

NEW DYSLEXIA CENTRE IN BATU KAWAH

BY AVA LAI

The Star



Mok (third from right) and Dr Ong (first from right) calls for help to raise fund for new building. — AVA LAI/
The Star

KUCHING: Help the Dyslexia Association of Sarawak (DASwk) will continue advocacy work, intervention and learning support programmes for dyslexic with its upcoming charity food fair on Sept 11.

The event is to help raise capital for the construction of a new DASwk centre in Desa Wira, Batu Kawah, which it has just acquired from the state government.

Organising chairman Venia Mok said the association was aiming to raise RM200,000 or more to cover the construction cost of RM4.3mil for the complex.

They will set up 100 booths and currently 40 have already been occupied. There are outdoor booths available for grilling, barbequing besides also a pet adoption drive by Sarawak Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

“Mostly, there will be food and fun. There is a children’s corner offering face painting. The fundraising acts to create awareness of public, what Dyslexia Association does and how to identify children with reading disorder,” she said during the press conference at DASwk.

Boards with information about dyslexia will be set up for visitors to gain insight on the disability. Interested parents can visit the centre to gain more information and help from the experienced teachers.

According to her research, DASwk president Associate Prof Dr Ong Puay Hoon said dyslexia affected six in 100 children in Kuching and eight to 100 children nationwide.



A teacher telling a story to a student at the DASwk.

“We believe strongly that it is children’s basic right to literacy – to be able to read and write functionally in their daily lives as reading and writing is the core business in school.

“If they cannot do it, they will suffer socially and emotionally.

Feeling ashamed, fearful and anxiousness in school may lead to playing truant and eventually school dropout. If they do drop out of school, what opportunity is there for them to gain full employment?

“It’s a crime for teachers and schools to allow a child to remain being a poor reader by Primary 4 or 5. Dyslexia can be helped but nobody knew what condition is,” she said.

Dr Ong hopes that the charity sale will receive good response this year to allow the organisation to continue providing intervention and remedial

programs for dyslexic children as well as train teachers in a larger and conducive space.

DASwk is also looking for corporate donors or corporate partners to adopt a block or few classrooms in the new five-block centre.



A student (left) constructing words using alphabet caps under the guidance of a teacher.

“We need this building to help more dyslexic children. With the new building, children and parents outside Kuching can come and stay at the centre.

“We cannot do it alone. We have the passion, the expertise, programmes, skilled staffs, the learning resources but do not have the finances.

“Help us by being partners in elevating the level of literacy in the state,” said Dr Ong who is a retired lecturer from Universiti Malaysia Sarawak.

