



Hands-on experience: Nor Fathiyah (front row, third from left) getting closer to the sea cucumbers.



Bon appetit: The children witnessing a giant stingray swallowing its lunch.

Encounters from the sea

Underprivileged kids get up close to ocean creatures in Aquaria KLCC

VOLUNTEERS from Ireka Cares and children from Rumah Kanak-Kanak Angels immersed themselves in the underwater wonders at Aquaria KLCC recently.

The exploration started at the interactive DNA touch pool where the children and volunteers interacted with exotic exhibits such as sea cucumbers, horseshoe crabs, spotted starfish and bamboo sharks.

After some time learning about animals such as otters, water rats and electric eels, they proceeded to Level Two where they were greeted by creatures of the wetlands in the Malaysian Flooded Forest section.

The journey became even more exciting as the volunteers and children embarked on an underwater discovery in the Oceanarium. They were treated to a face-to-face encounter with the ferocious Sand Tiger Sharks and Giant Stingrays, all within a surreal environment where Green Turtles were gliding through the corals and thousands of fish swam away from the deadly predators.

After this, the group made their way to the Aquatheatre where they had a close-up view of the Aquaria divers feeding the marine life in

the giant tank.

"We hoped to take the children on a recreational trip that would also be educational, which was why we chose Aquaria," CSR action committee head Nor Fathiyah said.

"As the children learned about aquatic life, the volunteers also learned from the children about cherishing what life gives us," she added.

Ireka Corporation Bhd deputy managing director Datuk Lai Foot Kong said, "The home's caregivers, William and Belinda, wanted our volunteers to spend time with the 12 children on a regular basis. Therefore, aside from refurbishing and repairing the home, we have also planned monthly activities for the children."

Rumah Kanak-Kanak Angels, Ireka Cares Year 3 adopted home, was set up in 2004 to provide shelter to underprivileged or abandoned children aged from 5 to 16.

Ireka Cares had previously adopted Lighthouse Children's Welfare Home (Year 1) and Rumah Hope (Year 2), with yearly themes including community, arts, recreation, environment and sports.



Smiling faces: Volunteers and children ending the 'fishy' discovery in a jovial mood.