

# TZUCHI *USA Journal*



## An Array of Aid Across America

**Averting Hunger and Malnutrition  
in Haiti During the Pandemic**

**Youth Reflect on the Future  
They Want and How to Achieve It**



## CONTEMPLATIVE WISDOM

Thoughts for meditation, contemplation,  
and reflection

**Dharma Master Cheng Yen**

*Founder of the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation*

With loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity,  
let us embody selflessness.

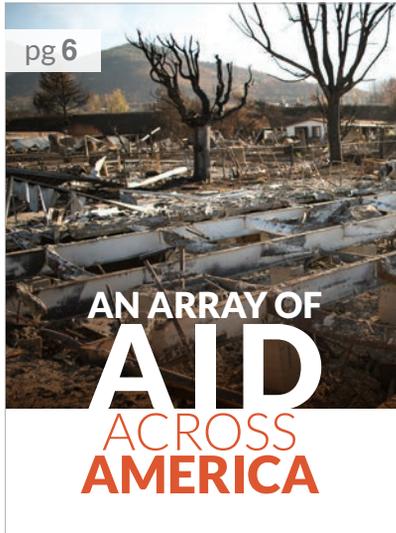
With hearts united and sharing the same Dharma,  
let us practice giving without expectations.

May we merge our limited selves into the greater self  
so that our love can be without boundaries,  
without distinctions between self and others.

Let us turn our limited love  
into long-lasting compassion and great love.

With faultless virtues and infinite love,  
may we become a canopy that protects all people in this world. 🌿

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Photo/C.M. Yung

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**Cover:** The beaming smile of this care recipient in Manhattan, New York, encapsulates all Tzu Chi volunteers' essential mission: To bring comfort and relief to others, serving their needs joyfully and selflessly. This gentleman just picked a jacket and other winter wear for himself and his family. Thankfully, they will now be better equipped to stay safe and warm during this dangerous pandemic winter. *Photo/San-San Chiang*

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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## Tzu Chi USA Directory

# Discover MindfulEye

FILM AT TZU CHI CENTER

A program launched in February 2021,  
at the Tzu Chi Center for Compassionate Relief,  
in Manhattan, New York.

See carefully selected and critically  
acclaimed films that touch on global issues,  
and introduce remarkable individuals  
striving to benefit the world.

Join Q&A conversations with the people  
behind the films or central to the stories,  
and draw inspiration towards a more  
mindful and meaningful life.

**The next Mindful Eye:**  
**Film at Tzu Chi Center screening is on**  
**April 22, 2021**



**Tzu Chi Center**  
For Compassionate Relief

[TzuChiCenter.org](https://TzuChiCenter.org)



As we look back at 2020, let's take a moment to reflect upon and remember how much this challenging year has taught us. And then, just as the leaves look forward to a new life in Spring, let's look forward to the new year, 2021. May the Year of the Ox, the 2021 Lunar New Year, bring forth renewed hope for us all.

We're entering a new phase in the battle against this global pandemic. We're now witnessing the first chapter of COVID-19 vaccinations unfold. Many of us are hoping this will be the final chapter of this far-reaching crisis. Thus, the theme for this issue of the Tzu Chi USA Journal is HOPE.

Our cover story, "An Array of Aid Across America," recaps the winter relief work Tzu Chi USA volunteers have done across the nation. From providing cash cards, care packages, winter outerwear, and food supplies for those in need to donations of educational equipment, free vision care services, and more, we can confidently say that Tzu Chi's axiom of compassion in action lives strong.

For over a decade and counting, we've been there to support the ever-resilient people of Haiti, helping to keep their hope alive even in the direst circumstances. We have not faltered in doing so during extraordinarily difficult 2020, overcoming obstacles that might have hindered our aid efforts. The feature story "Averting Hunger and Malnutrition in Haiti During the Pandemic" details activities in our food aid mission, made possible thanks to thriving allegiances with Haitian partners and the dedication of local community volunteers.

HOPE leads to the creation of a better FUTURE, as the energy and initiative it awakens and invites pave the way forward. We've heard the adage "All it takes is one person to make a difference," or "Be the change you want to see." So, we could do well to ask ourselves, "What is the better future that we hope for?" This issue sheds light on several aspects of the change we hope to achieve, individually and collectively, in our affiliation with Tzu Chi and its missions.

Our second feature, "Youth Reflect on the Future They Want and How to Achieve It," takes us to the heart of three "Youth Future Global Dialogue" virtual events hosted by Tzu Chi New York. Organized in collaboration with the United Nations' "UN75: 2020 and Beyond - Shaping Our Future Together" global consultation initiative, the events offered a forum for youth, the world's future leaders, to reflect on and share their perspectives and vision.

Moving from the individual aspirations of youth, in our portrait stories, we take a look at progress regarding two fundamental Tzu Chi missions set by Dharma Master Cheng Yen, which address our actions and choices today, as they shape tomorrow. These pertain to encouraging and practicing daily giving and adopting a vegetarian or vegan diet.

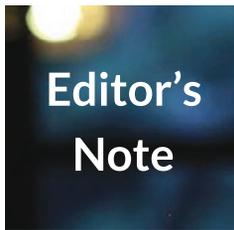
Tzu Chi began with 30 housewives saving some of their grocery money each day to help others. Daily charity remains at the core of the foundation's philosophy and fuels the capacity to accomplish its missions. However, the manner of donating has evolved, as we learn in our portrait, "Spring Forward to Tzu Chi Connect: The Future of Relief

Work." The Tzu Chi Connect App is the next iteration of Tzu Chi's Bamboo Bank ideology - Small Change, Huge Impact - and embodies the future of Tzu Chi's mobile fundraising efforts.

Our final portrait, "The Very Veggie Movement: A Year in Review," gives a one-year recap of Tzu Chi USA's Very Veggie Movement's efforts to promote a meat-free, plant-based diet. We're enthused about and wholeheartedly grateful for all the partners who have and continue to join our movement. And, we're thrilled about the number of individuals pledging to eat vegetarian meals for a designated time. Our pledge invitation lets you decide whether it's for a single lunch or a lifetime commitment; that's entirely up to you.

Let's keep hope in our hearts as we venture forward in 2021. Happy reading! 🌱

By Anik Ghose



## Editor's Note

# The Kulapati's Wish

Master Cheng Yen's Teachings

Translated by the Dharma as Water Team

*As spiritual practitioners, we must treat everyone impartially, so that we can feel happy no matter who we meet. When we look at people with the heart of a buddha, everyone is a buddha.*

*Dharma Master Cheng Yen*

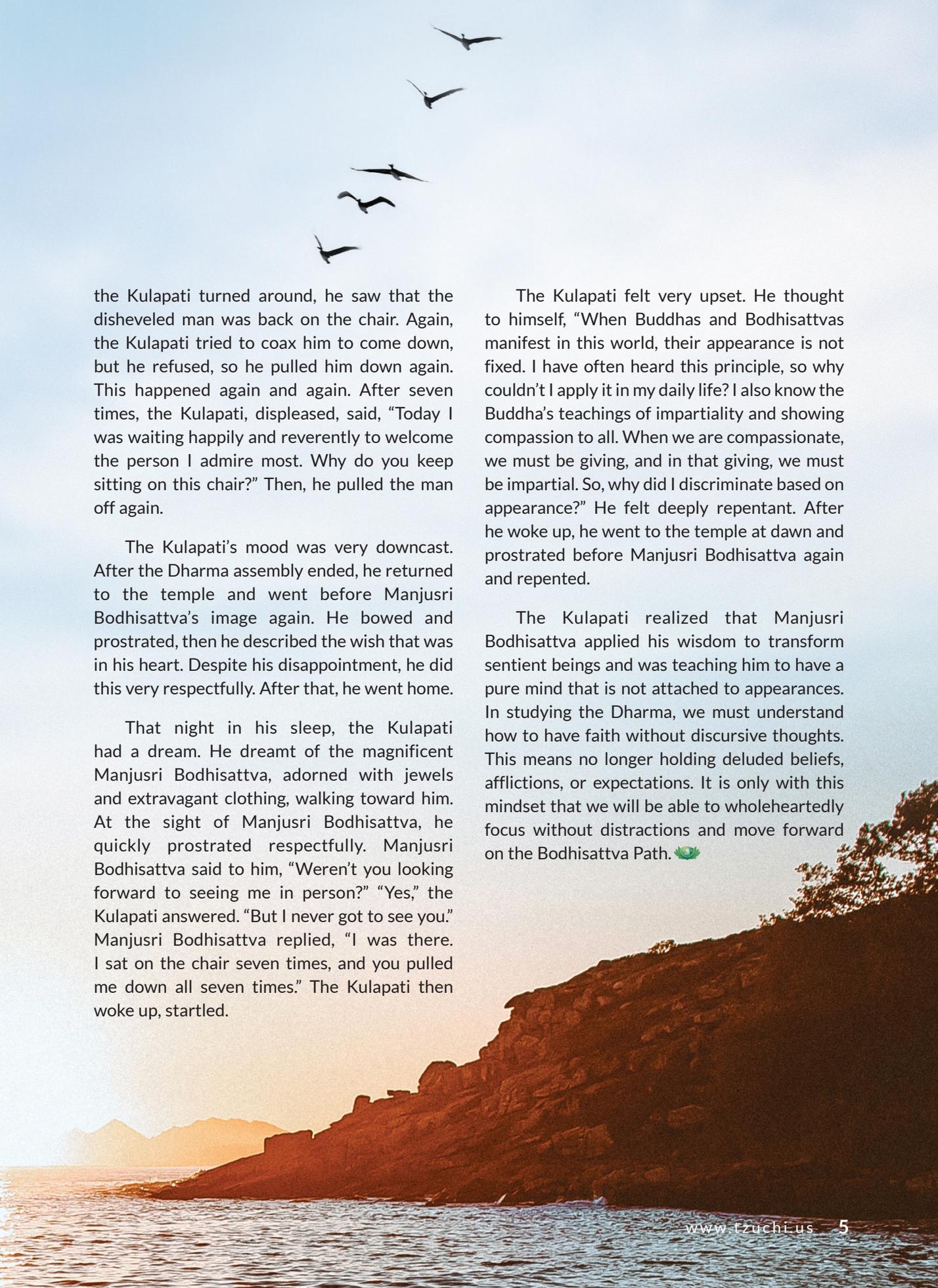
I often say, "Faith is the source of the path and the mother of merits. It nurtures all roots of goodness." All of our merits and virtues arise from faith. If we have the right faith, we can constantly grow in wisdom, and if our faith is pure, right Dharma and right mindfulness will always remain in our minds. A mind that is not distracted or afflicted is a pure mind, and if our minds are pure, we will not be attached to external phenomena.

There is a classic story from a Buddhist sutra. There was once a Kulapati, a clan chief, who had faith in the Three Treasures, the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha, and had the utmost respect for them. Every time he visited a monastery, he most enjoyed prostrating respectfully to the golden image of Manjusri Bodhisattva, which was luxuriously adorned with all kinds of treasures. In his hand, the statue held the sword of wisdom, to sever afflictions. This image of Manjusri Bodhisattva was truly majestic.

After some time visiting this monastery to see the image, the Kulapati made a wish. "Manjusri Bodhisattva, I admire your wisdom and your image. If I had wisdom like yours, I could delve into the Buddha Dharma, which is as boundless as a great ocean. I keep hoping that you, Manjusri Bodhisattva, will manifest a physical form so that I can see you in person. I vow to make offerings to one thousand monastics, and I hope you will be among them so that I can see your physical form." After he went home, the Kulapati reverently made lengthy preparations. At last, the Dharma assembly for making offerings to one thousand monastics began.

At this most reverent and grand occasion, the Kulapati set out an extravagant chair. Then the monastics came one after another. As this was happening, the Kulapati saw a man who looked ragged. The man was disheveled, ugly, and dirty, and he arrived hobbling and limping on a cane. He ignored the many empty seats and strutted and limped to sit in the extravagant and elevated chair.

The Kulapati said to him, "Please come down; I placed this chair here for someone else to sit in." The man refused, so the Kulapati yanked him off the chair. Then, the Kulapati went back to waiting by the door, hoping that Manjusri Bodhisattva would come. When



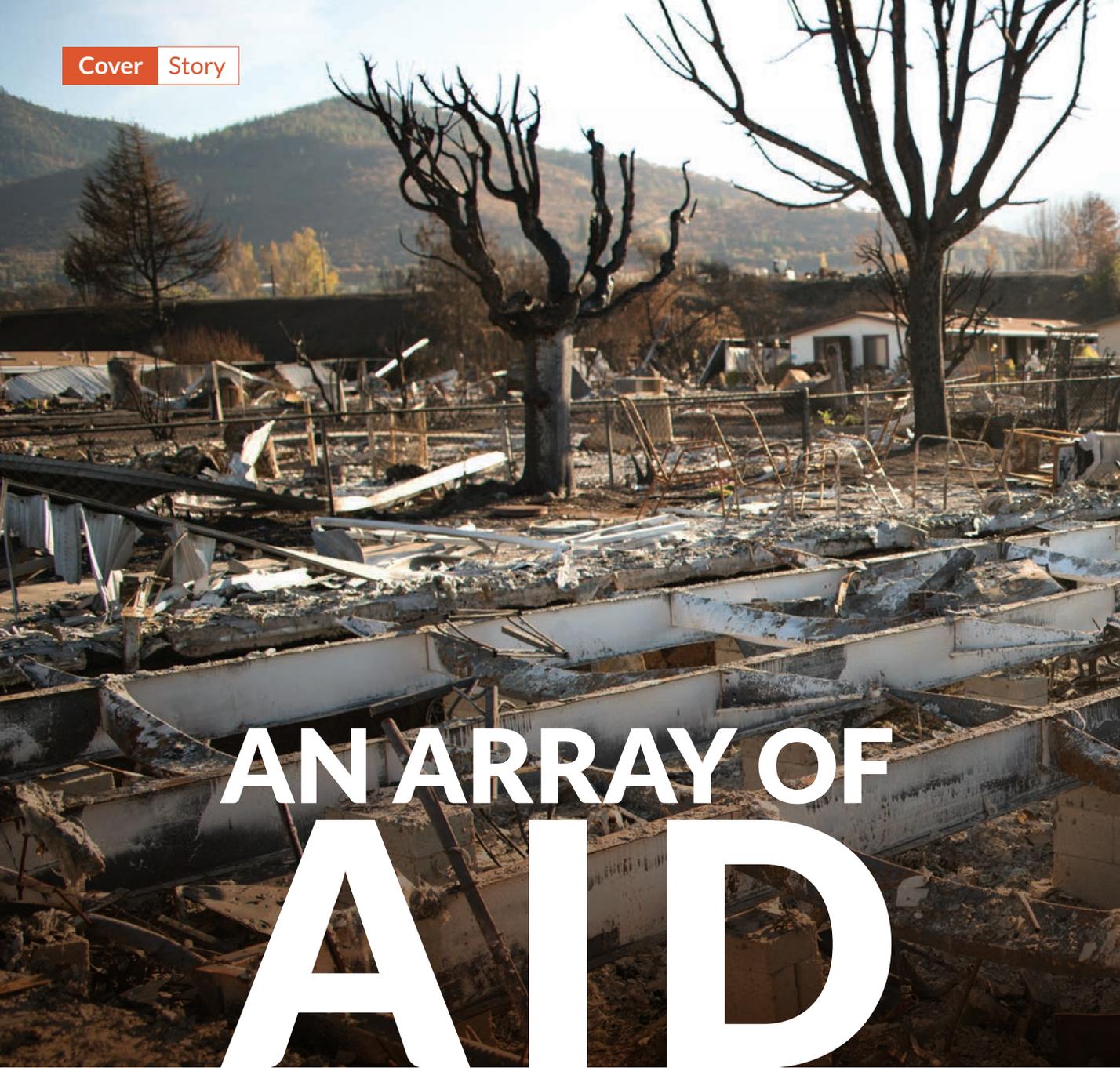
the Kulapati turned around, he saw that the disheveled man was back on the chair. Again, the Kulapati tried to coax him to come down, but he refused, so he pulled him down again. This happened again and again. After seven times, the Kulapati, displeased, said, "Today I was waiting happily and reverently to welcome the person I admire most. Why do you keep sitting on this chair?" Then, he pulled the man off again.

The Kulapati's mood was very downcast. After the Dharma assembly ended, he returned to the temple and went before Manjusri Bodhisattva's image again. He bowed and prostrated, then he described the wish that was in his heart. Despite his disappointment, he did this very respectfully. After that, he went home.

That night in his sleep, the Kulapati had a dream. He dreamt of the magnificent Manjusri Bodhisattva, adorned with jewels and extravagant clothing, walking toward him. At the sight of Manjusri Bodhisattva, he quickly prostrated respectfully. Manjusri Bodhisattva said to him, "Weren't you looking forward to seeing me in person?" "Yes," the Kulapati answered. "But I never got to see you." Manjusri Bodhisattva replied, "I was there. I sat on the chair seven times, and you pulled me down all seven times." The Kulapati then woke up, startled.

The Kulapati felt very upset. He thought to himself, "When Buddhas and Bodhisattvas manifest in this world, their appearance is not fixed. I have often heard this principle, so why couldn't I apply it in my daily life? I also know the Buddha's teachings of impartiality and showing compassion to all. When we are compassionate, we must be giving, and in that giving, we must be impartial. So, why did I discriminate based on appearance?" He felt deeply repentant. After he woke up, he went to the temple at dawn and prostrated before Manjusri Bodhisattva again and repented.

The Kulapati realized that Manjusri Bodhisattva applied his wisdom to transform sentient beings and was teaching him to have a pure mind that is not attached to appearances. In studying the Dharma, we must understand how to have faith without discursive thoughts. This means no longer holding deluded beliefs, afflictions, or expectations. It is only with this mindset that we will be able to wholeheartedly focus without distractions and move forward on the Bodhisattva Path. 🌿



# AN ARRAY OF AID ACROSS AMERICA

*By Ida Eva Zielinska*



**A**t the start of 2021, people worldwide face an unprecedented conglomeration of challenges that threaten or have impacted their lives, their hopes for emerging from the dark cloud of the COVID-19 pandemic intense. Indeed, the late fall and winter of 2020, which we have just traversed, were unlike any other in recent history.

While the need for charity aid and other support across the United States was and continues to be urgent, so are the difficulties, and even dangers, while providing it. Notwithstanding the outbreak of COVID-19, Tzu Chi USA volunteers, some at greater risk of infection and complications due to age, have been doing their part to bring relief to those in need on several fronts.

First off, relief efforts to support the survivors of natural disasters are ongoing, some of these families having been rendered homeless, and this, amid the raging global health crisis. It's a shock that's hard to absorb, as is the distress of not knowing what to do next.

**“That was supposed to be our forever home.**

*Michelle Bankston  
2020 Wildfire Survivor*

*Wildfires ravage many communities on the West Coast in 2020, leaving some residents homeless. Photo/C.M. Yung*

## ♥ Aid for Recovering Disaster Survivors

On the West Coast, the 2020 wildfire season left many struggling along the long road to full recovery, and Tzu Chi's distributions of cash cards and other supplies have been a source of vital aid.

Tzu Chi USA's Northwest Region volunteers held six days of disaster relief distribution at the Local Assistance Center (LAC) in Oroville, California, in October, serving North Complex Fire survivors. By the end, their efforts had benefited 314 households.

For Michelle Bankston, who had lost her dream home in Berry Creek to the flames – one she only purchased months earlier, expecting to live in it for the rest of her life – the aid was a beacon of hope. It was especially critical since her family had recently grown, as just three days before this tragedy struck, Michelle had legally adopted three girls.

When the fire broke out, causing power failures, Michelle moved to a hotel where the children could get internet access for remote learning while their schools were closed. That temporary departure quickly became permanent. “We found out that the fire was taking over Berry Creek... we left everything up there. They didn't let us back home to grab anything,” she explained. Within hours, everything they owned was gone.

**“At first, I was kind of lost. My mind was gone. I just couldn't think of what to do, what to put my foot next to. But then I snapped out of it; I have kids I have to deal with – so, one foot in front of the other. Just keep going.”**

*Michelle Bankston  
North Complex Fire Survivor*

Michelle would use the cash card from Tzu Chi to buy food and clothing for her children, as she starts over from scratch. Along



Michelle Bankston, who lost her home to the North Complex Fire, shares her story while receiving Tzu Chi's aid. Photo/Huan Xun Chan

with the emergency funds, she, and each care recipient, also received a letter from Dharma Master Cheng Yen, expressing her sorrow for their trauma and loss and sending her love and encouragement. Wildfire survivor Sabrina Hopkins was moved to tears reading it, then shared her deep gratitude at that moment:

**“I'm just happy everybody is alive. [And] I'm so thankful you guys are here to help everybody. I don't know what we would do without people like you guys.”**

*Sabrina Hopkins  
North Complex Fire Survivor*



Wildfire survivor Sabrina Hopkins talks to a volunteer as she receives Tzu Chi's disaster aid. Photo/C.M. Yung

The wildfire disaster relief mission reached Oregon as well, with Tzu Chi volunteers from three states mobilizing to bring aid to families in Medford, Jackson County, many of whom found themselves left with nothing overnight. Volunteers from Tzu Chi USA's Portland Service Center, Northwest Region, and Seattle Branch held a distribution at the LAC in Medford on October 31, aid of immediate help to 126 households.

Some care recipients gave harrowing accounts of their recent experience coming face-to-face with the terrifying and destructive flames:

**“ At that time, there was smoke everywhere, and there were fires everywhere coming from both sides of the highway through the forest.**

**When I got home, my home was already burned to the ground.**

*Eugene*

*Oregon Wildfire Survivor*



Hearing the words of encouragement in Master Cheng Yen's letter to wildfire survivors, two care recipients hug with emotion, the shock of their situation still fresh. *Photo/C.M. Yung*

And yet, the love and care they felt as they talked to volunteers at the distribution was a balm to the sting of such misfortune, bringing some comfort.

**“ We're all a family living under the same sky! I'm grateful for the love from around the world!**

*Oregon Wildfire Survivor*

Across the country, Hurricane Laura had caused extensive damages in Southeast Texas and Southwest Louisiana, leaving some underprivileged families in dire need of aid in the aftermath. Tzu Chi USA's Southern Region volunteers from Houston organized a large-scale cash card distribution, aiming to help residents in the underserved communities of Orange County and Deweyville, Texas, and Dequincy, Louisiana.

For safety reasons during the pandemic, the October event, held outside Deweyville High School, utilized a drive-through distribu-

tion method to limit personal contact. However, this didn't prevent Tzu Chi volunteers and care recipients from connecting heart to heart.

For some, receiving financial aid was a first, and they felt immensely grateful for the freedom and ability it provided to purchase what they needed the most. When hearing about Tzu Chi's origins and the inspirational history behind its bamboo banks, they were also eager to give back.



Despite their own hardships, many care recipients readily place coins into bamboo banks to help others in their time of need. *Photo/Roger Lin*

As is the custom, in addition to cash cards, food, or other supplies, volunteers also gave out Tzu Chi's signature eco-blankets during these disaster relief distributions, sharing the environmental protection message they embody.



Each hurricane survivor receives a cash card, Jing Si Rice and other foods, and an eco-blanket with love from Tzu Chi. *Photo/Roger Lin*



Yolanda, a 2020 wildfire survivor, receives an eco-blanket and learns about Tzu Chi's environmental protection mission. *Photo/C.M. Yung*

## DID YOU KNOW?

The eco-blankets Tzu Chi gives out when providing disaster and charity aid in the U.S. and globally are produced in Taiwan by DA.AI Technology Company Limited. After obtaining Master Cheng Yen's approval, five entrepreneurs started the company in 2008.

They aimed to integrate environmental protection and materials recycling in the development and manufacture of new products, the proceeds of whose sales would support Tzu Chi's charity missions worldwide. The company's motto expresses DA.AI's vision succinctly:

**Turn trash into gold, gold into love,  
love into a purifying stream, and surround  
the globe with it.**

Today, DAAI Technology develops eco-friendly products crafted from discarded polyethylene terephthalate (PET) plastic water bottles. The company collects and sorts raw PET materials, transforms them into its proprietary DA.AI Technology yarn, then weaves the resulting high-quality textiles into various products, all without increasing the total PET volume.

In addition to Tzu Chi's signature blankets, DA.AI manufactures scarves, various clothing, backpacks, bedding, and other everyday textile products. To complete the cycle of love and care for Mother Earth and its inhabitants, all the proceeds from the sale of DA.AI products directly benefit Tzu Chi's humanitarian missions.

Likewise, Tzu Chi volunteers use DA.AI's durable apparel and practical products as they travel and serve in disaster areas, keeping them safe and sound while consciously expressing their dedication to environmental protection through this choice.



Each eco-friendly blanket has the Tzu Chi logo on it, a reminder of the foundation's love and care for the recipient.  
Photo/Dong-Yun Jien

See DA.AI's ad on page 63 to shop for eco-friendly face masks!

## Relief to Alleviate Food Insecurity

While disasters caused upheaval in some people's lives, the pandemic has touched the lives of us all, leading to economic hardships for many families and escalating their need for food aid. Tzu Chi USA's efforts on that front have continued without interruption as well.

In Texas, Tzu Chi USA's Southern Region office in Houston gained approval to become a permanent partner of the Houston Food Bank in 2020, which has enabled regular food distributions, beginning in October. The plan is to hold two distributions per month, serving low-income and undocumented families in the community.

The path to this partnership began when Tzu Chi volunteers took to heart that with the

pandemic's spread and hurricanes continually affecting Houston's economy, many residents are struggling to make ends meet. They contacted Houston Food Bank proposing their offices as a distribution site.

After three distributions as temporary partners over the summer, the organization officially approved Tzu Chi USA's Southern Region office as their permanent site for distribution events.

**The first three distributions had gone well. The food bank felt our location is good and our volunteers are respectful to the families, so in October, we [were] approved to become a permanent partner of the food bank.**

Taishan Huang  
Executive Director  
Tzu Chi USA Southern Region

To illustrate the grave need for such support, families began lining up three hours before the October event's scheduled start.



People begin lining up hours before the start of food distribution, elderly residents among them.  
Photo/Jong Wu

Seeing the queue, which included elderly residents, the volunteers hastened to unload the food bank's truck delivering over 12,000 lbs of fresh produce and staples. They subdivided the items and packed individual boxes swiftly to start the distribution sooner.



Teenaged community volunteers unload fresh vegetables from Houston Food Bank's truck.  
Photo/Jean Hsu

A total of 47 volunteers participated in this event, benefiting 234 households. Roger Lin, who coordinates the food distributions, hopes that such activities will help attract more community volunteers, and they already have.

Starting from October, members of the Formosa Association of Student Cultural Ambassadors (FASCA) – which aims to help teenagers learn Chinese culture, leadership skills, and teamwork through community services and cultural experiences – volunteer at the distributions with their parents. It's the first time

many students will meet families struggling to put food on the table; the first-hand encounter leaves a lasting impression.

Tzu Chi volunteers also invited their friends to participate in the event. Greg Walker, who accepted the invitation to volunteer, cherished the opportunity to serve the community.

***“[It's] the most important thing in this day and age with the coronavirus that basically shut down the world and put a lot of people out of work. I think this is one of the most worthy things to volunteer your time for.*”**

*Greg Walker*

*Community Volunteer*

On the West Coast, food distribution through Tzu Chi USA's Northwest Region's Happy Campus program in East Palo Alto, California, a community populated with new immigrants and low-income families, is also ongoing.

The Happy Campus program strives to address low-income and underserved communities' needs holistically. Among its activities, it works with young school children, assists students' families, provides college scholarships, offers free medical outreach, distributes food alongside local food banks, and donates winter clothing.

Sadly, the situation for many families in East Palo Alto has worsened due to the pandemic, with numerous residents left unemployed or with significantly reduced income. Consequently, food assistance requests increased by 200% to 300%, depending on the week. In response, volunteers ramped up the food distribution volume to provide nourishment to over 600 families per week, each Saturday morning.

With people mostly confined to their homes, not only do these events provide food to families in need but also open a precious window for volunteers to reconnect with residents, offering moral support through the tough times we're all experiencing.



Tzu Chi and local community volunteers work as a team, loading food directly into the trunks of care recipients' cars. *Photo/Jong Wu*

Tzu Chi USA's Greater Washington D.C. Region volunteers have also been doing their part to help food-insecure families. For staff and volunteers at Tzu Chi Academy Washington D.C., in Bethesda, Maryland, their annual Thanksgiving food drive and distribution is a cherished tradition that continued in 2020, although somewhat differently.

To protect everyone's safety, food donation, collection, and packaging, which took place in advance of the distribution, proceeded outdoors, in the parking lot of Walt Whitman High School, a few blocks from Tzu Chi Academy. Tzu Chi volunteers, the families of Tzu Chi Academy students, staff, and school volunteers all took part in this venture of love.

Once they categorized the donated food supplies, including staples such as rice, beans, cereal, cooking oil, and so on, the families packed shopping bags with an assortment of items, preparing numerous grocery bags, each weighing over 20 pounds. Finally, on November 19, a team of volunteers set out for JoAnn Leleck Elementary School at Broad Acres in Silver Spring, where families in need were waiting for them that afternoon.

Frank Chen, the Executive Director of Tzu Chi USA's Greater Washington D.C. Region, brought along even more items to share with the families, including gift cards and packages of Tzu Chi's noodles and Jing Si Rice. Several local volunteers also came to assist during the distribution and helped with Spanish translation.

By the end of the afternoon, the volunteers had distributed all the bags of food with love and care, bringing relief and cheer to each family during this year's challenging holiday season. It was heartwarming to see these families with a

gleam of gratitude and hope in their eyes as they joyfully exclaimed, "Gracias!"

T.J. Lau, the nine-year-old son of one of the volunteers helping out at the food drive, summed up the experience beautifully:

***"I was most happy when I saw how happy these families were!"***

*T.J. Lau  
Son of Tzu Chi Volunteer*



The care recipients are eager to take the food home to their families, bringing cheer on what might have been a more somber Thanksgiving. *Photo/Courtesy of Tzu Chi USA Greater Washington D.C. Region Volunteers*

## ♡ Winter Clothing to Warm Those in Need

In the Northeast, Tzu Chi volunteers also intended to bring aid to underprivileged families around Thanksgiving. And in New York, despite COVID-19, they followed through with their traditional winter clothes distribution, a charity event with a 25-year history. What has made the event even more blessed is that it has become a joint interfaith charity effort in New York City, of Buddhist Tzu Chi and the Christian Episcopal Church.

Tzu Chi New York has collaborated with All Saints' Episcopal Church in Manhattan on Thanksgiving for two years, offering winter wear for those in need alongside the church's annual Thanksgiving food distribution. As it happens, the church is located directly across the street from the Tzu Chi Center for Compass-

sionate Relief, and the two have evolved from good neighbors to great partners through their collaborative charity work.

**“You bring a lot of volunteers. It has helped us a lot, and we feel good about our mutual work together.”**

*Rev. Dr. Steven Jay Yagerman  
Rector, All Saints' Episcopal Church*



Respecting public safety protocols, All Saints' Episcopal Church hosted its annual Thanksgiving food distribution outside in 2020. More people than expected came since the pandemic's impact is widespread, causing many hardships. Inside the Tzu Chi Center's kitchen, volunteers had prepared colorful vegetarian dishes for bento boxes that would join the church's offerings of hot food for the homeless and those in need.

Meanwhile, outside the church across the street, another group of volunteers had hung up the donated winter jackets and coats after sorting them according to gender, size, and type, making it easy for people to select the right one, just like in a store. Behind the scenes, the clothing's path from donation to the distribution site had been a laborious one made possible thanks to many volunteers' love and dedication.

Initially, numerous bags of winter coats were donated by New York residents, reaching more than a hundred collected within the month

before Thanksgiving. Taking advantage of the weekend before the holiday, Tzu Chi volunteers hurried to sort all the pre-owned clothing into different categories, carefully checking each piece to ensure it was in the best condition possible before sending them all for washing.



Lucy Lu, the owner of a laundromat, who also happens to be a Tzu Chi volunteer, was in charge of the next phase in the process. Since the laundry shop is open seven days a week, she doesn't have much time on her hands. Still, she utilizes her lunch breaks and the laundromat's off-hours to volunteer with Tzu Chi.

**“Whenever Tzu Chi has some things that need to be washed, I can take care of it. I'm very grateful for this opportunity. I will wash and divide [the clothes] by size (large, medium, and small) so they won't get messed up while being distributed.”**

*Lucy Lu  
Tzu Chi Volunteer*



Finally, all the winter wear was ready for the distribution event on November 28. While people waited their turn to select clothes, Tzu Chi volunteers distributed homemade cakes and cookies they had baked. At a designated time, church staff and volunteers also began giving out their take-out hot meals and Tzu Chi's vegetarian bento boxes. Everyone was glad to get a bite to eat but also couldn't wait to choose their best fitting winter clothes.



A senior care recipient tries on clothes with the help of a volunteer. Photo/Peter Lin

Some care recipients shared their hardships with the volunteers while selecting clothes. Herman, who lost his job then unemployment benefits since the pandemic began, comes to the church for a hot meal every Saturday. Pointing at the broken zipper of his jacket, the only cold-weather clothing he owned, it was clear that the winter wear from Tzu Chi on Thanksgiving was a precious gift that relieved an urgent need.

**“Currently, I'm getting a few food stamps and a tiny bit of cash assistance till I find full-time work. But I'm glad there are places like this where they can help people and families.**

Herman  
New York City Resident

A taxi driver passing by stopped twice to pick some winter clothes plus get a free meal, exclaiming, “Thank you very much for helping people like me. May God bless you, your children, and your family.”



A taxi driver in need puts coins in a bamboo bank as he thanks the volunteers for the winter clothes and free meal, hoping to give back. Photo/Peter Lin

Volunteers assisted each care recipient as they tried on jackets or coats, sharing, “This coat is a blessing from a generous donor... they hope it will keep you warm...” They also explained how to wash the items and highlighted any unique features, just like store clerks.

Finally, as the care recipients decided on their favorite piece of clothing, some stating, “This is perfect for me, I like it so much,” the volunteers could feel a sense of peace and accomplishment. Having helped provide warmth during the cold season, they were also protecting people's health during this dangerous pandemic winter.

## Flu Shots to Help Protect Against Illness

Flu shots are another recurring necessity during late fall and winter, and Tzu Chi USA's Northeast Region volunteers in the Greater New York area were proactive to meet that demand. Before the flu season began, the volunteers provided two free flu shot events for low-income or uninsured individuals; one in Long Island, alongside a food pantry on October 24, the second on October 25 in Flushing, at the Northeast Region's offices there.



Dr. Lok Yung, a Tzu Chi International Medical Association (TIMA) member, inquires about patients' overall health before administering the flu vaccine. Photo/Hui Liu

The team implemented an appointment system to limit the number of people gathering and administer the flu shots in the shortest possible time. A total of 100 people were to be served, as that is the number of vaccinations Dr. Weichien Chang, Medical Coordinator for Tzu Chi USA's Northeast Region, had obtained for the two events.



People can still register on-site for the free flu shots intended for low-income or uninsured families. Photo/Hui Liu

Thanks to the appointment system, the teams could administer shots for six to eight people every 30 minutes while minimizing person-to-person contact. Individuals without appointments could still register on-site, but volunteers required everyone to wear masks and maintain safe social distances.

In Flushing, medical volunteers Kristine Tseng and Dr. Lok Yung, an Infectious Disease Specialist and Tzu Chi International Medical Association (TIMA) member, prepared general volunteers by familiarizing them with procedures and protective measures. Dr. Yung and a nurse, Connie Chu, then administered the vaccines at the scheduled times.

The day before, at the Northeast Region's Long Island Branch, Catholic Health's Mercy Medical Center partnered with Tzu Chi for the event, and their staff was responsible for administering the flu vaccine.

The pandemic has raised awareness about flu vaccination since certain influenza symptoms are similar to those of COVID-19. Heightened vigilance incentivized some to get vaccinated for the first time, even the young. Mr. Yong, 26, was among them, making an exception and getting a shot this winter season.

“**Experts are advising us that the flu vaccine can give protection, and it also gives me peace of mind.**

Mr. Yong  
New York City Resident

## Free Prescription Glasses for Adults

Another medical care effort also went forward in Tzu Chi USA's Northeast Region near the end of 2020: Vision care outreach in New York City's Queens Borough, in Elmhurst, one of the neighborhoods most severely impacted by the pandemic.



Tzu Chi USA's Vision Mobile Clinic provides free vision care in Elmhurst, Queens Borough, New York, on November 7, 2020. Photo/Hector Muniente

On November 7, Tzu Chi USA's Vision Mobile Clinic drove to and stationed itself in front of the Centro Civico Colombiano in Elmhurst, then provided free vision tests and prescription glasses throughout the day, primarily for low-income Hispanic families. Whereas Tzu Chi's vision care outreach in the New York Metropolitan area previously focused on school-aged children, this time, it served middle-aged and elderly residents.



After the vision tests, trained volunteers help care recipients choose a pair of glasses inside Tzu Chi USA's Vision Mobile Clinic. Photo/Hector Muniente

New York Supreme Court Justice Carmen R. Velasquez, a board member of the non-profit Brigada de Esperanza NY that co-hosted the outreach, was on hand to welcome the vision care patients. Everyone had applied for the free service beforehand, then registered if they were eligible.

**“As long as you meet the standards for low-income families, our volunteers welcome everyone to apply. You don’t need to wait for long; you can get new glasses on the same day!”**

*Carmen R. Velasquez*

*New York Supreme Court Justice*

Serving during the outreach were more than 20 Hispanic volunteers, who had just completed training provided by Tzu Chi in affiliation with Brigada de Esperanza NY, and were finally, for the first time, helping people in need of eye exams and glasses. Judge Velasquez took the opportunity to thank Freeman Su, Executive Director of Tzu Chi USA’s Northeast Region, for the resources and volunteer training by optometrist Dr. James Chuang that made this vision care for New York’s Hispanic communities possible.

However, perhaps the vision care patients themselves had the most reason to feel grateful. Alicia Degro, a single mother raising four children, exclaimed, “A pair of glasses costs \$300 plus, which is more than my income for a week!” Alicia is now supporting her family on half the income she had before the pandemic took its toll. The free multifocal glasses she received are a blessing since her insurance doesn’t cover vision care.



Alicia Degro undergoes vision tests that determine the prescription she will need.

*Photo/Daphne Liu*

As a construction worker with an unstable income and lack of medical insurance, Mavro Quintuna was also in desperate need of free vision care and, as he discovered, glasses.

**“I noticed having problems with my eyesight, but without health insurance, it is very difficult to get help. I need to have clear vision at work, and with these lenses, I can see much better, and the difference is very noticeable.”**

*Mavro Quintuna*

*Elmhurst Resident*

Some of the 22 Elmhurst residents who came to the free clinic that day got glasses with the appropriate correction for the first time. Sixty-six-year-old Alberto Alarcon has had problems with his vision for years and relied on \$10 generic reading glasses to get by. The moment he tried a pair from Tzu Chi with the correct prescription, he was overjoyed, also marveling at how quickly he got them.



With event co-organizer Judge Carmen Velasquez (front left) and TIMA volunteer Richard Yang (right) beside him, Alberto Alarcon proudly shows his new glasses. *Photo/Jupiter Chiou*

**“I’m able to see again with these glasses! It didn’t take too long, not so much time, about one hour, thank you once again.”**

*Alberto Alarcon*

*Elmhurst Resident*

## Individual Care Leaves No One Behind

Beyond distributions and other charity aid events, Tzu Chi USA volunteers have also been diligently reaching out within the communities they serve to identify those who may need help as individual care cases during the pandemic.



Teams of Tzu Chi and local volunteers make home visits in East Palo Alto to provide cash cards, cloth masks, and other aid to low-income families. Photo/Leslie Shieh

In East Palo Alto, California, Tzu Chi USA's Northwest Region volunteers are informing residents of available aid through flyers. Since they collaborate with the Ravenswood City School District, where Tzu Chi's Happy Campus program is a steadfast presence, flyers about food distributions are being sent home to students' families. Volunteers also took the initiative to distribute the flyers at a federally funded COVID-19 screening and testing site at the local YMCA.

A network of local community volunteers built through the Happy Campus program is vital in these outreach efforts. Together, teams of Tzu Chi and local community volunteers are following up with families who can't make it to food distributions, bringing cash cards and supplies directly to their homes. Additionally, since the local volunteers know the community well and speak Spanish in many cases, they can refer more eligible low-income families and help with translation if need be.

This personalized care is invaluable. During home visits, the teams learn of the hardships

these households endure, many of whom consist of single-parent or undocumented families. From income reductions due to job loss or the deportation of family members to chronic illnesses, grave medical conditions, and infection with COVID-19, their stories are heartbreaking. The aid provided by Tzu Chi is more critical than ever.



Tzu Chi USA's Southern Region volunteers head to a hotel lobby in Houston to provide disaster relief to Hurricane Laura evacuees from Louisiana. Photo/Roger Lin

In Tzu Chi USA's Southern Region, volunteers also sought to provide individual case support when needed. Through their connections, they learned that even weeks after Hurricane Laura struck in Louisiana, damaging their home, a mother and daughter who had evacuated to Texas were still living in a hotel in Houston and needed help.

Ms. Battenfield's mother had knee surgery a few weeks before the hurricane, affecting her mobility, and the daughter herself suffers from seizures and can't drive. Although they had home insurance, it was no longer paying for hotel accommodations, while the trailer promised to them would not be available for another few weeks. The two had nowhere to go as they struggled to subsist on their social security and disability benefits.

After contacting them to better understand their situation and determine the appropriate course of action, a team of volunteers went to the hotel on December 4. They duly offered the mother and daughter a cash card and care package to help them get by until their new home is ready, providing financial and moral support.

## Support for Specific Communities

Notwithstanding recurring lockdowns, maintaining specific community care was equally a concern of Tzu Chi volunteers in different regions. On the West Coast, Tzu Chi USA's Northwest Region had begun offering aid to the residents of a motorhome community in Mountain View, a city in California's Santa Clara County in Silicon Valley.



Tzu Chi volunteers bring care packages to families living in motorhomes parked in Silicon Valley. Jauquin, a resident of this makeshift community, helps with Spanish translation. Photo/Judy Liao

Since the beginning of the pandemic, a section of a street along the railway line cutting through the town was designated by the City as a safe place to park motorhomes. Gradually, this makeshift community of 30 vehicles arose.

Most of the residents came from Latin America, leaving home to pursue the American Dream. Many are undocumented, and all can be considered low-income families. While some depend on temporary jobs, the rest have no employment whatsoever, making their survival continually stressful.

Around Thanksgiving, Tzu Chi volunteers visited the community three times to assess the situation and begin providing essential supplies. They were planning to distribute more close to Christmas when news of an impending lockdown broke. With the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases rising in California, five counties in the Bay Area announced on December 4 that they would implement a month-long stay-at-home order from the night of December 6 until January 4.

Tzu Chi volunteer Emily Polivka immediately sprang into action mobilizing a team to prepare care packages for distribution, explaining:

***“The City is about to be on lockdown. People are worried and don't know what to do. We're afraid it'll be inconvenient to go out after the implementation of the stay-at-home order, so we have to hurry up and deliver the essential supplies to the residents living in the trailer homes before the order goes in effect.”***

Emily Polivka  
Tzu Chi Volunteer

The team was undaunted by the fact that they only had hours to get everything ready and, within a day, had prepared 30 care packages, which they delivered on December 5. Among the goods provided were eco-blankets, sleeping bags, jackets, masks, shampoo, body wash, soap, hand sanitizer, socks, toothpaste, toothbrushes, Tzu Chi's Jing Si Instant Rice, and noodles.



Tzu Chi volunteers bring blankets and socks for a single mom who lives in a motorhome with her 18-month-old daughter. Photo/Judy Liao

One of the residents, Jauquin, had already been assisting Tzu Chi volunteers with Spanish translation during previous visits to the community and continued this time as well, telling them, “I'm really grateful for you bringing clothes for us to stay warm during such difficult times.” Thanks to his help, Tzu Chi volunteers could communicate with the Hispanic residents and learn more about their situation.

Victor, 88 years old, has been living alone in his motorhome for eight years, and first, expressed his gratitude to Jauquin, who is a good neighbor and helps take care of him, then ex-

claimed, “And now, I have you delivering these living essentials to help me, I really appreciate it.” Jauquin had tears in his eyes as he translated for Victor.



Tzu Chi volunteers give Victor, age 88, a warm blanket and other goods to help him through the winter. Photo/Judy Liao

As they went from one motorhome to another, the volunteers heard the care recipient families’ stories. Despite her limited job opportunities due to the language barrier, Bianca, from El Salvador, managed to help bring her daughter and grandchildren to the U.S. to join her. The family had just reunited the day before, and everyone was now living in the motorhome. The timing of the supplies from Tzu Chi was a godsend:

***“We’re really blessed. [May] God bring you more blessings and give you more opportunities to give in the future. We don’t have any resources here; we’re so moved by your efforts in bringing these essential supplies to us.***

*Bianca  
Care Recipient*

Obtaining daily necessities that most people have and taken for granted is a daily worry here, yet this night, as the city was locking down, these families found some relief. Moreover, as they left, the volunteers already began planning for more distributions and the establishment of individual care cases for long-term aid.

Forging and maintaining long-term relationships within the communities they serve is always in Tzu Chi volunteers’ hearts. In Tzu Chi USA’s Southern Region, volunteers in Houston have been visiting Wellsprings Village Inc. since 2014 and continued to do so during the pandemic’s first winter.



Volunteers from Tzu Chi USA’s Houston office carefully ready supplies for delivery to Wellsprings Village. Photo/Sue Shiu

The nonprofit charitable organization offers long-term transitional housing and supportive services for homeless and abused women, and in the beginning, Tzu Chi volunteers occasionally visited to offer emotional support. With approval from the center’s management, the visits evolved to a monthly program, through which volunteers also provide cleaning supplies or personal hygiene products.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Tzu Chi volunteers have continued to bring cleaning supplies along with masks, sanitizers, and more necessities for both the residents and staff. And near the end of 2020, to spread some Christmas cheer, the volunteers decided to provide care packages as gifts. On December 16, they brought the presents to the center, where they discovered Wellspring Village had recognized Tzu Chi’s aid through its annual Humanitarian Award.

## Improving Online Learning for Students

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted our lives in many ways, and especially for students, for whom in-person class attendance has been repeatedly interrupted due to school closures. While remote learning from home has worked for the most part, for some families, the lack of a home computer has become an unprecedented obstacle in their children’s ability to continue their education.

Tzu Chi USA’s Northwest Region volunteers in Silicon Valley decided to donate laptops to help migrant farmworker and undocumented low-income families who can’t afford such equipment for their children overcome this new challenge. In October, with a referral from the County of Santa Clara Social Services Agency, accompanied by its social workers, Tzu Chi volunteers began this far-seeing care mission.



Israel Rivera Alvarado (right), a social worker, assists Tzu Chi volunteers in donating computers and daily living supplies to migrant farmworker families. Photo/Judy Liao

Israel Rivera Alvarado, social worker and California Migrant Education Program (MEP) Advocate at the Santa Clara County Office of Education, was part of the team and knew how the computers could make a difference in these families' lives. Apart from enabling students to attend online classes, they would also allow these families to find out about and apply for other resources that may be available to them.

Each student who received a laptop was delighted, most probably never expecting such a gift, and from a group of strangers. Diego, who lives with his parents in a rented cabin near a farm in a small town near Santa Cruz, just started Grade 7 after the summer break. When he received a laptop computer from Tzu Chi, he was overwhelmed with joy.

Diego's parents are from a village in Mexico and have been working hard harvesting crops in the U.S. for 16 years to survive. While they never had the opportunity to learn English, Diego, born and raised in the United States, speaks it fluently. This and the fact that he can get an education make him the hope of the family.



Luis receives a new computer from Tzu Chi, which will help him continue his education. Photo/Judy Liao

Luis was another student who received a computer. While age 14, he's only in Grade 7 instead of Grade 9, as is the norm. He and his father, Jorge, came to the U.S. from Guatemala two years ago. They live on a strawberry farm in a horse barn converted to living quarters for six

single male workers. Luis is the only kid, sharing accommodations consisting of basic beds between partitions subdividing the space into separate units.

Life is hard for the father and son. In 2020, due to the pandemic and wildfires nearby, Jorge's working hours diminished significantly, and he's trying to find another job to make ends meet. Luis is the only son in the U.S. with his father; his five siblings are with their mother back in Guatemala, who also takes care of the couple's elderly parents.

Jorge struggles to survive in the U.S. and provide for his extended family back home, his worries about them a constant source of suffering. As was the case with Diego, his oldest son Luis, too, will become this family's hope, with the associated responsibilities.

Christopher Yang, an 18-year-old Tzu Chi volunteer who grew up in Northern California surrounded by all the conveniences and benefits of technology, was on the team of volunteers giving out the computers. Being just a few years older than the students, the experience of meeting the children of underprivileged migrant workers on this mission moved Christopher deeply.

**“These students who received laptop computers have the same learning ability and the same desire to learn as we do. They just need a computer.**

Christopher Yang  
Tzu Chi Volunteer



Tzu Chi volunteer Christopher Yang (front) watches as Ludys uses his new computer for the first time. Photo/Judy Liao

After Christopher helped Ludys set up his new computer, the boy rushed to use Google Translate from Spanish to English so the two could converse. While the boy is 14 years old, he's only in Grade 6. Due to his father's undocumented immigrant status, the jobs he finds are

unstable, and as a result, the family is often on the move. Although they have been in the U.S. for some time, changing schools frequently, Ludys doesn't speak English fluently and can't keep up with students his age.

Nonetheless, Ludys is the luckiest one in the family of seven, as he's the only one who has had the opportunity to go to school at all. As he received the laptop computer, his eyes sparkled with joy, as everyone in the family knows the access to the world of knowledge and opportunity this gift will bring.



In addition to laptops, Tzu Chi volunteers also give bags with Jing Si Instant Rice, noodles, cloth masks, cleaning supplies, and hand sanitizer to the families. Photo/Judy Liao

In San Francisco, Tzu Chi USA's Northwest Region volunteers hoped to facilitate remote learning for underprivileged students as well. Beyond owning a computer, headsets are indispensable for online learning and can enhance students' ability to concentrate, especially in overcrowded homes. Volunteers from Tzu Chi USA's San Francisco Branch were motivated to answer this need.

Tzu Chi USA has been providing food distributions in Gordon J. Lau Elementary School, the largest primary school in San Francisco's Chinatown, for the past 12 years. All the students here are from recent immigrant and low-income families, and a quarter of them reside in single room occupancy (SRO) housing, often sharing a space of 80 to 140 square feet with the entire family. These are not ideal conditions for focused study.

Tzu Chi volunteers searched online and ordered the most appropriate headsets for children that block external noise and are comfortable to wear. They then tested the quality of each one individually to ensure everything works as it should once they arrived. Finally, on October 13, a team of volunteers distributed the headsets at

Gordon J. Lau Elementary School. At the same time, they provided whiteboards, which teachers at the school indicated were also important.

It was an opportunity for Tzu Chi volunteers and many parents to reconnect after months without any contact due to recurring stay-at-home directives. The volunteers also gave out Tzu Chi's noodles and Jing Si Instant Rice, favorite foods in many families.

Jinghua Chen, a mother of two who has been receiving Tzu Chi USA's aid for some time, declared, "I'm so grateful that Tzu Chi has been supporting me and my two kids both financially and with essential supplies. We received a cash card twice. The kids really like to eat Jing Si Rice and noodles. And this time, I'm receiving the headsets, whiteboards, masks, and Jing Si Rice. Thank you so much!"

Gloria Choy, Principal of Gordon J. Lau Elementary School, was at the distribution event as well and equally expressed her gratitude:

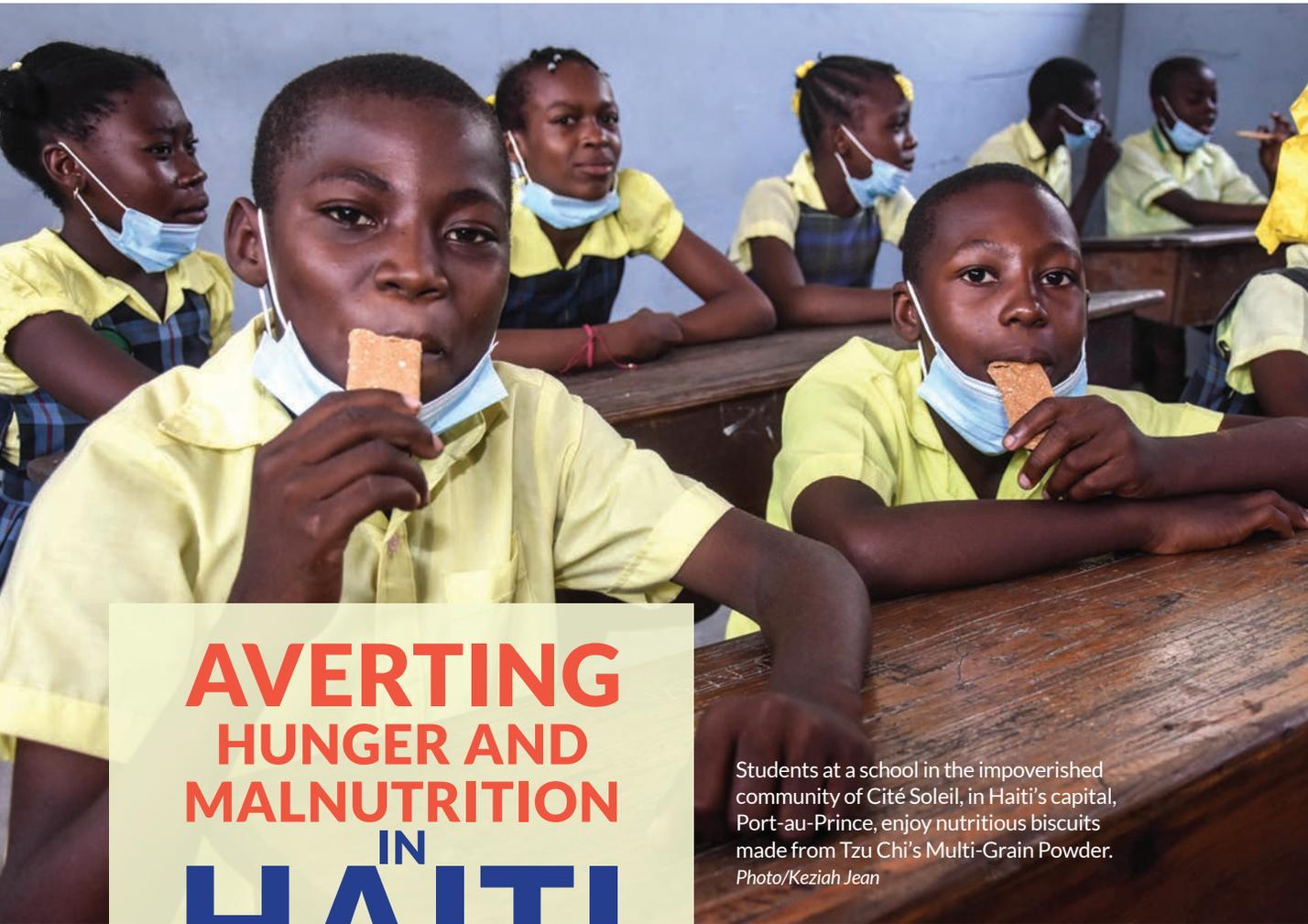
***“Thanks to Tzu Chi for distributing emergency aid to families living in SRO housing at our school. I've known Tzu Chi for more than 12 years. Tzu Chi has always cared for students, parents, and teachers. When there's a special case, the first thing I think of is Tzu Chi, gratitude from the bottom of my heart.”***

*Gloria Choy*

*Gordon J. Lau Elementary School Principal*

The day after the distribution, Tzu Chi volunteers visited the homes of some students living in SRO housing to see how they were faring with the new headsets. Watching the children at their computers, attentive and undistracted, was all the reward they needed for another mission hitting the mark.

Indeed, there were many such moments of heartfelt joy for Tzu Chi volunteers over the last few months, as they accomplished an array of aid missions across America, in advance of and during the winter of 2020. And now, their plans for the Spring and Summer of 2021 are already unfolding and underway. 🌱



# AVERTING HUNGER AND MALNUTRITION IN HAÏTI DURING THE PANDEMIC

Students at a school in the impoverished community of Cité Soleil, in Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince, enjoy nutritious biscuits made from Tzu Chi's Multi-Grain Powder.  
*Photo/Keziah Jean*

*By Grace Wong, Keziah Jean, Pheel Wang  
Translated by Pen-Chi Liu, Diana Chang  
Edited by Ida Eva Zielinska*

**T**zu Chi USA has been providing continual aid in Haiti for over a decade now. Thankfully, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 did not halt these efforts, although conditions in the country have deteriorated dangerously, making the provision of this support increasingly hazardous and challenging.

**“ Since mid-2020, social unrest in Haiti has been like a nightmare. Our Haitian volunteers said that this is the worst situation they have encountered in their lives. It is difficult for Westerners to imagine.**

*James Chen  
Tzu Chi Volunteer*

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs has currently placed Haiti at the most critical level in their Travel Advisories ranking, "Red: Do Not Travel," and describes the risks: "Violent crime, such as armed robbery and carjacking, is common. Kidnapping is widespread. [...] Demonstrations, tire burning, and roadblocks are frequent, unpredictable, and can turn violent."

Notwithstanding the pandemic's additional bearing down on the country's economy, Haitians were already struggling in extreme poverty before this global crisis emerged. It appears that people are desperate, and resorting to violence may be their last resort in terms of sheer survival.

"[Due to] the political, economic, and social turmoil in Haiti, it is always difficult for us to achieve something in Haiti," James Chen, head of Tzu Chi USA's aid missions in Haiti, points out. Still, while Tzu Chi volunteers may have been ready to weather today's escalated perils, they can't even reach the country at the moment. "The Haitian government stopped commercial passenger flights [...] which prevents us from entering Haiti," James reveals.

Yet, as the love and care must go on, the team is successfully circumventing the problem through monthly virtual meetings to manage ongoing programs and the steadfast strides of Tzu Chi's cherished local partners on the ground in Haiti. Father Zucchi Ange Olibrice, Executive Director of Oeuvre des Petites Écoles de Père Bohnen (OPEPB), who has been at the forefront of Tzu Chi's aid in Haiti for years, holds a central

role and is finding ways around the difficulties of distribution during the pandemic.

When Multi-Grain Powder shipped from Tzu Chi's global headquarters in Taiwan arrived, Father Zucchi had his concerns. A large portion of the supply was for single-parent families in Cité Soleil and La Saline, two major slums in Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince. However, the situation in those communities had deteriorated significantly. Nonetheless, he went forward with the plan, recruiting local volunteers to bring the food supplement to the intended recipients securely.

Additionally, the volunteers delivered the powder in an ingeniously tasty form: Cookies baked by OPEPB school staff and faculty. Father Zucchi remembers fondly how the tradition began in 2018, when, "We decided to make all the grain powders into nutritious cookies and provide them to the people in need in the slums and the students in slum schools."



In 2018: Tzu Chi volunteer James Chen (second left) and OPEPB school staff and faculty proudly show the baked product they learned to make from Tzu Chi's Multi-Grain Powder.

*Photo/Keziah Jean*



Tzu Chi's Multi-Grain Powder biscuits in the making. *Photo/Keziah Jean*

Transforming the powder into cookies continues until now, as the health benefits, especially for children, have become evident. "According to past experience, when the school provides multi-grain cookies, the children's height, weight, and health status have all improved, and their health conditions have also greatly improved. The students were less likely to get sick," Father Zucchi is glad to share.



Delicious and healthy multi-grain biscuits infused with Tzu Chi's love and care. Photo/Keziah Jean

However, Tzu Chi's Multi-Grain Powder may be of even greater importance at the moment. According to The World Bank's recent analysis, the pandemic will push 115 million people into extreme poverty worldwide. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) also pointed out that children whose families fall into poverty are prone to malnutrition. In the worst situations, children in impoverished countries and regions are the first to bear the brunt, and the result can be fatal.

***While we still don't know the direct impact of COVID-19 on malnourished children, we can only assume that malnourished children, who are immunocompromised, may be at a higher risk of becoming critically ill and/or die from COVID-19.***

Vilma Tyler  
Senior Nutrition Specialist  
UNICEF MENA

Father Zucchi considers the biscuits made from Tzu Chi's Multi-Grain Powder to be a life-saving staple during the pandemic. Moreover, they are popular due to the tailored recipe. He explains: "Because Haitians prefer stronger flavors and have a sweet tooth, we must add sugar when making them. And these cookies are suitable for their taste buds." But most importantly, they provide an essential food supplement, helping to strengthen people's immunity and diminish their chances of contracting COVID-19.

And, during the pandemic, these nourishing biscuits are not only reaching children in schools but also beyond. Father Zucchi and Johnson Chang, a local Tzu Chi volunteer, are distributing the cookies to vulnerable populations in Port-au-Prince's most impoverished communities. Together, in 2020, they brought this vital nutritional supplement to more than 18,000 children, elders living alone, and people with disabilities.

***I'm grateful for Master Cheng Yen and Tzu Chi volunteers for always caring and thinking of us and helping the Cité Soleil and La Saline community. We still have a long way to go for our children's future.***

Father Zucchi Ange Olibrice  
Executive Director, OPEPB  
Tzu Chi Volunteer



The faculty and staff of an OPEPB school make cookies with Tzu Chi's Multi-Grain Powder delivered to Haiti in August. Photo/Keziah Jean



Students make signs to say "Thank you" to Master Cheng Yen and Tzu Chi. Photo/Keziah Jean

Another ongoing Tzu Chi charity program in Haiti is the regular provision of rice. Once again, many distributions in the underprivileged communities of La Saline and Cité Soleil proceeded in collaboration with Father Zucchi and OPEPB schools. The history of OPEPB's food aid in these slums is a touching one and began in 1954 with the launch of their School Hot Lunch Program inspired by the old Haitian adage, "An empty stomach has no ears."

The custom of providing a free lunch continues until this day, and according to OPEPB's website, "It has been said that OPEPB has the largest free cafeteria in the world. We feed over 25,000 children daily (and hope to increase that number as parents realize that sending their children to school accomplishes two basic needs: education for their children and a place where they may receive free meals)."

However, OPEPB's free lunch program is interrupted during the summer vacation, which extends three months in Haiti. Therefore, providing rice from Tzu Chi becomes especially important before and after the vacation period. Two bags of rice had been given to students' families before the 2020 summer break to ensure the children would not go hungry, and they received more at the start of the next academic year.



Students of the La Saline community in Haiti are excited when they return to school and see bags of rice from Tzu Chi. Photo/Keziah Jean



More than 1,500 families benefited from this rice distribution. Photo/Keziah Jean

“Today is the first day of October. It is also our school’s first day of the new semester. After this first day, the students will go home and will return after seven days to officially start school. So, we use this opportunity to distribute rice to the parents,” Father Zucchi explained.



Father Zucchi Ange Olibrice (left) and Johnson Chang (right) are the driving force for Tzu Chi’s unconditional love in Haiti. *Photo/Keziah Jean*

Father Zucchi and Johnson Chang mobilized a team of local Haitian volunteers to help with the rice distribution, and they began by unloading the staple from the many trucks used to transport it to the school. Once everything was ready, the volunteers started the distribution event by performing a sign language song, bringing even more cheer to this happy occasion.

Everyone waited their turn patiently, then when leaving the distribution, with joyful smiles, some fathers carried the bag of rice they received on their shoulders while holding their child by the hand. Mothers transported the rice on top of their heads while their children ran ahead towards home, eager to enjoy a delicious meal.

**“I am so happy and grateful to receive the rice. Thank you, people of Taiwan, for helping us. Thank you, Master Cheng Yen, and all the good-hearted people who care about Haiti.**

*Guerta Goger  
Parent and Care Recipient*

A total of 1,532 households benefited from this single rice distribution. Seeing the parents’ and students’ gratitude and joy, Father Zucchi was also most pleased, exclaiming, “I saw their happy faces. Without this rice, their lives would be very difficult.”

Even though Tzu Chi volunteers can’t currently travel to Haiti due to pandemic restrictions, the foundation’s mission continues without fail and is even expanding. Furthermore,



Local volunteers help unload the rice from Taiwan, from one truck after another. *Photo/Keziah Jean*



Before the distribution, volunteers start with a performance of a sign language song for the parents. *Photo/Keziah Jean*

with the opening of a warehouse on Tzu Chi's new campus grounds in Port-au-Prince in January 2018, the local volunteers have a place to hold regular meetings and store the rice reserves safely.

***We are greatly encouraged and blessed by our beloved Master Cheng Yen, Tzu Chi's global headquarters, and Tzu Chi USA's national headquarters. We receive more relief supplies from Taiwan and the United States every year.***

*James Chen  
Tzu Chi Volunteer*

Through the local Haitian team's collective persistence, in 2020, Tzu Chi managed to distribute 90,000 bags of rice, 20,000 pairs of shoes, and a shipping container's worth of Multi-Grain Powder and personal protective equipment. While there may be a physical distance right now between Tzu Chi volunteers in the U.S. and their colleagues in Haiti, they remain as close as ever since they are of one heart, always concerned about the people's needs, and doing their utmost to meet them without delay. 🌱



Students who go to school on their own could also receive the rice before going home. *Photo/Keziah Jean*



Guerda Goger, a parent, carries the bag of rice she received on her head as she leaves the distribution. *Photo/Keziah Jean*



Parents, who are now familiar with Tzu Chi's rice distribution process, line up in an orderly fashion to receive the rice. *Photo/Keziah Jean*



A student takes the opportunity to help her mother carry the rice home. *Photo/Keziah Jean*



# YOUTH REFLECT ON THE FUTURE THEY WANT AND HOW TO ACHIEVE IT

ACHIEVE IT  
AND HOW TO

By Ariel Tsai, Iris Chiou  
Edited by Ida Eva Zielinska

The end of September 2020 marked six months since Andrew Cuomo, the Governor of New York, had issued a statewide stay-at-home order. The new school year had begun, with many schools conducting classes either entirely online or using a hybrid model. And, COVID-19 cases were on the rise again.

2020, a year many had only somewhat-jokingly called “the worst year ever,” was coming to a close. And yet, the end of our woes seemed nowhere in sight, with the lasting implications of the pandemic, natural disasters related to climate change, geopolitical conflict, racial unrest, and so on, ever-present, with no promise of easy resolution.

Within this context, Joanna Zhang, a certified Tzu Chi volunteer in New York City, pitched an idea to Tzu Chi USA’s Northeast Region’s New York Office. She proposed transforming the Tzu Chi Young Leaders Fellowship Program into a virtual event for the time being. Thus, from October to December 2020, Tzu Chi New York hosted three “Youth Future Global Dialogue” events in collaboration with the United Nations’ UN75 Initiative.

“UN75: 2020 and Beyond – Shaping Our Future Together,” a global consultation initiative, launched in January 2020 to mark the UN’s 75th anniversary, asks people to join, through surveys and dialogues, the conversation around our hopes and fears for the future and critical global issues. The goal is to discuss priorities and challenges and present ideas on how the international community can build a better future together. Specifically, it asks people to envision what 2045, the UN’s 100th anniversary, should look like and what steps we need to take to get there.

Zhang, who took the role of co-lead for Tzu Chi’s virtual series of “Youth Future Global Dialogue” events, indicated that they would aim at: “Stimulating discussions amongst youth about global issues, cultivating [a] global citizenship mindset in [the] youth, inspiring youth to take actions to shape the future, building

bridges for global youth in the pandemic, and amplifying youth voice[s] by joining the UN75 Dialogue Initiative.”

The virtual events co-lead, Roger Chou, a Tzu Chi Collegiate Association (Tzu Ching) alumnus from California, summed up the project’s objective by saying: “What the future will look like depends on the choices and actions we make now, today. 2020 must be a year of dialogue where we come together to discuss how we can build a better future for all of us.”

The three dialogues would involve the participation of high school and college students from all over the world, and begin with a panel discussion amongst guest speakers. The first dialogue would focus on identifying the challenges we face moving forward, the next on what we can do to solve those problems, and the last on how people around the world can cooperate in a digital context to build the future we want to see. Following the third dialogue’s conclusion, the organizers would compile participant outcomes and submit them to the UN.

The planning process for the dialogues began at the end of September 2020. Overall, the team consisted of about 30 volunteers, mostly either Tzu Ching members or alumni from the United States, with a few Tzu Chi Youth Group (Tzu Shao) members. Some volunteers were from outside the U.S., and even outside the sphere of affiliation with Tzu Chi.

The team received a great deal of support from Tzu Chi New York, Tzu Chi USA’s Headquarters in California, the foundation’s Global Headquarters in Taiwan, and its Culture Department. However, as Zhang explained, “The team was also given [...] flexibility, which allowed our young volunteers [to take] initiative and practice creativity and leadership skills, which made me feel positive about the future of [the Buddhist] Tzu Chi Foundation.” Finally, with the planning and organizing completed, it was time to begin the dialogues in October.

## Ready, Get Set, Go!

The first dialogue session featured panelists Dr. Emily Huang, a biomedical research scientist at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine; Elliot Maclean, sustainability leader and subject teacher at Dehong International Chinese School in Shanghai; Grace Kwon, Strategist at Purpose, an international strategy consultancy; Dooree Moon, former Peacebuilding Officer at UNICEF in Bosnia and Herzegovina; and Dustin Liu, the 9th UNA-USA Youth Observer to the United Nations. As requested, the panelists expressed their vision for 2045 and their view of what obstacles stand in the way of achieving that future.

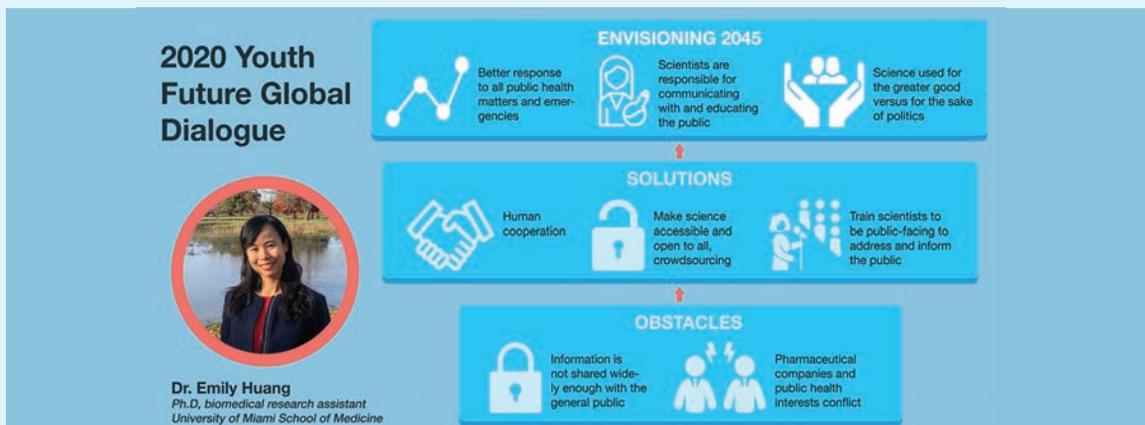
After the panel, participants broke out into smaller groups to discuss their thoughts on the topic. Overall, the future the youth wanted to see was one of peace, prosperity, tolerance, and compassion; wherein there would be more global cooperation centered around caring for people and the planet. The challenges they mapped out were many: Ignorance, bigotry, complacency or fear of change, learned helplessness, and a mindset focused on the short term instead of the long.

In November, the second dialogue featured panelists d’Arcy Lunn, the founder of Teaspoons of Change, a global citizen educational NGO; Helen Ni, the founder of Green Light-Year, an environmental NGO; and Dr. Han Huang, Executive Vice President and former CEO of Tzu Chi USA. During the panel, they spoke about their work and what action youth can take to make their voices heard and contribute to a brighter future.

In the group discussions that followed, the panelists repeatedly asserted that change starts with looking at one’s actions and thinking about how they fit into the larger global context. Lunn especially emphasized that “small actions multiplied by lots of people equals big change,” and participants agreed. They also felt that action on multiple levels was needed: Personal, academic, societal, and governmental.

In December, the third and last dialogue featured panelists Kevin Ezzell, Program Director of Lehigh University’s 1-MBA program; Jess Zier, Regional Outreach Associate, Minerva Schools at KGI (Keck Graduate Institute); and Joe Huang, the senior representative of Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation’s Religious Affairs Department. The panelists addressed what global cooperation looks like in their view and how to leverage digital innovation to promote it and build a sustainable future. They also formulated suggestions on what kinds of small but impactful individual actions youth could take going forward to achieve these goals.

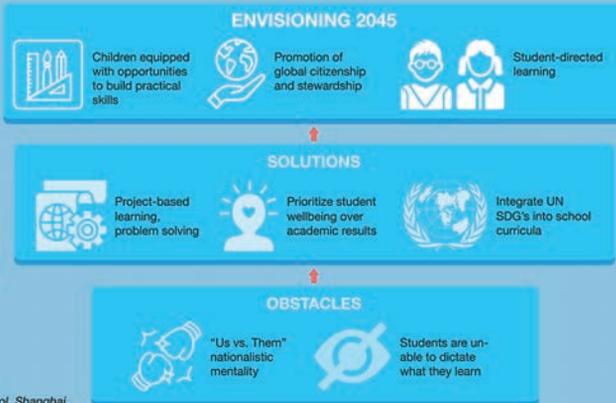
This time, when breaking into discussion groups after the panel, the participants took on an added objective: To think of and commit to some small changes that youth can make to work towards the future we want to see. They suggested actions such as volunteering locally, donating to charity, using social media to raise awareness about sustainable development goals (SDGs) and issues, and being more conscious about consumption choices. Following the conclusion of the third dialogue, the participant outcomes were compiled and submitted to the UN.



## 2020 Youth Future Global Dialogue



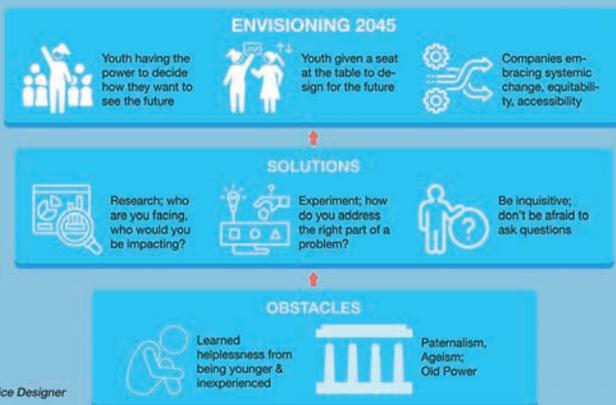
**Elliot Maclean**  
Sustainability and subject teacher,  
Dehong International Chinese School, Shanghai



## 2020 Youth Future Global Dialogue



**Grace Kwon**  
Strategist, Design Researcher, Service Designer  
Purpose



## 2020 Youth Future Global Dialogue



**Dooree Moon**  
Public Information, Peacebuilding Officer  
United Nations Secretariat, UNICEF Bosnia and Herzegovina



## 2020 Youth Future Global Dialogue



**Dustin Liu**  
9th US Youth Observer, the United Nations



## The Future Is in Good Hands

Looking back at what emerged during the dialogues, it was encouraging to see that panelists and participants alike emphasized the necessity of individual responsibility and action in shaping the future we want: A philosophy that the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation embodies as an organization. Furthermore, both the outcomes of the participant discussions and the exemplary work of the team of young volunteers who made the event possible were clear signs that the future of not only Tzu Chi but also the world is quite bright.

The diversity of fields represented among the panelists was impressive, including science, education, design, diplomacy, and NGOs, and their differing perspectives, experiences, and insights were illuminating. Nonetheless, their views were not central in this context, as the young participants' thoughts and ideas concerning the future they hope to see were of primary importance.

Since these dialogues were global, participants naturally came from all over the world. Most were from the United States, but some were from Malaysia, Indonesia, Taiwan, Canada, New Zealand, and China, among other places. The majority were Tzu Chi volunteers and Tzu Ching or Tzu Shao members. However, others were not part of Tzu Chi and its activities, and as such, praised the event's inclusivity, made possible by its virtual nature.

Facilitator Danny Lu, a Tzu Ching member from California, concluded that the dialogues succeeded in bringing young people together to talk about ways to create a better future. He also added that "For many high school and middle school students, the dialogues [were] a rare chance for them to bring in their personal experience while learning from others."

Moreover, with the panelists' encouragement, the young participants could recognize the value of their evolving voices and roles, as aptly stated by Jess Zier during the last panel session: "Right now you might not be one of [the] global decision makers, but maybe one day you will be, and in the meantime, there are so many different things that you can do to bring your background and your perspective into the conversations, both here today and going forward."

Overall, as a sampling of their reflections reveals, participants found that the insights and inspiration gained from this experience were motivating, meaningful, and empowering:

***I was surprised at how much power we as youth hold. The way the panelists put things into perspective really inspired me because we often hear pessimistic views on what youth can do, even since we were little, like 'you can't do this,' 'you can't do that,' because either you don't know enough, or they're worried that you will mess it up. But because of what the panelists said, I feel like it's not that we're messing it up; it's that sometimes we bring new things onto the table, new ideas, and it's not messing it up, it might be upgrading it. It might be making it better.***

Tiffany Wang

Youth Future Global Dialogue Participant  
California Tzu Shao Member

***What resonated with me was that I saw that there's this glimpse of humanity within everyone, and they really wanted to help others. I thought that this is an open space to help everyone. I saw it as an opportunity to open up to other people, and it really influenced me to realize what I'm doing right now and how every action I do might affect others, even if it's just a little.***

Egbert Liu

Youth Future Global Dialogue Participant  
California Tzu Shao Member

**“I will have more open and meaningful conversations with other people, such as my parents, about things like the importance of SDGs, etc. I also realize that no matter how small an action might be, if everyone contributes a little, that would result in a large impact, which would be very meaningful, so I will pay more attention to the small things that I can do instead of just feeling helpless.**

Sarah Dong

Youth Future Global Dialogue Participant  
California Tzu Shao Member

Panelist Dustin Liu, the 9th UNA-USA Youth Observer to the UN, stated during the first dialogue: “In 2045, I hope that all young people see themselves as problem solvers: Problem solvers for our world’s most complex and pressing issues.” These dialogues, planned for young people by young people, were a concrete step towards realizing this vision and a visible sign of hope. They proved that young people are passionate and enthusiastic about critical global issues and, even more importantly, motivated to solve these problems and inspire others to act. Though there is still much work to do, it’s clear that the future is in good hands.

**“Even if it’s different to create change right now, these events allow for conversations to be started. It is only by identifying problems that we can solve them, and interacting with international youth builds networks for change in the future.**

Kira Lai

Youth Future Global Dialogue Participant  
New York Tzu Shao Member 

**2020 Youth Future Global Dialogue**  
GLOBAL COOPERATION IN A LIMITLESS DIGITAL FUTURE



**Kevin Ezzell**  
Program Director,  
Lehigh University 1-MBA




**Integrative**  
Higher education incorporating SDGs into curriculum helps to foster change



**Accessible**  
Reliable internet treated as a formal utility can dramatically improve livelihood and equity

**2020 Youth Future Global Dialogue**  
GLOBAL COOPERATION IN A LIMITLESS DIGITAL FUTURE



**Jess Zier**  
Regional Outreach Associate,  
Minerva Schools at KGI




**Inclusive**  
Nobody should be left behind in the growing accessibility to tech and its literacy



**Interdisciplinary**  
Everyone has a different role to play and exposure to different ways of thinking is crucial

**2020 Youth Future Global Dialogue**  
GLOBAL COOPERATION IN A LIMITLESS DIGITAL FUTURE



**Joe Huang**  
Senior Representative,  
Tzu Chi Religious Affairs




**Connected**  
Human based, human focused digital innovation can bring people closer together



**Open**  
Sharing information more freely fosters innovation and positively impacts more people

# Very Veggie Movement

A Year in Review

By Dilber Shatursun



Meat alternatives are better than ever thanks to refined technologies. Photo/Vegefarm USA

It's been approximately a year since the launch of the Very Veggie Movement, or VVM. What began as a wake-up call through the emergence of COVID-19 has now turned into a dietary revolution...

## How It Started

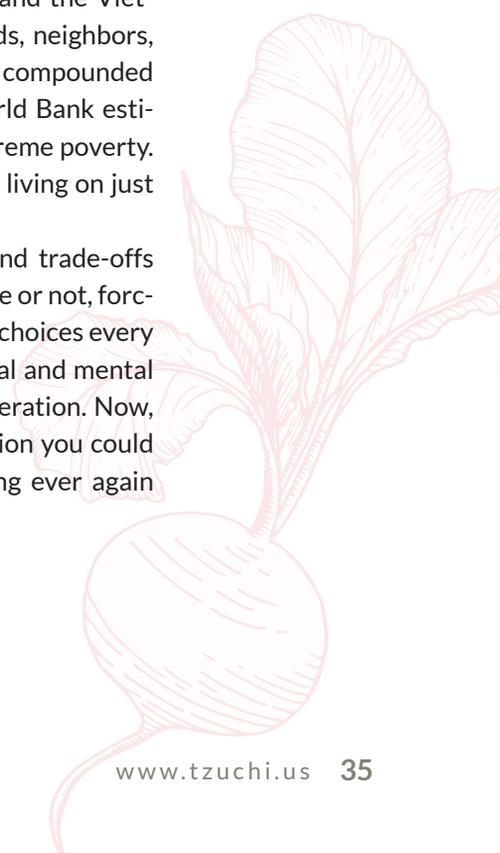
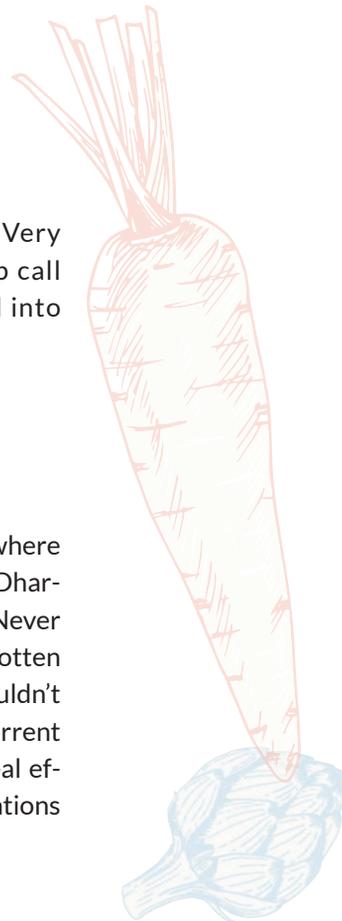
With COVID-19's first known ties to a wet market (where animals are butchered and sold as food), Tzu Chi's founder, Dharma Master Cheng Yen, amplified the case for vegetarianism. Never before had the picture looked so clear to her: humanity had gotten itself into this mess in great part because it couldn't – and wouldn't – stop eating meat. Though it would be too late to stop the current pandemic, by eating vegetarian or vegan, we could make a real effort to stop the next one. Impossible? Perhaps, but the ramifications we've faced already are worth considering.

## Painful Consequences

In the past year alone, more Americans have died as a result of COVID-19 than from World War I, World War II and the Vietnam War combined. They are family members, friends, neighbors, and more who can never be replaced. This loss is then compounded by the pandemic's economic punches, which the World Bank estimates have pushed at least 88 million people into extreme poverty. This means that the global poor have become poorer, living on just \$1.90 a day.

Such numbers translate to opportunity costs and trade-offs that are difficult to measure. Poverty, whether extreme or not, forces individuals and households to face and make tough choices every day. These include those that can impact their physical and mental health, as well as learning outcomes for the next generation. Now, knowing all of this, if there was a simple, discreet action you could take in your daily life to prevent this from happening ever again would you take it?

Thousands of people have told us, ***sure they can.***



## How It's Going

Since March, 7,650 people across the United States made firm commitments via VVM to give vegetarianism or veganism a fair shot. After submitting their email addresses at [veryveggie.com](http://veryveggie.com), each person sets a personal goal of how many vegetarian meals they hope to commit to per day. Then, over the next month, the individual receives information and advice on common challenges for new and longtime vegetarians, video recipes, stories from peers, and more straight to their inbox. But, VVM isn't stopping there.

## Expanding Through Collaboration

Business owners across the country, too, have committed to making vegetarian-friendly foods more accessible than ever. To date, VVM has rallied 44 Very Veggie Partners to join the Movement. These restaurants and retailers offer discounts on their vegetarian fare or goods while gaining exposure to new customers through the VVM network. For so many of these entrepreneurs, whose businesses have all been impacted by the pandemic, passion is perhaps their biggest driving force.

Bodhi Kosher Vegetarian Restaurant in New York City is run by Kent Zhang. From his combined experience in restaurants and catering companies in China and the U.S., he's accumulated over 200 vegetarian recipes. "There are many people who misunderstand

that vegetarian dishes are indifferent and boring," Kent explained; "if you think about Chinese food, the southern cuisine is sweet, the northern ones are salty, the east is spicy, and the west is sour." Like VVM, Kent hopes to change people's minds about vegetarian eating.



Fresh catch of the day? Guess again.  
Photo/Bodhi Kosher Vegetarian Restaurant

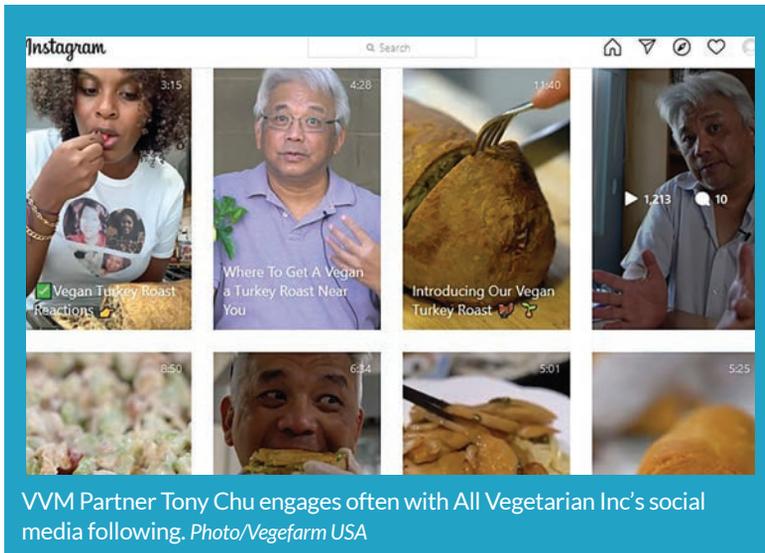
At the same time, Eric Chu, owner of food distributor Vegefarm USA in San Jose, California, explains that such misconceptions aren't exactly baseless. "Vegetarian food was not that tasty ten years ago," he said; "most vegetarian foods were made from beans, but beans have a beany taste." Eric credits increased demand and advances in food technology in Taiwan, where he sources most of his products. Some include black pepper 'steak,' 'pork' belly, and even 'chicken' nuggets.



Vegetarian and vegan meats so mouthwatering even meat eaters can't stay away. *Photo/Vegefarm USA*



All Vegetarian Inc. founder Tony Chu also imports many of his products from Taiwan. But, he points out that “if you want to get into the market here in the U.S., you have to satisfy the tastes here.” One example is his sliced vegan ham. In Taiwan, the ‘ham’ would be sold whole, as opposed to the U.S., where cold cuts are specifically sold for sandwich making. Tony’s keen understanding of his customers’ needs, no matter how discreet, are crucial to the success and reception of vegetarian and vegan food products.



Nevertheless, the pandemic has dealt many blows to the restaurant industry. Cindy Lee, the owner of Queen House in Mountain View, California, told us that when the pandemic began, “many Tzu Chi volunteers called and asked about my situation, and then they ordered a lot of take-away. I was really touched.”

While Queen House isn’t fully vegetarian yet, Cindy’s found a lot of encouragement by becoming a VVM Partner: “I have always hoped that one day I can turn my restaurant into a vegetarian restaurant... I feel I am working hard for my wish to come true.”



## Connecting with Ethical Eating Day

Finally, VVM teamed up with Ethical Eating Day, which takes place every year on January 11th. It is a global day of awareness of our diet's impact on the environment, animals, and public health. To honor this occasion, VVM invited people to share why they think eating ethically is important in 2021. Some virtual responses included...

**“The heart of any religion should be kindness. We have to include kindness toward animals by moving to plant based diets. Also, a huge part of the damage we are doing to the environment is due to the use of animals in agriculture.**

*Dave, Virginia*

**“For our planet and all that is interconnected. To be true to my values of compassion and sustainability. To walk the talk. For the goats. The pigs. The cows. The web of life.**

*Adrienne, California*

**“To actively participate in healing power to Mother Earth and my own body.**

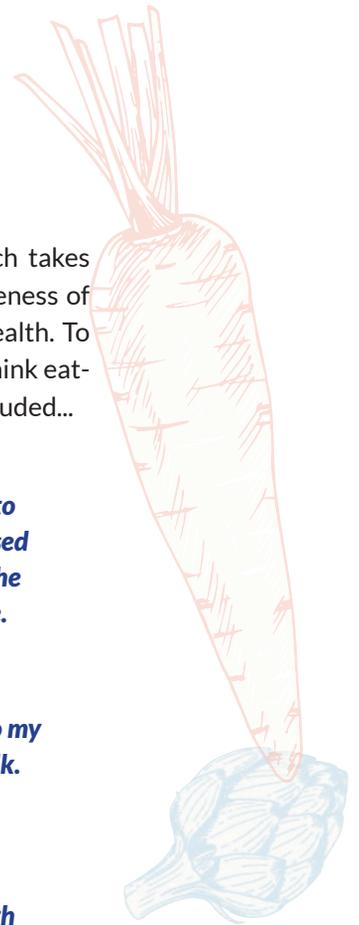
*Corrina, California*

Furthering this virtual community building, VVM also launched a series of video recipes created by teens from Tzu Chi's youth groups, or Tzu Shao, in California. The young cooks worked virtually with filmmakers from Tzu Chi USA's Media Production Center to learn how to shoot and edit their videos. In an “Iron Chef” like twist, they were challenged to incorporate a single ingredient in all of their recipes, Jing Si Black Tea. The real focus though: to show how vegetarian foods could be easy and fun to make!

After their release online, many of the contributors shared their experience in participating. One student, Selina Juang, a senior at Cupertino High School said that “through video making, I was able to contribute to the [Very Veggie] Movement by using my own voice and creativity... I hope these videos will inspire people from a variety of backgrounds to consume more vegetarian meals.”

Indeed, with now more than 945K meatless meals pledged toward VVM, more Very Veggie Partners, and new digital ambassadors, the future of vegetarianism – and our planet – looks brighter than ever. 🌱

Want to join the Very Veggie Movement, too? Visit [veryveggie.org](https://www.veryveggie.org) to learn how and try recipes featuring Jing Si Black Tea on pages 40-41.



# Jing Si Black Tea Porridge

Recipe by **Joanna Chiu**



## INGREDIENTS

- 10 g Jing Si Black Tea, Machine Picked
- 1 c white rice
- 1 l water
- ½ c shiitake mushroom (if dry, prepare/hydrate according to package directions)
- ½ c dried black fungus, prepared/hydrated according to package directions
- ½ c red dates
- 2 tbsp wolfberries (goji berries)
- salt to taste

*Recommended tools: kitchen scale, mesh sieve or strainer*

## DIRECTIONS

1. Bring water to boil. In teapot or vessel, add water and tea. Brew for 5 minutes. Then, strain tea leaves and pour out into bowl.
2. Wash rice.
3. Slice hydrated mushrooms, black fungi, and red dates.
4. In a stock pot, add rice and tea. Add in mushrooms, fungi, as well as wolfberries and dates.
5. Cover and simmer on low for 30 minutes.
6. Remove lid and add salt to taste. Enjoy!



# Tea Cookies

Recipe by **Ethan Chang**



## INGREDIENTS

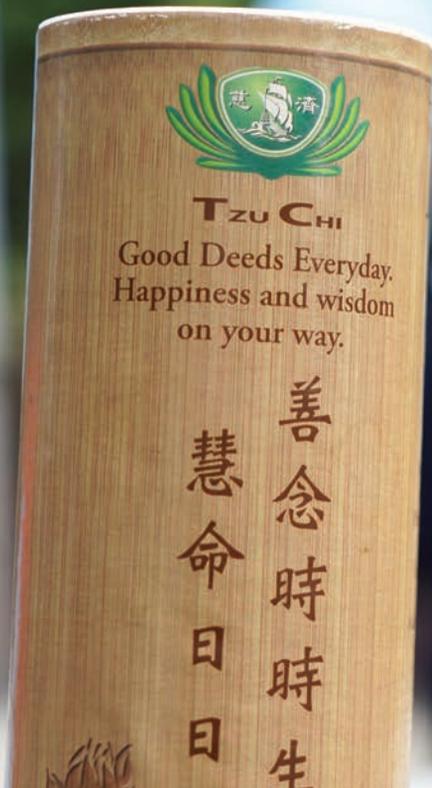
- 1 c sugar
- 1 tbsp vanilla extract
- 8 tbsp unsalted butter (or your preferred vegan alternative)
- 2 c flour, separate
- 10 g Jing Si Black Tea, Machine Picked

*Recommended tools: blender or food processor, cookie cutters*

## DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. In a microwave-proof bowl, microwave butter for 1 minute. If not using a microwave, heat butter till softened but not too liquidy.
3. Add in sugar and vanilla extract. Mix with fork or whisk. Stir in flour. Fold dough to incorporate.
4. In a blender or food processor, shred tea leaves. Add to mixture and fold in with hands or fork.
5. Lay out dough and flatten to ~3/4" thickness. Using cookie cutters, a knife, or the rim of a small cup, cut out desired shapes. Reshape leftover dough and repeat till done.
6. Layout cookie onto lined baking tray, setting slightly apart.
7. Bake for 10 minutes. Cookie bottoms should be golden brown and tops should be lightly golden. Enjoy!

Visit [jingsi.shop](http://jingsi.shop) and explore the entire collection of all natural Jing Si Teas, grown in the mountains of Taiwan.



# SPRING FORWARD TO TZU CHI CONNECT: THE FUTURE OF RELIEF WORK

By Adriana DiBenedetto, Anik Ghose

## 👍 The Power of a Good Deed

**T**he story behind Tzu Chi's bamboo banks is one of profound love given rise to by a moment of heartbreaking tragedy, and has since transformed the suffering of countless individuals across the globe.

An aboriginal woman suffering from labor complications had been carried to a hospital for miles only to be turned away when she lacked the funds to cover the hospital's security deposit. Upon noticing the blood that remained on the hospital floor and learning of this woman's story, the venerable Dharma Master Cheng Yen was moved to action. Over

the course of one year, she and her followers saved NT 50 cents daily from their grocery fund to raise the amount of money needed for someone like that woman to receive proper treatment.

Since then, Tzu Chi has gone on to raise enough money to build a hospital in Hualien, and the foundation's footprint of charity and humanitarianism now spans the globe.

**Bamboo banks** are still in use to this day for donations on behalf of those in need, serving as an enduring symbol for pure and loving intention and gentle perseverance.

It is with this in mind that Tzu Chi created its new mobile application: Tzu Chi Connect. The app helps users stay connected with the causes they hold dearest to them. And like the traditional bamboo bank, the app gives individuals the power to donate in small quantities over time to directly support Tzu Chi's humanitarian missions.

## Your Compassion, In Focus

In a time of great challenge and greater upheavals, Tzu Chi Connect provides a means of togetherness through shared compassion and the desire to help those who struggle amidst disasters, poverty, illness, and more. This bamboo bank custom-fit for a digital era gives users the opportunity to not only donate, but share inspirational stories that empower others as well, allowing users to bestow spiritual support in addition to financial relief.

Furthermore, Tzu Chi Connect optionally utilizes a feature called "Spare Change" that rounds your purchases up to the nearest dollar. Users can select a specified amount in round-ups to be donated at the end of the month. For example, app users can donate each time they accumulate \$5 by rounding up spare change through purchases made on a particular credit card, or they can donate a specified amount in round-ups at the end of the month.

Can't do recurring donations? The app also allows individuals to select the cause they wish to support – from health and wellbeing, to quality education, to hunger, poverty, and disaster relief – and send a one-time donation as well. Every dollar counts, and in these deeply challenging times, your selfless gift can help Tzu Chi volunteers deliver hope to those who need it most.

***"We are connected like one big family. Therefore, love each other during peaceful times and help each other when calamities strike.***

*Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen*

The world still trembles under the weight of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and many who already struggled to make ends meet before the crisis now face even further challenges. With Tzu Chi Connect, you're just a few taps and swipes from making a difference for a family on the brink of poverty, hunger, and despair.

Sharing one's support with a humble heart and inspiring others is also made easier by Tzu Chi Connect's story submission option. Through this activity, app users are invited to share meaningful experiences they had with Tzu Chi, choosing to either make the story public on the app, or send the message directly to Tzu Chi. A team at Tzu Chi USA reviews all of the stories received and features a number of these uplifting public contributions on the app's home screen. Also available on the app are featured news and videos that introduce users to some of the real people and communities that we're supporting, as well as the progress we're making.

***"What is to be feared is not the long distance to our goals but rather, not moving forward even one step.***

*Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen*

Through Tzu Chi Connect, you can help us do more for the communities we serve. As individuals stay at home in an effort to maintain their wellness and that of their families, and small businesses, too, have become caught in the tides and struggle to stay afloat, our app makes compassionate giving more convenient. Through the timeless potential of perseverance and selfless giving, Tzu Chi hopes to illuminate the future, and inspire active compassion in our daily lives. With one heart, we invite you to help us empower those in need. 🌱

# CONTINUING THE SPIRIT OF THE BAMBOO BANKS

***“By forming an aspiration, we are seizing the moment.  
By being persistent, we are sustaining it forever.”***

*Master Cheng Yen's Teachings*

*Translated and Compiled by the Dharma as Water Team*

In November 2020, we began our annual Year-End Blessings tour. We traveled from Taipei to Taichung, back to Taipei, and finally returned to Hualien on December 6. For over thirty days, I was surrounded by so many loving people every single day. Everywhere I turned, I saw Living Bodhisattvas sharing inspiring and moving stories about the people and events in their volunteer experiences. What they shared was all about great love, a love that inspires us to give without conditions or expectations.

At the Year-End Blessing ceremony in Taichung, the volunteers from Nantou shared about Cao Meiyang, a teacher who had dedicated herself to Tzu Chi for more than twenty years. When she passed away on November 11, 2020, she donated her body to become a Silent Mentor. This fulfilled her wish to “do the work of Tzu Chi until her final breath.” In the end, she said that she never had any regrets in doing Tzu Chi’s work, and she expressed her wish to follow me on the Bodhisattva Path, lifetime after lifetime.

Recently, I have frequently said that I have no regrets in this lifetime. Fifty-five years ago, I saw how impermanence in the world caused so much poverty and suffering. In a very timely series of causes and conditions, my master wanted me to go to Chiayi, but a group of people in Hualien expressed their hope for me to stay. I told them that if they could help me do charity work by caring for the impoverished and suffering people here, my life would be of use if I stayed in Hualien. Thus, everyone began to set aside a bit of their grocery money, putting fifty cents into the bamboo banks each day. This was how the Buddhist Tzu Chi Merit Association’s relief work began. With everyone contributing a little, each drop came together to form a river and then an ocean, enabling us to accomplish great things. Using this method, people everywhere can do good deeds so that their love may be felt around the world.

Back then, each person saved fifty cents, and even now, after fifty-five years, the spirit of the bamboo banks still lives on wherever there are Tzu Chi volunteers. For example, in Turkey, even the children of refugee families from Syria that we have helped have responded to our fundraising efforts. During the past few years, when disasters occurred abroad, such as when earthquakes hit Hualien and Tainan in Taiwan, they eagerly donated money to help with the disaster relief. One child even wrote a rain check, scribbling “one dollar” on a piece of paper. Even though he had no money, he had the aspiration to help others. These Syrian children are very sincere. This is what makes their strength so great; their aspiration is most touching!

My single-minded aspiration from more than fifty years ago is the same as the aspiration of those children. I have carried this one thought with me to this day, without deviating in my direction, and I have formed many sincere and positive affinities with people along the way. Whenever I see suffering in the world, my heart feels anxious and heavy. But when I see so many Tzu Chi volunteers giving of themselves with one heart, I am once again reminded of the great value of life and that my own life can still be of use. Fifty-five years ago, without that one aspiration, without gathering drops of love from everyone, we would not have been able to help so many people. However, what is more important, is not how many resources we have distributed to people, but how we have opened their hearts and inspired their love to help others using their own local resources.

As the day draws to a close, when the sun is at its most gentle and most beautiful, we know that it soon must set. This reflects the impermanence of life. Before long, another year will be over, and with each passing day, we have one day less in this life. But if we can create blessings every day, then we will have more blessings day after day. So, everyone, please always be mindful! 🙏



# Dharma Q & A

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

## Physical Life vs. Wisdom Life

**Q:** "Master, what is your perspective on life?"

**A:** "Our physical lives are of little significance; however, a person's wisdom life is truly valuable. It can last forever and help us to live out our potential so that we can set an example for generations to come."

## Planning for the Future

**Q:** "One member asked about the proper approach to life."

**A:** "You must take responsibility for every word you say and make sure that everything you are doing is part of a larger plan. Then, things that come up in the near future will not deter you from pursuing your life's goals. Plan for the future, yet be responsible in the way you are living right now."

## Seeing the Big Picture

**Q:** "Master, do you have faith in the future of the world?"

**A:** "We must always have faith. If we give up whenever we see imperfections here and there, those problems will just keep growing. We must look beyond what is immediately around us to see the big picture."

# Happiness

Music & Lyrics: Ta Chun Huang, Wei Chao Hsin

Singer: Hsu Wei Chieh

Translation: Dharma as Water Team, Tzu Chi USA

Illustrations: Sae Yokoyama

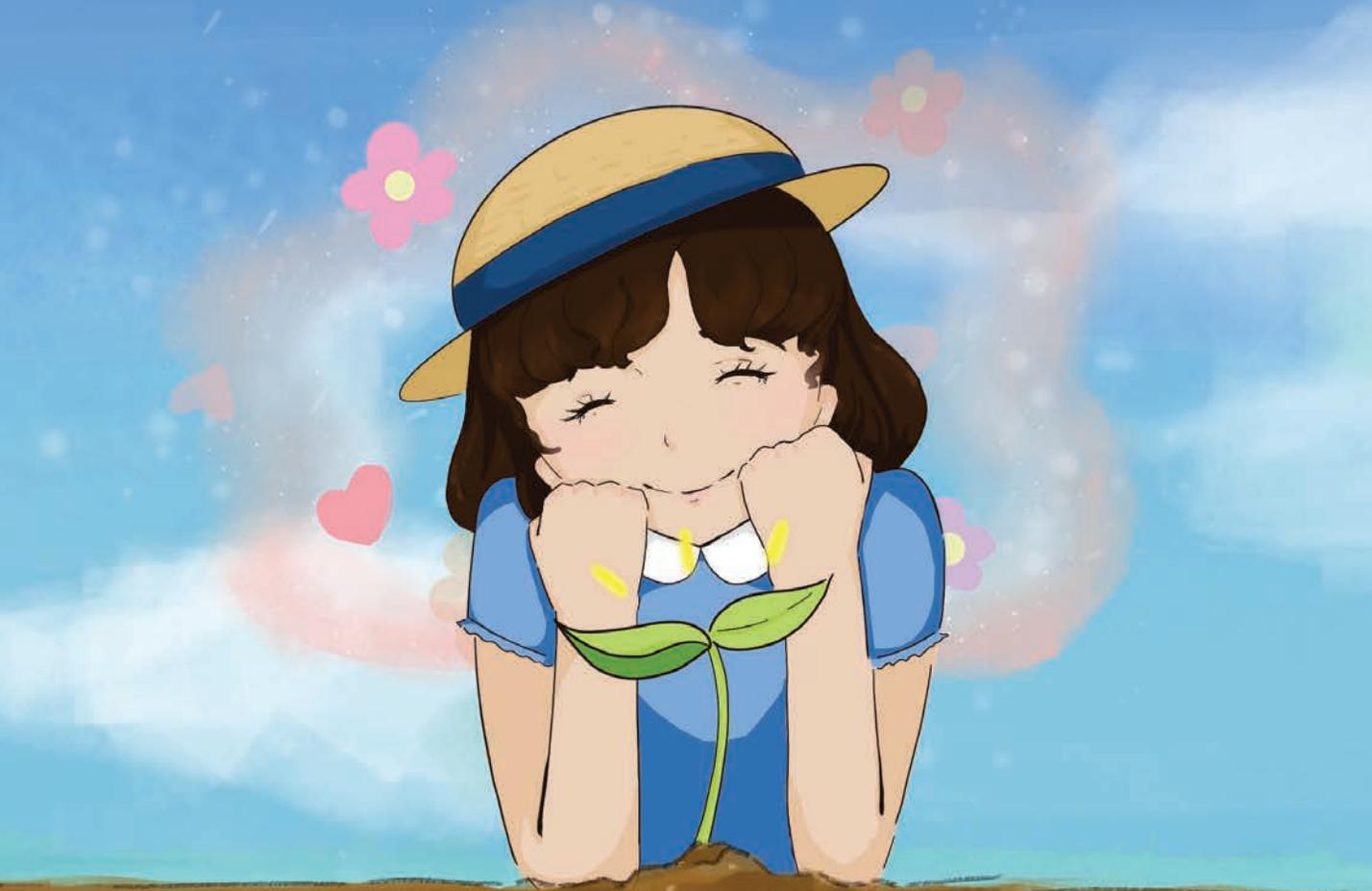
By my side, I look for happiness  
But it's not something I can chase  
By my side, I look for happiness  
A friendly, happy, smiling face

Left, right, round and round my house I look  
Warm and loving rooms I see  
Outside the sun is shining happily  
For my friends and family

Now I've learned  
If desires, hopes and wants are few  
Happiness will come to you  
Mother Earth she gives so much to share,  
If we show her that we care

And if we can all be like family  
Happiness will shine everywhere!





With the pandemic being such a prominent part of our lives nowadays, it has been increasingly difficult to find happiness in our daily lives. This song reminds me to take a moment every day to acknowledge and appreciate what is right in front of me. By continuing to create connections with family, friends, and others, I have found little pockets of happiness in my daily life. When creating illustrations for this music video, I thought of the actions that could bring happiness to others. I realized that seemingly simple actions can bring great joy. All of us can be a source of happiness for someone by treating one another with love and compassion. 🌱

## Sae Yokoyama

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*Sae Yokoyama is a Tzu Chi Collegiate Association (Tzu Ching) alumna and Northwest Region Tzu Ching Alumni team member. She works as a neuroscientist technician at UCSF and creates artwork during her free time. She hopes to use her unique skill set as she pursues a career in Clinical Neuropsychology.*



TZU CHI USA

RELIEF EFFORTS:

HOW  
WE'VE BEEN  
**HELPING**  
THIS WINTER

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

**A**s historic cold fronts sweep a nation in partial lockdown, Tzu Chi volunteers warm hearts through the winter months by supporting students, the homeless, the hungry, and our neighbors in need.

## Laptops for Students in California



*COVID-19 has disrupted routines and livelihoods, causing anxiety and upheaval at home. School closures and the transition to remote learning is compounding the stress for children. For those who can't afford a computer, the status quo is disastrous towards continuing their education. Tzu Chi volunteers in California made it a mission to give laptops to students from low-income and undocumented families. Photo/Judy Liao*

## Winter Wear for New Yorkers



*Distributions of donated winter outerwear are a tradition at Tzu Chi USA. Here, a volunteer assists a care recipient in selecting a coat. Volunteers put a lot of care into making sure that each clothing item is in tip-top condition, then helping everyone choose the perfect one for them. Photo/Peter Lin*

## Giving Groceries in New Jersey



*Tzu Chi USA's food distributions, such as this one in New Jersey, are helping relieve food insecurity. They are more vital than ever during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Feeding America, the nation's largest domestic hunger-relief organization, "50 million people may face hunger in the U.S. - including more than 17 million children." Photo/Wankang Wang*

## A Nourishing Staple for Schools in Hawaii



*Tzu Chi's Jing Si Instant Rice is popular in Hawaii, where many people are of Asian heritage, and rice is a favorite food staple in their households. Here, volunteers donate a supply to Nānākuli Elementary School in Honolulu County, where it went home with teachers, staff, and students through the school's Grab 'n Go meals program. Photo/Allen Chung*

## Support for Individual Care Cases in Wisconsin



*Offering consistent support to Tzu Chi USA's individual care cases is close to heart for volunteers in all regions. Here, in advance of Christmas, a team from Tzu Chi Milwaukee visits Tracey Hassinger (left), who must take 20 medications daily to treat her condition. They bring her a toaster, bathrobe, groceries, and other presents. To express her gratitude for Tzu Chi's continual care, Tracey gives the volunteers a painting she made for them. Photo/Meng-Chun Wang*

## Fresh Produce and a Veggie Message in Maryland



*While providing fresh produce and food staples at distributions across the U.S., volunteers are promoting plant-based diets as a means of protecting health, preventing zoonotic diseases, and reversing climate change. A volunteer holds up a sign advocating vegetarianism as a care recipient picks up food at Rosa L. Parks Elementary School in Hyattsville, Maryland. Photo/Wendy Tsai*

## Hot Meals and Cheer for the Homeless in Florida



*Tzu Chi USA strives to leave no one behind, especially underserved groups. Days before Christmas, a team of volunteers in Florida delivers greeting cards alongside the hot food they brought for distribution to the homeless population receiving help at the Jubilee Center of South Broward in Hollywood, a beachfront community located midway between Miami and Fort Lauderdale. Photo/Judy Su*

## Food Distributions with Houston Food Bank in Texas



*During the pandemic, many distributions proceed in a drive-through process to avoid large gatherings and minimize contact. As more and more people are suffering economic hardship, food distribution lines are growing long; hence, volunteers work fast to reduce the amount of time people must wait. At this event held in collaboration with Houston Food Bank, a team quickly loads food into care recipients' cars. Photo/Jong Wu 🌿*

# BUDDHIST TZU CHI FOUNDATION GLOBAL RELIEF EFFORTS

By Jennifer Chien, Diana Chang, Ida Eva Zielinska

In the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic that is raging globally, Tzu Chi volunteers around the world stepped firmly and steadfastly into the communities they serve, putting the power of compassion in action and spreading the seeds of goodness.

**“Unconditional love makes no distinction between rich or poor, sees everyone as equals, and engenders kindness and harmony.”**

*Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen*

## The Americas



### Canada

Tzu Chi volunteers hold a hot meal distribution at the Dalhousie Food Cupboard in Ottawa, Canada. As they pick up a lunchbox, volunteer Judith Gardner hands a Vegetarian Pledge Card to each care recipient to encourage a plant-based diet. Photo/Chihuang Wang

### Chile

While Santiago, Chile's capital, is on lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Tzu Chi volunteers organize and deliver relief packages on December 13 to the commune of La Pintana in the Santiago Metropolitan Region. It is their 35th aid visit here, and they benefit 171 households this time. Photo/Courtesy of Tzu Chi Chile





 **Ecuador**

Local volunteers from Tzu Chi Ecuador distribute rice and essentials in Manta, in Manabí Province, for the fifth time on November 9. As the volunteers hand the supplies to care recipients, aid made possible through the love and care of people from around the world, they bow to each other to express mutual respect. Photo/Courtesy of Tzu Chi Ecuador

 **Bolivia**

Tzu Chi Bolivia holds a distribution of aid in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, the nation's largest city, on December 8. Through this relief effort, families affected by the pandemic could receive over 80 pounds of food. Photo/Chenhsiang Hsieh



 **Mexico**

Tzu Chi Mexico launches a Work-for-Relief project, where participants earn income while sewing handmade cloth masks. For those who lost their jobs due to the pandemic, the payment gained provides vital relief, while the masks produced help protect residents from COVID-19. Photo/Courtesy of Tzu Chi Mexico



## Europe, Asia, and Africa



### **United Kingdom**

On November 15, Tzu Chi volunteers in Powick, a village in Worcestershire, England, launched a fundraising project to benefit typhoon survivors in the Philippines. After obtaining permission from Roy, the local gas station owner, they place their "Send Love to the Philippines" poster on the counter to inspire people to make a donation.

Photo/Suchen Wang

### **Germany**

Tzu Chi Germany donates a total of 200,000 masks to hospitals and care centers in Bavaria, of great benefit to their staff. In response, the medical workers with the Kliniken Südostbayern healthcare system in Southeast Bavaria express their thanks for Tzu Chi's love and care on their website.

Photo/Courtesy of Tzu Chi Germany



### **Lebanon**

In the aftermath of a huge explosion in Beirut, Tzu Chi provides aid to families affected by the disaster. With the help of volunteers from the Foutowa Islamic Association, a Lebanese charity organization, Tzu Chi's distributions in December reach 400 families, each household receiving up to 65 pounds of food and supplies.

Photo/Mohammed Nimr AlJamal





## Vietnam

Starting in October, consecutive tropical storms have impacted central Vietnam, causing the worst flooding and landslides in 100 years. In response, Tzu Chi volunteers from Ho Chi Minh City fly to affected regions to carry out a series of disaster relief activities from December 5 to 13. Photo/Courtesy of Tzu Chi Vietnam

## Thailand

For three consecutive months, Tzu Chi Bangkok continues to provide mid- to long-term pandemic relief in Thailand, especially for those without income, day laborers, families in dire need, refugees, and more. Due to government restrictions prohibiting large gatherings, Tzu Chi volunteers pack the supplies and deliver them to care recipients rather than having people come to a distribution event. Photo/Pinti Su



## Myanmar

Most residents of Mingaladon Township, located in the northernmost part of Yangon, the largest city in Myanmar, are migrant workers from other parts of the city. Since the pandemic began, many workers have been affected by factory closures or layoffs, leaving them without income and away from their home communities. On January 6, Tzu Chi Myanmar volunteers distribute rice and cooking oil to help individuals and families in need. Photo/Mg Myint Thu





## Cambodia

Cambodia experienced drought and floods in 2020, causing severe damage in 20 provinces and cities. Tzu Chi provided disaster relief in the Bavel District of northwestern Cambodia's Battambang Province, the second hardest-hit region. After postponements due to the pandemic, from January 5 to 12, Tzu Chi volunteers proceeded to distribute rice and cooking oil in six counties to help those affected by the string of disasters. Photo/ Shuchen Huang

## Australia

In Australia, Tzu Chi Melbourne volunteers prepare Christmas gift bags and deliver them to Launch Housing to offer some holiday cheer to those it serves. The community organization provides homelessness services and life-changing housing support to disadvantaged populations in the state of Victoria. Launch Housing's staff members come out to receive the supplies. Photo/ Courtesy of Tzu Chi Melbourne



## South Africa

Since its establishment in 1992, Tzu Chi South Africa has become deeply rooted. In response to the pandemic, it partners with over 130 non-profit organizations to help feed those in need in densely populated Gauteng Province, home to Johannesburg, the country's largest city. On November 15, a groundbreaking ceremony launched construction of a Jing Si Hall in Johannesburg, which will facilitate such aid efforts. Photo/ Taijung Lin





## Eswatini

Eswatini, formerly known as Swaziland, is a landlocked kingdom in Southern Africa. Tzu Chi volunteers promote the cultivation of vegetable gardens here and have established over 60 distribution stations for produce grown at the Great Love Farm in the city of Manzini, the country's largest urban center. Every week, one to three distributions serve underserved families, including seniors and young children. Photo/Courtesy of Tzu Chi South Africa



## Zimbabwe

Several Tzu Chi programs in Zimbabwe were interrupted due to COVID-19. However, a clinic in Epworth, a settlement in Harare Province, notified volunteers that the number of malnourished children in the region has surged during the pandemic. Therefore, they resumed Tzu Chi's hot meal project there so children won't go hungry. In gratitude, parents send their kids to bring firewood from home for the volunteers to use when cooking the meals. Photo/Hlengisile Jiyane 🌿



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SHOP MASKS



State	Tzu Chi USA Offices	Address	Tel / Fax	State	Tzu Chi USA Offices	Address	Tel / Fax
AZ	Phoenix Service Center	2145 W. Elliot Rd. Chandler, AZ 85224	480-838-6556 F: 480-777-7665	KS	Kansas Office	9508 Shannon Way Circle Wichita, KS 67206	316-323-5798
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 Elementary, Monrovia	429 E. Wildrose Ave. Monrovia, CA 91016	626-357-3286 F: 626-357-3287	NJ	Mid-Atlantic Region/Jing Si Books & Café	150 Commerce Rd. Cedar Grove, NJ 07009	973-857-8666 F: 973-857-9555
	Tzu Chi Great Love Preschool & Kindergarten, Monrovia	206 E. Palm Ave. Monrovia, CA 91016	626-305-1188 F: 626-599-8098		Tzu Chi Academy, Northern New Jersey		
	Tzu Chi Academy, Monrovia	220 E. Palm Ave. Monrovia, CA 91016	626-775-3675 F: 626-359-8199		Tzu Chi Academy, Central New Jersey	50 Woodrow Wilson Dr., Edison, NJ 08820	973-857-8666
	West Los Angeles Service Center	11701 Wilshire Blvd. #15A Los Angeles, CA 90025	310-473-5188 F: 310-477-9518		Central New Jersey Service Center		908-420-5218
	Torrance Service Center	1355 Broad Ave. Wilmington, CA 90744	310-684-4465 F: 310-684-4460	NY	Northeast Region/Academy	137-77 Northern Blvd. Flushing, NY 11354	718-888-0866 F: 718-460-2068 718-799-3000
	Tzu Chi Community Clinic, Wilmington		310-684-4466 F: 855-651-1717		Brooklyn Service Center	5721 6Th Ave. Brooklyn, NY 11220	917-909-0682
	Orange County Service Center	22911 Mill Creek Dr. Laguna Hills, CA 92653	949-916-4488 F: 949-916-5933		Long Island Branch/Academy	60 E Williston Ave. East Williston, NY 11596	516-873-6888 F: 516-746-0626
	Tzu Chi Academy, Irvine	4321 Walnut Ave., Irvine, CA 92604	714-624-3026 F: 949-916-5933		Manhattan Service Center	101 Lafayette Street, 4/F, New York, NY 10013	212-965-1151 F: 212-965-1152
	Cerritos Service Center	14618&14620 Carmenita Rd. Norwalk, CA 90650	562-926-6609 F: 562-926-1603		East Long Island Office	4 Milburn Rd. S. Setauket, NY 11720	631-964-3393
	Northridge Service Center	8963 Reseda Blvd. Northridge, CA 91324	818-727-7689 F: 818-727-9272		Tzu Chi Center, New York	229 E. 60th St. New York, NY 10022	212-660-9229 F: 646-864-0086
San Gabriel Valley Service Center	9620 Flair Dr. El Monte, CA 91731	626-416-4527 Warehouse: 626-416-4529			Raleigh Service Center		919-322-8389
Jing Si Books & Café, El Monte		626-448-1362	NC		Charlotte Office	4527 Dwight Evans Rd. Charlotte, NC 28217	704-281-8060 F: 704-943-1031
San Diego Service Center	5754 Pacific Center Blvd. #202 San Diego, CA 92121	858-546-0578 F: 858-546-0573			Cincinnati Office	11228 Brookbridge Dr. Cincinnati, OH 45249	513-469-2161 F: 513-469-2161
N. CA	Northwest Region	2355 Oakland Rd. San Jose, CA 95131	408-457-6969 F: 408-943-8420		OH	Columbus Service Center	2200 Henderson Rd. Columbus, OH 43220
	Tzu Chi Academy, Tri-Valley		925-785-7413	Dayton Service Center		1459 E Dorothy Lane Dayton, OH 45429	937-701-7111
	Jing Si Books & Café, San Jose		408-457-6981	Cleveland Service Center		1076 Ford Rd. Highland Heights, OH 44143	440-646-9292 F: 440-646-9292
	San Francisco Branch	2901 Irving St. San Francisco, CA 94122	415-682-0566 F: 415-682-0567	OR	Portland Service Center	3800 SW Cedar Hills Blvd #194 Beaverton, OR 97005	503-643-2130 F: 503-643-2130
	Tzu Chi Academy, San Mateo	2675 Ralston Ave., Belmont, CA 94002	650-888-1582		Tzu Chi Academy, Portland	12250 SW Conestoga Dr., Beaverton, OR 97008	503-841-7776
	Tzu Chi Academy, San Francisco	350 Girard St. San Francisco, CA 94134	415-680-5225 F: 415-682-0567	PA	Philadelphia Office	107 North 9th Street Philadelphia, PA 19107	215-627-1915 F: 215-627-1916
	Modesto Service Center	1100 Carver Rd. #J Modesto, CA 95350	209-529-2625 F: 209-529-2625		Pittsburgh Service Center/ Academy	1333 Banksville Rd. #201 Pittsburgh, PA 15216	412-531-8343 F: 412-531-8341
	Stockton Office	1212 W Robinhood Dr. #3D Stockton, CA 95207	209-957-7800 F: 209-957-7800	TX	Southern Region/Academy	6200 Corporate Dr. Houston, TX 77036	713-270-9988 F: 713-981-9008
	Tzu Chi Academy, Cupertino	1280 Johnson Ave San Jose, CA 95129	408-823-8799		Jing Si Books & Café, Houston		713-981-8966
	Santa Rosa Office	1615 Cleveland Ave. Santa Rosa, CA 95401	707-546-1945		Tzu Chi Great Love Preschool & Kindergarten, Houston		713-395-0303 F: 713-395-0305
	Sacramento Service Center	1820 Tribute Rd. # J Sacramento, CA 95815	916-568-5800		Austin Service Center	7221 Northeast Dr. Austin, TX 78723	512-491-0358 F: 512-926-1373
	Ukiah Office	527 S State St. #B Ukiah, CA 95482	707-462-2911 F: 707-462-2911		Point Comfort Office	P.O. Box 700, 201 Formosa Dr. Point Comfort, TX 77978	361-987-7130 F: 361-987-7139
	Oakland Service Center	620 International Blvd. Oakland, CA 94606	510-879-0971 F: 510-879-0971		San Antonio Office	19179 Blanco Rd. #109-2 San Antonio, TX 78258	909-576-2387 F: 210-566-3970
Tzu Chi Academy, San Jose	625 Educational Park Dr. San Jose, CA 95133	408-457-6970	Central Region/Academy/ Jing Si Books & Café		534 W. Belt Line Rd. Richardson, TX 75080	972-680-8869 F: 972-680-7732	
Fresno Service Center	7421 N Maple Ave. Fresno, CA 93720	559-298-4894 F: 559-298-4894	Tzu Chi Great Love Preschool & Kindergarten, Dallas		214-446-1776 F: 214-446-1772		
FL	Orlando Service Center	5401 Alhambra Dr. #A Orlando, FL 32808	407-292-1146 F: 407-292-1146	VA	Greater Washington D.C. Region/ Academy	1516 Moorings Dr. Reston, VA 20190	703-707-8606 F: 703-707-8607
	Miami Service Center	8070 Pasadena Blvd. Pembroke Pines, FL 33024	954-538-1172 F: 317-645-9907		Richmond Service Center	1318 Tomahawk Creek Rd. Midlothian, VA 23114	804-306-6037 F: 804-378-3520
GA	Atlanta Branch Tzu Chi Academy, Atlanta	2000 Clearview Ave. #100 Atlanta, GA 30340	770-458-1000 F: 770-986-8669	WA	Seattle Branch/Academy	15800 SE Newport Way Bellevue WA 98006	425-643-9104
HI	Pacific Islands Region/Academy	1238 Wilhelmina Rise Honolulu, HI 96816	808-737-8885	WI	Milwaukee Office	5356 W. Silverleaf Ln, Brown Deer, WI 53223	414-357-8427
IL	Midwest Region/Academy/ Jing Si Books & Café	1430 Plainfield Rd. Darien, IL 60561	630-963-6601 F: 630-960-9360		Madison Office	726 W Main St. #302 Madison, WI 53715	608-268-7692
IN	Chicago Chinatown Service Center	215 W 23rd St., Chicago, IL 60616					
	Indianapolis Service Center	2929 E. 96th St. #E Indianapolis, IN 46240	317-580-0979				



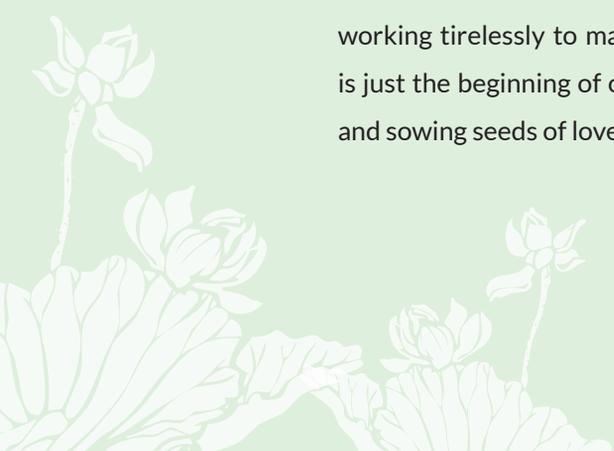
## Who We Are:



**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. US 2 cents) from their grocery budget every day to help the less fortunate, Tzu Chi has now brought humanitarian aid to 121 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. 🌱





**Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation**

1100 S. Valley Center Ave.

San Dimas, CA91773

Tel: 909.447.7799

Fax: 909.447.7948

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As the cold weather begins bearing down from coast to coast in the United States, bringing a chill even in sunny California, Tzu Chi volunteers step in with their regular winter distributions. Here, they offer Tzu Chi's signature eco-blankets, eco-scarves, and toiletries to those in need, everyone wearing masks to help protect each other from infection with COVID-19.

*Photo/Mandy Lo*