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# Festive goodwill

## > 7-Eleven Malaysia celebrates the Raya season with the 'neglected'

**7-ELEVEN** Malaysia, the nation's largest 24-hour convenience store chain operator, recently took the opportunity to spread Hari Raya goodwill and bring cheer to shelter seekers of Persatuan Kebajikan Ikhlas Komuniti Malaysia (PPKIM), otherwise known as Ikhlas. Together with NGO Hub Asia, representatives convened to distribute packed wholesome food and a goodie-bag containing an Aktif water bottle, a travel toothbrush kit and 7-Eleven housebrand products to "visitors to Ikhlas".

### SUPPORT AND CARE

Ikhlas is an organisation bent on providing guidance, support and counselling to homeless drug addicts, sex workers and transgenders, a part of society that is neglected and hardly thought much of by many.

The organisation operates as a walk-in centre that welcomes persons from this sect of the community. It provides shelter and access to basic amenities like water and food. The organisation also runs a "Needle and Syringe

Exchange" programme that is funded by the Health Ministry and Malaysian AIDS Foundation.

### GUIDANCE AND SHELTER

PPKIM secretary Kamal, once a drug user, disagrees with the perception many in society have on this "lesser thought" community of people. "Many think 'they' behave inappropriately due to their association with drugs and sex. However, our 'visitors'

have never displayed such behaviour at our centre," he says.

Nor Akmar, an outreach worker at Ikhlas, shares that the centre does not condone the "daily activities" of these sex workers or drug users. "We work towards helping them practise safe habits that help lower their risk of contracting and spreading diseases, and guide them on their way to rehabilitation and giving up these bad habits when they decide to stop."

### ALWAYS THERE FOR YOU

Captured above is 7-Eleven's marketing general manager Ronan Lee, distributing food at the centre. "Hari Raya is a celebration for everyone to partake, including the pockets of community that tends to be forgotten. We are delighted to have been able to celebrate this festivity with this particular community, and we hope that our efforts today will enable Ikhlas to expand its outreach on garnering more awareness and diminish society's stereotypical beliefs regarding these individuals," he said.

Lee shared his view further, adding that this community needs "us" more than ever. "By offering our support, we are giving them a chance to change their future and lead better lives".

Those who wish to support or make donations towards Ikhlas can visit the centre, which is located at Lorong Haji Taib 4 in Kuala Lumpur.

Ikhlas seeks funds to cover its operational expenses and upkeep and welcomes necessities like food, toiletries and kitchen supplies among others.

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Lee distributing packed meals and goodie bags to the shelter seekers at Ikhlas.