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# A little care goes a long way

MyKasih welcomes donations and volunteers in bid to help more poor people

By SHEILA SRI PRIYA

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**Y**ONG Kam Leng, 55, had to shoulder the full responsibility of raising four children between the ages of four and 20 when her husband suffered a stroke 11 years ago.

Yong took up a job as a janitor and her oldest daughter had to quit her studies to support the family.

The family's struggles got worse when Yong was diagnosed with a tumour in her womb six years ago.

"We faced financial difficulties and needed moral support to stay positive," she said.

Yong was lucky as a friend introduced her to MyKasih, a non-profit organisation aimed to help the less fortunate in the country through food aid programmes, counselling, as well as financial literacy and skills training.

Yong grabbed the opportunity and started attending sewing classes under MyKasih's skills training programme.

Soon, she realised there was also a need for better financial planning in the family and started attending the financial literacy course.

"Before attending the financial literacy course, I was in debt. Since then, I have learned about money management and am debt-free. I have even managed to save a little," she said.

Yong is among thousands who have benefited from the various programmes offered by MyKasih.

MyKasih Love My Neighbourhood managing director Jeffrey Perera said in the four years since its establishment, MyKasih has hosted various programmes for the poor — food aid programmes, bursary programmes, financial education, health awareness, skills training, early education and youth development.

The foundation was set up by chairman and co-founder Dr Ngau

Boon Keat and his wife Jean Ngau in 2009.

The journey of MyKasih began with the pilot project Love My Neighbourhood, a food aid programme in Selayang allowing families to buy essential food items using their MyKad instead of cash or through volunteer handouts.

"In the past, many charitable organisations faced 'leakages' and the money donated was not spent well. The MyKasih system was revolutionary because we managed to get rid of the middle person.

"All money donated to the foundation is channelled to the needy through their MyKad. There are no physical cash transactions involved.

"Our aim is to channel help through a system approved by the Bank Negara," said Perera.

He added that there were 100,000 families from 130 location nationwide benefiting from the MyKasih food aid programme.

Meanwhile, about 6,000 students across the country are part of the Love My School programme.

"Poverty eradication is a long term effort and the food aid programme will help address short-term needs.

However other programmes are introduced to the needy once their basic needs are addressed. This will help them to come out of the poverty bracket," he said.

Under the Love My School programme, children receive RM60 (primary level) and RM80 (secondary level) on a monthly basis to buy food at the school canteen or books from the school bookstore — all using their MyKad.

"We inform parents that if their children do not do well in school, we will not hesitate to stop the aid. We see improvement in students as the parents make sure they perform

well," he said.

The foundation has more than 50 donors, mostly corporate giants.

However, more individuals and businesses are encouraged to offer their contributions.

"We welcome donations as we have a good financial management record to show them how we spend the money. Every ringgit donated goes straight to charity.

"We even provide monthly records to our donors. They can log on to our system using a password and view the financial reports. Everything we do is transparent," said Perera.

Volunteers with skills or time are also welcome to get in touch with MyKasih.

The Multimedia Development Corporation (MDeC) and National Registration Department (JPN) have been key supporters of the foundation's efforts from the start — sharing the aim of finding better and more efficient ways of using technology to improve the welfare of the poor.

MDeC, for instance, has been instrumental in pushing the use of the MyKad to access seamless welfare services.

For more information visit [www.mykasih.com](http://www.mykasih.com) or call 03-7949 9735.

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— JEFFREY PERERA

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**Stocking up:** A Temuan Orang Asli recipient of aid under the MyKasih 'Love My Neighbourhood' programme choosing food at a shop in Kg Chemperoh in Bentong, Pahang.



**Money management:** Families receiving aid from MyKasih taking part in a financial literacy workshop conducted by the National Population and Family Development Board called 'SMARTBelanja@LPPKN'.



**Important skills:** MyKasih children participating in a basic computer literacy programme by AMD Global Services in Cyberjaya.

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**Finding a way out:** Yong Kam Leng (left) picking up sewing skills under MyKasih's skill training programme.



**A chance to excel:** Thanks to the MyKasih Tuition programme in Kayu Ara, Petaling Jaya, children from the lower-income group are able to enjoy free tuitions.