MALAYSIAN DYNAMIC: VISIT TO ORPHANAGE (REFLECTION)

 On the 28th of November, the students of section 20 of the Malaysian Dynamic Course organised and carried out a visit to the “Raudhatul Maryam” Orphanage located at Taman Universiti, Skudai, Johor Bahru; just 10 minutes driving distance away from the Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) Campus. On the day of the visit, the students made sure to arrive at the orphanage on time, which was around 8a.m. in the morning. The students were greeted by the orphans upon their arrival and without further delay the visit was carried on immediately by a speech from the housekeeper of the orphanage.

 After the opening speech, the students proceeded to carry on with their plans which was to set up the stations games to be played by the orphans. At roughly 9a.m. the station games started and the orphans were split into a few different groups. Those station games were all intended to be educational for the orphans as the games were a way for the students to teach the orphans about some valuable lessons in life that they might not have had a chance learn from their parents. For instance, one of the games organised by the students was a game to educate the orphans about the importance of honesty. In that game, the group of orphans were divided into 2 smaller groups, namely group A and group B. The rules were simple, group A was given some random pictures and they had to act out a certain action for group B members in order for them to guess the picture. However, the catch is that group A member would gain a point if group B members failed to guess the picture, while group B members would gain a point if they successfully guessed the picture. Naturally, it should be logical for the orphans from group A to act a different thing then what was shown to them in the picture in order to ensure victory. To every student’s surprise however, the kids from group A acted out all the pictures exactly as they were shown and group B ended up winning each round. This just showed that the orphans were very honest even without their parent’s guidance, and it served to act as a source of motivation for all the students to always be honest, even if it meant that they will inevitably lose something by being honest.

 There were also many other games that were organised that day, each of which offered to educate the orphans about a different life lesson to help the orphans grow into respectable adults in the near future. Some of the life lessons that were the goal for the games were the importance of being punctual, the importance of teamwork, the mindset of “where you came from does not determine where you will finish in life.”, the importance of critical thinking, the importance of following orders clearly, and also the importance of being responsible.

 At approximately 11:30a.m. the station games were completed and the students transitioned onto the next phase of their plan which was to clean up the stations and prepare a simple lunch for both the orphans and the students to enjoy after the tiring session of station games. Everything went according to plan and the orphans from each group picked a representative to give a short talk about their reflection and thoughts about what they have learned through the activities organised by the students that day. As expected, all of the representatives stated that they have learned some important life lessons after participating in the station games, all of which were the lessons that were intended to be taught by the students. Hence, it can be said that the station games were a huge success in terms of educating the orphans about some important life lessons.

 After that, the visit was closed with a speech from the student representative who was in charge of the visit to the orphanage. Additionally, a short award-giving ceremony was also carried out in order to hand out some prizes to the winners of the station games. Lastly, everyone gathered for a group photo session just before the students left and went back to the university campus.

 As a conclusion, the visit to the orphanage was without a doubt an eye-opening experience for all of us from group 3, in which members include Cheong Chien Li, Jared Ryan, Manfred John, Chan Yi Lin, Tan Chiaw Torng, Chong Kai Jie, and also Yong Jing Xuan. After an effective discussion, all of us from group 3 have agreed that these orphans are no different from us “non-orphans”. Even without their parents, all of them still managed to make plenty of friends, communicate with others fluently, and are also very well behaved. Most importantly, they were all able to still have an amazing childhood even without their parents in their life. Hence, all of us from group 3 feel that it is important for us to treat them not as orphans but as equals, just because their parents are not there for them, they should not be labelled as an “orphan” for their whole lives. Moreover, we should not visit these orphanages expecting to feel pity for them. Instead, we should treat them just like any other people and make friends with them just like how we made all our friends since young. Furthermore, we tried to observe the orphans carefully to try and figure out what they might have been hiding behind their smile, because after all, who would be happy to show their scars to the public? But we finally figured out that they were not actually hiding anything behind their smiles, instead they were genuinely happy living together with their friends, and figuring that out made all of us from group 3 happy as well. In short, we were very glad to be able to partake in this amazing visit to the orphanage, it was really an eye-opening and life-changing experience for us all. The orphans do not need sympathy from anybody, all they need is love and support, and we truly hope that they will always be happy and healthy, and be able to grow into amazing adults in the near future.