

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Bringing CNY cheer to the needy with rice

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SINGAPORE – With the Chinese New Year less than a month away, a group of youths have taken it upon themselves to ensure that some 17,866 needy beneficiaries will have enough rice for their reunion dinners.

Project RICE, an effort by some 900 Red Cross Youth volunteers, aims to raise 37,000kg of rice for needy households.

“Rice is a staple food, especially in Asia ... For the people who may not have enough rice, we hope that this project will be able to help them to enjoy the fragrance of rice,” said the project’s Co-Director, Ms Gis-cille Chen, 21.

Explaining the timing of the donation drive, she added: “This rice will be more important, because people will want to have their reunion dinner.”

Volunteers will go door-to-door at more than 500 Housing and Development Board blocks to alert residents about the rice-collection drive this Saturday. On Feb 2, they will return to collect the rice. The next day, the volunteers will distribute the rice to more than 80 charity organisations. These include St Luke’s ElderCare, Thye Hua Kwan Moral Society and SINDA Family Service Centre.

**DONATION POINTS**

● Donations can be made in person on Feb 2 at Teck Ghee CC, Queenstown CC, Tampines East CC, Boon Lay CC and Raffles Junior College.

The youths have also partnered with Sheng Siong supermarket, where members of the public can purchase a rice voucher at S\$6.90, from now until Jan 25. For each voucher sold, Sheng Siong will donate 5kg of Fragrant Jasmine rice.

This is the third time the Red Cross Youth is running this donation drive. In 2009 and 2010, the project accepted cups of rice from residents. This year, to prevent contamination, only unopened bags of white rice and brown rice with expiry dates more than six months away will be accepted.

This may deter donations, acknowledged Ms Chen, a Singapore Management University undergraduate.

“We really hope the whole of Singapore can actively support Project RICE and help our needy to receive the warmth and love during the Chinese New Year celebrations,” she said.

Ms Chng Shuqi, who helped organise Project RICE 2010, shared: “I still remember vividly the happy faces when they received the rice from us ... All the hard work that went into organising the project was not in vain.”