



A UMS student nurse interacting with one of the psychiatric residents at Hospital Mesra in Bukit Padang.

Some at mental home for 30 years

UMS praised for cheering up Mesra inmates

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KOTA KINABALU: The Nursing Students Association (Nusa) of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (FMHS) Universiti Malaysia Sabah, UMS and Hospital Mesra Bukit Padang (HMBP) jointly organised a series of social outreach activities the long-stay residents of the hospital. These social outreach activities were coordinated by Associate Segaran Ramodran from FMHS UMS and clinical staff of Hospital Mesra Bukit Padang.

According to Assoc Prof Segaran, some of the long-stay residents have been warded for more than 30 years.

"Many of the long-stay residents are homeless without relatives and a few residents had been abandoned in the hospital for years due to rejection by family members.

The public often had a stigmatising view towards psychiatric residents here and tend to shun away from engaging with them. As such, charitable visits or social activities organised by outsiders or NGOs are rare due to this stigma," he said.

"UMS' effort in organising this kind event for the psychiatric residents serves as a bold exemplary endeavour to break the walls of stigma towards people with mental illness and build the bridge of compassion and acceptance," he added.

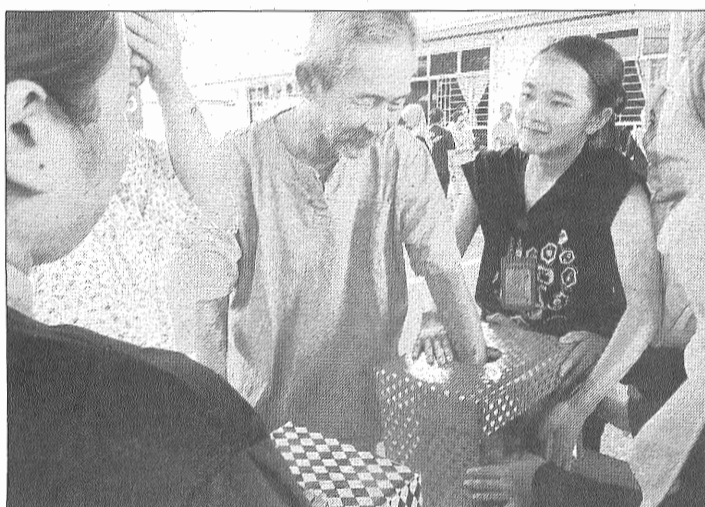
Among activities organised during the social event included recreational games.

The purpose of these games is to help foster interaction and develop therapeutic rapport between the student nurses and the psychiatric residents.

The residents were also treated with a variety of Hari Raya savoury, bubur kacang and lunch.

HMBP's Matron Grace said each time the UMS nursing students organised this event, we can see the sparks of joy and enthusiasm in the eyes of our long-stay residents, who otherwise are lonely and bored.

"After so many years, the taste of the bubur kacang rekindled my fond boyhood memories in my kampung where I 'curi-makan' the bubur kacang my mother



A student nurse involved in games with the patients.



UMS nurses goes all out, bringing joy for a long-stay residents at Hospital Mesra in Bukit Padang.

made," said a 78-year-old inmate.

Another long stay 68 year-old resident, long abandoned by his family, said: "The Sumazau dance with young students touched my 'Semangat' and reawakened my lonely soul... I felt I was 22".

"Seeing how small simple things that I do make a big difference for this folks, I re-learned the real meaning of empathy, which I took for granted," said Kezia, a second year nursing student.

This is the first time FMHS UMS had held such an event which commemorates the 25th anniversary establishment of the university. UMS hopes to do this again next year. We want to portray a positive image of UMS as a community-friendly University," said Assoc. Prof Segaran.