

Dyeing with delight

Children and volunteers try their hand at batik painting

IREKA'S flagship corporate social responsibility (CSR) programme "Ireka Cares", recently conducted a batik-painting activity with Rumah Hope.

The batik-painting process was both exciting and educational as it was a rare opportunity for the children to try their hand at the famous local art for themselves.

Each child was given a silk cloth which was tightly stretched on a *pemidang* (wooden frame) to work on.

After a briefing by The Clay Arts Studio (which Ireka had engaged to conduct their arts and craft workshops), the children started sketching their names and favourite design patterns.

Next, under the volunteers' supervision, the children traced the design outline with hot wax or *canting* which helps prevent the dye from over-spreading during the colouring process.

With guidance from volunteers, the children meticulously coloured their artwork in hues of blue, yellow and red.



Careful: Volunteer Tan Cheng Yen patiently guiding Darshini.



Time for sharing: Tiggy Munnally helping (from left) Dinesh, Eswaran and Jayden.



Full of focus: Meticulously painting their artwork.

They were also taught how to mix these primary colours to create secondary colours of green, purple, orange and brown.

Some of the older children went the extra mile to paint in gradients and their sheer pride and joy in their work was clearly etched in their smiles. The painted batik cloths were then left to dry before The Studio removed the excess wax for the colour dye to last.

These beautifully-painted batik handkerchiefs were later returned to the children as keepsakes.

Ireka Corporation Bhd deputy managing director Datuk Lai Foot Kong said, "The ARTS initiatives is a great platform to enhance the children's creativity, confidence and hone their artistic talents.

"Creating the lovely batik art pieces together also helped build a close rapport between the Rumah Hope children and our Ireka volunteers. We are pleased to see the involvement of Ireka staff towards a cause that benefits children in need."

Rumah Hope started in 1994 and is a sanctuary for abused, abandoned, neglected and underprivileged children between the ages of five and 17. Since July 2011, the Ireka volunteers had been organising different artistic activities every month such as clay pottery where the children made their first ceramic bowls, created their own fridge magnets, made friendship bracelets and cross-stitch patterns; as well as having lessons in the performing arts – all under the Ireka Cares arts and craft banner.