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# Adding value to values

An initiative to inspire and instil good morals and attitudes among schoolchildren is bound to bring about benefits in the long run.

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“WHAT does an orangutan look like?” the woman asks the crowd of a 140-odd children seated in the small school hall.

“Chocolate (colour) and with big mouth,” a boy answers with wide eyes and a grin.

“That’s right,” said Datin Rossiti Aishah Rashidi.

The local book writer and advocate for wildlife conservation was in SJK (C) Lee Min, Teluk Gong, Port Klang, to give a talk on nature.

Her session with the children also saw her reading excerpts from her books - *Manja The Orangutan* and *Siti The Elephant*.

She later asked the children to read some pages of both the books.

The children read out in the classic sing-song voice that is so typical of primary school pupils.

Pictures of orangutans, turtles and elephants were also shown to the pupils to teach them the importance of conservation, especially of our local wildlife.

She even showed them a picture

of an elephant walking on the road and reminded the pupils that: “We cannot say that the elephant is using our road. Actually, we are using the elephants’ jungle.”

Rossiti Aishah said she found the children’s participation and will to learn “amazing!”

“They’re so enthusiastic and brave,” she said, adding that it was obvious from the way they asked questions.

It was a great way for these young children to kickstart the second half of the school year.

Rossiti Aishah kept the children entertained as she showed them a branch full of mulberry leaves.

“Elephant food from my house,” she told the amused crowd.

To make sure the pupils better understood how vital it was to protect endangered animals, she donated *Siti The Elephant* and a copy of *Puteri Tioman The Green Turtle*, also written by her.

The books are to be kept in the school’s resource centre.

She also gave two mulberry plants to the school.

The pupils were told to plant them in their school so that they could appreciate and understand the importance of a green environment.

The author’s presence and her interactive session with the children was part of the Setia Caring School Programme.

Under the initiative, the SP Setia Foundation adopts underperforming schools with the objective of teaching, inspiring and instilling good values in students.

They are expected to emulate their role models such as their teachers, parents and successful peers.

Under the programme, three schools will be helped by the foundation’s volunteers to carry out activities both within and among the schools.

The other two schools are SJK (T) Ladang Vallambrosa, Klang and SK Meru Jalan Tap, Kapar, Selangor.

## A study in nature

After the storytelling and nature talk, the pupils were handed plastic bottles cut in half, coloured popsicle sticks, pens and stickers to design their own plant pots.

They had fun filling their pots with soil before placing tomato seeds in them.

These pots will be kept outside their classrooms until they sprout shoots and bear fruit.

“Maybe it will grow fast after we take care of it,” said Year Two pupil Nor Aizawanis Norman.

Both activities for the day were carried out to mark World

Environment Day.

It was also in line with the basic framework of the programme. The day’s activities touched on caring for the environment and animals.

The other components of the framework was to care for family, friends, school and society.

The school’s headmistress Ngann Sook Wei said the programme was good for the 71-year-old school which rarely received outside help.

“Schools nowadays must focus on the academics as scores in exams seem to determine how

good they are,” she lamented.

“But examination results cannot determine if schoolchildren have good values and compassion for others” she said.

“That’s when a programme like this becomes relevant.

“The initiative is to inculcate good values.

“By doing so, their dealings with others, their attitude and acceptance towards animals and the environment would be more positive,” Ngann added.

She said that the rural school was the “smallest” schools involved in the programme.