

# Mum helps daughter at varsity

UM P student who suffers from spinal muscular atrophy copes with studies

By ROSLINA MOHAMAD  
rosolina@thestar.com.my

**KUANTAN:** A mother's love knows no bounds and this is clearly demonstrated by housewife Zaidah Tamjis who has to tend to her daughter's every needs including accompanying her to attend classes at Universiti Malaysia PAHANG (UMP) in Gambang here.

Her daughter, Siti Hawa Apandi, 18, suffers from Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) type II and is confined to a wheelchair.

She is also a first-year computer science student.

SMA is a disease that affects the nerves controlling voluntary muscular movement, which affects crawling, walking, head and neck control, and even swallowing.

Type II affects infants between seven months and 18 months in age and patients may be able to sit unaided or even stand with support. They are at increased risk of complications from respiratory infections.

Zaidah said Siti Hawa depended on her for everything - eating, putting on her clothes and even typing notes on the computer.

"She can use her hands but they are not strong enough."

"As such, I have to stay with her all the time while she completes her studies here," Zaidah said when met after Siti Hawa received a laptop and printer from Lepak assemblyman Datuk Ahmad Tajuddin Sulaiman at UMP here recently.

Ahmad Tajuddin has been instrumental in helping Siti Hawa obtain a place in UMP as the university is closer to her home in Batu 11, Jalan Gambang, compared to the initial place she was offered a course at the Universiti Teknologi Mara Jengka branch in Maran.

On her experience while taking care of Siti Hawa in UMP, Zaidah said the students, lecturers and staff had been very supportive.

"Siti Hawa's male classmates help carry her and the wheelchair whenever



In (right) presenting the laptop to Siti Hawa who suffers from spinal muscular atrophy at the university in

**Appropriate gift:** Ahmad Tajuddin presented the laptop to Siti Hawa recently.

er they have classes at the computer laboratory which is on the first floor.

"The lecturers are also kind enough to assist me in handling the computers as sometimes I have to type the notes for my daughter," she added.

Siti Hawa said she was happy that Ahmad Tajuddin presented the laptop as it would facilitate her in her

studies.

She added that adjusting to life in the new surroundings was hard as almost everything moved fast.

"However, I have my mother and friends to thank for making my life as comfortable as possible," Siti

Earlier, Mohamed Said, in his speech, said Siti Hawa's presence

had opened their eyes on the need to provide facilities for the handicapped, despite the

He added that moving classes to the ground floor and building ramps where necessary, to

"We are more than willing to make improvements and modifications to facilitate handicapped s

dents when the need arises.

"It shows that UMP has deep concern for their welfare and is ready to accept more handicapped students," he said.

Siti Hawa, a former student of SM Seri Mahkota scor

ed 5As, 4Bs and 1C in her Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia and 6As and 2Bs in her Penilaian Menengah Rendah.