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CHILDCARE FACILITIES AT USM ISLAMIC CENTRE FOR MOTHERS GOING FOR TARAWIH PRAYERS



PENANG, 23 June 2015 - The Islamic Centre of Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) has made available facilities to mothers with young children who wish to go for the non-obligatory Tarawih prayers.

According to the Deputy Director of the Islamic Centre USM, Ustaz Md Yusof Abdul Rahim, the service known as the "Hadhanah Transit Ramadhan" is a transitory childcare centre operating during the Tarawih prayers, under the care of three child-minders every night, beginning from 8.30 pm until 10.30 pm, and caring for children specifically from three to slightly above five years of age. This is to assist those who plan to go for the Tarawih prayers and be assured that their children are in safe hands.

"This is part of USM effort in providing amenities to maximise the functions of the masjid as a conduit of knowledge to benefit the local community through various ongoing activities.

Other activities include a series of Fajr lectures, tafsir of Al-Quran lectures, tazkirah at Zuhur, Tadarus Al-Quran, distribution of specially-prepared savoury porridge (bubur lambuk), iftar jam'ie (mass), Tarawih prayers, qiyamullail, International Postgraduate Quran Memorisation and Recitation Competition and a programme involving engagement with the poor and homeless.

Adds Md Yusof, besides the "Hadhanah Transit Ramadhan", this year the Islamic Centre has also set up a "One Stop Centre" as an innovative approach to optimise the role of the mosque.



The "One Stop Centre" is a collection site for those who would like to contribute raw items and in kind to be used for the preparation of meals for breaking fast en masse at the Masjid Al-Malik Khalid.

"We have erected covered canopies which are unsupervised to allow the ease of giving voluntarily for the mass breaking of fast organised by the Islamic Centre, as the items can be put in the canopies provided. At 10 pm daily, the Islamic Centre officials would come and collect the donated items without specifying any amount, as the donations should be done out of sincerity," he added.

As practiced in previous years, the Masjid Al-Malik Khalid USM has extended an invitation to an imam specially brought from Saudi Arabia to lead the Tarawih prayers throughout the month of Ramadhan, although there would be other imams as well on specified days.

"The Islamic Centre serves as a Transit Point for the guest imam, with lodging facilities provided for the imam, while the remaining costs are paid for by the Saudi government, which allows the imam to visit other masjids to lead the Tarawih prayers," he said further.



Adds Md Yusof, the 'iftar' or mass breaking of fast programme has been well-received, with the food prepared daily for 1,500 people.

"Upon the recommendation of the Vice-Chancellor of USM, Professor Dato' Dr. Omar Osman, this year the Islamic Centre has improvised the idea by shifting the space allocated for 'iftar' to the front part of the masjid, to provide a more comfortable location," he said.

At the same time, this Ramadhan brings a sense of unity and strengthens the bond of brotherhood among Muslims, as the international students in USM would also assist in the preparation of Arabian food, to be distributed to others.

In the meantime, for the final 10 nights of Ramadhan, the Islamic Centre will hold the 'qiyamullail' (voluntary night prayers), beginning midnight and to be followed by 'sahur' (having meal before dawn, prior to fasting).

"What's unique about this sahur programme is, the meals would be prepared by volunteers and the 'jemaah'," he said.

Commenting on the 'My Suffah' system, Md Yusof stated that "My Suffah" is a system developed with the aim of assisting the students who face urgent financial needs.

'My Suffah', launched recently by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and International Affairs) Professor Dato' Dr. Ahmad Shukri Mustapa Kamal, is a system developed by the Islamic Centre, whereby the student is exempted from repayment, thus providing some relief to the unfortunate student, in cases where the student loses his or her wallet or anything of such nature.

Md Yusof too expressed his feelings of gratitude and appreciation to the volunteers, consisting of USM staff and students who have contributed much in ensuring a smooth running of the programmes throughout the month of Ramadhan and wished that such a tradition can be sustained in times to come, and also urged for the orientation of Ramadhan to be upheld by strengthening continually the bonds of 'ukhuwah'.

"The spending for the activities throughout the month of Ramadhan is approximately RM 5,000 per day, acquired via assistance and contributions from various parties which have supported the Islamic Centre, he said in an exclusive meeting at the USM Islamic Centre. - Translation: Mazlan Hanafi Basharudin/Text: Siti Naquiah Abdillah & Syuhada Abd. Aziz/Photos: Muhammad Firdaus Khiruddin



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