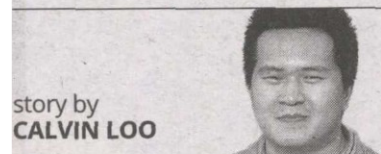


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# Touching young lives in need of surgery

## Insurance firms holds charity bazaar in aid of children with congenital heart disease and cleft lip



story by  
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MOTHER Judiyana Bachtiar breathed a sigh of relief when she received financial aid for her 18-month-old son Alif Daniel's surgery through the AIA Touching Lives programme.

"The financial assistance helped to pay for the surgery my son needed to live a normal life.

"I feel relieved to see him active again as he can play with his siblings.

"The funding we received from the programme has made his full recovery possible," the 32-year-old clerk said.

Organised by AIA Bhd for the third time, the programme aims to help underprivileged children with congenital heart disease and cleft lip.

The insurance provider organised a charity bazaar at Menara AIA Kuala Lumpur to help raise RM180,000 this year.

More than 1,500 AIA employees took part with 15 booths set up to sell a variety of items including food and home appliances as well as offer services such as massages.

A charity auction was also held on Sept 10 where employees had the chance to bid on items donated by AIA's executive committee members.

AIA Bhd chief executive officer Anusha Thavarajah hoped that the programme would change the children's lives for the better.

"AIA Touching Lives is an effort by AIA families to raise funds for the underprivileged children.

"The funds raised at the charity bazaar will be matched by the company. We hope to help the children live healthy lives and fulfil their dreams in the future," she said.

From the funds raised, RM100,000 will be pledged to help six children undergo corrective heart surgeries, while RM50,000 will be channelled to the Cleft Lip and Palate Association of Malaysia (CLAPAM).

"We appreciate AIA's continued efforts. Sometimes, we get corporate donations for a year but then it stops and we have to search for other sources of funds.

"We have a continuous collaboration with AIA, which really makes a difference to us," said CLAPAM chairman Zainal Azhar Ahmad.

More than 350 children born with heart defects and cleft lip have had their lives changed by the RM655,000 raised by the programme since 2013.



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1 AIA Bhd chief executive officer Anusha Thravarajah (left) and Zainal Azhar presenting a RM50,000 mock cheque to a family of a child with cleft lip as part of the AIA Touching Lives programme.

2 Back massages being offered by AIA employees at the charity bazaar. — Photos: RAYMOND OOI/The Star



Affordable authentic honey is among the items sold at the charity bazaar.