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NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Human nature never ceases to amaze me and sometimes for all the wrong reasons. I find it a very odd paradox that the same society which can today, speak openly and event bluntly about things that would not have been whispered about in the past, still remains silent when it comes to discussing mental illness. Absolutely no one would say that someone with a broken limb is not a whole person. But we do say it or loudly imply it if someone has a mental illness.

October is World Mental Health Month. A mental illness is not everyone else's problem. None of us lives in a magic protective bubble. According to the Malaysian Health and Morbidity Survey 2015, 29.2% of Malaysians aged 16 and above have some sort of mental disorder - that's one in three Malaysians. In this issue we look at mental illnesses, the stigma sufferers face and how two of them came to grips with their runaway minds.

We often look at children who are small in size and comment on how cute they are. However, this cuteness might be related to growth disorders which need to be quickly dealt with. Growth disorders in children are seldom detected early enough for intervention even though they're prevalent around the world, often with detrimental effects on the physical and mental health of children. In this issue we look at situations where "cute" is a genuine problem and how it can be rectified.

Would you take part in the 4 Deserts Gobi March in China, one of the world's most gruelling footraces to spread awareness about HIV/AIDS and raise funds? The 250km, seven-day Gobi March combines a cool weather mountain trail race with a hot desert race. Medical student Jerry Song from Penang, pledged to complete the run to raise awareness and funds for the Malaysian Aids Foundation. In this issue, we tell you his story, and it's an amazing one.

Being a parent is not easy to begin with. No matter how many books you read or much advice you are given, it will all be new when your own child arrives. Being a parent of a special needs child is even harder, because very often, there's isn't much help or advice to guide you along on your journey. Spinal muscular atrophy is a rare disease that causes severe muscle weakness among those afflicted. We speak to a young patient affected by the disorder, as well as to mothers, who are trying to raise more awareness about the condition to help themselves and other families.

The year is slowly drawing to a close and it's time to reflect, count our blessings and learn a lesson or two from Nature as she prepares for the turning of the year.

Autumn shows us how very beautiful it is to let things go, rest and be ready for new growth.

Astra inclinant, sed non obligant

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