

# TZU-CHI *USA Journal*



**Persistent Love  
and Care Under  
Smoke-Filled  
Skies**

**C.A.F.E. 229: Reflections  
on Contemplative Living**

**Jing Si Instant Rice  
Provides Nutrition and  
Comfort in Hawaii**

**A New Horizon in  
Health Care**



## CONTEMPLATIVE WISDOM

Thoughts for meditation, contemplation,  
and reflection

**Dharma Master Cheng Yen**

*Founder of the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation*

When we live our lives in accord with principles,  
we will naturally be in harmony with nature.

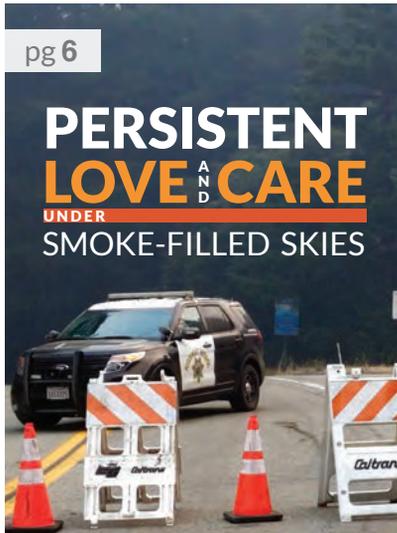
If we wish for peace in the world,  
humankind must create blessings together  
and cherish all living beings.

Adopting a vegetarian diet can  
help nurture our compassion.

The more people who adopt a vegetarian diet,  
the more blessings there will be.

In this way, we can create a protective shield  
of blessings for the world. 🌿

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Photo/Minjhing Hsieh

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**Cover:** During recent wildfire relief distributions, as at all Tzu Chi disaster aid events, care recipients listen closely when volunteers read Master Cheng Yen's letter of condolences extending love and blessings, their hearts touched. *Photo/C.M. Yung*

The Editorial Team sincerely thanks all contributors and invites feedback and contributions. Please contact us at [journal@tzuchi.us](mailto:journal@tzuchi.us). Read the online version at [tzuchi.us/journal](http://tzuchi.us/journal).

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Peter Lin, Ph.D.



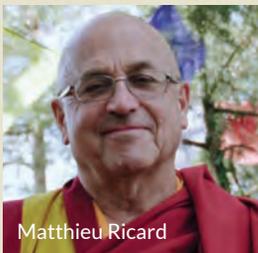
Roshi Pat Enkyo O'Hara



Dr. Deborah Middleton



Randye J. Semple, Ph.D.



Matthieu Ricard



David Listen

# Tzu Chi Center for Compassionate Relief C.A.F.E. 229

The **C.A.F.E.229** webinar, hosted by the Tzu Chi Center for Compassionate Relief located at 229 East 60th Street in New York, casts a light on different aspects of contemplative living, and their benefits for self and others. Examined from a variety of perspectives, a contemplative lifestyle emerges as one that encompasses altruistic tendencies, mindfulness and positive transformation, and wisdom. These themes are echoed in the words that constitute the C.A.F.E. name: Compassion in Action, Freedom, Enlightenment.

Speakers come from the fields of psychology, health care, clinical research, religious practice and studies, philosophy, arts and culture, communications, global studies, and service-learning. And, the webinar runs in series. The first series began in July and runs through December 2020:

## Transforming Distress into Compassion: Mindful Living in Action

July 24 – Zen Mind, Therapist Mind: Integration of Zen and Psychotherapy

◆ Peter Lin

August 20 – *Meditation Makes a Bodhisattva* ◆ Roshi Pat Enkyo O'Hara

September 18 – *Awake in the World: Contemplative Arts as Mindfulness in Action* ◆ Dr. Deborah Middleton

October 24 – *Mindfulness Matters to Children: Cultivating Mindfulness During Childhood* ◆ Randye J. Semple, Ph.D.

November 20 – Virtual world premiere of **Karuna**, with **Matthieu Ricard**, Buddhist monk, photographer, international best-selling author, humanitarian, and prominent speaker worldwide.

December 18 – *Mindfulness and Mental Health Services* with **David Listen**, Mental Health Counselor, L.P., and Zen monk for 10 years in the Chan tradition.



To learn more visit: [www.tzuchicenter.org](http://www.tzuchicenter.org)



All of us began 2020 in a particular place; now, we are ending it in a completely different one.

Our spring issue of the *Tzu Chi USA Journal* focused on Tzu Chi's decade-long relief work in Haiti and the celebratory photo exhibition, "Keeping Hope Alive: 10 Years of Care in Haiti." Little did we foresee a global health crisis looming on the horizon, and that it would come to change our lives in immeasurable ways.

Our summer and fall issues then detailed Tzu Chi USA's immediate and long-term response, respectively, to the COVID-19 pandemic. Concurrently, Dharma Master Cheng Yen urged the adoption of vegetarianism; a solution that, if embraced by all, may very well deter the emergence of future zoonotic viruses like SARS-CoV-2. And, further disasters steadily and forcefully appeared, from wildfires and hurricanes to social unrest and more.

Now, in issue 59, we bring you up to speed on the progress of Tzu Chi USA's long-term recovery efforts as we head into the winter. At the same time, we present all this from a reflective point of view; one where we introspect on the challenges, triumphs, and lessons learned this year.

We begin with our cover story, "Persistent Love and Care Under Smoke-Filled Skies," which presents Tzu Chi USA's immediate relief efforts after California wildfires, including the hundreds caused by the "August lightning siege." We have also witnessed the incredible selflessness of Tzu Chi volunteers in the face of a potentially deadly disease. The portrait piece,

"Snapshots: Hurricane and Wildfire Relief in the Wake of COVID-19," gives a personal look as to what it is like to volunteer through a pandemic and natural disasters.

Also sharing his ruminations is a New York City doctor who served at the former epicenter of the pandemic. You can read them in the article, "Wisdom Gained on the Frontlines of COVID-19." Then, "C.A.F.E. 229: Reflections on Contemplative Living" presents the research and guidance of guest speakers of the Tzu Chi Center for Compassionate Relief's inaugural webseries, which seeks to bring awareness to spiritual and mental health during the pandemic.

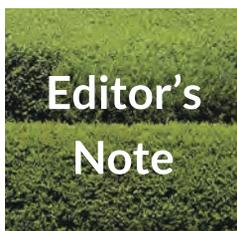
With "A New Horizon in Health Care," we highlight the Buddhist Tzu Chi Medical Foundation's recent designation as a Federally Qualified Health Center Look-Alike, beginning November 1, 2020. This accreditation helps Tzu Chi Health Centers deliver more tangible care to those

that are underserved in our local communities.

Our final feature, "Jing Si Instant Rice Provides Nutrition and Comfort in Hawaii," recounts how Tzu Chi volunteers tailored food distributions to meet the specific needs of seniors in Hawaii. It also looks back on the creation of Jing Si Instant Rice, itself a product of reflection and proactive relief.

As the year ends, let us contemplate the unexpected lessons we are learning, and use our wisdom to carry us forward, with peace, hope, and solidarity, into what lies ahead. 🌿

By Anik Ghose



# The Benevolent Deer King

Master Cheng Yen's Teachings

Translated by the Dharma as Water Team

*If we truly wish to protect and love living beings, we should not contribute to killing them.*

*Dharma Master Cheng Yen*

We learn the Buddha Dharma to understand and realize our true nature. In learning the Dharma, we must first train our minds and understand that all virtuous deeds begin with the Five Precepts. The first of the Five Precepts is “no killing.” But even beyond “no killing,” we should further work to protect life.

During his lifetime, the Buddha told many stories. In the Agama Sutra, there is a story about one of the Buddha's previous lives as a deer king.

Once upon a time, in a secluded forest, a herd of thousands of deer, led by a magnificent deer king, took shelter together. In the refuge of the deep forest, the herd grazed in peace.

One day, the kingdom's king and his courtiers came to the forest to hunt. The once serene surroundings turned into a scene of chaos as people shot their bows and arrows everywhere. The deer panicked and scattered in all directions, and many died. After the hunters left, the deer king was aghast at the sight of the carnage, and he blamed himself. After some thought, the deer king decided to go to the palace to speak for the herd.

Once he reached the king, the deer king knelt down and cried. He pleaded with the king. “A deer's life is not worth much. Our lives are insignificant, and we reside on your land. Since we can live peacefully and are grateful for our lives here, if the staff of your royal kitchen needs to create gourmet meals, I beseech Your Majesty to tell me the number of deer that are required each day. We would be very willing to send that number of deer to your kitchen.”

Hearing this, the king replied, “I had no idea that our culinary needs caused so much suffering to your herd. Since our kitchen will only need one deer each day, I will immediately forbid anyone to hunt in the forest.”

The deer king was relieved to hear the king's promise. He went home to tell the herd the news. The deer quickly gathered around, knelt down, and listened intently to what the deer king had to say. He began, “Since the beginning of time, no one has lived forever. We live on the king's land and feed on his grass and water. Since we anyway must die one day, for the sake of peace and security and a place for our herd to flourish, why don't we choose our time to die in exchange for peace?” The members of the herd believed that what the deer king said was right. “It is true. Everyone must die one day. If we can figure out a reasonable arrangement, we will accept it.”

From then on, the members of the herd decided amongst themselves who would go next. The deer whose time was up would pay his or her last respects before the deer king and listen to his teachings. The deer king wept and constantly advised them as he reluctantly let them go.

One day, a pregnant doe came before the deer king. She knelt and begged. "Tomorrow it is my turn to die. This is the end for me, but I am pregnant with my fawn. I am not asking to be spared; I only need a few more days to bear my child so he can live, then I will go."

The deer king thought the request was reasonable. He found the deer who was next in line and asked him if he could go a day earlier. That deer begged, "I still wish to keep living, even if it is just for one more day. I do not want to leave a day earlier."

Upon hearing this, the deer king understood that all living beings desire life and fear death, so he could not ask any of them to die early. After the herd members went away, he quietly left the forest and headed for the palace.

When the king saw him, he asked, "Why are you here so soon? Have you exhausted the deer in your herd?" The deer king said no and

recounted the story of the pregnant doe and the deer next in line who asked to live one more day. In order to meet the kitchen's needs, the deer king came himself. When the king heard this, he felt ashamed. He realized that all living beings, even animals, can be benevolent. Thus, the king repented, and he issued a new decree forbidding anyone to hunt in the forest for any living being.

This was one of many stories that recounted the Buddha's spiritual cultivation throughout many lifetimes. Not only had the Buddha been born in the human realm, but he had also been born as a cow, a horse, a deer, and countless other forms. He had been through it all. As we live our lives, we must not think that only humans matter. Rather than thinking only of ourselves, we should cherish and treasure all beings, as we are all equal.

If we can not only refrain from killing but further save lives, we are doing a good deed. By not killing, we are just observing the precept. Yet going beyond that, we must actively engage in doing good deeds and strive to protect living beings. In this way, we can be a beacon of light for others through the way we live. 🌿

# PERSISTENT LOVE AND CARE UNDER SMOKE-FILLED SKIES

By Pingyao Chang, Christina Chang  
Translated by Diana Chang  
Edited by Ida Eva Zielinska





Severe lightning and wildfires cause many road closures and smoky air in Santa Cruz County, California. Photo/Minjhing Hsieh



Volunteers verify residents' personal information at a disaster relief distribution site. Photo/S. P. Ooi

***“I went out of town, and when I came home, I didn't have a home. It was burnt, it was gone, everything. Everything I owned. It means a lot after losing everything, to know that you guys have come this far to help us.***

*California Wildfire Survivor*

When the wildfires first broke out, the sky in Northern California turned orange-red, then darkened ominously, as in an apocalyptic scene. Some people likened it to being in purgatory or on planet Mars...

Since mid-August 2020, hundreds of wildfires have swept across California, burning more than a million acres of land in just one week. They forced the evacuation of over 100,000 people, while acrid smoke spread through the state and the air quality soared to hazardous levels. What is now referred to as the historic “August lightning siege” left firefighters scrambling from one blaze to another, of over 900 wildfires ignited by some 14,000 lightning strikes in 72 hours.

In nine days, the average area burned in California reached more than three times that in a regular wildfire season. By late August, fires had consumed 1.42 million acres of land, more than the size of Delaware, and by September 15, scorched a record-breaking 3.25 million-plus acres.

For the evacuated residents of impacted areas, who fled in the middle of a global pandemic, the disaster only added to their misery and distress, worsening economic hardships they were already facing. For many, it meant losing every-

thing they owned to the flames, and for some, it was not the first time.

## **🔥 Launching Tzu Chi USA's Wildfire Disaster Relief**

As soon as the wildfires erupted and spread, Tzu Chi USA's Northwest Region volunteers immediately established an Emergency Operations Center to hold daily meetings. The goal was to keep up with the latest developments while strategizing and launching relief plans, exploring the feasibility of establishing temporary shelters for evacuated residents at local offices, and determining their capacity.

The volunteers' relief efforts for evacuees began shortly after that and initially included giving out eco-blankets, cloth masks, and essential supplies to address emergency needs and reduce the anxiety of being in such an unsettling situation. Disaster relief distributions of cash cards would soon follow.



A volunteer shares the story behind the making of Tzu Chi's signature eco-blankets with a wildfire survivor. Photo/S. P. Ooi

Given the constraints and safety measures in place during the pandemic, the relief teams established services allowing wildfire affected residents to register online to obtain resources. Simultaneously, they trained volunteers on procedures for the intake of applications through phone interviews and ways of comforting disaster survivors while verifying their information.

## Reconnecting With Firefighting Heroes

After the COVID-19 pandemic broke out in March, Tzu Chi USA donated personal protective equipment (PPE) to firefighters in Saratoga, in California's Santa Clara County. To express their gratitude, in August, Adam Cosner, president of the Santa Clara County Firefighters Local Union 1165, contacted Tzu Chi USA to pass on a donation on behalf of the county's fire department.

The day Tzu Chi volunteers reconnected with Santa Clara's firefighters to accept the donation was August 17. Earlier that very day, one of the lightning fires had struck in the region...

When they met, Adam shared how he and his fellow firefighters were busy handling the pandemic needs in the community on top of fire prevention and control. Not to mention the herculean work that lay ahead battling the August lightning siege fires.



Adam Cosner, Santa Clara County Firefighters Local Union 1165 President, presents a check on behalf of all Santa Clara County firefighters to Tzu Chi volunteer Chijen Huang. *Photo/Judy Liao*

Taking their pressing and dangerous work to heart, as a gesture of appreciation with love and care, volunteers Chijen Huang and Judy Liao brought a box of Tzu Chi's Jing Si Noodles and Jing Si Biscuits for the first-responder heroes the following day.



Tzu Chi volunteers bring an assortment of Jing Si Noodles and Jing Si Biscuits in different flavors to lift the spirits of firefighters battling wildfires in the midst of the pandemic. *Photo/Judy Liao*

The connection would deepen in the days and weeks ahead, as Tzu Chi volunteers conducted disaster assessments in the region in advance of Tzu Chi USA's disaster relief distributions, and brushed shoulders with teams of firefighters battling blazes across Northern California.



Minjhing Hsieh, Tzu Chi Northwest Region CEO, meets firefighters as he surveys fire-stricken terrain in Northern California. *Photo/Minjhing Hsieh*

## 🔥 Discovering Friends in the Highway Patrol

On September 21, Tzu Chi volunteers were on their way to the Oroville area to assess damages resulting from the Bear Fire and drove by Berry Creek, a site of massive destruction. There, a California Highway Patrol (CHP) officer stopped the team. Although they didn't know CHP Officer Blair Parrott, he knew Tzu Chi volunteers from previous wildfire relief missions:

**“I recognize the blue and white (uniform), because after the Camp Fire, we actually met with your foundation, and you guys gave us some starting money to help us recover. After the Camp Fire, my wife and I were able to buy a house in a small town south of Chico. We're not going to be rebuilding our home in Paradise, but we really appreciate that money; it helped out with some of those initial bills. So what you guys are doing is really great work, and we really appreciate it.**

*Blair Parrott*

*California Highway Patrol Officer*

Having been personally impacted by the Camp Fire in 2018, Officer Parrott also had a message for other disaster survivors. “To those who might be affected by the Bear Fire, you know, just keep in mind that you might have lost some stuff, but even though you lost that stuff, you still have the memory. And since you have the memories, you really didn't lose much, maybe just the items,” he said.

Since having received disaster aid from Tzu Chi USA, Officer Parrott is also committed to helping others and keeps a bamboo bank handy. “The little can that I got for the change that you guys gave to us, I fill that up with my change every afternoon when I come home from work. And about every six weeks, I take it to the bank and have them give me the money for it, and then I send you guys a check,” he explained, then adding:

**“I haven't kept count of how much money I've sent to you guys, but I love when people are paying it forward.**

*Blair Parrott*

*California Highway Patrol Officer*

## 🔥 They Lost Everything Again

While sports and fitness programs have been on pause through the pandemic, the Oroville Gymnastics Sports Academy in Oroville has had an evolution of sorts: It was chosen to house the Local Assistance Center (LAC) after the North Complex Fire. Here, residents impacted by wildfires can seek resources from local organizations, one of them being Tzu Chi USA's Northwest Region office.



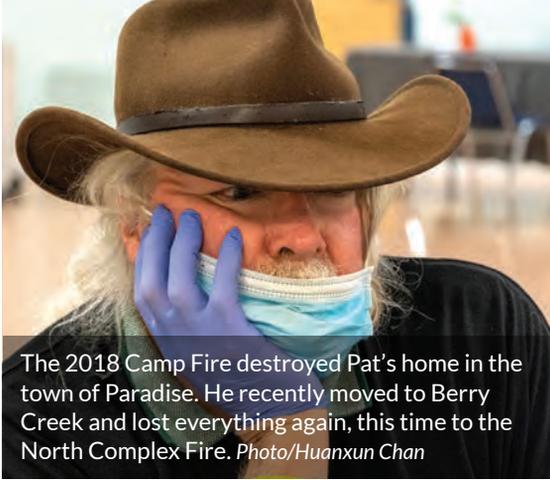
Government agencies and non-profit organizations, including the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation, offer resources side-by-side to support wildfire survivors.

*Photo/Huanxun Chan*



Volunteers join together in group prayer before the start of a wildfire disaster relief distribution.

*Photo/Huanxun Chan*



The 2018 Camp Fire destroyed Pat's home in the town of Paradise. He recently moved to Berry Creek and lost everything again, this time to the North Complex Fire. Photo/Huanxun Chan

As Tzu Chi volunteers met people seeking assistance, they heard stories of loss, yet also witnessed North Californians' resilience. For some, losing everything was not a first time experience, as was the case for Pat Cornelius, who strode in wearing a cowboy hat and, seeing Tzu Chi USA's table, headed that way.

After the volunteers handed him a bag of essential supplies, including one of Tzu Chi's eco-blankets, he hugged it with emotion, saying, "I lost my house to the Camp Fire in 2018. I got help from you at the LAC in Chico. Four months ago, I finally moved into a house in Berry Creek. But my new home was destroyed by a wildfire again, including the blanket you gave me two years ago..." He paused, then added:

***The blanket you gave me helped me through the cold and lonely winter. Today, again, I got another blanket...***

*Pat Cornelius*

*North Complex Fire Survivor*

## **Serving With Dedication**

While firefighters were gradually bringing the wildfires in Northern California's Bay Area under control, others ignited in the state of Washington and Oregon, causing extensive destruction and suffering. By September 17, blazes had burned at least 764,000 acres in Washington and more than 586,000 acres in Oregon, according to the National Interagency Fire Center.

Tzu Chi USA's Northwest Region volunteers were ready and swiftly brought disaster relief where needed, no matter the distance. To reach Melissa Ward, a retired teacher who required urgent assistance, a team of volunteers drove ten hours round trip to personally give her a cash card with love from Tzu Chi.

Tzu Chi USA's Seattle branch also donated 18 air purifiers for elderly residents, those with weak immune systems or allergies, and families with young children in Oregon, whose health could be at risk due to poor air quality resulting from wildfires. To accomplish this, Tzu Chi volunteers from Portland drove to Seattle to retrieve the air purifiers, then back, a six-hour trip in the middle of a storm midway.

Reaching Seattle, a volunteer was loading the air purifiers into the cars one by one when a downpour caught him off guard but did not stop the work at hand. Suddenly, an elderly lady came from across the street, holding an umbrella to shield the volunteer from the rain. Acknowledging the Tzu Chi uniform, she exclaimed, "I appreciate your hard work!"

Such words of encouragement are always touching and support the dedication in volunteers' efforts. Yet, they bring blessings for those offering them as well, as expressed in Dharma Master Cheng Yen's teachings:

***Encouraging good deeds is a means to awakening our pure and genuine loving heart.***

*Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen*

On their part, some of the people who then received those air purifiers – several of whom are from low-income households – later responded to Tzu Chi USA's fundraising efforts in Portland and contributed to help other wildfire survivors.

Tzu Chi USA's wildfire relief in 2020 then went on to mark a milestone in October, with unexpected sites for relief distributions benefiting those affected by the Slater Fire, which devastated remote areas on the border between Southern Oregon and Northern California.

## A First for Tzu Chi USA's Wildfire Relief

The light from the moon reflected onto Gary Francis Mandina's silver hair as the 72-year-old drove alone along a winding country road towards a Starbucks next to a highway, a significant distance away. Time had passed, and his phone just ran out of battery, so Gary was worried if Tzu Chi volunteers would still be there with the wildfire disaster relief they reminded him about on the phone two hours earlier. When he finally arrived, he could breathe a sigh of relief as the volunteers kept their promise, having said, "We'll definitely wait for you."

It was the end of a long day for the volunteers participating in this mission of care, who had left Tzu Chi USA's Northwest Region campus in San Jose, California, early in the morning on October 30, their four vehicles filled with essential supplies. They first headed to Redding, about four hours away, then the small town of Yreka, an hour and a half farther north.

To ensure that residents affected by the Slater Fire could receive cash cards and essential supplies in person, the team had made a special arrangement with two Starbucks along a highway that passes through those Northern California towns. Grace Chen, who served as the disaster relief team coordinator, explained that the Starbucks outdoor seating area locations were ideal since they were convenient to reach for aid recipients and cut down the time typically needed to set up a distribution site.

The volunteers went on to provide more than cash cards that day, distributing blankets, cloth masks, bags of Tzu Chi's Jing Si Instant Rice, toothpaste, toothbrushes, and – taking into account the cold weather of approaching winter – thick socks and sneakers.



When Gary Francis Mandina arrives at the Starbucks outdoor seating area after dark and connects with Tzu Chi volunteers who have been waiting for him in the cold, he feels deeply moved. *Photo/C.M. Yung*



The eco-blankets wildfire survivors receive from Tzu Chi USA will help warm families living in mountainous areas during late autumn. *Photo/C.M. Yung*

Before the volunteers left the Starbucks in Redding, their first stop, the staff happily took photos with the team to remember the day, one of them saying, "What you did today is really great; I don't know you, but thank you."



Starbucks staff in Redding thank Tzu Chi volunteers for their care for the community and take a photo with them to remember the day. *Photo/C.M. Yung*



In addition to providing a cash card and essential supplies, Tzu Chi volunteers give sneakers, socks, toothpaste, and toothbrushes to wildfire survivors. *Photo/Judy Liao*



Cardea is brought to tears when a volunteer reads Master Cheng Yen's letter to wildfire survivors, sending condolences and blessings. *Photo/C.M. Yung*

The Slater Fire destroyed at least 150 homes in Happy Camp, a town about an hour and a half from Yreka and the second Starbucks distribution site. Several people who came seeking assistance were from there, including Cardea. Her father bought land in Happy Camp years ago and divided it among his five children. The Slater Fire destroyed all five family houses, and now she and her dad are staying near the river that runs through their land: Her father sleeps in a tent, while she sleeps in the car.

After receiving a cash card and essential supplies, Cardea listened as a volunteer read Master Cheng Yen's condolence letter to wildfire survivors. She couldn't stop the tears from rolling down her face, then was silent for a moment before finally putting her emotions into

words, saying, "For those of us who have lost everything, everything you have brought us through the long journey is truly appreciated."

Another wildfire survivor, Delanea, works in the kitchen at the Happy Camp Elementary School, one of the few schools in California that had reopened before the Slater Fire left about half the students and their families homeless. Half the school staff also lost their homes, Delanea among them, as she recounted tearfully. As a volunteer listened to her story and consoled her, Delanea exclaimed, "I hope that one day I will be able to give back such love."

As for Gary, who arrived after dark when the distribution was already over, he'd been cleaning up in his burnt house when Minjhing Hsieh, Tzu Chi USA's Northwest Region Executive Director, had called. Minjhing asked if Gary was still coming as he was on the list of expected disaster aid recipients. It turns out Gary had forgotten the date and time of the distribution and was dismayed since he was now more than an hour away.

But the Tzu Chi team waited as promised, and when Gary arrived, volunteers immediately gave him a blanket to help warm him on this chilly night, which he clasped with blackened hands, soiled from rummaging through ashes all day. Once Gary received a cash card and other supplies, and the volunteers had listened to his story and offered moral support, their mission for the day was complete.

The team of volunteers then drove off into the night, continuing north. When the sun would rise the next morning, they had another wildfire distribution to provide for survivors they've never met before, this time in Medford, Oregon. And by the end of that, the people they would serve will no longer have to say, "I don't know you," as new connections with Tzu Chi will have been born. 🌿



A volunteer comforts Delanea, who spent five years organizing the trees around her house in Happy Camp before the Slater Fire burned everything overnight. *Photo/C.M. Yung*

# C.A.F.E.

## Reflections on 229 Contemplative Living

By Ida Eva Zielinska

The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged us on many levels. It has shattered our daily routines and way of life and forced us to confront our vulnerability to this virus and the threat of severe illness or death that looms in our fears. And for some, it has brought to the doorstep the sudden loss of family members, friends, or colleagues to mourn.

We have much to reflect upon during these momentous times, as we adapt, hoping to bolster our resilience in the face of what lies ahead, mostly unknown. More than ever, it is a time that can lead us to contemplate the fragility of life and seek greater meaning in how we live.

In this climate of uncertainty and change, the Tzu Chi Center for Compassionate Relief in Manhattan, New York, launched “C.A.F.E.229” in July 2020. This inaugural virtual program casts light on different aspects of contemplative living and their benefits for self and others.

Guest speakers in the C.A.F.E.229 program come from the fields of psychology, health care, clinical research, religious practice and studies, philosophy, arts and culture, communications, global studies, and service-learning. A contemplative lifestyle, examined from these various perspectives, emerges as one encompassing altruistic tendencies, mindfulness and positive transformation, and wisdom. These themes echo in the C.A.F.E. name: Compassion in Action, Freedom, Enlightenment.

The first series of talks in the program, running from July to December 2020, is entitled “Transforming Distress into Compassion: Mindful Living in Action,” and features six guest speakers; from Buddhist monks, priests, and yogis, to academics in mindfulness research and psychology.



## Zen Mind, Therapist Mind: Integration of Zen and Psychotherapy

In the program’s premiere talk, **Dr. Peter Lin** presented “Zen Mind, Therapist Mind: Integration of Zen and Psychotherapy.” As a licensed psychologist who specializes in mindfulness-oriented psychotherapy and Associate Chair and Professor of Psychology at St. Joseph’s College, New York, he is deeply interested in exploring the commonalities between Eastern Buddhist practices and Western psychotherapy treatments. This focus emerged in conjunction with his cultural background and the immigrant experience:

*“I’m an immigrant from Taiwan ... I came to this country at a very young age. And the best way for me to adapt as an immigrant is really to look at what the Western culture has and compare it to what’s the similarity within my culture.”*

As Dr. Lin embarked on a career in psychotherapy, he was also on a spiritual path, culminating in years of training in Chan (Chinese Zen) practice, the two being avenues that he seeks to integrate:

*“There are many different ways to help people and since psychotherapy is really the product of the West, I’m always also looking at what does the Asian culture offer that is similar to Western psychotherapy.”*

He found a commonality between Zen and psychotherapy in that each address mental distress and its suffering. Moreover, Dr. Lin explained how both put forth mindfulness as a therapeutic process, asking us to “observe thoughts and feelings as events in the mind, without overidentifying with them and without reacting to them in an automatic, habitual pattern of reactivity.” He elaborated, stating that “Both Zen and psychotherapy help people to do four things: face it, accept it, deal with it, and let it go.”

In essence, then, the practice of mindfulness helps us face difficulties and anxiety, turning towards them rather than running away. However, Dr. Lin pointed out that the process goes deeper:

***“The more you practice, the more you realize, when you say ‘face it, accept it, deal with it, and let it go,’ it’s not facing just the problem, but it’s really facing the self. So, both Zen and psychotherapy have something in common, which is really facing one’s self, accepting one’s self, transforming one’s self, and dissolving one’s self.”***

The subject of the talk certainly resonates during the COVID-19 pandemic, when stress is a daily presence. This climate of anxiety emerged as an opportunity for self-exploration. And yet, to conclude his talk and summarize the essential spirit of mindfulness, Dr. Lin quoted Mahatma Gandhi to present the optimum path towards understanding, transforming, and surpassing the self and its painful limitations:

***“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”***

*Mahatma Gandhi*



## Meditation Makes a Bodhisattva

**Roshi Pat Enkyo O'Hara**, Abbot of the Village Zendo in New York, was the next C.A.F.E.229 guest speaker and addressed the theme of service as well. Roshi Enkyo is a Zen priest and a certified Zen teacher. She received further Buddha Dharma Transmission from Roshi Bernie Tetsugen Glassman, an American Zen Buddhist with a strong focus on social engagement and peacemaking. This focus underlies much of her vision of Zen practice, which encompasses caring, service, and creative response to suffering.

In her presentation, entitled “Meditation Makes a Bodhisattva,” Roshi Enkyo spoke of meditation in conjunction with the ideals and practice of a “bodhisattva,” a Buddhist image or archetype:

***“A bodhisattva is a heroic figure in Buddhist. A bodhisattva takes care of other beings. It takes care of the earth itself, and all that is. And each of us can turn ourselves into a bodhisattva. ‘Bodhi’ means ‘light:’ Being able to see clearly; Being able to discern and to function as light to uncover suffering around. And ‘sattva’ simply means ‘a being; someone that is,’ like you and me. A being who is present. A being who offers light. I translate that as a person who serves.”***

Roshi explained that her Zen Buddhist tradition places the highest value on “caring service and compassionate action towards others. And that value arises out of our understanding that we’re all part and interconnected, we’re all part of this grand reality, and that recognition of our interconnectedness gives us energy and gives us a desire to take care of all beings.”

However, what does one do when realizing the fundamental Buddhist understanding of the nature of suffering: “Suffering is always arising. It’s part of the nature of life.” The truth of the matter is that we’re not going to fix anything permanently, Roshi continued: “We’re not going to fix ourselves permanently, nor our loved ones, nor the virus, nor racism, nor the climate nor even the political system, or the world’s suffering.”

So how do we not get discouraged, depressed, or apathetic? Roshi narrowed in on how meditation can help:

**“You could say the heart of our practice is our meditation because it sustains us and encourages us to practice to live a life of service and compassion and to be active in this world at this time. So, I could say that our meditation practice takes care of us so we can take care of others. And more than ever these days, we all need to calm ourselves and restore ourselves so that we can be energized to face the stresses of this pandemic, the unsettling changes in our lives, and the suffering that’s all around us.”**

Roshi pointed out how meditation also helps bring our attention to the very moment, with all its inherent potential. Then, fully present, we can care about what’s right in front of us and find joy in the opportunity to make a difference without expectations of the outcome, since “our work is to serve in the process of change, not to cling to some fixed idea.”

The path becomes one of “constantly being present as life itself manifests, as time flows on.” Moreover, we can bolster our inner strength, as “even when we feel most vulnerable, we can also feel courage as we stay on top of the very moment.” And, meditation leads us there:

**“Meditation can be seen as just a ritual thing you do every day to remind yourself that this precious moment is only existing right now. [In] this precious moment you’re connected to everything in the world, and your role in the world is activated by this moment.”**

In closing, Roshi Pat Enkyo O’Hara encouraged everyone to try a meditation practice, and “take up the strength and energy of a bodhisattva and help to take care of this world.” As a support, she offered an inspirational 21st-Century “gāthā” (Sanskrit term meaning “song or verse”) that in contemporary Zen Buddhism can be recited as part of mindfulness or meditation practice, or in daily life:

**“Get in the boat. The water’s rising. All together now. Row, row, across the sea of suffering. We can do it.”**



## Awake in the World: Contemplative Arts as Mindfulness in Action

September's guest speaker, **Dr. Deborah Middleton**, joining in from England, directed the focus back to mindfulness practice, adding further nuance to our understanding of what it entails and placing it within the context of creativity and the arts. Dr. Middleton is Director of the Mindfulness and Performance Project at the University of Huddersfield and a co-editor of the *Journal of Performance and Mindfulness*. She is also a long-term meditator and yogi, and under her pen-name, Deborah Templeton, writes mindfulness-informed performance texts.

Dr. Middleton's presentation, "Awake in the World: Contemplative Arts as Mindfulness in Action," explored how the arts can allow us to practice mindfulness-in-action and how mindfulness leads to the cultivation of heartfelt compassion. She began by reiterating the definition of mindfulness as a process of paying attention, remembering to pay attention, and remembering why to pay attention. Moreover, it also is, crucially, one of paying attention without judgment as to good-bad, like-dislike, as well as the judgment of labeling and categorizing, "the turning of living experiences into static concepts."

"In bringing non-judgmental awareness to the present moment, we are already stepping away from the discursiveness and discrimination of the everyday mind. In daily life, we tend to overuse a particular form of mental activity to the detriment of other capacities that we

have," Dr. Middleton explained. One could encapsulate this as overthinking, and "mindfulness is a break from all that. When we pay attention to the present moment, we are inviting cessation of inner talking."

The resulting inner silence opens the way for increased awareness of the body, "domain of sense portals." It frees us from the feeling of distance and disembodiment that comes with overthinking and conceptualization; and the view that our thoughts are the world itself. From that perspective, mindfulness becomes a process of awakening, as by repeatedly striving "to abandon the thoughts that come compulsively between us and our lives ... we wake up from our disembodied dream, our incessant, abstracted thought stream." Then, with our increased lucidity, the world can suddenly appear more vivid.

Dr. Middleton warns us, however, that "sometimes mindfulness does not flower into vividness and lucidity" but puts us in touch with how stuck, tense, or neurotic we may be. In that respect, "mindfulness practices can start to teach us about how we relate to the world and about the real cause of our suffering."

In this way, "mindfulness is a practice of tolerating discomfort, cultivating the ability to sit with, to sit through pain, irritation, uncertainty, the small and large sufferings that characterize this human life without resistance or reactivity." This capacity and tolerance for ambiguity are, in fact, at the heart of creativity, which "always involves traveling into the unknown" and facing dilemmas and mystery.

Dr. Middleton provided examples whereby Buddhist mindfulness practices are being incorporated into the actors' art, writing, and other forms of creative expression. She also spoke of clinical uses of mindfulness techniques to help patients deal with stress, chronic pain, fear, or mental distress, as Dr. Lin had touched on in the first C.A.F.E.229 talk. However, she then explained that some people question using a meditative technique in this manner, describing such mindfulness interventions as "reductions

and distortions” of mindfulness as it functions in a Buddhist context, where it originates:

***In Buddhism, mindfulness is not an end in itself, although its much-publicized benefits, stress-reduction, health, happiness, might be desirable, they're not technically the point. The point is developing liberating insight and the transformation of our self-centered ignorance into the wisdom and compassion of a bodhisattva.***

Thus, mindfulness pursued to its full depth, with its abandonment of discursive thinking, leads to profound openness, liberating insight, and more: “This state of being which mindfulness cultivates, and from which insight naturally arises, is sometimes called Buddha Nature, or basic goodness. And it is a state of being from which the naturally arising response is one of spacious acceptance and love.”

Dr. Middleton summarized by saying that “mindfulness activates a stream of embodied awareness that carries us out of our heads and into the heart of our own compassion.” In conclusion, she drew us back to the topic of creative expression, with this parting message:

***Mindful artistic process can be a way in which to touch and enact compassion. We can be artists of our own lives, blending mindfulness and creative action, bringing loving attention to each moment. And if we are brave, we can share our images, our dances, our songs of interconnection with others. Then, contemplative art can be a skillful means through which we help each other towards the profound, spacious, and liberating insights waiting in the depths of our embodied Buddha Nature. Together, we can remember, over and over again, that no matter what is unfolding in the stormy weather of our lives, we belong.***



## **Mindfulness Matters to Children: Cultivating Mindfulness During Childhood**

The next guest speaker, **Dr. Randy J. Semple**, Associate Professor of Clinical Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California, introduced applications of mindfulness practices in school and clinical settings, with groups of children.

In her talk, “Mindfulness Matters to Children: Cultivating Mindfulness During Childhood,” she revealed that mindfulness interventions have been shown to help children become more aware of their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, enhancing their social-emotional resiliency and the ability to make more skillful life choices.

She began by quoting psychologist William James, who is often referred to as the father of American psychology, to stress the fundamental importance of attention, which previous C.A.F.E.229 speakers had already placed at the heart of mindfulness practice: “The faculty of voluntarily bringing back a wandering attention, over and over again, is the very root of judgment, character, and will.”

The clinic and school-based child mindfulness programs Dr. Semple then described, which she co-developed, are, in fact, means of teaching children how to pay attention, rather than merely telling or asking them to do so – a commonly recurring plea during childhood.

The interventions are based on two mainstream and highly respected adult programs – Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction Training and Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy – with adaptations in several areas to make them more child-friendly.

Through various mindfulness exercises, children can discover how continually active their thoughts are, and realize the impact those thoughts can have on their emotions. Indeed, these habitual tendencies, unchecked, continue throughout our lives, and mindfulness-based therapies address them, Dr. Semple explained:

**“Research has actually shown that about half the time, our thoughts are not in the same time and space as our bodies. So our mind wanders to the past; it wanders to the future; it wanders to some other space altogether, other than where we are at right here, right now. And that mind-wandering can create suffering. So, mindfulness-based therapies essentially train clients to keep their mind and body in the same place at the same time.**

Concurrently, “practicing mindful awareness promotes the development of what we call decentering. This is the ability to step back from our thoughts and see them as being transient events in the mind. They’re not me; they’re not facts; they’re not real.”

The child interventions Dr. Semple spoke of, Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy for Children and the Mindfulness Matters Program, allow children to learn from direct experience:

**“Like the adult programs, activities are designed to cultivate an experiential understanding of how thoughts and feelings contribute to felt experiences. So experientially, children learn that thoughts capture their attention and color what they see. They also learn that strong emotions, whether they’re pleasant or unpleasant, can color how they interpret events.**

This realization can then become a concrete tool for emotion self-regulation, leading to a degree of freedom, through mindfulness of choices:

**“We teach children to discover that they do have choices. And these choice points give them opportunities to respond to events with kind speech and thoughtful behaviors. They learn that they always have the choice to act with compassion for themselves and for others.**

And, from Dr. Semple’s observations, it appears that the programs can spark insight and wisdom in the young participants. To illustrate, she offered two delightful quotes from children who completed one of the programs:

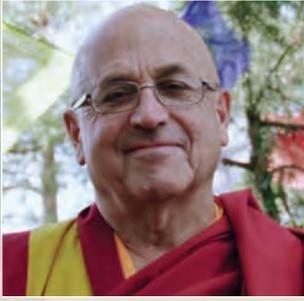
**“Mindfulness lets me see when I’m going to get in trouble and just breathe instead.**

**“Mindfulness is not letting thoughts get in your way when you can be doing something better.**

At the end of her talk, Dr. Semple also mentioned that although the programs don’t explicitly focus on it, acts of kindness and kind speech emerge in the mindfulness groups, and parents often report a positive change in relationships at home. To highlight the far-reaching effects this could have on society at large, Dr. Semple left us with a quote from H.H. the 14th Dalai Lama:

**“If every eight years old in the world is taught meditation, we will eliminate violence from the world within one generation.**

*H.H. the 14th Dalai Lama*



## A Documentary World Premiere and Talk by Matthieu Ricard

In November, C.A.F.E.229 offered a stage for the virtual world premiere of *Karuna*, a Tzu Chi USA produced documentary celebrating compassion in action in the arena of international aid. The film took us on a vivid journey from the foothills of the Himalaya in Nepal to Bodhi Gaya in India – where the Buddha attained enlightenment – and traced the activities of the non-profit Karuna-Shechen.

As several women shared their stories of lives transformed through the organization's assistance, we discovered how compassionate aid must intertwine with wisdom. In the view of Karuna-Shechen's founder, Buddhist monk Matthieu Ricard, who leads the narrative thread in the film, this entails supporting women's empowerment and advocating voluntary simplicity.

Buddhist Master Shechen Rabjam Rinpoche, the co-founder of Karuna-Shechen, also appeared in the film and began by stressing the importance of compassion:

***In the Buddhist tradition, we always talk about caring for others, helping others. We cannot do any prayer without thinking of other sentient beings. Then we can also put [that] in action by doing something – compassion in action.***

Rinpoche then highlighted, more generally, the importance of getting rid of our negative emotions – which are the principal cause of suffering – cultivating equanimity while dissolving our self-centered tendencies.

Following the screening of the film, **Matthieu Ricard**, who is also an international best-selling author and prominent speaker worldwide, joined in from France and touched on those themes as well, pointing out the urgency of our adopting a more compassionate and altruistic attitude, given the challenges facing the world today:

***Compassion is not just a good feeling. It's not just to be nice. It's not just a naïve, utopian ideal that doesn't work in the real world. It is the most pragmatic answer to the challenges of our time. Selfishness has no chance to solve the problem of our times. We will never work for a more compassionate economy if we just promote or maximize our personal preference and immediate interest, which is the definition of the homo economicus. We need to step out of this voice of calculus and reason to bring the voice of care in the field of economy in the short term. In the midterm, compassion, kindness, dictate us to remedy poverty in the midst of plenty, to address all kinds of suffering, whatever shape they take, wherever they are, whatever their causes might be, and to try our very best to do all we can to remedy the cause of suffering.***

Ricard also spoke about our basic need to flourish in life and how good quality human relationships play a part and increase our sense of happiness. In this regard, kindness, altruism, and the transformation of negative qualities are also fundamental:

***We can't have good human relationships with being nasty, grumpy, short-tempered, jealous, proud, arrogant, craving, angry. 'No!' We need to bring at the surface the best of our self, the best of human potential. Bring to the surface the Buddha Nature and let it fully bloom and express for the twofold accomplishment of others and our self.***

He then pointed out how “almost unknowingly, we have completely damaged our planet and the fate of future generations. So now, this is a new challenge. Therefore, consideration for future generations has become one of the key points of compassion and altruism.” Moreover, such a state of mind is equally beneficial on the individual level, right now:

**“If you think ‘me, me, me’ all day long. ‘What happens to me. What’s going to happen to me.’ Hope and fear: It’s such a limited world. Then you feel miserable, and you make everyone’s life miserable around you. If you’re full of benevolence and compassion, you don’t feel so vulnerable. This is the most gratifying state of mind, and people will perceive it in positive ways because you’re kind to them, so they’ll love that. So, it’s good from all aspects, to cultivate altruistic love and compassion. There’s no unwanted side effects.**

In conclusion, Ricard urged us to “be brave and claim that altruism, compassion, and cooperation are what we need most.” While he proposed that society should teach these values in secular ways, in schools, at the same time, as individuals, we also share responsibility for adopting this compassionate stance ourselves:

**“Let’s dare to implement it in our own life and slowly within our family, and within our village, and with it, society. And there may be a time where this is the new sort of paradigm shift. This is where the evolution of cultures will lead us, and we can be a much more compassionate world.**

Quoting Martin Luther King, who said “We came in different vessels; now we are all in the same boat,” Ricard invited us to work together towards a better world.



## More Talks to Come

To complete the first series in the C.A.F.E.229 talks program, **David Listen** will be the guest speaker in December and draw us back to the topic of mindfulness. As a Mental Health Counselor, L.P., and former Zen monk, he specializes in leading intensive meditation retreats and guiding people in mindful living. In his talk, “Mindfulness and Mental Health Services,” Listen will share his reflections on integrating the timeless Buddhist practice of mindfulness and the approach of modern mental health services.

Do tune in and watch the talks to gain insights and tools to help navigate the uncharted waters of this 21st Century global pandemic. The next series in the C.A.F.E.229 program, which begins in January 2021, is entitled “Creative Compassion in Action.” 🌿

# JING SI INSTANT RICE

## PROVIDES NUTRITION & COMFORT IN HAWAII

By Pheel Wang  
Translated by Diana Chang  
Edited by Ida Eva Zielinska



# 淨斯 香積飯



Due to the pandemic, seniors in Hawaii face shortages of food, especially rice, a favorite staple. These photos show seniors receiving Tzu Chi's Jing Si Instant Rice from Hawaii Meals on Wheels. *Photo/Courtesy of Meals on Wheels*

A senior resident of Oahu hobbles along with the help of a walker to answer the door. Outside, volunteers from a non-profit organization, wearing uniforms, had placed fresh fruits, vegetables, and frozen food at the doorstep, as they were doing for other seniors living alone on Hawaii's third-largest island. They stepped back as the residence's front door swung open, then paused before leaving, to make sure the elderly occupant got the supplies of food they had brought.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic took hold, these senior care recipients would chat with the volunteers who came to deliver food or meals, which helped alleviate their sense of loneliness. Now, to avoid cross-transmission of the virus, such interactions have subsided.

However, today, the volunteers stay a little longer and exclaim loudly to the somewhat hard-of-hearing seniors they visit, "This time, there's rice in the bag! No need to cook it in a rice cooker; you can eat it just after microwaving, okay?"

Hearing this news, the seniors would open the bag of groceries right there and then, eager to pick out the Jing Si Instant Rice package with Chinese characters printed on it. It was clear that they had been looking forward to this staple food for a long time.

## Where Rice Cookers Are a Household Must

After the outbreak of COVID-19, the beach fronts of Hawaii fell silent. No swimmers or surfboarders are crowding the Pacific Ocean's shores right now to enjoy its azure waters. Although the number of confirmed cases and deaths in Hawaii has not been high, since the elderly account for 18.4% of the state's population, no one here is taking the pandemic lightly.

"Kupuna," or "Kuku," in short, are Hawaiian words meaning "grandparent or elder." In Hawaii, people consider Kupunas to be society's most precious asset. To support the needs of these vulnerable and cherished residents, several non-profit organizations launched food programs providing meals to seniors, aiming to reduce their risk of exposure to the coronavirus. Hawaii Meals on Wheels (HMW) is one of them, although it has been helping seniors all along.

Michelle Cordero-Lee, the CEO of HMW, shared that the organization specializes in serving elderly Hawaiians and those with disabilities. The non-profit's statistics indicate that it provides 60% of its meals to seniors older than 86. And, as it turns out, many of them share a similar cultural heritage.

"Because most of us here are descendants of Asian immigrants from the Philippines, Japan, Chinese, etc., the culture of respecting the elderly in Asia is passed on from generation to generation. The other similarity is that we all love rice, our staple food, and the rice cooker is a must-have item for everyone here," Michelle explains. However, these Kupunas of Asian descent are facing a shortage of rice recently.

Additionally, reluctant to leave the safety of their homes, many of Hawaii's seniors who suffer from chronic diseases or cancer are becoming malnourished during the pandemic, further aggravating their conditions.

***"A Kuku who's a retired teacher didn't go out to buy groceries and only relied on a few packs of biscuits and a pack of macaroni and cheese for the whole week before asking for help."***

*Michelle Cordero-Lee  
CEO, Hawaii Meals on Wheels*



Thirteen non-profit organizations in Hawaii, including The Salvation Army, Hawaii Meals on Wheels, and local food banks, receive Tzu Chi's Jing Si Instant Rice from Taiwan. *Photo/Courtesy of The Salvation Army*

## Sharing Is Caring

Tzu Chi USA volunteers were expecting the shipment of rice from Taiwan to help meet their own distribution needs. Nevertheless, after becoming aware of the constraints facing other aid groups, once the supplies arrived, they decided to share by distributing them among 13 non-profit organizations in Oahu and Kauai to assist their efforts to provide this favorite staple.

After getting the instant rice from Tzu Chi USA, Hawaii Meals on Wheels CEO, Michelle Cordero-Lee, exclaimed, "The fresh fruits and vegetables we sent, coupled with the different flavors of Tzu Chi's vegan Jing Si Instant Rice [are] easy to cook and very nutritious for the seniors." She smiled, remembering one elderly lady's joyful response, "There's an 80-year-old Chinese grandma who doesn't speak English, and she usually acts reserved, but this time she saw the rice and reacted! Pointing at the bag of rice, she said, 'Good! Good!' to our volunteers."

The Salvation Army (TSA) also began distributing Jing Si Rice to unemployed residents and households with family members under quarantine. When National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) informed TSA about Tzu Chi USA's large supply of individually packed rice, their outreach specialist, Connor Hendrix, was extremely pleased to hear the news, "The small packages of rice comply with government regulations: This is what we really needed!"

Dismayed to learn of this case, HMW rushed to provide food assistance. "After we found out, we delivered the food immediately and saw Kuku's face was so pale," Michelle said. She then added that although they aim to protect Kupunas, the organization only had food that constitutes side dishes to provide and lacked food staples such as rice.

HMW had hoped to account for demand in advance, but food safety restrictions inhibited their ability to move forward on their plan. Michelle elaborates, stating that "rice is so important to us, at times, we will buy hundreds of pounds of rice and ask volunteers to help divide them into small bags. But the project was rejected before they were sent out."

The Salvation Army had also encountered this obstacle in its food distribution efforts. Connor Hendrix, Outreach Specialist with the Family Services offices of the organization, explained that "Because the government has food safety regulations, not because of COVID-19, we're not allowed to bag [food] into smaller Zip-lock bags, we must find a professional packaging company. For us, that's an extra expense, and it greatly reduces the amount of food we can obtain, plus it delays delivery."

Other non-profit organizations in Hawaii were also in the same situation regarding their capacity to provide rice; that is, until the end of June when the tide turned as a special shipment arrived. A total of 23,000 packs of Tzu Chi's Jing Si Instant Rice shipped from Taiwan had reached the port of Oahu, Hawaii.



Salvation Army volunteers place a bag of Jing Si Instant Rice into each bag of food supplies they will deliver to seniors. *Photo/Courtesy of The Salvation Army*

“ **The Jing Si Instant Rice you donated is a great gift!**

Connor Hendrix

Outreach Specialist, Family Services

The Salvation Army



Bags of individually packaged Jing Si Instant Rice. Photo/Hsinhua Chou

Actually, Tzu Chi USA's ongoing collaboration with VOAD led to this shipment of Jing Si Instant Rice to Hawaii. “We have worked with the National VOAD for many years. When a disaster strikes, we will all be mobilized for disaster relief together,” Stephanie Fan, a Tzu Chi USA volunteer in Hawaii, explains. She then recounted the incredible fate behind the journey of Jing Si Instant Rice across the ocean from Taiwan:

“ **In November last year, we had a Thanksgiving Holiday distribution. We donated Jing Si Instant Rice to families in need. Because it was delicious, it could be cooked without electricity or gas, so the feedback was really good. So, in February this year, VOAD wanted to purchase our Jing Si Instant Rice to prepare for disaster relief reserves in advance of the hurricane season. But after the outbreak of the pandemic, Tzu Chi Taiwan called to inquire about the needs in Hawaii. As soon as they heard that the rice was in demand, the immediate response from Master Cheng Yen was ‘Let’s donate it, if the people need it, we must send it to them urgently.**

And so, following Master Cheng Yen's compassionate advice, Tzu Chi USA volunteers in Hawaii planned the logistics of a shipment and arranged for warehousing the container once it arrived. Before the rice even began its ocean voyage, other organizations in Hawaii were facing challenges in providing emergency food aid.



During the hurricane season, and now the pandemic, many families suffer a shortage of food in Hawaii. Photo/Courtesy of Tzu Chi Hawaii

Marsha Tamura, voluntary and private sector liaison for the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency, is also very active in VOAD. Seeing that various volunteer organizations' food supply was running out, she became anxious, sharing that “The economic state of our island is stagnant. Our unemployment is one-third of the workforce in Hawaii, which is extremely dependent on tourism, and is now unemployed, with many families needing food.”

According to statistics from Hawaii Food Bank, even before the COVID-19 outbreak, the local distribution of 46,000 pounds of food a day had increased to 151,000 pounds. Nonetheless, more food was still in demand. “It may be hard to believe, but the cost of living in Hawaii is very high. So many retired seniors have to work part-time. Now, with the pandemic, they're unemployed and not qualified for unemployment benefits. They can only rely on meals distributed by non-profit organizations,” Marsha explained.



Fresh fruits and vegetables combined with Jing Si Instant Rice can provide seniors with sufficient nutrition. Photo/Courtesy of County of Kauai Agency on Elderly Affairs

In an effort to find solutions to the need for food assistance, Marsha had contacted the 13 members of VOAD in Hawaii. And then, Tzu Chi USA offered support through donations of Jing Si Instant Rice to those organizations, helping resolve some of their current supply shortages. "We're truly grateful for this rice that came from an organization we trust, and we can give it to our Kupunas directly," Marsha exclaimed when learning of the precious gift which will be of benefit to many seniors in Hawaii.



This elderly care recipient is happy to finally receive rice along with a box of fresh fruits and vegetables. Photo/Courtesy of County of Kauai Agency on Elderly Affairs

As for Michelle Cordero-Lee from HMW, who is extremely busy and often exhausted since the outbreak of the pandemic, these bags of Jing Si Instant Rice that gave Kupunas in Hawaii hope also inspire her. "We're just a small non-profit organization on the island of Hawaii. I didn't expect that Tzu Chi in Taiwan would also see our efforts and even help us fulfill our wish to care for the elders," she said.

***“When I see the elders happy, I'm happy! This inspired me and all the volunteers on the island to continue!***

*Michelle Cordero-Lee  
CEO, Hawaii Meals on Wheels*

Tzu Chi volunteers in Taiwan and Hawaii were glad to have reflected on seniors' needs in Hawaii, then provided this food aid, which is now helping to guard their health. Moreover, the history behind the creation of Tzu Chi's signature Jing Si Instant Rice itself is an example of a proactive response to disaster relief needs.

## A Product Propelled by Wise Compassion

The Buddhist Masters who reside alongside Dharma Master Cheng Yen at the Jing Si Abode in Hualien, Taiwan, were the ones who developed Jing Si Instant Rice. The need for such a product emerged in 2006, during Tzu Chi's disaster relief mission in Mainland China when Master Cheng Yen recognized that many older people were coming down from the mountains in need of food.

The bags of rice they received were heavy, and cooking it would demand things they might not have following a catastrophe. Upon reflection, Master Cheng Yen envisioned a rice product that was light to carry and could easily be ready to eat. She entrusted one of her disciples, Master DeHan, to create such a food commodity. It took more than two years to perfect the process, and today, the production of Jing Si Rice follows the method invented by this Buddhist nun.

Jing Si Rice was first offered in Haiti following the massive earthquake in 2010 and continues to provide vital nourishment to people around the world who are enduring urgent circumstances. It certainly brought welcome nourishment and joy to the Kapunas in Hawaii, as they brave the challenges posed by the pandemic. 🌿



# A NEW HORIZON IN HEALTH CARE

*By Audrey Cheng, Mandy Lo, Jennifer Chien  
Translated by Diana Chang  
Edited by Dilber Shatarsun*

Three and a half years ago, the Buddhist Tzu Chi Medical Foundation began reaching for a new target: to become a Federally Qualified Health Center, or FQHC, Look-Alike. In a broad sense, it would allow them to offer care to patients, regardless of their ability to pay, and more. The designation was finally granted from the US Health Resources & Services Administration, or HRSA, on October 26, 2020, marking a joyful new frontier. Just ask Tzu Chi Medical Foundation’s Chief Executive Officer and long-time Tzu Chi volunteer, Dr. William Keh:

*“Obtaining the certification is just the beginning. We must continue to work hard and further develop Tzu Chi’s medical mission in the United States.”*



The Buddhist Tzu Chi Medical Foundation celebrates their designation of becoming a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) Look-Alike. *Photo/Mandy Lo*

## ❤️ A Slow Metamorphosis

So, what exactly is a FQHC Look-Alike?  
They are outpatient clinics that...

- qualify for specific reimbursement under Medicare and Medicaid
- are able to purchase prescription medications at lower costs
- may receive automatic Health Professional Shortage Area designation
- have the ability to access National Health Service Corps providers
- can offer care on a sliding fee scale, based on patients' ability to pay
- do not receive Health Center Program funding

To benefit from all of these privileges, the Tzu Chi Medical Foundation team had to work through many challenges to meet strict guidelines. An important component of the application was the inclusion of feedback from patients of Tzu Chi Health Centers at its Alhambra, South El Monte, and Wilmington, California locations. An online questionnaire was developed and sent out. Though it was a time-consuming task to reach out to each patient for their feedback and ensure they filled out their forms on time, the team was both patient and steadfast to ensure the success of this vital step.

They also made bigger moves internally, like diversifying the governing board to include patients. The addition of new board members, including two Latino members, proactively helps address the needs and concerns of the specific populations they serve. The result has been a significant reorganization of the health care services offered at Tzu Chi's California Health Centers that is more inclusive. However, this new governing board must be in operation for over a year, so this process is one that began as far back as 2017.

Finally, applicants must demonstrate the use of electronic health records, or EHR, to improve data maintenance and transfer of patient information. In 2017, too, Tzu Chi Medical Foundation staff received thorough training on how to implement EHR and upkeep this new, computerized system. With all this, the team was ready to take the next step and apply for look-alike designation in March of 2020, pending a live review.

## ♥ The Final Countdown

The HRSA set its evaluation period from July 15 to July 17. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, all review activities would be conducted virtually. Nonetheless, it would be a rigorous and challenging process!



Some teammates join in via video conference. Photo/Mandy Lo

HRSA evaluators were going to ask tough questions; to prepare, Tzu Chi Medical Foundation staff and volunteers created a list of nearly 50 questions through which they could practice their answers. They focused on three main categories: clinical operations, financial operations, and operations of the board of directors and administration. They ran this simulation multiple times to ensure that they would be prepared for whatever curve balls the HRSA would throw their way.



Board members, staff, and volunteers gather for the virtual evaluation. Photo/Mandy Lo

There were a total of six interviewers, who also reviewed other factors including Tzu Chi Medical Foundation's operation manuals and records. Each staff member, too, was required to have active CPR certification from the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program, and show proof of on-the-job training from medical professionals. Evaluators then offered their comments and suggestions for improvement, and, at long last, revealed their high score. However, notice would only be official within the next 45 days.

With baited breath, Tzu Chi Medical Foundation staff and volunteers waited until October 27 for the good news: they had been granted the FQHC Look-Alike designation, effective November 1, 2020! Dr. Keh was overjoyed. He said the moment was even happier than when he was admitted to the Medical Department of National Taiwan University, and reflected on this new potential:

***“This accomplishment is not just for me individually. It's for all people. [And], it wasn't something that was achieved by a single person, it was a culmination of the whole team's strengths.*”**



The Tzu Chi Medical Foundation team celebrates the unofficial stamp of approval on July 17.  
Photo/Mandy Lo

## ❤️ Teamwork Makes Dreams Work

There are many individuals to thank for this breakthrough. Clinical operations were led by Dr. Stephen Denq and financials by John Pazirandeh, Chief Financial Officer at Centro Medico Community Clinic, Inc. Mr. Pazirandeh's long-term experience in health care and understanding of the FQHC operation process was a huge asset. Board of directors' and administrative operations were coordinated by Dr. William Keh, Kevin Wong, and the main contact for this project, Yuting Guan. Not only did board members proactively supervise application activities since 2017, they also made a favorable impression with HRSA evaluators.

At the Alhambra, South El Monte, and Wilmington Health Centers, Tzu Chi Medical Foundation staff worked together to fulfill the requirements of the application while performing their regular duties. Among them are Albert Huang, who was charged with administrative operations; EHR Administrator (E-Clinical Works) Pauline Alberty; Nyunt Tin Khoo and Adriana Yaacoub, who led quality control; General Manager Bessie Nhan, who was also responsible for insurance payment processing; newly appointed Director of Den-

tristry, Dr. Yawen Peng; and Mary Keh, who handles recruiting and acts as the primary liaison for all Tzu Chi Medical Foundation's vibrant volunteers.

“**Our responsibility in life is to do the greatest good for all of humanity.**

*Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen*

Though the COVID-19 pandemic has posed many challenges to Tzu Chi Medical Foundation's operations, it has not gotten in the way of their goal of expanding patient-centered care. With the FQHS Look-Alike designation, it has taken one step closer to relieving the suffering of those who need compassion most. 🌿



Ready for a new era. Photo/Mandy Lo



*Minjhing Hsieh works with a community partner at the Local Assistance Center in Oroville, CA.  
Photo/C.M. Yung*

# SNAPSHOTS: HURR🌀CANE AND WILDF🔥RE RELIEF IN THE WAKE OF COVID-19

*By Dilber Shaturgun*

**W**hen disaster strikes, complete strangers have a unique way of showing each other humanity, care, and togetherness. But with a contagious disease out and about, this isn't just complicated; it's dangerous for the person or people trying to help. Seeing how Tzu Chi volunteers bravely jumped in anyway, I spoke with two key organizers of disaster relief operations in Houston, TX and San Jose, CA to learn how the pandemic has impacted their disaster relief missions, and how the experience has impacted them.

**Penny Liu**, Tzu Chi Southern Region Volunteer – currently organizing emergency relief after 2020 Hurricanes Laura and Delta, and long-term recovery post-2017’s Hurricane Harvey.

## Harvey’s Aftermath Still Lingers in Texas

*“We had gotten grants for C.O.R.E. [Tzu Chi’s long-term recovery program, Community Outreach Recovery Education] from the Red Cross. Because of the pandemic, priorities have shifted and those have run out... A lot of residents, especially in Wharton, some of them have still not moved back home. Maybe they can live in them, but the floors are still bad; some of the walls are unfinished. Everyone is financially stressed.”*

## Laura & the Rise of COVID-19 in Louisiana and Texas

*“Even though Laura was also a Category 4 hurricane, it didn’t really get a lot of media coverage because of the pandemic. Donations have been affected, too, so there aren’t as many resources and not as many volunteers. Transportation is also an issue because if we use a 15 passenger van, we can only carry six or seven people at a time now, so we need a lot more vehicles.”*



Penny Liu is ready to welcome care recipients to a mask distribution in July. Photo/Jong Wu

*“The distribution method is definitely different. We have been doing drive-thru distributions, so we cannot have a major presentation of Tzu Chi beforehand. Instead, we really rely on individual volunteers to explain everything to recipients so it means we need more experienced volunteers who know how to explain who we are, present the debit cards, and offer care in the Tzu Chi way.”*

## Cumulative Damage

*“When we went to see damage from Hurricane Laura in Deweyville, TX, mostly we saw roofs coming down and so forth. Also because of the strong winds, some of the trailer homes – frame houses on concrete blocks – they just got pushed off by the wind. But the houses themselves were mostly okay, just, we saw blue tarps everywhere.”*

*“Then, for Hurricane Delta, we saw it had ripped off the tarps and gave way to water damage from heavy rains. We saw a lot of sofas, beds, appliances thrown out on curbs. We also went to Cameron, LA, and met a woman whose neighbor’s home was lifted up and thrown 50 feet [from where it used to be]. It really made a big impression... It’s a testament to the power of nature.”*

## Volunteering in a Pandemic

*“Among other things, I am in charge of looking for volunteers. There are certain people willing to participate, and there are those who are hesitant, so I typically don’t contact them. Many are in their 70s, so I don’t even consider them! We also don’t ask those with young kids. Instead, I reach out to volunteers from our food distributions because they are more willing to come out.”*

*“I’m a pretty positive, optimistic person, so was I hesitant? Not really! I kind of feel like I can control the distance I maintain with another person well, so as long as I have a mask on and I take all the precautions, it’s a good opportunity to help other people. There are so many people needing help.”*

## Beyond the Comfort Zone

*“Nature has a way of restoring things... and I don't think human beings can, even though they try to, overpower it. I think the same thing of the pandemic. Before, you could go anywhere, or see your mom or your dad every day or once a week. Now you cannot. It's nature's way of bringing us back to appreciate some of the basic things we take for granted.”*

*“Before I started doing pandemic and hurricane relief, I was usually helping 'behind-the-scenes.' I'd hide behind the camera or camcorder, I didn't like to go up and talk to people. But, the current situation won't allow me to do that since we don't have any other volunteers. I learned I am able to go to the frontlines and talk to people. It's kind of expanded my potential.”*

*“I'm really shy, very introverted. It can be awkward because a lot of times I don't know what to say. I think I'm getting better. But, when we talk to disaster survivors, a lot of times we don't have to say anything at all. We just have to be there and listen. They appreciate the silence sometimes, and they just want to know you are there for them. I think that's the most important thing I learned.”*



A community partner presents a bouquet of flowers to Penny as a token of appreciation.  
Photo/Julienne Chi

**Minjhing Hsieh**, Tzu Chi Northwest Region Executive Director – currently leading wildfire relief operations across Northern California.



Minjhing Hsieh hands a CZU Lightning Complex Fire survivor a blanket and PPE. Photo/Judy Liao

## When Wildfires Touch Home Turf

*“At the beginning, we were wondering if we could do anything because of COVID-19. A lot of our volunteers are retired and are considered part of the 'vulnerable' group. Should we do it? How much can we accomplish? Everything is so different this time.”*

*“Then, three major fires surrounded the Bay Area where our headquarters are located, so for the first time, we had to think about the wildfires' effect on us. Most likely, we would have to be evacuated. We just didn't have the space to be a relief agency. It's a mental state we haven't been through before.”*

*“After two weeks, the situation stabilized for the fires around us. We thought, 'okay, we are safe.' We also saw a lot of communities, other agencies are showing resilience. All this put together encouraged us to change our mindset and see what we could do.”*

*“Because of the pandemic, the whole sheltering solution is so different from before. Most people reported to evacuated centers but were then transported to motels. The operational model is very different this time. It made us think: now that people are spread out, how can we help them? It gave us the opportunity to be more creative, more innovative.”*

## Creating a New Workflow

*“Our connection with wildfire survivors this year is almost 100% done through the internet. I worked with Tzu Chi USA’s Media Production Center to have people submit applications for relief online. We see them coming in quickly, sometimes a few, a dozen, even a hundred.”*

*“Then we had a lot of volunteers to call survivors over the phone. We initially thought it wouldn’t be effective, but it surprised us. Compared to when we met face-to-face [in the past], survivors have been more willing to share their experience and trauma. We’ve had really in-depth conversations.”*

*“Next, we set up an appointment and they come to our Local Assistance Centers to retrieve their debit card. They almost don’t have to wait. Because of the early phone conversation, the distribution experience is much more comfortable, particularly for survivors. It gave us a completely different opportunity to interact at a different level.”*



Minjhing (middle) greets a care recipient at a distribution along California’s Highway 5.  
Photo/Judy Liao

## Making Discoveries

*“I see the problem is much more psychological and mental than material. When people face shocking situations, they can easily lose themselves. A few years back, I had thought the money we gave was helpful and important. It still is, but I see it’s the emotional piece, where we give them some strength to help them through the situation, that has impact.”*

*“In previous disasters, we’ve helped 1,000 people a day. I look back and realize that’s the best way to do that. Survivors have to stand in a long line, squeeze through a process. Now, unless it’s absolutely necessary, we want to avoid it. The more personal touch we can give, that’s much more important than the amount of money we give.”*

## On Volunteering in One’s Golden Years

*“We do have quite a few brave, senior volunteers who just want to go out and do something. I cannot say ‘no, you are too old!’ so we just have to be very careful, sensitive, and try to put them in roles of less exposure to risk. We constantly remind volunteers about precautions and protections, but it’s not easy.”*

*“As for me, I’m 66 this year. My family is concerned, but they understand and don’t stop me from going out and doing things. I have a grandson now, and my son and daughter-in-law work from home. I choose not to visit them because I have a higher risk of exposure, but we talk almost every day or every other day through video, so we stay connected.”*

## Every Cloud Has a Silver Lining

*“We’re solving problems we’ve never encountered before, gaining social service knowledge that I didn’t have before. On the surface, I’m giving, but really I am receiving and widening my horizons.”*

*“One day, I hope I can tell my grandson stories from these years. I’m not a good storyteller, but the most important lesson I want to share is to be strong and positive and to understand that the world is not perfect. There will always be difficulties, but a positive attitude in the face of great challenges makes all the difference.” *



# WISDOM GAINED ON THE FRONTLINES OF COVID-19

By Ida Eva Zielinska

**O**n March 1, 2020, Governor Andrew Cuomo announced the first case of COVID-19 in New York at a press conference. A mere three weeks later, the number of confirmed coronavirus cases in the New York City (NYC) area accounted for roughly five percent of cases worldwide. By March 27, NYC was the global epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic, reaching the apex by mid-April, when between 700 and 800 people were dying every day for nearly a week.

Hospitals across the city scrambled to cope with the massive influx of COVID-19 cases, flooding into their emergency rooms and overflowing their intensive care units, while concurrently facing severe shortages of personal protective equipment (PPE) for medical staff. BronxCare Hospital Center in the Bronx was among the facilities inundated with patients. Even with years of experience, Dr. Sridhar S. Chilmuri, Physician-in-Chief and Chairman of the Department of Medicine, found the situation alarming:

***We were expecting the worst and we are seeing the worst. I've been a physician for more than 30 years. This has been the roughest thing to witness and be part of.***

*Dr. Sridhar S. Chilmuri*

*Physician-in-Chief, Chairman*

*Department of Medicine, BronxCare Hospital Center*



*Dr. Sridhar S. Chilmuri (middle). Photo/Jupiter Chiou*

The location of the BronxCare Health System in the Bronx contributed to the number of patients. This culturally diverse NYC borough's poverty rate is around 29%, and poverty can adversely impact immunity and overall health. Moreover, many Bronx residents have diabetes, HIV, or hepatitis, making them particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 infection and complications, one doctor on staff explained:

***The Bronx community is an extremely vulnerable community. They're extremely vulnerable because there is a high incidence of immunocompromised patients.***

*Dr. David Wong, DPM*

*Podiatric Surgeon*

*Department of Orthopaedics, BronxCare Hospital Center*



*Photo/Garson Ormiston*

Dr. David Wong, a Podiatric Surgeon in the Department of Orthopaedics of BronxCare Hospital Center, was among the medical staff on the frontlines: "I was treating all the COVID patients with foot-related problems. I'd get called for foot infections into the emergency room, so I would see it all, like in the whole pandemic."

Those memories are still vivid in David's mind. "When it first escalated, it was so scary. I mean, it was incomparable to anything I've ever seen. I remember the emergency room being packed every day, like enough to capacity, and there would be lines coming into the hospital. I'd never seen that before," he recalls.

And then, there were the deaths to contend with, he says, "I would see refrigerator trucks outside the hospital for all those patients that succumbed to COVID-19. And I would see these trucks for a few months, you know, dead bodies would be transported every morning. So, it was really hard to deal with, seeing that."

Everyone at the hospital was confronted with situations never imagined before, as James Newman, a resident, described: "As family medicine residents, we're more prone to be in the outpatient setting, but here, we're intubating patients. Up until COVID-19, I didn't ever have a patient die on me, and since COVID-19, I've had dozens, and I'm just one resident. Having to answer the phone, speak to the family, give them updates, and they can't be here to see their family member, and sometimes, they're never going to see their family member again. And that's very, very difficult to deal with."



David has tremendous respect for his fellow medical workers' courage on the frontlines, which shone brightly at the time. "All these doctors and nurses, they were in there, they weren't scared. Everybody was helping each other. They were just in there, even if they didn't have PPE, they would help these patients," he remembers.

What was the impact of this daily brush with death and uncertainty about what tomorrow may bring? For David, it accentuated the importance of family in that "being with my family really helped me get through it," he says. However, contact wasn't without stress: "I wasn't sure if I should go home because I was seeing these patients daily, and I have a wife and daughter at home. So, I wasn't sure if I had to get a hotel. It was scary because we didn't know how it was transmitted. I would be very cautious, and, you know, try not to make too much contact with them."

Despite the accompanying anxiety, this was the "blessing in disguise" of the pandemic he feels: "Once the pandemic hit, my clinics were closed, the schools were closed, and I actually got to spend more time with my daughter and my family. It brought me closer to my family. I was always close to my family, but now I'm always trying to do more stuff with them. It just showed what I was missing this whole time."

Another unexpected silver lining to the pandemic was the sense of solidarity it brought out and strengthened among the hospital staff. "We describe this as a family, we're all a big family, and we always talk that way, but now, it really, really feels that way," Dr. Doug Reich, Chairman of Family Medicine, explained. Consequently, there was a heightened sensitivity to the state of mind of

colleagues, "we start to look for signs. We notice if someone is not peppy like themselves, and we emotionally support them," Kamla Baldeo, a social worker at the hospital, added.

David noticed another aspect of this shift in attitude at the hospital, which blurred divisions between ranks. He elaborated, saying, "There is like a hierarchy, you know, the janitors, people look down on, they would never say 'hi' to them. But after, during the height of the pandemic, you need those guys. We needed them, and everybody came together in the hospital. Everyone was pretty much treated equally. Everybody was saying 'hi' to each other. I think everyone was trying to help each other out."

For David, seeing the staff's efforts to support each other inspired him to reach out to Tzu Chi about obtaining PPE to fill the hospital's grave short supply: "I felt I needed to make a difference and help the hospital. Because as a foot doctor, I felt I couldn't do that much against COVID anyway." At the same time, other NYC hospitals were receiving donated supplies of PPE, "that's another reason why I pushed for this," he added.

The shortages of PPE at BronxCare Hospital Center had manifested early, further amplified by widespread panic among patients and staff, alike. "We had a hard time keeping them on the shelf, the PPE. Like the patients, they'd come and take as many masks as they could. Gloves. Even employees, they'd take boxes home. There was even a week where I couldn't get a mask for my surgeries. It was so bad that the hospital had to lock up all the PPE and dispense them accordingly," David recalled.





Photo/Garson Ormiston

The stress was palpable, yet as it turned out, it would soon be relieved, since Tzu Chi's response to the plea for help was swift, and a donation, the first of three arrived within a few days, a fond memor until now, he says:

***“I was with the Physician-in-Chief, Dr. Chilmuri – he’s the Head of Medicine. I told him Tzu Chi was delivering some donations to the hospital, so he came with me. When we saw the donation, we were just astounded about the amount of donations that came in. We would see all these donations being delivered for all the major hospitals, these big hospitals in New York City. But we were just a little hospital, so seeing all these boxes come in, it definitely relieved a lot of stress.*”**



Photo/Garson Ormiston

The desire to help others isn't new for David Wong. In fact, this urge fueled his choosing medicine as a career: "I always wanted to be in the field of medicine, since I was very little. I'm actually the first doctor in my family. I've always liked helping people, no matter what." That innate aspiration was then fortified by Dharma Master Cheng Yen's teachings, he says:

***“She actually made a really tremendous impact on my life early on in my career. There was a time when I was back in New York, all alone by myself, because my family was in Las Vegas, and I was just going through depression with all these tests, being in residency, and I just didn't know what the meaning of life was. So, I told this to my mom, and she actually sent me a couple of books of Master Cheng Yen's teachings, and it basically taught me not to stress over the little things in life and just to focus on spreading happiness. Yeah, it really did change my life.*”**

When asked to distill the pearls of wisdom gained as a result of the pandemic, David leaves us with this parting message:

***“I think people will look back to the year 2020 and say that this is the year that made humanity realize that true happiness is not measured by one's possessions. It's measured through compassion, love for one another. It basically taught me [that] the meaning of life is measured through how you treat others and how much compassion you have for others. It's just, basically, just spreading happiness to others.*”**

As the new year, 2021 approaches and the pandemic is still not under control worldwide, Dr. Wong's insights are worth taking to heart, as we all search for meaning while facing unprecedented challenges in our lives. 🌱

# Tenderness Oden



## INGREDIENTS

- white radish
- corn
- vegetarian pork balls
- vegetarian chikuwa
- fried bean curd
- konjac

## SEASONING

- 1,000g water
- 15g rice vinegar
- 60g seaweed soy sauce
- sweet chili sauce
- 60g ketchup
- 300cc water
- sweet rice flour water
- 20g sugar

## DIRECTIONS

1. Cut corn and white radish into 1-inch chunks.
2. Boil water, mix in sweet chili sauce and ketchup, then thicken the sauce with sweet rice flour and water for the dipping sauce.
3. Add water, rice vinegar, and seaweed into one pot. Boil over low heat.
4. Cook white radish and corn over low heat for 15 minutes, then add in other ingredients. Cook for 3 minutes.



# Regimen Steamed Pumpkin Buns



## INGREDIENTS

- 700g all-purpose flour
- 350g wheat flour
- 350g pumpkin
- ½ tsp salt
- water

## SEASONING

- 20g yeast baking powder

## DIRECTIONS

1. Cut the pumpkin into large pieces and use a rice cooker to steam for 7 minutes, adding ½ cup of water to the outer pot.
2. Mix yeast baking powder with warm water (please refer to the instructions on the package). Add all-purpose flour, wheat flour, pumpkin, and mixed yeast baking powder. Add water slowly, rub all ingredients into nonsticky dough.
3. Place a wet cloth on the dough, and let ferment for 60-90 minutes.
4. Cut the dough into long pieces, then into smaller pieces.
5. Place the small pieces of dough into a pot to steam, let them ferment for 15 minutes.
6. Boil water, and steam over medium heat for 15 minutes.

# COMPLETE LOVE: BRINGING HARMONY TO OURSELVES AND PEACE TO THE WORLD

*“Only love can bring peace to the world, and only by becoming vegetarian can we truly show our love.”*

*Master Cheng Yen’s Teachings*

*Translated and Compiled by the Dharma as Water Team*

**R**ight now, what the world needs is harmony. When there is no harmony among people, the world cannot be at peace.

I often say that since peace and safety must come from people’s hearts, if people’s hearts are not harmonious, how can we bring the four elements into harmony? If people are not in harmony, how can the climate of the world, the macrocosm, be in balance? This is why I constantly say that we must all have a repentant mindset. We must be vigilant of what disasters tell us. No matter how far away from disasters we are, we must keep encouraging everyone to pray with sincerity and gather the power of love together. Yet without repentance, prayers are useless; only when we pray while repenting at the same time can we truly put an end to disasters.

Apart from the tangible disasters due to floods, fires, and storms, there is this invisible and intangible pandemic. People have not been able to stop the pandemic, so we keep asking everyone to sincerely pray. What can we do to express our sincerity? We can only practice love. We must express our love in action—only then can it become “complete love.” There is a saying, “A household that practices good deeds will certainly have more than enough blessings.” The more kind people there are in each family and the more family members there are who are willing to benefit others, the more peaceful and happy the family will be. And the more families there are in the society that does good deeds, the more peaceful and happy the society will become. Thus, we need good people in order to accumulate blessings and happiness.

Our human minds are afflicted by the Three Poisons of greed, anger, and ignorance, and people’s thoughts of greed, anger, and ignorance, when

expressed through their actions, give rise to disasters. I hope that everyone will listen to my words and eliminate the Three Poisons of the mind. If the Three Poisons of the mind are not removed, the three major and three minor calamities—fires, floods, storms, epidemics, famine, and war—will continue to occur uncontrollably in the world.

In summary, all-natural disasters are the result of human beings’ karma. This is why we must cultivate goodness. We will only be at peace when we create blessings for the world. But once we truly have the aspiration to benefit others, how do we do it? The strength of one individual is very limited, so we must inspire more people so that everyone can work together in unity towards helping others with the power of love. This “complete love” extends not only to our fellow human beings but to all beings and all things. For this reason, we must see all beings as one and promote vegetarianism. In order to coexist with all living beings, we need an impartial mindset, nurtured through the Four Infinite Minds of great loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity. Let us continue to encourage everyone to form aspirations to practice the Bodhisattva Path together; this is the only way to restore balance to the climate. Not only can we transform the climate of the planet; through unity, harmony, mutual love, and concerted effort, the atmosphere among people can also be changed to become harmonious and happy. The power of love is manifested through the thoughts and actions of every person. We must encourage each other to do this, not only for this life but also for all of our subsequent lifetimes. Let us all encourage each other in this. 🌿

(Compiled from Master Cheng Yen’s teachings during a videoconference with Tzu Chi USA volunteers on September 15, 2020)



# Dharma Q & A

*Dharma Master Cheng Yen responds to questions from visitors, volunteers, staff, and disciples.*

## Remaining Calm

**Q:** *"How can I cultivate Samadhi, the power to stay calm and focused?"*

**A:** *"Make mental concentration a habit. Once your mind does not get distracted, you will be in a state of Samadhi."*

## Generosity Helps Others and Ourselves

**Q:** *"It's very hard to make money! It feels foolish to spend the money I earned on other people."*

**A:** *"We all depend on each other, so since we take from the world, we should give back to the world. We should sow the seeds of goodness today while we have the ability; by relinquishing one thing we get ten thousand in return."*

## One Thousand Eyes, One Thousand Hands

**Q:** *"We often use the phrase 'one thousand hands and one thousand eyes' to describe the capabilities of Guanyin Bodhisattva. What is the significance of this?"*

**A:** *"One thousand hands and one thousand eyes' symbolize perfection. With one thousand eyes, we can see the suffering of all living beings, and with one thousand hands, we can relieve their suffering."*



# A PURE LAND on Earth

**W**e all have a seed of love in our hearts. However, without the coming together of causes and conditions, this seed of love cannot grow and bear fruit. In nature, for a seed to grow, it requires the land, breeze, water, and sunlight. Much like this seed, for the seeds of love in our hearts to grow, we need to nurture and nourish them with sincere faith, love, joy, Dharma, and diligence.

We must be like farmers cultivating the plot of land in our hearts, so that these bodhi trees can grow tall. Then, we must spread the seeds throughout the world. When our hearts are united in love, we can create a stream of purity and form a pure land on earth. 🌍



*Lyrics: Wang Si Xi (lyrics based on Master Cheng Yen's teachings)*

*Music: Lee Shou-Chuan and Li Ziheng*

*Singer: Prajna Murdaya*

*Translation: Dharma as Water Team, Tzu Chi USA*

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Sincere faith is our great land  
Love and joy our gentle breeze  
Dharma is our wholesome rain  
Diligence our warming sun

Helping seeds of kindness grow  
We uproot our ignorance  
Walking firmly on the path  
We spread love throughout the world

Wisdom and compassion flow  
Nourishing our Bodhi trees  
All united with one heart  
Let us form a pure land on Earth



▶ Watch Video



TZU CHI USA

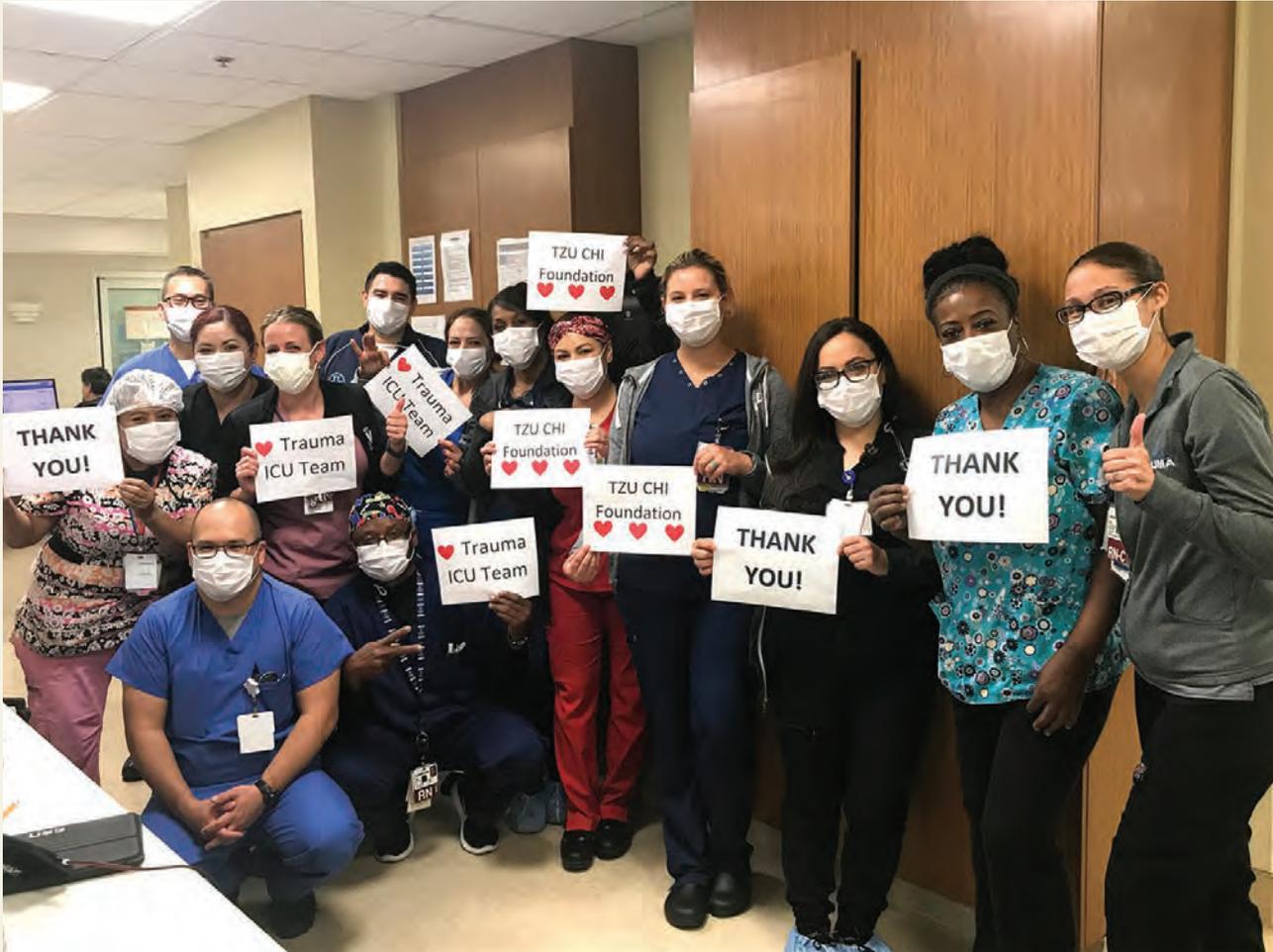
RELIEF EFFORTS:

TOP  
10 PHOTOS  
OF  
2020

*By Anik Ghose, Dilber Shatarsun, Ida Eva Zielinska*

**T**he year 2020 has been a dramatic one, given the global outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and its widespread impact. Through the lockdowns and disruptions to daily life as we knew it before this international health crisis, Tzu Chi volunteers have been active nationwide, extending aid in various ways. The following are our Top Ten photos of 2020, which shed light on some of Tzu Chi USA's current missions and their beneficial results.

## Providing Personal Protective Equipment Nationwide



*Although their smiles are covered, the ICU team's eyes at Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center in California shine with joyful gratitude after receiving a donation of vital personal protective equipment (PPE) from Tzu Chi USA in April. Thanks to Tzu Chi volunteers' ongoing efforts, such donations of PPE continue to bring relief to frontline healthcare workers and first-responders nationwide. Photo/Courtesy of Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center Staff*

## Long-Term Pandemic Relief Through Food Distributions



*Tzu Chi New York collaborates with chapters of Lions Club International to provide food supplies within the Nepalese community in the borough of Queens. Such distributions are part of Tzu Chi USA's long-term pandemic relief efforts, which seek to leave no community behind. Photo/Hector Muniente*

## A Steadfast Response to Wildfires Despite the Pandemic



*Even as the pandemic rages on, Tzu Chi USA's wildfire relief continues. A volunteer shares a touching moment with a care recipient during a cash card distribution in Butte County, California, at the Oroville Local Assistance Center. The plexiglass wall didn't impede a heart-to-heart connection. Photo/Kitty Lu*

## Hurricane Survivors Receive the Care They Need



*A mother reacts with joyful shock when learning the dollar amount of the cash card from Tzu Chi USA as disaster relief following Hurricane Laura, which made landfall in Louisiana at the end of August. Pandemic or not, disasters struck in 2020, and Tzu Chi USA was there to help those impacted. Photo/Roger Lin*

## Support for Testing to Control the Spread of COVID-19



*Professional medical volunteers from Tzu Chi International Medical Association provide their services during a second COVID-19 antibody testing event held at Tzu Chi USA's National Headquarters in San Dimas, CA. Such initiatives are vital and help assess the virus's community spread. Photo/Mandy Lo*

## A Milestone for the Buddhist Tzu Chi Medical Foundation



*The year 2020 brings cause to rejoice as the Buddhist Tzu Chi Medical Foundation receives designation as a Federally Qualified Health Center Look-Alike, which helps Tzu Chi Health Centers deliver care to those that are underserved in our local communities and offer care on a sliding fee scale based on ability to pay.*

*Photo/Mandy Lo*

## Volunteer Training to Support Our Medical Outreach



*An optometry training program takes place in New York for Spanish-speaking volunteers who will support Tzu Chi USA's Vision Mobile Clinic's free services for those in need in Hispanic communities. Brigada de Esperanza NY, a non-profit Tzu Chi collaborates with to provide food aid, helped recruit the volunteers. Photo/Nancy Wei*

## A Concerted Effort to Promote Vegetarianism



*Tzu Chi USA launches the “Very Veggie Movement” in 2020 to promote vegetarianism, and volunteers across the nation do their part. In Chicago, they organize online vegetarian cooking classes that attract participants of all ages eager to share and learn new recipes together.*

*Photo/Yue Ma*

## Commemorating a Decade of Care in Haiti



*Guests celebrate Tzu Chi's decade-long relief work in Haiti at the "Keeping Hope Alive: 10 Years of Care in Haiti" exhibition that opened at the Tzu Chi Center for Compassionate Relief in Manhattan, New York on January 12, the decade anniversary of the 2010 Haiti Earthquake. Photo/Eric Li*

## Protecting Hard-Hit Native American Communities



*COVID-19 severely impacts the Navajo Nation and residents of other Native American Reservations. While many communities are remote and hard to reach, Tzu Chi Phoenix volunteers set out to deliver ample supplies of personal protective equipment to healthcare facilities and households, even in isolated regions.*

*Photo/Jonathan Van Lamsweerde 🌿*

# BUDDHIST TZU CHI FOUNDATION GLOBAL RELIEF EFFORTS

By Jennifer Chien, Diana Chang, Ida Eva Zielinska

The spread of the pandemic around the world has not stopped. The global climate is changing at an unprecedented rate, and it's having dramatic effects on our environment. Floods, wildfires, droughts, and other natural disasters are occurring across the planet. Tzu Chi volunteers worldwide were mobilized to bring essential supplies to families in need and comfort them with love and care.

**“Unite for good causes, work together harmoniously, love and support each other, and cooperate to move forward.”**

*Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen*

## The Americas



### Chile

The new coronavirus has severely impacted Chile. Tzu Chi volunteers visit the Samaritano Center for the elderly in the Santiago Metropolitan Region on October 10 to donate food and supplies. In order to care for vulnerable populations, volunteers from Tzu Chi's Santiago office visited senior homes in the community multiple times. Photo/Courtesy of Tzu Chi Chile

### Guatemala

Guatemala is facing a shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE). Tzu Chi Guatemala volunteers obtained PPE from Tzu Chi Global HQ in Taiwan and are providing support to Caritas Arquidiocesana, a charitable, non-political, and non-profit foundation of the Catholic Church.

On July 30, volunteers donate PPE supplies to the Hospital Temporal del Parque de la Industria to support frontline medical workers. Henry Davis Reyes Ortiz, Chief Financial Officer of Caritas Arquidiocesana (first right), accepts the PPE from Tzu Chi volunteers. Photo/Lichu Yeh Wu



### Bolivia

Droughts related to climate change and slash-and-burn agriculture are exacerbating water scarcity and disasters in Bolivia. Recent forest fires in Santa Cruz de la Sierra burned some 3,000 square miles of land and blocked roads, leaving nearly 200 residents without food. The City of Santa Cruz de la Sierra requested support from Tzu Chi Bolivia.

On October 14, Tzu Chi volunteers and City staff deliver supplies to the disaster area to support residents impacted by the fires. Local officials also assist during the food distribution. While they wait, care recipients read a letter of condolences from Master Cheng Yen. Photo/Chenhsiang Hsieh

## Brazil

Brazil has been hard-hit by COVID-19. Many people face difficulties due to unemployment, and low-income families in remote communities are waiting for help. On October 25, volunteers from Tzu Chi Sao Paulo, Brazil, hold a relief distribution for the working class in the suburban city of Francisco Morato, providing much-needed supplies that will help families overcome recent shortages. Photo/Shouyung Chen



## Mexico

Mexico's capital, Mexico City, and its Xochimilco district were affected by heavy rains in early August. Deadly landslides and floods struck in multiple communities in the surrounding region, leading Tzu Chi Mexico volunteers to launch disaster assessments immediately, in advance of relief efforts.

On August 14, Tzu Chi volunteer Ken Nomura (first left), and local volunteers visit San Mateo communities that incurred severe flooding following a river breach. They find that most of the affected families are still living in houses full of debris. Photo/Courtesy of Tzu Chi Mexico

## Canada

Tzu Chi Canada volunteers and the Richmond Food Bank in British Columbia regularly distribute food and supplies to low-income households during the pandemic. On October 2, volunteers donate 2,000 masks to the food bank so that its employees and volunteers can be protected. Hajira Rahim-Hussain (right), Richmond Food Bank's Executive Director, accepts the donation. Photo/Yajung Huang



## Canada

To cope with COVID-19 pandemic prevention measures, in September, Tzu Chi established a new branch in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. On October 12, a team of certified volunteers held a virtual training event for Tzu Chi volunteers-in-training.

Yanghe Cheng, Executive Director of Tzu Chi Canada's Toronto Branch, tunes in online, along with volunteers-in-training joining in from their homes in Toronto, Ottawa, and Montreal. Mentors of each volunteer-in-training also participated. Photo/Courtesy of Yanghe Cheng

## Haiti

Father Zucchi Olibrice, head of a Catholic school in Haiti, is also a Tzu Chi volunteer and has helped expand the Foundation's aid for Haiti's children, which includes addressing hunger and malnutrition.

As part of its efforts, Tzu Chi distributes cookies made from nutritious Multi-Grain Instant Mix, created and produced with love by the nuns who reside alongside Master Cheng Yen in Taiwan. Students in schools throughout Haiti enjoy eating them. Photo/Keziah Jean



## Europe, Asia, and Africa

### South Africa

Residents of Ladysmith, a village in South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal province, have been severely impacted by the pandemic, which has made the finances in already impoverished households even worse. Tzu Chi volunteers travel to a remote community close to 40 miles from Ladysmith to distribute food to those in need during this difficult time. Women from the village bring their children as they collect rice and other food supplies. Photo/Chiu Yue Huang



### Zimbabwe

Volunteers from Tzu Chi Zimbabwe have long cared for families in the Eastview area of Harare. There, they met Tapiwa Kapeta, 12, who had to take care of three siblings because their father was in prison, and their mother had left home. After their house collapsed due to prolonged rain, the children stayed at a neighbor's house temporarily. When she visited them, they asked Tzu Chi volunteer Easter Muzenda, "Can you be our mother?" After discussing with her husband Isaac, the couple decided to adopt them. Isaac happily interacts with the kids at home in September. Photo/Hlengisile Jiyane

### New Zealand

The New Zealand government has strictly implemented a lockdown policy due to the continuous spread of COVID-19. The closures have affected many low-income families and community schools. On October 17, Tzu Chi New Zealand volunteers distribute food for the third time in Auckland and share Tzu Chi's bamboo bank story with care recipients. Tzu Chi New Zealand held four grocery giveaway events before October's end to help students and families in need. Photo/Meijui Wu



### Australia

In Australia, the state of New South Wales has been suffering from severe drought for many years. Working in cooperation with Georgie's Pantry, run by St. George Anglican Parish in Parkes, Tzu Chi Australia has been caring for the town's residents since 2019. Their collaboration on distribution events is helping farmers experiencing economic hardships due to the pandemic.

On October 23, Tzu Chi Sydney volunteers revisit the parish's food bank to understand the community's needs. Derrick, a church volunteer, shared that Tzu Chi's donations help farmers get the items they need, just as if they were shopping in a supermarket. Photo/Yenshu Chien



## Malaysia

The Kampung Poh Chee Leng village in Johor, Malaysia, suffered a downpour on October 31, which caused severe flooding. The heavy rain inundated houses swiftly, so the villagers could not rescue most of the items in their homes. Volunteers from Tzu Chi Johor Bahru received the news that same night and headed over to assess damages in the disaster area. On November 1, volunteers begin helping the villagers clean up their homes. Photo/Yulung Huang

## Myanmar

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Myanmar government implemented curfews and stay-at-home orders. The pandemic's economic and social disruption is devastating, and many villagers lack sufficient food to meet their needs. Tzu Chi Myanmar launched relief distributions to help relieve these food shortages. Volunteers from Tzu Chi Collegiate Youth Association (Tzu Ching) assist in the distribution of rice and cooking oil on September 10. Photo/Mg Pyae Sone



## Singapore

Taking Master Cheng Yen's teachings to heart, Tzu Chi Singapore volunteers seize the opportunity to recommend environmental protection and vegetarianism to the general public. In the waiting area of the Buddhist Tzu Chi Traditional Chinese Medicine Free Clinic (Khatib), in Yishun, a town in the North Region of Singapore, a volunteer strikes up a conversation about Tzu Chi's origins and environmental protection concepts and encourages choosing to eat vegetarian meals. Photo/Meichen Tseng

## England

Tzu Chi volunteers hold an environmental protection day in Malvern, Worcestershire, England, on September 27, adopting an area of the woods where homeless individuals had lived for cleanup. The homeless group left tents, sleeping bags, clothes, garbage, and leftover food behind before moving on. The team of volunteers mobilized to clear the area and restore the natural environment. Photo/Suchen Wang 🌿



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S. CA	Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation, US Headquarters Area	1100 S. Valley Center Ave. San Dimas, CA 91773	909-447-7799 F: 909-447-7948	LA	New Orleans Office	52 Driftwood Blvd. Kenner, LA 70065	504-782-5168 F: 504-832-2022
	Jing Si Books & Café, San Dimas		909-447-7799 x 6569	MD	Montgomery County Service Center		703-707-8606 F: 301-339-8872
	Tzu Chi Academy, San Dimas		909-447-7799 x 6551 F: 909-447-7944	MA	Boston Service Center Tzu Chi Academy, Boston	15 Summer St. Newton, MA 02464	617-762-0569 617-431-4844 F: 617-431-4484
	Buddhist Tzu Chi Medical Foundation	1008 S. Garfield Ave. Alhambra, CA 91801	626-427-9598 F: 626-788-2321	MI	Lansing Office	3511 West Hiawatha Dr., Okemos, MI 48864	517-505-3388
	Tzu Chi Medical Center, Alhambra		626-281-3383 F: 626-281-5303		Detroit Service Center	2122 Fifteen Mile Rd. #A Sterling Heights, MI 48310	586-795-3491 F: 586-795-3491
	Tzu Chi Community Clinic, South El Monte	10414 Vacco St. South El Monte, CA 91733	626-636-8706 F: 626-671-8778	MN	Minneapolis Office	1485 Arden View Dr. Arden Hills, MN 55112	617-939-6965
	Buddhist Tzu Chi Education Foundation	1920 S. Brea Canyon Cutoff Rd. Walnut, CA 91789	909-895-2125 F: 909-345-7025	MO	St. Louis Service Center	8515 Olive Blvd. St. Louis, MO 63132	314-994-1999 F: 314-994-1999
	Tzu Chi Great Love Preschool & Kindergarten, Walnut		909-895-2126 F: 909-927-8336	NV	Reno Office	903 West Moana Lane Reno, NV 89509	775-827-6333 F: 775-770-1148
	Tzu Chi Elementary, Walnut		909-895-2125 x 3200 F: 909-345-7025		Las Vegas Service Center/ Academy	2590 Lindell Rd. Las Vegas, NV 89146	702-880-5552 F: 702-880-5552
	Tzu Chi Academy, Walnut		909-895-2280	NJ	Mid-Atlantic Region/Jing Si Books & Café	150 Commerce Rd. Cedar Grove, NJ 07009	973-857-8666 F: 973-857-9555
	Tzu Chi Elementary, Monrovia	429 E. Wildrose Ave. Monrovia, CA 91016	626-357-3286 F: 626-357-3287		Tzu Chi Academy, Northern New Jersey		
	Tzu Chi Great Love Preschool & Kindergarten, Monrovia	206 E. Palm Ave. Monrovia, CA 91016	626-305-1188 F: 626-599-8098	Tzu Chi Academy, Central New Jersey	50 Woodrow Wilson Dr., Edison, NJ 08820		973-857-8666
	Tzu Chi Academy, Monrovia	220 E. Palm Ave. Monrovia, CA 91016	626-775-3675 F: 626-359-8199	Central New Jersey Service Center			908-420-5218
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	Torrance Service Center	1355 Broad Ave. Wilmington, CA 90744	310-684-4465 F: 310-684-4460		Brooklyn Service Center	5721 6Th Ave. Brooklyn, NY 11220	917-909-0682
	Tzu Chi Community Clinic, Wilmington		310-684-4466 F: 855-651-1717		Long Island Branch/Academy	60 E Williston Ave. East Williston, NY 11596	516-873-6888 F: 516-746-0626
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	Tzu Chi Academy, Irvine	4321 Walnut Ave., Irvine, CA 92604	714-624-3026 F: 949-916-5933		East Long Island Office	4 Milburn Rd. S. Setauket, NY 11720	631-964-3393
	Cerritos Service Center	14618&14620 Carmenita Rd. Norwalk, CA 90650	562-926-6609 F: 562-926-1603		Tzu Chi Center, New York	229 E. 60th St. New York, NY 10022	212-660-9229 F: 646-864-0086
	Northridge Service Center	8963 Reseda Blvd. Northridge, CA 91324	818-727-7689 F: 818-727-9272		Raleigh Service Center		919-322-8389
San Gabriel Valley Service Center	9620 Flair Dr. El Monte, CA 91731	626-416-4527 Warehouse: 626-416-4529	Charlotte Office		4527 Dwight Evans Rd. Charlotte, NC 28217	704-281-8060 F: 704-943-1031	
Jing Si Books & Café, El Monte		626-448-1362	Cincinnati Office		11228 Brookbridge Dr. Cincinnati, OH 45249	513-469-2161 F: 513-469-2161	
San Diego Service Center	5754 Pacific Center Blvd. #202 San Diego, CA 92121	858-546-0578 F: 858-546-0573	Columbus Service Center		2200 Henderson Rd. Columbus, OH 43220	614-457-9215 F: 614-457-9217	
N. CA	Northwest Region	2355 Oakland Rd. San Jose, CA 95131	408-457-6969 F: 408-943-8420	OH	Dayton Service Center	1459 E Dorothy Lane Dayton, OH 45429	937-701-7111
	Tzu Chi Academy, Tri-Valley		925-785-7413		Cleveland Service Center	1076 Ford Rd. Highland Heights, OH 44143	440-646-9292 F: 440-646-9292
	Jing Si Books & Café, San Jose		408-457-6981	Portland Service Center	3800 SW Cedar Hills Blvd #194 Beaverton, OR 97005	503-643-2130 F: 503-643-2130	
	San Francisco Branch	2901 Irving St. San Francisco, CA 94122	415-682-0566 F: 415-682-0567	OR	Tzu Chi Academy, Portland	12250 SW Conestoga Dr., Beaverton, OR 97008	503-841-7776
	Tzu Chi Academy, San Mateo	2675 Ralston Ave., Belmont, CA 94002	650-888-1582		Philadelphia Office	107 North 9th Street Philadelphia, PA 19107	215-627-1915 F: 215-627-1916
	Tzu Chi Academy, San Francisco	350 Girard St. San Francisco, CA 94134	415-680-5225 F: 415-682-0567	Pittsburgh Service Center/ Academy	1333 Banksville Rd. #201 Pittsburgh, PA 15216	412-531-8343 F: 412-531-8341	
	Modesto Service Center	1100 Carver Rd. #J Modesto, CA 95350	209-529-2625 F: 209-529-2625	TX	Southern Region/Academy	6200 Corporate Dr. Houston, TX 77036	713-270-9988 F: 713-981-9008
	Stockton Office	1212 W Robinhood Dr. #3D Stockton, CA 95207	209-957-7800 F: 209-957-7800		Jing Si Books & Café, Houston		713-981-8966
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	Miami Service Center	8070 Pasadena Blvd. Pembroke Pines, FL 33024	954-538-1172 F: 317-645-9907	Seattle Branch/Academy	15800 SE Newport Way Bellevue WA 98006	425-643-9104	
GA	Atlanta Branch	2000 Clearview Ave. #100 Atlanta, GA 30340	770-458-1000 F: 770-986-8669	WI	Milwaukee Office	5356 W. Silverleaf Ln, Brown Deer, WI 53223	414-357-8427
Tzu Chi Academy, Atlanta			Madison Office		726 W Main St. #302 Madison, WI 53715	608-268-7692	
HI	Pacific Islands Region/Academy	1238 Wilhelmina Rise Honolulu, HI 96816	808-737-8885	IN	Indianapolis Service Center	2929 E. 96th St. #E Indianapolis, IN 46240	317-580-0979
IL	Midwest Region/Academy/ Jing Si Books & Café	1430 Plainfield Rd. Darien, IL 60561	630-963-6601 F: 630-960-9360				
	Chicago Chinatown Service Center	215 W 23rd St, Chicago, IL 60616					



## Who We Are:



**T**he Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation is a volunteer-based international non-governmental organization, established by Dharma Master Cheng Yen in Hualien, Taiwan, in 1966. From 30 housewives saving 50 NT cents (approx. 2 US cents) from their grocery budget every day to help the less fortunate, Tzu Chi has now brought humanitarian aid to 117 countries and regions. The Foundation is dedicated to providing community and social services, national and international disaster relief, medical and charitable aid, education, environmental protection, and a bone marrow donor registry while promoting humanistic values and community volunteerism.

Tzu Chi USA, the first overseas chapter of the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation, was established in Alhambra, CA in 1989. It all began when Stephen Huang, a wealthy American businessman seeking personal guidance, visited Dharma Master Cheng Yen in Taiwan. Meeting this gentle nun, who had created a powerful organization, and was able to realize one seemingly impossible dream after another, solely for the benefit of others, changed his life. Filled with awe and admiration, Huang became a disciple and vowed to bring the spirit and mission of Tzu Chi to the United States, which he did by establishing Tzu Chi USA.

Tzu Chi USA began by mobilizing volunteers, then hosting “tea parties” where they could share their thoughts, experiences, and joy of volunteering. The events drew supporters and quickly inspired the creation of additional chapters. Today, Tzu Chi USA has 66 offices and facilities throughout the U.S., with volunteers and donors working tirelessly to make a difference in their communities. This is just the beginning of our journey, serving others unconditionally and sowing seeds of love and kindness in the Americas. 





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Each distribution and aid event is also an opportunity to spread Tzu Chi's philosophy of giving and compassion, in the spirit of one global family, always ready to care for its most vulnerable members and those suffering or in need. *Photo/Roger Lin*