

# Veronica to share her quest for making world a better place

ACCLAIMED social entrepreneur Veronica Colondam will be sharing her experience on "One Woman's Quest For A Better World" at The Women's Forum 2010 on August 5 at The Empire Hotel & Country Club, according to a press release.

Veronica or Vera as she is called, is the CEO of Yayasan Cinta Anak Bangsa (YCAB) or the Loving the Nation's Children Foundation, an NGO that is concerned about drug problems among Indonesian youths.

She was a stay-at-home mom with young children before she decided to establish the foundation just over 10 years ago.

"I felt that I needed to create meaning in my life," said Vera. "So at that point of time, I thought about what I could possibly do to benefit my children, while at the same time benefiting other kids."

After extensive research, she discovered that drug abuse was a growing issue among youth in Indonesia. That was when she started to dedicate her life to fighting drug abuse by focusing on prevention. In 1999, she formed YCAB with like-minded individuals who share a deep concern for the increasing drug abuse problem among Indonesian youth.

"Why do we focus on preventive measures? Because the primary prevention of drug abuse is not even there," says the mother of two boys and a girl.

"When it comes to drugs, people usually only know about rehabilitation and treatment. They never think about how to prevent it. In fact, this can be prevented."

Today, under her leadership, YCAB trains close to 300,000 youths nationwide annually and mobilised the mass media in shaping public opinion on drug abuse and advocating the government on the urgency of and the strategy for primary prevention.

Through YCAB, Vera is aiming to warn youngsters to be more careful, shaping them to be resilient, saying she wants young people to make better and smarter choices, as well as engage in positive lifestyles.

"In our lifetime, our children may be offered



COURTESY ASIA INC FORUM

## Veronica Colondam

drugs," she said.

"If that happens, what will they do? Are they going to accept it or are they going to refuse it?" she asked.

According to her, parents play a big role in preventing drug abuse problems.

"Parents should be extra watchful when their children are in the golden years, which we believe is between 10 and 13."

According to recent data compiled by YCAB, there are about 120 young people per hour who experiment with drugs in Indonesia, while YCAB disperses information about the danger of drug abuse to about 10 youths per hour.

"When you compare it to the big picture, it might be just like a cup of tea floating in the ocean. But with limited resources, I'm pretty happy with things that we have accomplished," she said.

"If you look into each individual, it's like YCAB is changing the world of this one person."

Vera is a co-author of a book for youth entitled "Enhancing Life Skills on Drug Abuse Prevention"