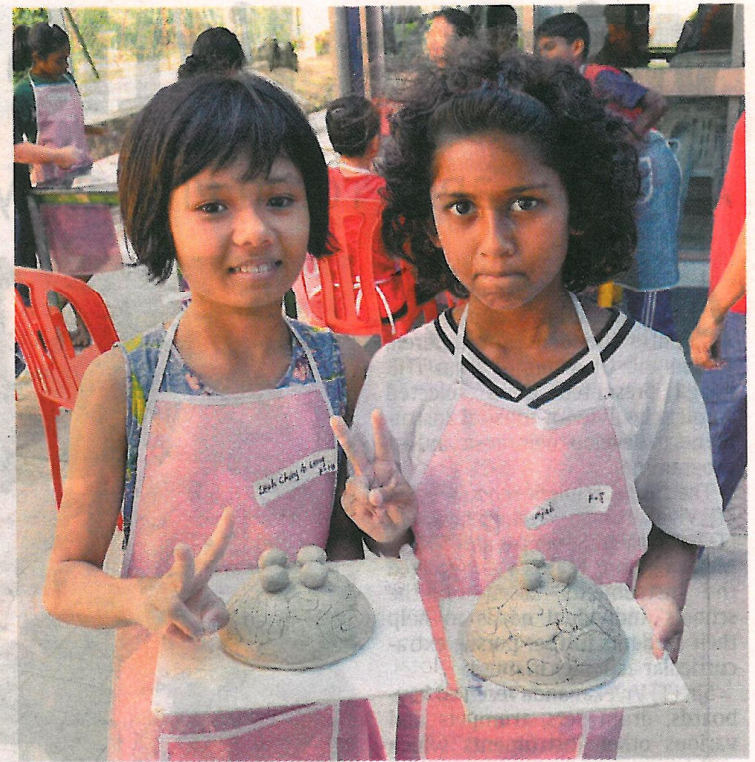




**Bonding opportunity:** Ireka Cares volunteers having a fun time getting to know the children from Rumah Hope.



**Future artists:** Leah and Anjali posing with their finished artwork.

# Building lasting friendships

## Company 'adopts' children from Rumah Hope

**R**UMAH Hope in Petaling Jaya is Ireka's adopted children's home for 2011/2012, through Ireka Cares, a flagship Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programme that aims to contribute to the betterment of children's lives.

'CARES' is an acronym for the areas that Ireka intends to focus its CSR activities – Community, Arts, Recreation, Environment and Sports – in each respective year.

For 2011/2012, Ireka Cares will focus on "ARTs" by organising a series of outreach activities for Rumah Hope in three key areas of Arts and Craft, Living Skills and Performing Arts which would be organised and coordinated by over 40 volunteers of Ireka Cares.

Ireka's group general manager Leonard Yee said, "It has always been the group's effort to focus its effort in sustainable CSR activities and involving purposeful participation from all Irekians, aside from merely monetary contributions.

"We are proud that our CSR programme, Ireka Cares, has progressed into its second year and hopefully, through the planned activities, the children of Rumah Hope will have the opportunity to learn useful living skills, while unleashing their talents and value."

The 'adoption' started off with a Housewarming Party in September, as a platform for the volunteers and children to break the ice and get to know each other.

The volunteers, consisting of staff across all levels of the organisation, brought gifts and games for the children and their caregivers.

Each Ireka Cares volunteer has 'adopted' a child each from Rumah Hope, which will encourage relationship building throughout the year. Initially shy, the children eventually warmed up to the volunteers after a series of fun games, creative balloon tricks and magic show by hired entertainment, Cha Cha The Clown. The 38 children were then treated to a sumptuous buffet luncheon.

Ireka Cares' first Arts and Craft activity with Rumah Hope was Clay Pottery. It was a fun-filled day for the volunteers and children as they

deftly put their creativity to work. Garbed in mini aprons, each child was given a ceramic bowl and a handful of clay to work on under the guidance of "artists" from The Clay Arts Studio. All materials used were toxic-free.

It was indeed a delightful experience for the children as they were engrossed with all the handiwork of rolling, coiling and moulding clay bits into creating their own "masterpieces" in less than two hours. The Clay Arts Studio had arranged to send the art pieces to be glazed and returned to the children in the next Arts and Craft session.

The Clay Arts Studio, located in Petaling Jaya, provides clay art classes for both children and adults. This

creative studio was set up with the intention of providing a friendly and comfortable space for students to develop artistic ideas and organise pottery ceramic workshops. Their signature product, ceramic stone-ware, is oven and microwave safe.

Rumah Hope's founder Alice Paul said, "It is wonderful to see the bonding and interaction between Ireka staff and the children, the sheer joy and happiness clearly etched in their cherubic faces. I am very happy that Ireka Cares has adopted Rumah Hope as I see these kids benefitting from the series of arts programme that are both interesting and beneficial. The first activity was interesting, and I'm sure the kids look forward to more in the future."