

# Serving with heart and passion



Mr Chan (left) and Mr Lo appreciate that their job allows them to do good beyond just helping their clients. PHOTOS: LIM SIN THAI, GREAT EASTERN

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## Making a difference

As a Life company, Great Eastern goes beyond providing insurance and financial security. It believes in empowering the community to live healthier and better, and in creating sustainable value for stakeholders.

It is committed to making a positive difference and adding value to the community, inspiring its employees and agency force to go the extra mile for the good and betterment of society.

Across the company, it leverages its Live Great events and encourages its people to volunteer their time and talent to make a positive and meaningful impact on society.

Year-round, Great Eastern's community and corporate social responsibility efforts are centred on its Live Great philosophy, which champions:

- Helping the young and elderly live healthily;
- Empowerment through education;
- Women and children-related causes; and
- Caring for the environment.

## A company that believes in giving back to society, Great Eastern supports its agency force in doing good

MELISSA HENG

OVER 10 months this year, Mr Kenny Lo and about 150 other volunteers have run a total distance of more than 10,000km for charity.

Those who ran included him and his colleagues, as well as their friends and family members.

For each kilometre that they ran, 1kg of rice will be donated to various charities at the end of the year.

His agency, Advisors' Bloc, one of the groups within Great Eastern, will be footing the bill for the more than 10,000kg of rice. Insurance company Great Eastern will also contribute to the cause.

Mr Lo, 46, founder of Advisors' Bloc and director of financial services, says the rice challenge came about because the agency wanted to create a corporate social responsibility (CSR) event that could have a larger impact on both the participants and the beneficiaries of the project.

The challenge, which began in February and ended on Nov 30, surpassed its target of 10,000km recently.

### Running for rice

Mr Lo says: "Earlier this year, I was speaking to my consultants in Advisors' Bloc and we realised that we were all individually donating our time or money to different charities and causes.

"We thought it would be more meaningful to come together to do something more impactful as a group.

"It is an opportunity to stay healthy together and also spread the message about giving back through this challenge. These runs also support Great Eastern's Life company purpose to promote a healthier lifestyle and we have great fun at the same time," he says.

### A noble profession

Mr Lo, who started Advisors' Bloc in 2015, joined Great Eastern in 1994.

Fresh out of national service, he joined the company because he wanted to start working and contribute financially to his family.

It turned out to be the right decision for him. Though he was a quiet person when he was younger, he says the extensive training he received at Great Eastern has helped him develop the knowledge and communication skills that have made him more outspoken, engaging and confident.

"Without Great Eastern, I would not be where and who I am today. I've been given great opportunities to grow and perform."



Mr Lo (right) and his team organised a running event to raise money for charity and promote a healthy lifestyle.

**You do not need a reason to contribute to society. It is the right thing to do. I am not rich, but I am able to give and donate within my limits. It makes me happy to be able to give to others.**

MR KENNY LO  
founder of Advisors' Bloc  
and director of financial services  
Great Eastern

The bachelor is now the director of his own agency and manages 38 financial consultants.

He says: "When I first joined the insurance industry, it was tough. As a young consultant, you need to have determination and perseverance to do this job.

"There will be times you face rejection and feel down, but with a strong and positive mindset, you pick yourself up and carry on."

Asked why he is passionate about his job, he says: "Insurance is a noble profession. Many do not realise the importance of being adequately insured until disasters happen in the family.

"These days, medical costs are so high. I have seen how Great Eastern helped families to cover their hospital bills when illness struck. Insurance is priceless in times of need."

The qualities of a good consultant, he says, are "discipline and integrity and the ability to think about what your customers need and to put them first".

His other goals for Advisors' Bloc are to help his consultants grow and to continue to add value to society.

He says: "You do not need a reason to contribute to society. It is the right thing to do. I am not rich but I am able to give and donate within my

limits. It makes me happy to be able to give to others."

### An insurer with a heart

Other groups within Great Eastern have the same desire to do good. They include Great Alliance, a cluster of 19 agency groups, with more than 350 financial consultants, headed by Mr Paul Chan.

Mr Chan, chairman of Great Alliance and a director of financial services at Great Eastern, says he chose to work at the company because it is a local brand that people are familiar with.

Besides caring for its employees, the company also "encourages giving back to society", which resonates strongly with him and adds a meaningful and more holistic dimension to the job.

The 61-year-old joined Great Eastern in 1989 and now manages a team of 27 financial consultants.

The alliance values "service before self" and organises a CSR event annually for its consultants to give back to the community, a key focus for the group since its inception some 14 years ago.

### Service before self

Every year, each agency in Great Alliance pools together donations from its consultants to give to a selected charity.

**If you just donate money, it is not as memorable or as personal. We wanted to get involved and really get to know the people whom the charity helps. We get to listen to them and know their stories.**

MR PAUL CHAN  
chairman of Great Alliance  
and director of financial services  
Great Eastern



Great Alliance team members spreading cheer to elderly beneficiaries.

The group also organises an event for the beneficiaries of the charity.

Mr Chan says: "If you just donate money, it is not as memorable or as personal.

"We wanted to get involved and really get to know the people whom the charity helps. We get to listen to them and know their stories."

Last year, Great Alliance donated to social service organisation AWWA and took elderly beneficiaries from AWWA to the River Safari.

This year, it helped the Salvation Army through donations and by taking students from the Salvation Army Bukit Batok Children Care Centre to Science Centre Singapore for an educational outing.

### Improving lives

Mr Chan says that over the years he has seen how Great Eastern not only cares for the community but also takes care of its clients.

He had a client who was a 45-year-old coffee-shop owner. Six months after his client bought an insurance plan through him, he was diagnosed with lung cancer, and he passed away the following year.

Mr Chan says: "Great Eastern gave his family the full sum he was due. He had three children who were studying

at the time and the money made a big difference to them.

"They were able to continue living in the same house and didn't need to worry about education fees or daily living expenses."

That experience is one of many that assured Mr Chan that he has chosen the right profession and the right company.

He believes that he and his fellow consultants help improve the lives of others not only through their profession, but also through the group's CSR projects.

He recalls a visit to an old folks' home in Chua Chu Kang a few years ago, when the team spent an entire day with the elderly, playing games, working on craft projects and singing songs.

"While the activities were simple, what was more important was spending quality time befriending each of the residents and lending an ear.

"In many ways, we were the beneficiaries, learning about life's experiences from them," says Mr Chan.

When asked if he has advice for those keen to join the industry, he says: "Look for a company that is progressive, a company that looks after its people and a company with a heart like Great Eastern."