



Sembawang GRC MP Ellen Lee (left) with beneficiaries of the donation drive, Mr Ng Chee Seng and his daughter, and Madam Chia Lai Huey. ST PHOTO: SHAHRIYA YAHAYA

## Buy a pack of rice and help a needy family out

■ BY LIAW WY-CIN

THE Chinese Development Assistance Council (CDAC) and welfare group Lions Befrienders are trying to raise money for 80,000kg of rice – enough to fill the entire living room of a three-room flat.

The beneficiaries? About 4,000 needy families and senior citizens living on their own.

The rice donation drive was launched at the Yishun Ring Road petrol station, of the Singapore Petroleum Company (SPC) chain, by MP for Sembawang GRC Ellen Lee yesterday afternoon.

CDAC's manager for volunteers and social services, Ms Diong Siew Kuan, said rice was the focus because it was a staple in Singaporeans' diet.

The drive is an extension of a similar one-day event that self-help group CDAC held last year, when the public brought in a total of 12,000kg of rice packets, which went to 500 families.

This year, each family will get 10kg of rice a month from October to December, on top of the 10kg pack they received yesterday.

For the beneficiaries, the money saved means more cash for other expenses such as transport.

Madam Chia Lai Huey, 49, spends about \$60 a month on rice to feed herself and her eight children. The part-time cashier became the breadwinner when her husband died in 2005.

She said in Mandarin: "We eat about 20kg of rice a month. Four of my children are still studying, so some of the money saved from having to buy rice will go towards their transport fares."

Another beneficiary, Mr Ng Chee Seng, 38, a delivery driver, said the rice he will be getting will last at least six months. Mr Ng, who is divorced, lives with his three daughters aged nine to 16 in a three-room flat in Yishun. Every month, he spends about \$8 to \$10 on the 5kg of rice they eat.

From now till the end of next month, there are two ways the public can make a donation.

They can purchase a \$6 rice voucher at any of the 38 SPC petrol stations islandwide, which is the equivalent of a 2.5kg pack of SongHe rice. The pack of rice goes towards the 80,000kg pool and SongHe will also donate 50 cents' worth of rice.

Or they can purchase a 5kg pack of SongHe rice at SPC stations and donate it to the pool. If they choose to take it home for their own consumption, SongHe will donate 50 cents' worth of rice.