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MYKAD FOR MY FOOD

10,000 poor families will get RM80 worth of food each with just a swipe of their MyKad under a new scheme. >17



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MyKad for my food needs

Poor folk can get free supply of necessities with new scheme

By **P. ARUNA**
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PETALING JAYA: With just a swipe of their MyKad, nearly 10,000 poor families nationwide can get free food items from stores near their homes.

They can even choose when and what to buy from 10 categories of items up to RM80 each month.

The scheme, implemented by the MyKasih Foundation, allows the poor to buy the basic necessities such as rice, bread, cooking oil, biscuits and milk by keying in a unique PIN number into a card-reader at the payment counter.

MyKasih then electronically pays the retailer within 48 hours of the purchase.

"We are merely using the existing MyKad technology to monitor and make the distribution more organised," MyKasih managing director Jeffrey Perera said here yesterday.

The two-year-old non-profit welfare organisation's aim is driven by the private sector, with contributions from corporate firms such as Petronas, AmBank and Sime Darby as well as individual donors.

Perera said the technology, known as ePetrol, also removed the chances of misusing funds.

"This is because only the MyKad details and the bar-code of the allowed food items are identified by the system," he said.

"Items such as chocolates or cigarettes cannot be bought using the card."

Besides food, MyKasih also provides needy students with free tuition and housewives with work skills like sewing, baking



Purchase made easy: Perera (right) and senior manager Shafinaz Suhaimi demonstrating how the MyKad can be used to purchase items at a retail outlet in Petaling Jaya yesterday.

and hairdressing.

"So far, 32 mothers have graduated from these programmes and are able to earn additional income for their families," Perera said.

Recipients are identified through the Welfare Department's e-Kasih database as well as with help from local NGOs and state governments.

Perera said the foundation promoted a "Love My Neighbourhood" concept.

"Donors are encouraged to contribute to poor families in their own area," he said.

Those interested can contact MyKasih at info@mykasih.com or 03-79499691.

All donations are tax exempt.