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SPECIAL SUSTENANCE

HOMELESS IN KL NOT FORGOTTEN

Pertiwi Soup Kitchen, with City Hall, ensures those in need feted this Raya with food, aid

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AS the entire country celebrates a muted Hari Raya Aidilfitri in the confines of their homes, the authorities are seeing to it that the poor, destitute and homeless living in and around the city centre are able to receive some special sustenance in conjunction with the festive period.

Pertiwi Soup Kitchen president Datuk Munirah Abdul Hamid said food and aid for the poor and homeless would continue, especially during the Hari Raya festive period.

"We are pleased that Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) has centralised and scheduled food aid that are distributed by the non-governmental organisations to the poor and the homeless throughout the capital.

"This ensures the food does not go to waste and everyone is able to receive the food aid, eliminating waste, hoarding and rubbish in the form of rotten food and food packets littering the streets."



People queuing up to receive food aid from Pertiwi Soup Kitchen at Kuala Lumpur City Hall's facility in Medan Tuanku, Kuala Lumpur, on Wednesday. PIC BY MOHAMAD SHAHRIL BADRI SAALI

She said during the fasting month, Pertiwi provided food aid twice a day at DBKL's facility in Medan Tuanku at 5.30am and during breaking of fast, and on normal days from 12.30pm to 1.30pm and from 6.30pm to 7.30pm.

"We prepare about 350 to 400 packets of food during each session and it always finishes. We make sure that the standard operating procedures are followed,

such as temperature checks, hand sanitisation and physical distancing.

"We only allow a small number of people in and on the premises at any given time. We are thankful that the people have been co-operative and queue up in an orderly fashion each time, which makes things easier for us.

"For this Hari Raya, as a festive treat, our team of dedicated volunteers prepared a special menu

of Raya delicacies, such as *nasi briyani*, *nasi impit*, *ketupat pulut*, *serunding* and cookies to evoke the festive cheer," said Munirah.

One of the recipients of Pertiwi's food aid at the Medan Tuanku Homeless Transit Centre was Ross Ariffin, 59, an accomplished and well-known composer and music producer who has been in the music industry for 37 years.

Ross, who has been coming almost daily since last year after being adversely impacted by the pandemic, expressed his gratitude for Munirah and Pertiwi's efforts.

"I have known Munirah for almost 30 years now and what she and Pertiwi are doing is great because if not for them and others who distribute aid, many of us would be even worse for wear.

"Many of us count our blessings for such aid and assistance as many have fallen on hard times because we lost our jobs and source of income. We are appreciative of their efforts," said Ross.

Salim Abdullah @Lee Yun Fatt, 63, from Mantin, Negri Sembilan, also heaped praise on the local authorities and the NGOs for their tireless efforts in distributing aid and helping the poor and homeless.

"Pertiwi has been providing food aid and assistance for as long as I can remember. I have been coming here for quite some time and was pleasantly surprised with the effort to surprise us with Raya goodies, which was touching.

"I cannot thank them enough for all that they and other NGOs do for all of us out on the streets," said Salim, who embraced Islam several years ago after he felt moved while doing repair work on the Tun Abdul Aziz Mosque in Section 14, Petaling Jaya.

The initiatives were made possible through the cooperation between DBKL, the Yayasan Kebajikan Negara and several NGOs.