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Be a Pal to people stricken with HIV

Hanna Hussein

KUALA LUMPUR: When she was diagnosed as HIV positive 11 years ago, Lela (not her real name), a single mother now in her 40s, did not give up on life as she had four children to live for.

Although shunned and discriminated against by people around her, she fought hard to live on.

She was able to do so by thinking of her young children who needed her to bring them up.

To stay alive, she had to be on three types of medication which cost almost RM1,000 per month.

"I didn't earn enough to buy my medicines and support the family," she said after the launch of the Positive Audacious Living (Pal) Scheme.

The launch was held at Tesco Training Academy, Bandar Manjalara, recently.

The Pal scheme is a fundraising initiative by the Malaysian AIDS Foundation (MAF).

It was formerly known as the Medicine Assistance Scheme.

It was started in 1998.

It targets the underprivileged who

are living with HIV.

Those who earn RM2,000 and below can apply for the scheme.

A doctor's recommendation letter is compulsory in the application.

The selection will be based on clinical and medical needs.

MAF chairman Professor Adeeba Kamarulzaman said its main objective is to help Malaysians living with HIV prolong and improve their quality of life.

She said that the Pal scheme was introduced to attract corporate funding and to generate public contributions.

"We are hoping that through this approach, more people can donate because it is now more visible to the public and more people can go for treatment," she said.

The event was officiated by the Malaysian AIDS Council's Red Ribbon celebrity supporter and Pal Scheme ambassador Faizal Tahir.

Also present were Malaysian AIDS Council president Tan Sri Mohd Zaman Khan and Abbott Laboratories Sdn Bhd general manager Muru Annamalai.



(From left) Faizal Tahir, Mohd Zaman Khan, Muru Annamalai and Adeeba Kamarulzaman at the launch. — Picture by Sugumaran Suppiah