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Star GOLDEN HEARTS AWARD 30th Anniversary

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NS reboot **The Star EXCLUSIVE**

Safety measures have been strengthened, and additional support systems introduced in the revamped National Service Programme (PLKN 3.0), set to begin in January with a pilot batch of 200 trainees. The Defence Minister assures Malaysians that past mistakes will not be repeated. > See reports on page 6 by ZAKIAH KOYA

Nation Junior and senior cadets separated at UPNM to keep bullying in check. >2



Photo: AZHAR MAHFOF/The Star

The inspiring 10

(From left) Suri Lifestyle founder and chief executive officer Salena Ahmad, social work and child protection consultant Vijayakumari Pillai, Star Media Group (SMG) chief business officer Lydia Wang, SMG group chief executive officer Chan Seng Fatt, Star Golden Hearts Award chief judge Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye, SMG chief content officer Datin Paduka Esther Ng, Institut Keusahawanan Negara social enterprise associate Nurul Liana Irfan Ramli and others with the 10 winners of SGHA 2024 at Menara Star. > See reports on page 5

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Kind hearts, good deeds that inspire

SGHA marks 10 years of celebrating the unsung heroes of Malaysia

By JUNAID IBRAHIM
newsdesk@thestar.com.my

PETALING JAYA: A decade on, the Star Golden Hearts Award (SGHA) continues to recognise organisations and individuals who have selflessly contributed to the betterment of Malaysian society.

This year, with its 10th instalment, SGHA singled out 10 more winners whose causes have sparked changes and created impacts nationwide through their noble efforts.

Star Media Group (SMG) group chief executive officer Chan Seng Fatt said the selfless actions of the winners have motivated SMG to continue its mission.

"Your stories inspire us to believe in the power of kindness and to continue uplifting those who need a helping hand.

"These stories of compassion, unity and resilience will continue to shape the Malaysia we all aspire to build – a Malaysia where every act of kindness matters and every life is valued," he said in his speech during the awards ceremony at Menara Star yesterday.

Themed Power of One, the Strength of Many, SGHA 2024 celebrates its 10th anniversary since its first inception in 2015.

Chan said SGHA, which started as a modest effort, has become a beacon of hope, drawing people from all walks of life and demonstrating the nation's true strength.

"We have consistently proven that compassion and unity are at the core of who we are as a people, as it is deeply ingrained in our identity," he added.

"Our 10th anniversary is particularly special as it not only commemorates SGHA itself but also marks an important milestone – a tribute to the 100 unsung heroes we have honoured over the last 10 years."

He said SGHA is a testament to the belief in the transformative power of storytelling. "Stories are wonderful and powerful. They weave together the threads of hope, kindness, gratitude and unity.

"Over the past decade, we have remained committed to showcasing humanity at its best – ordinary individuals whose acts of kindness and compassion serve as an aspiration and inspiration for us all," he said.

He also congratulated the winners, saying that their contributions and achievements have shaped the world for the better. "You remind us that heroes are not just found in history books or fictional tales. They walk among us, quietly transforming lives with every gesture of goodwill.

"We celebrate your contributions and achievements, knowing that each of you has shaped our world for the better. And to that, I say kudos to each and every one of you!" he said.

The winners, taking home a cash prize of RM15,000 each, were selected by a panel of seven judges from over 500 nominations this year.

SGHA chief judge Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye



Lively show: Children from the IDEAS Autism Centre, which was a Star Social Impact Grantee, performing during the ceremony at Menara Star. — AZHAR MAHFOF/The Star



Meeting of minds: Orang Asli patrollers (right) from the WWF-Malaysia Anti-Poaching team interacting with the Turtle Conservation Society of Malaysia team at Menara Star. — AZHAR MAHFOF/The Star

said the award manifested the collective efforts of Malaysians from different walks of life.

"Serving as the chief judge has always been a rewarding experience, reminding me year after year of the quiet, transformative power of kindness, compassion and unity.

"I have witnessed acts of courage and generosity that have created a lasting legacy of change across communities," he said.

Lee said the award had inspired many Malaysians to keep doing good deeds and continue fostering unity among the people.

"SGHA is more than just an award, a trophy or a title. It serves a deeper purpose – to inspire others to take up the initiatives in doing good work for the society and environment," he said.

Among the pillars recognised in this year's SGHA 2024 are wildlife conservation, community development, social welfare, environmental and biodiversity, as

well as crisis and disaster relief.

The 10 winners are RIMAU, Reef Check Malaysia, Silatul Rahim Dahman, WWF-Malaysia Orang Asli Anti-Poaching Team, Food Aid Foundation, Prof Dr Thong Meow Keong, APE Malaysia, WWF-Malaysia's Sarawak Wildlife Conservation Team, Turtle Conservation Society of Malaysia and Search and Rescue Dogs Malaysia.

The award ceremony was also enlivened by a special musical performance by IDEAS Autism Centre, which was the 2024 Star Social Impact Grantee, while one of its students, Muhammad Dharwisy 'Ukaysyah Muhammad Azam Syah, delivered a poem

entitled *Terima Kasih Perwira Kami*.

Past SGHA winners were also invited to the event, where some of them set up booths to showcase their works. They included IMAM Response & Relief Team (IMARET), DrsforALL, Asli Co., Efinity Social Enterprise and Dignity for Children.

SGHA is an annual award by *The Star* that honours everyday Malaysian unsung heroes. For more details, visit sgha.com.my.

significant changes to those who are in need," said Chee, who runs a food bank and was recognised under the social welfare pillar.

Malaysian Foundation for the Blind chief executive officer Silatul Rahim Dahman said he wanted to further empower the blind community, especially with the award he received under the community development pillar.

"I look forward to serving this special community for many, many more years to come, not only in Malaysia but beyond.

"I think it is high time that people with visual impairment are fully recognised in society and given a fair opportunity to contribute to the nation's development," he added.



- 1. RIMAU**
Safeguards the critically endangered Malayan Tiger's future through conservation efforts involving habitat preservation alongside communities.
- 2. Reef Check Malaysia**
Protects and conserves the marine ecosystems in Malaysia.
- 3. Silatul Rahim Dahman**
Champions equal rights and full participation for the blind and visually impaired communities in Malaysia and beyond.
- 4. WWF-Malaysia Orang Asli Anti-Poaching Team**
Protects the critically endangered Malayan tigers through anti-poaching efforts and strong partnerships with local communities.
- 5. Food Aid Foundation**
A dynamic food bank that serves as a community asset, dedicated to rescuing surplus food, feeding the needy, providing emergency relief and empowering individuals.
- 6. Prof Dr Thong Meow Keong**
An advocate for equity in genetic healthcare and a pioneer of genomic medicine for people living with rare diseases in Malaysia.
- 7. APE Malaysia**
Restores wildlife habitats through community-based conservation projects.
- 8. WWF-Malaysia's Sarawak Wildlife Conservation Team**
Protects Sarawak's precious ecosystems through a collaborative approach, working with partners to ensure humans live in harmony with nature.
- 9. Turtle Conservation Society of Malaysia**
Protects and restores depleted freshwater turtle populations in Malaysia through research, conservation, education and community empowerment.
- 10. Search and Rescue Dogs Malaysia**
Specialises in deploying trained dogs for life-saving missions during disasters and emergencies.

WATCH THE VIDEO
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SGHA winners motivated to do more good for communities

PETALING JAYA: Proud, honoured and grateful – this sums up the feelings of the winners of the Star Golden Hearts Award (SGHA) 2024.

Out of over 500 nominations received for SGHA's 10th instalment, these selfless individuals and organisations dedicated their achievements to their whole team.

RIMAU president Lara Ariffin, whose organisation aims to conserve and protect the Malayan tiger, said the award is another push for them to amplify the plight of the endangered animal.

"To be selected from among more than 500 nominees is truly a wonderful recognition, not only to our team in Kuala Lumpur but more importantly, to the 110 patrollers who are working day and night to help

save the endangered Malayan tiger," said Lara, who received the award under the wildlife pillar.

For the crisis and disaster relief pillar, Search and Rescue Dogs Malaysia president Datuk Dr Mohd Nordin Mohd Nor was hopeful that the SGHA recognition would draw more public interest in its efforts.

"The recognition is very important to us because through this, we hope that more people will come to know about us.

"We would like to attract more people, particularly youth, to participate in this (cause) and be part of what we consider an honourable exercise," he said.

The organisation trains dogs for life-saving missions during disasters and emergencies.

WWF-Malaysia's Sarawak Wildlife Conservation senior programme assistant Affy Azlizam Senin echoed his views, saying he was hopeful for more awareness of the importance of wildlife conservation.

"We also hope that by winning this award, we can work better in the future," he said.

Food Aid Foundation founder Rick Chee applauded Star Media Group Bhd for the awards that recognise the work of social workers.

"This will bear some significant motivation to all of us on the ground, and hopefully it can inspire people to do more for the community.

"We believe that the power of the community, together with passion, can deliver