another student, Amir Muqriz Mohd Amin, 12, said the programme helped to alleviate the burden of a single income family.

Amir, a Year Six pupil from SK Bukit Pantai is the youngest of three siblings.

After his mother passed away, his sister Sofia Najwa, 20, had been taking care of him. They live at the Sri Pahang Flats.

His father works as a chef in Pengerang in Johor.

Amir said he is inspired to study hard as he will sit for the Ujian Pencapaian Sekolah Rendah (UPSR) this year.

"I am grateful for this assistance. I realise now that TNB is a company that not only does business but has a positive role to play in society," he said.

He hopes to follow his father's footsteps in becoming a chef.

Another recipient, Mohd Agasha Jeffridi, 17, from SMK Bangsar, is an Orang Asli of the Temiang tribe.

He received an offer to study in SMK Bangsar after he excelled in his UPSR examinations.

He is the third of five siblings. His father is a village head and his mother is a housewife, and they live in Sungai Siput, Perak.

Agasha recounted a memorable experience of having to walk seven kilometres from SK Chenein to his home.

"At times, my father could not pick me up because he has work to do. So after school, I had to walk back home. When I reached home, it was already dark," he said.

"It is very common for Orang Asli children to walk from home to SK Chenein. The pupils of the Temiang tribe who walk to school come from Kampung Bawong, Kampung Ulu Chenein, and Kampung Kuala Chenein," he said.

“I am grateful that TNB reaches out to help Orang Asli children in their education,” he said.

Agasha, who views safety and security as important aspects of life, wants to become a policeman.

Meanwhile, Siti Nor Atiqoh Maulida, 11, from SK Bangsar said every time a new school term starts her parents have to prepare a lot for the family.

Her father works in security department and her mother is a cleaner.

“I was born abroad to an Indonesian mother. I am not eligible to receive free text books assistance,” she said.

Siti said most of the household expenditure were spent on food, rent and utilities.

She has a younger brother and sister and this assistance would go a long way to reduce the financial burden her parents faced.

TNB recently held a ceremony to present the school necessities for the children living around Bangsar.

Under the Back to School 2019 programme, TNB gave out school uniforms, bags, and stationery to prepare students for the new school term.

Since 2013, some 30,000 students have benefitted from the programme.

This year, TNB allocated RM1 million for 5,000 school-going kids nationwide. Present at the event were TNB chairman Tan Sri Leo Moggie and Persatuan Wanita Kumpulan Tenaga Nasional Berhad president Datin Seri Noor Afizah Ahmad Noor.

Leo said the ceremony is symbolic of TNB’s good ties with the surrounding community.

“TNB lights up the life of the nation not only via providing electricity, but also through three main pillars of corporate social responsibility,” he said.

He said the main causes were education, socio-economic and environment conservation.

“We hope the assistance would provide a moral boost for the students to concentrate on their

studies," he said.

He said the Back to School programme was targeted at primary pupils but focus was also given to the secondary students who fall under the category of city urban poor.

"We strongly believe that education would change life for the better," he said.

At the ceremony, there were 400 recipients from six schools, namely SMK Sri Pantai, SK Bukit Pantai, SMK Bukit Bandaraya, SK Bukit Bandaraya, SMK Bangsar and SK Bangsar.

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