

## United against world hunger

**T**ERRY Lee and his family were stranded at the Jakarta International Airport, struggling to get by amidst the shortage of food and water during the 1998 riots in Indonesia.

They were forced to live without food for two days while waiting to board their flight and flee the country for personal safety.

That was the closest Terry ever came to experiencing a food crisis.

“I was too young to remember anything about the episode, but my parents would always remind me of the incident as well as the importance of not wasting food,” said the Indonesian student.

More than a decade later, the attacks still haunt Terry’s family. Because of his family’s first-hand experience with hunger, Terry always makes sure that no food is wasted.

The Sri Garden International student also volunteers with the Kechara Soup Kitchen to feed homeless people around Kuala Lumpur.

“It’s a blessing to live in Malaysia where food is always readily available,” said Terry, 14.

Terry was one of the over 4,000 volunteers at Taylor’s Education Group (TEG) World Food Day recently.

More than 25,000 people die of hunger-related causes every day, according to international relief organisation Stop Hunger Now (SHN).

In fact, more people die each year from hunger-related causes than AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

The irony, however, is that there is actually enough food in the world to feed everyone 4.3 pounds (1.95kg) of food every day.

“How can we ever let a child go to bed hungry?” asked SHN founder and international president Ray Buchanan.

“My board of directors always asks me if it is realistic to ever think that we would achieve our vision, which is a world without hunger,” he said.



Eager to help: Some of the volunteers cheering with enthusiasm at the start of the day.

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Volunteers helping to pack food packages, which have a shelf life of three years and contain six nutritious meals.

“We are committed to our mission to end hunger in our lifetime by providing the hungry with food and nutrients they need to live. Where there is enough justice, fairness and care, we can do it.

“We will continue to raise the awareness and create a worldwide movement so expansive that the world leaders and individuals like us can no longer ignore the food crisis and will take actions to help the vulnerable people,” said Buchanan, when met at the event.

Headquartered in Raleigh, North Carolina, Buchanan said SHN had been planning to set up an office in Kuala Lumpur.

World Food Day was proclaimed in 1979 by the Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and marks the date of the founding of FAO in 1945.

More than 4,000 volunteers successfully packed one million food packages to fight hunger on World Food Day recently. After putting on their hairnets, the

volunteers scooped, weighed, packed and sealed food packages at their work stations to the accompaniment of loud pop music.

They did the task with a big smile, knowing that they were part of a worldwide movement to alleviate hunger and malnutrition.

The event was held simultaneously at four locations complete with live video feed, namely the Taylor’s University Lakeside Campus, Taylor’s College Sri Hartamas, Taylor’s College Subang Jaya and Sri Garden Schools.

TEG Group CEO Datuk Loy Teik Ngan said the overwhelming response and large turnout of volunteers had exceeded expectations.

“Our initial target was to get 1,000 volunteers. Instead, we received help from more than 4,000 people who had turned up on a Sunday to contribute their time and energy for the benefit of the needy,” he said.



Workers stacking up the sealed boxes of food packages which will be delivered to crisis areas and school feeding programmes around the world including Somalia.

Each finished package, which weighed about 370g, had six highly nutritious meals containing rice, soy protein, dried vegetables, flavouring, and 21 essen-

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tial vitamins and minerals. The food packages have a shelf life of three years sealed in reusable bags.

They will be delivered to crisis areas and school feeding programmes around the world, including Somalia.

Volunteers also had a chance to try the porridge.

Although many found the vegetarian porridge to be a bit bland, they finished the porridge so that no food was wasted.

“As these food packages are sent all over the world where there are different cultures, the local residents would customise the taste. In Haiti, for example, they add black beans. In Mexico, they add chillies. In Indonesia, they put in some dried shrimps,” Buchanan shared.

Taylor’s University business administration student Eliza Wong, 20, said she had been actively involved in charity work ever since she read about the Szechuan earthquake in the media.

“We may not know the people we are helping or even get to meet them at all. But that is not important because what matters is that they get the food that will help them become stronger and healthier,” she said.

Generasi Gemilang service learning head Law Gin Kye, who brought some 50 children from the public housing project Lembah Subang, said the meal-packing event would serve as a platform for the children to learn about personal empowerment.

“We want to challenge the concept of poverty. We want the underserved children to know that they too are capable of helping the less fortunate ones and they do not always have to be on the receiving end,” he said.

*The Star* was the official media partner of the event.