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Title: Charity funding that is recession proof
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Conventional thinking dictates that companies should tighten their belts during economic downturns.

And one of the first things to go, is support for charities.

But some companies here have decided not to scale back their charitable donations this year.

Instead, they're spreading more festive cheer to the needy.

Melanie Yip finds out.

The tough economic times appear to have done little to dampen the spirit of giving at some companies here.

NTUC Fairprice Co-operative is one of them.

Its Managing Director, Seah Kian Peng, says that the company will not be slashing the resources it allocates to helping the lower income groups.

"In July this year, where we used to give \$1 million worth of our Fairprice food vouchers, we have increased it to \$1.5 million. Again, this year in August, we donated \$3.5 million to NTUC, specifically to help the low wage workers cope with rising inflation. For the same causes last year, this represents a huge increase over lasty year."

SembCorp Marine is another company which has increased the funding for its community care program.

This year, it's decided to set aside \$300,000 for its SchoolBAG initiative which helps low income households defray their children's basic educational expenses.

That's a 20 percent increase compared to 20-07.

Over at the Tan Chin Tuan Foundation, the recession has not impeded the foundation in funding more philanthropic projects, says council member, Chew Kwee San.

"Largely because we have always reviewed any application funds in terms of the number of people it can benefit. We don't donate because we have to. But it is based on programs which bring the most benefits to individuals which we pick. So even in a situation where times are getting bad, the opportunities for doing a lot more expanded."

Executive Director of the Boys Brigade, Desmond Koh admits that the current recession has taken a toll on efforts to get more corporations to support its Sharity Gift Box project.

But he's confident that Singaporeans will continue to generously donate.

"I remembered one year, when there was a downturn, we met the food target on time and there were no issues at all. Of course, there could be many reasons one would speculate why that took place, maybe people were saving their dollars and going for fewer holidays, and so they had something to spare for the gift box. I think whatever the reasons may be, we do not want to doubt the generosity and the heart of Singaporeans."

Singaporeans are generous when it comes to donating for a good cause.

A recent National Volunteer and Philanthropic Center survey showed that Singaporeans donated three times more this year than they did in 2006.

Public donations amounted to almost S\$960 million in 2008.