

UMS student nurses spread love to Bukit Padang inmates

BP 29.5.2019 2

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) recently organized a series of social outreach activities for the long-stay residents of the hospital.

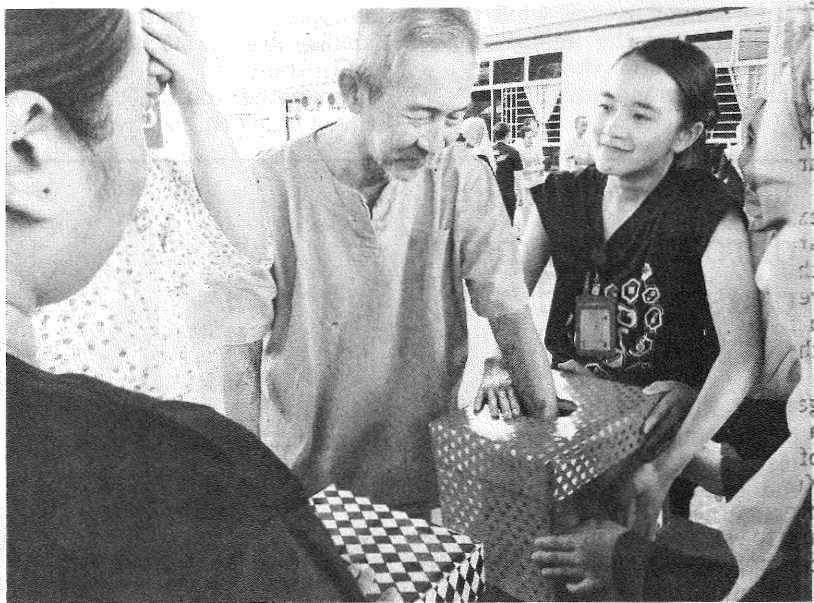
These social outreach activities were coordinated by Associate Professor Segaran Ramodran from FMHS UMS and clinical staff of Hospital Mesra Bukit Padang. They were held to commemorate the fasting month of Ramadan.

The social outreach activities were mainly aimed for the well-being of long-stay inpatient residents of HMBP.

According to 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 have been abandoned in the hospital for years due to rejection by family members. The public often have a stigmatising view towards the 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," said Segaran.

"UMS' effort in organizing this kind event for the psychiatric residents serves as a bold exemplary



The UMS student nurses having close rapport with a long-stay resident at Hospital Bukit Padang.

endeavour to break the walls of stigma towards people with mental illness and build the bridge of compassion and acceptance," he added.

Among the activities organised during the social event included recreational games aimed 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 expressed her appreciation.

"Each time the UMS nursing students organise 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," she said.

A 78-year-old inmate who had been residing in HMBP for the last 36 years said, "After so many years, the taste of the bubur kacang rekindle

my fond boyhood memories in my kampung where I 'curi-makan' the bubur kacang my mother made'.

Another long-stay 68 year-old resident who has been abandoned by his family, said the Sumazau dance with young students touched his 'semangat' and reawakened his lonely soul. "I felt I was 22".

Kezia Sunam who is a Year Two nursing student said, "Seeing how small simple things that I do make a big difference for these folks, I re-learned the real meaning of empathy, which I took for granted."

During the closing of the event, Segaran thanked UMS for supporting their activities.

"This is the first time FMHS UMS had held such an event which commemorates timely with 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," he said.