

SARAWAK : THE PRINCESS ROYAL, PRINCESS ANNE AND DATO SRI ANG LAI SOON CELEBRATE SCH GOLDEN JUBILEE

Ang Lai Soon thanks Princess Anne for unveiling Sarawak Cheshire Home Plaque and urged government to provide jobs and pensions for the retired and disabled

KUCHING, SARAWAK, MALAYSIA, November 3, 2016 /EINPresswire.com/ -- GOLDEN JUBILEE MESSAGE FROM ANG LAI SOON, PRESIDENT OF SARAWAK CHESHIRE HOME

“THE GREATNESS OF A NATION IS NOT MEASURED IN TERMS OF THE ACCUMULATION OF WEALTH BUT IN HOW WE TREAT THE POOR, THE SICK, THE DOWNTRODDEN, THE MARGINALISED, THE PERSECUTED AND THOSE LESS FORTUNATE THAN US.”

It is the saddest thing in life that we are all not born equal. In terms of intelligence and social background, meaning social demographics such as one's colour, race and creed. It looks absolutely unfair, and totally unacceptable, as basically everyone without fail including all living creatures have the same path of life through birth, survival, growth, aging, ailing and ultimately death.

It is against this background that I found myself starting to associate myself with voluntary social and charity work from college days. Voluntary and humanitarian organisations like the Sarawak Cheshire Home and St. John Ambulance have been brought into the world as “tools” to minimise the imperfection in life. The official aim of Sarawak Cheshire Home is “for the relief of suffering”.

50 years is a relatively short time in human history, but it is a significant milestone for this organisation. The Sarawak Cheshire Home was honoured that The Princess Royal of Britain, Princess Anne has associated herself with our Golden Jubilee when she met the Deputy President, Dr. Lim Tian Siong, the Executive Committee and myself before unveiling a plaque to commemorate the occasion. The Cheshire Home has its origins in Britain. The Head of the Commonwealth, Queen Elizabeth II has given staunch support to the Cheshire Home since her accession to the throne. It is



Princess Royal talking to Dato Sri Ang Lai Soon, President of Sarawak Cheshire Home and Founder, Chairman & Commander of St John Ambulance Sarawak. The British High Commissioner of Malaysia looks on.

common knowledge that the British Queen, Prince Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh and Prince Charles, the Prince of Wales and the royal family have always been great supporters of various charities.

I am delighted to note that popular appreciation of those people with disabilities has undergone a tremendous transformation in the last half century; from shunning off and even revulsion for such people, the general attitude today is one of acceptance, understanding and care. The incredible change in mental attitude has always been our dream and prayer.

The transformation has meant that the Cheshire Home is able today to rely on the goodwill and generosity of the community at large through donations in cash and kind.

Going forward I feel that both the government especially and the larger community can still contribute by helping to attend to the physical needs of the less fortunate members of our society.

The government, in particular, can contribute most meaningfully by providing specialised experts to give vocational and occupational training to the disabled in order that they will lead more meaningful and fulfilling lives and become less dependent on the charity of others. The rehabilitation will, hopefully, enable those who have been trained to be integrated into society.

The physically disabled need not necessarily be disabled in all their physical or mental faculties. I appeal to the government, which has a lot of resources at its disposal especially, and the wealthy corporate sector to give better attention towards developing whatever latent talents and skills such people may possess. We may discover a scientist, a Stephen Hawking, an inventor, philosopher, a great composer, a prima ballerina (as reported by the BBC, a girl who had bone cancer had part of the leg amputated and fixed with an artificial limb. The girl can now dance as good as anyone on stage). A trust fund can be set up for this purpose by the government and properly administered by government and NGOs.

As the country progresses, we need to inculcate a more humane society especially in the way we treat those less able to stand on their own two feet, such as the elderly after retirement age. Most developed and developing countries have now found out that their populations are aging, but the trend today is to have a small family.

While we may not want to create a society too dependent on welfare assistance provided by the state, we need to do more to create jobs specially for the less advantaged members of society, particularly the elderly who either have no savings or insufficient savings, and who are probably not getting any financial support from their families. We can deploy our senior citizens to contribute usefully to the economy on jobs that are not too taxing or physically demanding of them. This way, our senior citizens can remain productive and independent and be less of a burden to their own children but eventually when some of these people just cannot continue to work anymore, some form of old age pension should be given to them so that they can continue to live a dignified existence. A small appreciation and recognition of their early contributions to society.

In this jubilee year, I also wish on behalf of the Sarawak Cheshire Home and the disabled community to express my gratitude to all the wonderful and generous who have over the years made life more bearable for the people. My special thanks and appreciation go to my dedicated Executive Committee and various sub-committees, the staff and hundreds of volunteers who have contributed to the success of this organisation. And to the ever supportive and equally dedicated media, I wish to say "thank you" for helping to make Sarawak Cheshire Home what it is today.

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