

# Purposeful decluttering

While we wish to help by donating unused household items, it is best to first check what NGOs need

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WITH the start of 2020 and Chinese New Year in two weeks, this is the time to declutter.

A check with some non-governmental organisations (NGO) that collect used items comprising recyclables showed that they receive the most items in December and just before Chinese New Year.

Taiwan Buddhist Tzu-Chi Foundation Malaysia Taman Desa Recycling Centre coordinator Francis Tan said they usually received a lot of books during the school holidays in December and clothes before Chinese New Year.

Melissa Sebastian, from the Salvation Army Regional Headquarters Malaysia, concurred.

She said although they were collecting items all year round, "typically, our peak period is between December and Chinese New Year."

Social enterprise Kloth Cares co-founder Nik Suzila Hassan echoed this sentiment, too.

"It seems like Malaysians are in the mood to declutter their homes, including wardrobes and shoe racks at this time.

"From our engagement with donors, they are happy that Kloth Cares helps to keep unwanted items away from landfills," she said.

In the last week of November,



Tan says they Tzu-Chi Foundation Malaysia does not accept bulk furniture due to space constraints.

Kloth Cares organised a fabric recycling drive in collaboration with Edotco (an Axiata subsidiary company), where the fabric drop-off centre was at the Shell station in Taman Tun Dr Ismail, Kuala Lumpur.

The day-long recycling drive managed to garner more than 25,000kg of unwanted fabric and textiles.

However, data from KDEB Waste Management Sdn Bhd in 2018 showed that there was no signifi-



cant change in waste collection during the end of that year.

"Significant changes can be seen usually during festive seasons, for example, Hari Raya. The trend also varies depending on municipalities.

"During Chinese New Year in 2018, waste collected in Klang, Ampang and Selayang saw a reduction.

"The assumption is most of the people return to their hometown for the long break during Chinese New Year.

"This indirectly reduces the amount of waste generated, particularly around the city," a KDEB spokesman said.

During a recent visit, *StarMetro* observed how a family who dropped off unwanted items at Tzu-Chi Foundation's recycling centre was educated by volunteers about the categories of recyclables.

Tan said the most important thing was educating the public

"We tell them about the 5Rs (refuse, reduce, reuse, repurpose and recycle) and what items can be recycled.

"It is not just about recycling but also preventing wastage and reducing the quantity of rubbish sent to landfills," he added.

Tan recalled incidents where people would just dump a bag of rubbish at their doorstep.

"We are not a rubbish dump," he stressed.

Instead of throwing away unwanted items that are still in good condition, people can donate it and do their bit for charity.

At Kloth Cares, used goods in good condition are sent in its original form to NGOs and third world countries.

Medium quality products have to be repurposed into other forms, including industrial wiping cloth and upcycled fuel.

Between Aug 18, 2018 and Dec 1 last year, Kloth Cares collected more than 350,000kg of unwanted fabric.

"Overall, more than 80% of the items that we receive are garments and footwear, bags as well as household fabric," Nik Suzila said.

Kloth Cares has installed more than 300 fabric bins from August 2018 until now.

More than 90% of its bins are available in Klang Valley while some have been placed in Negri Sembilan and Melaka.

More than 70% of the fabric bins are accessible to the public.

At Tzu-Chi Foundation recycling centre in Taman Desa, donated items in good condition are sold at its Cherish Corner every Saturday from 7am to 3pm.

The money derived from sales are channelled to the foundation.

Xim Phou Moon Welfare Society (XPM) also collects recyclables and items for donation.

XPM women's section head Amy Wai said volunteers would sort through donated items with books and stationery being given to NGOs or charity homes.

**The Salvation Army**  
YES  
Items in good/reusable condition  
Call ahead

**Tzu-Chi Malaysia**  
NO  
Furniture, mattresses, pillows, underwear, polystyrene/clay/wood/bamboo products, tyres, shoes, light bulbs, fluorescent tubes

NO  
Food, medication and recyclables  
Items that are broken or beyond repair  
Disposal service