

AUTOMOBILE & TOURING CLUB OF THE UAE

Press Release

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Vintage delight for kids with special needs

DUBAI: FIA Vice President for Sport Mohammed Ben Sulayem made an impassioned plea for parents to acknowledge at an early stage the realities of children with special needs, emphasizing that early acceptance could only lead to easing the difficulties in the years ahead.

Sulayem, who is also President of the Automobile & Touring Club of the UAE (ATCUAE), an active member of the *Fédération Internationale des Véhicules Anciens* (FIVA), the world governing body for vintage vehicles, was speaking to journalists and members of the public who had come to witness a vintage car parade organized by the Dubai Autism Center (DAC) in conjunction with the Emirates Motor Sports Federation.

The DAC was set up by the late Ruler of Dubai HH Sheikh Maktoum Bin Rashid Al Maktoum on 18 November 2001 and is governed by a board. The Center encourages a better understanding of Autism and provides specialist services for people with Autism and those who care for them.

The ATCUAE president noted that children are God's gift to mankind and "it is our duty to ensure that those who need special care are given that care. But this is only possible if parents acknowledge this reality at an early stage in order to make things easier in the years ahead."

"I can tell you (parents) there is no stigma attached to these children; we have to accept them and care for them. Most importantly, we have to have the patience to understand them," Mr. Sulayem said while lauding the role of Dubai Autism Center.

To drive home his point, Mr. Sulayem said: "They don't need money. What they need is acknowledgment, understanding, care and awareness. The ATCUAE is willing to place its resources at the disposal of the Center for this purpose," he added while issuing directives that all assistance be made available to the DAC as and when the need arose.

The event, organized with UN approval as part of the International Autism Awareness Month, was the 3rd such campaign held annually in the month of April.

Vintage cars dating back to the early seventies drove through The Walk at Jumeirah Beach Residence drawing curious Thursday evening shoppers and strollers to the venue.

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