

A close shave to save animals

ALL FOR CHARITY: Four to go bald to raise RM20,000 for animal shelter

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IN less than three weeks, four people will look different and it is all for a good cause.

Two men and two women will shave off their hair to raise RM20,000 to build an animal adoption shelter in Penampang.

The campaign called "Shave to Save", in aid of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) Kota Kinabalu, aims to collect as much public donations as possible until the culmination of the event on Feb 26, where the "shave-off" will take place at Gaya Street.

Event organiser and SPCA KK member Sabrina Melisa Aripin said such a campaign has been used by other charities, but this is the first for SPCA in this country. She said one of the volunteers, Matilda Shyma Hamid, was a long-time SPCA KK member who came up with the idea. Word spread and three people offered to do the same.

The three others are Don Arthur Sario, 27, Selina Ann Yapp, 33, and Pol Chin, 48.

A YouTube link showing the four campaign volunteers calling for donations is available at <http://www.spcakk.org>.

Sabrina said donations from the public are the foundation in keeping SPCA KK running, as there is no allocated space for rescued animals here and volunteers are taking care

of and adopting them.

"Right now, for instance, we have SPCA KK members who are taking care of more than 30 rescued cats in their own households. The Lomunu shelter, as we call it, is in progress and is about 70 per cent completed.

"The project costs RM100,000 and we will also need RM11,000 for operating cost every month, which includes food for the cats and dogs. So you see, we hope to keep the donations coming in," she said to the *New Straits Times*.

Besides making a cheque payable to SPCA KK, donations can be made to its Maybank account 560072005581, or contact donate@spcakk.org.

Matilda, who has adopted about 60 stray cats, said shaving her hair would be a bold thing to do but it is for the good of the animals.

Sario, who adopted a rescued Moli the dog from Mabul island four months ago, said his wife had encouraged him to be a part of the campaign.

"I love dogs and I believe they need to be taken care of properly, not just shoved into a cage. That's why I hope this fundraising will provide the rescued animals with a better place," said Sario.

Businessman Chin will be cutting off his ponytail, which he had kept for three years.

In the promotional video Yapp says: "I love my hair, but it will grow back... a dog's live lost is lost forever."