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# In honour of altruistic M'sians

## Award to spur the people and firms to do more charitable acts

By MICHELLE TAM

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** One way to live a moderate life is to accommodate other points of view, said Ecoworld Foundation chairman Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye.

Lee, who heads the judging panel of the Star Golden Hearts Award 2016, learnt that lesson anew when he led and listened to the other decision-makers to reach a consensus.

"Last year, all the winners were chosen unanimously, and I hope this will be the spirit we carry on for 2016.

"It is very meaningful when a panel of judges from different communities is able to work as a team, all for the sake of a good cause," he said in an interview.

The inaugural award was presented to 10 individuals and groups on Dec 16.

According to Lee, the results prompted many to contact him in praise of their fellow Malaysians as the colour blind acts of altruism were an inspiration to all.

"The award has done an immense service in recognising and honouring the unsung heroes and heroines of Malaysia.

"They went out of their way to help others, and made sacrifices in their personal life to do these charitable deeds," he said.

In its second year, the award continues to celebrate Malaysia's everyday heroes from all walks of life, who act in a selfless manner to build bridges

between different communities and promote racial harmony and unity.

This year, Lee hopes to find more people of integrity who demonstrate great commitment to their charitable work, and also those who provide a different nature of service than the winners of the last round.

"What is important to me is the

commitment shown. They are people who go out of their way to sacrifice their own time and efforts to really support their cause," he said.

The panel for this year comprises Star Media Group CEO and managing director Datuk Seri Wong Chun Wai; Malaysian Care executive director Dr Wong Young Soon; Malaysian AIDS Foundation chairman Dr Adeeba Kamarulzaman; Universiti Malaya Department of Parasitology Prof Dr G. Suresh Kumar; Zubedy (M) Sdn Bhd managing director Anas Zubedy; DC&A Group of Companies managing director and Higher Education Ministry entrepreneurship council member Datuk David Chua Kok Tee; and *The Star* editor-in-chief Datuk Leanne Goh.

So far, 56 individuals and groups have been nominated for the award, a number that nearly doubles last year's entries.

The diverse mix includes a soup kitchen volunteer who served over 2,000 refugees in Greece; a photographer who left his job to travel the world and raise funds for solar-powered lights; an accountant who helps Bhutanese weavers earn a better living through the sale of handmade scarves; and even a fisherman who is involved in numerous cases of recovering the dead from the sea.

This year's Star Golden Hearts Award is supported by Gamuda.

In addition to the 10 winners of the award, there will be a *Star-Gamuda Inspiration Award: Towards A Moderate Malaysia*.

### Call for more CSR

"The Star Golden Hearts Award is one way in which the Star Media Group is able to share with Malaysians all over the country,

that there are all these people who have done great things, things you have never imagined,"

said Lee.

In addition, he hopes the award will help companies to do more corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives.

"A lot more needs to be done by companies which still have a good balance sheet and good bottom line.

"Even though it may not be as good as before, don't forget about your CSR," he said.

Lee is also optimistic that the altruism exemplified by the award nominees will further inspire Malaysians, regardless of creed or colour, to help the disadvantaged.

"I am very passionate about this because I feel that charitable deeds must be something that cuts across all races.

"The fact is, the poor and the underprivileged come from all races," he said.

Lee wants more Malaysians to answer the clarion call for a more caring society, which is one of the nine strategic challenges to achieve Vision 2020.

Although volunteerism is already entrenched in local society with age-old practices such as *gotong-royong*, he thinks that a lot more can be done to promote and practise the spirit of volunteerism.

"I do a lot of voluntary work, and I still find that there are people who don't fully understand what volunteerism is all about," he said, citing those who ask about freebies before agreeing to contribute their time and effort.

"Of course, the organisation may want to provide (allowances) wherever possible, but a true volunteer would never ask for any of that.

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“They’ll find their own way to the meeting point, by hook or by crook, and buy their own meals and drinks. They’ll come and serve,” he added.

### Acceptance, not tolerance

Lee also disagrees with the common benchmark of “tolerance” for one another.

“What we should achieve is acceptance. There must be mutual understanding and respect for

## Lee: Malaysians must address racial polarisation

one another. Unity in diversity is the way we should move forward to build our country,” he said.

Thus, Lee feels it is more important than ever that Malaysians address and overcome the pressing issue of racial polarisation.

“Our Sabahan and Sarawakian friends have interacted so well, with intermarriages and bonding between their diverse ethnic groups.

“How do we achieve such unity and integration in peninsular Malaysia? Only through the preach-

ing and practice of moderation,” he said, cautioning against merely paying lip service.

Lee calls upon the country’s leaders to practise the moderate values that they preach, be it in the policies they want to introduce

or during the decision-making process.

“A moderate decision is one that takes the needs of others into account, and it’s not easy to juggle the needs of various ethnic groups,” said Lee.

“But whether it’s tough or easy,

you must be able to accommodate and listen to each other in the larger interest of nation-building for all.

“Moderation must be a way of life for all Malaysians if we want to see this country move forward in peace, harmony, and national unity,” he added.

**The closing date for Star Golden Hearts Award 2016 nominations is Sept 30. You can e-mail your nomination to [editor@thestar.com.my](mailto:editor@thestar.com.my), with the subject “Star Golden Hearts Award nomination”.**



Know any person or group who has helped others in need, regardless of race & religion? Nominate them for the Star Golden Hearts Award 2016. This year's Star Golden Hearts Award is supported by Gamuda.

**A Star-Gamuda Inspiration Award: Towards a Moderate Malaysia** winner will also be chosen from the pool of 10 recipients of the Star Golden Hearts Award 2016. This winner must fit the criteria of altruism and moderation. For details, go to [thestar.com.my/stargoldenheartsaward](http://thestar.com.my/stargoldenheartsaward)

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