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Giving them hope, a brighter future

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Photos by **SAMUEL ONG**

THE Assunta Children's Society (ACS) was a hive of activity last Saturday as its children and volunteers made preparations for a charity carnival to be held the next morning.

The society had wanted funds to repair the centre and, if possible, turn it into a double-storey unit so that there could be more room for study, activity halls and even to house children and single parents in cases of emergencies.

ACS is run by the Sisters of Franciscan Missionaries of Mary (FMM). It began as the Assunta Foster Care in 1966. Back then, it fostered children who had lost their parents or were abandoned to families that would love and care for them.

In 1994 ACS was set up as a learning centre, a move that enabled it to progress to a direct task of protecting, caring and supporting underprivileged children, irrespective of race or religion, while they still lived with their families. The ACS motto is Light Me A Life Within My Family.



The society provides free tuition to children aged from four to 18.



Wong ... 'we believe that as we light a beautiful light for the children, they can pass the flame on to their families.'

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The children helping to prepare the items for the charity carnival.

"We believe that as we light a beautiful light for the children, they can pass the flame on to their families," said ACS coordinator Sister Angela Wong Chin Chin.

"We believe in the importance of strong family ties. At the ACS, children are given care, love and help to grow up as normal, morally upright and matured adults.

"Our focus is to provide the children with a holistic education."

The centre provides free tuition classes to children aged from four to 18. Besides these, volunteers show the children how to put to good use various skills such as making art and craft, baking, sewing and using Information Technology.

"These will help them with employment prospects later," said Wong.

A housemother acts as a "disciplinarian" and takes care of the children's food and welfare. There are, at present, 45 students in ACS' care.

"A good sign is when the children learn to support their siblings," said Wong. "There are some who do when they have begun working."



The children are also taught skills like cooking and baking.

Others who have graduated come back on weekends to help out in the centre, mostly to teach the younger ones.

"These children also helped in the carnival. So eager were they that they would wake up early on weekends to help sell coupons for the fair," said Wong.

Corporations donated products such as food, toiletries, and drinks while church members and the public donated clothes and books for the carnival.

Those who would like to help ACS or be its volunteer can call 03-7783 7105 (Wong) or acsocie@streamyx.com. They can also visit the centre at 12 Jalan 1/3 in Petaling Jaya.

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