

 KUALA LUMPUR: Prejudice towards children and teenagers living with HIV/AIDS should be set aside as they have the right to lead their lives as normally as possible, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor said.
They too need physical, social and emotional protection, said the Prime Minister's wife yesterday after visiting the Women and Health Organisation (Wake) shelter home in Setapak.
Her visit was in conjunction with International AIDS Memorial Day which falls on May 15.
Rosmah stressed that people need to understand how the virus is spread and transmitted.
We need to change people's mindset by reducing the stigma and discrimination towards those who have HIV, especially since birth.
Children and teenagers will suffer if their parents pass away as they would have to quit school and support themselves, she said, adding the situation could become more complicated if the child tested positive for the virus.
She said that it was even sadder when there were cases of teachers and schoolmates treating those with HIV/AIDS as outcasts.
Rosmah, who is also Malaysian AIDS Foundation (MAF) patron, said it was important for parties such as government agencies, non-governmental organisations and the private sector to contribute to these children's education and finances.
Also present at the event were MAF president Prof Dr Adeeba Kamarulzaman and Wake president Abu Bakar Jamaluddin.