



December Issue 2020



Tzu Chi New Zealand 20th Anniversary Celebration

Tzu Chi New Zealand celebrated its 20th anniversary this October. Tzu Chi volunteers spring-cleaned Tzu Chi New Zealand branch both inside and out and prepared for the celebration seminar.

10th October: Seminar

In the morning, a seminar commenced with 28 volunteers who kneeled and bowed with respect; followed by Master Cheng Yen's dharma teaching and practice at dawn. Tzu Chi CEO, Ping Wang gave Master Cheng Yen a New Zealand branch virtual tour. Master Cheng Yen was impressed by the clear blue sky and the cherry blossom in spring outside the Jing Si Abode, where Tzu Chi New Zealand branch welcomed her with a New Zealand Haka performance. After the performance, Ping led Master Cheng Yen to Jing Si Chinese classroom where the children greeted her cheerfully.

In the Jing Si book store volunteers gave Master Cheng Yen a guided tour around the humanistic cultural exhibition. In the vegetarian kitchen, the volunteers vowed to make better cuisine to attract more people into eating vegetarian. At the recycling education centre, the volunteers greeted Master Cheng Yen with enthusiasm. Finally, everyone went back to Jing Si Abode where Anita Lee presented the 20th celebration seminar.

Master Cheng Yen said:

Although New Zealand is like paradise, we must work hard on recruiting volunteers. We need to inspire more local people into taking Tzu Chi's mission. In recruiting people, it does not matter how much people give; we want to embrace the spirit of the "Bamboo Bank" era. We must get more people to know Tzu Chi, and to spread the seed of kindness. Before ending the seminar, all volunteers shared the cake with Master Cheng Yen and said "I love you!" to the Master.



Christchurch earthquake

Volunteer Voltaire Chang thanked volunteers Patricia Duke and Rod Duke, for introducing Tzu Chi to the New Zealand government in the Christchurch disaster relief operation. Although the couple was not participating in the seminar, they have always supported Tzu Chi New Zealand branch.

Christchurch disaster relief stories

Volunteer Sarah Liu told warm little stories during the disaster relief operation. The Regional Director of the Salvation Army said: The compassion and love of Tzu Chi are very similar to the spirit of Christ of the Salvation Army. Only faith, hope and love can make the world beautiful, and this is what Tzu Chi brings to everyone.

The earthquake in Christchurch in 2011 also brought out many kind-hearted people. Among them is sister Ni. After the earthquake, sister Ni served vegetarian lunch for affected students; cared for affected families; delivered food parcels; helped in the award of Tzu Chi Financial Assistance Scholarship. In the past six years, she has also helped to serve hot meals once a week in Delta Community House in Christchurch.



Fighting COVID-19

Volunteers Steve Hsieh and Timmy Tu gave a brief report on Tzu Chi NZ in fighting the COVID-19. In March, when New Zealand went under lockdown to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Tzu Chi New Zealand donated 6,000 masks, and volunteer Patricia Duke provided NT\$1 million worth of personal protective equipment (PPE). At that time, Tzu Chi provided PPE to doctors; nurses; dentists; and rest homes in Auckland. Tzu Chi distributed food parcels to help affected families. Tzu Chi also made face masks using colourful fabrics which was very popular. Tzu Chi also set up an emergency relief fund which helped 71 people from 12 countries. One of them, Miss Yang from China, was previously rescued by Tzu Chi people during the Wenchuan earthquake in Sichuan.

Care for inmates

Volunteer Tweety Deng came to Tzu Chi because her daughter attended the Jing Si Chinese class. Tweety is fluent in Chinese, Cantonese and English and therefore is the best person to host charity events. She has been helping inmates through sharing Master Chen Yen's Jing Si Aphorism at the prison. As a result, some inmates began to write letters to their victims, apologizing for their wrongdoings.

Promote vegetarian food

For 16 years, Tzu Chi served more than 160,000 vegetarian meals. Volunteer Jennifer Chang shared the stories of their works at the community centres in serving vegetarian meals. In 2004, Tzu Chi volunteers began promoting vegetarian food at the Eastern Community Centre. They made many types of sandwiches to satisfy the taste buds of the elderlies. They also showed them how to make changes with different ingredients.

Tzu Chi started to promote vegetarian food in the central community centre in 2012. Some Maori elderlies were doubtful about vegetarian food initially. After a month of hard work, everybody was happy with vegetarian meals. It has been more than seven years now that Tzu Chi volunteers are serving the weekly vegetarian meals in the centre.

Hamilton

Ten volunteers from the Tzu Chi Hamilton office travelled to Auckland to join the online seminar. Volunteer Peter Hsiao shared their hot food distribution and environmental protection project. Tzu Chi had served hot food to the low-income and homeless people for 21 years. Every month about 80 people came for the hot meals.

Jing-Si Chinese class teachers

Jing-Si Chinese class teachers share their experiences in Tzu Chi. The teachers said Jing Si aphorisms inspire the children to be kind and grateful toward others. They too gained a lot from the teaching; they take pride in their duties and serve happily. Many are entering the volunteer training programme and are determined to walk the Tzu Chi Buddhist path.



11th October Online seminar

On 11 October Tzu Chi New Zealand branch held an online seminar in conjunction with Tzu Chi Taiwan at the Jing Si Book Store. Volunteer Cai from Taiwan shared her thought on happiness with New Zealand volunteers. After the talk, everyone watched online youtube videos on humanistic cultural exhibition tour; thanksgiving musical concert; volunteers' stories; past events; sharing senior volunteers experiences.

Honourable guests include Dharma Master De Huang of Tzu Chi Taiwan Hualien; Jeff Liu, Director General of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Auckland; Sharon Steward, Auckland City Councillor; Lotu Fuli from Otara & Papatoetoe Local Board; Justin Zeng, ethnic and Pacific Liaison Officer of Counties Manukau Police; Kitty Ko from Counties Manukau District Health Board; Rod Duke of Briscoes Group Limited; John Banks, former Auckland Mayor and John Sargent of Mondial Logistics.



Community Food Parcel and Food Voucher Distribution-2

Saturday, 3rd October 2020, Covid-19 at Alert level 2, Food distribution commenced at 10:00 in the morning. At 11:30, food parcel distribution was opened to walk-in families. Today Tzu Chi volunteers surveyed the three most popular food items. White rice was surprisingly rated as the most popular item, while spaghetti ranked the lowest.

A buddhist recipient Tian felt the love from many people that went into the food parcel, and so they donated some of the food items back to us to help other families in need. " Can we donate money? " little boy ask his mother. The mother immediately took out all the coins she had on her and gave to her son to put in the donation box. Even though both mother and son wore a mask that covered half their face, but their eyes smiled like a rainbow.

Care recipient Sela and her husband also came to pick up a food parcel, they are very grateful for Tzu Chi's help and Sela took a bamboo bank home that day, even though they're struggling, they know that giving love and kindness to others is not exclusive to the wealthy.

Overall, 224 people from 34 families benefited from the food distribution consisting of 49 food parcels and \$2055 worth of food vouchers.





Community Food Parcel and Food Voucher Distribution-3

On 8 October the COVID-19 outbreak alert level in Auckland and other parts of New Zealand reduced to level 1. While wearing masks was not mandatory, the government encourage residents to wear masks outdoor. New Zealand border remained close. Residents entering the country have to pay for two weeks quarantine at a designated site and test for COVID-19. They are not allowed to leave without permission, or they will get prosecuted.

On 17 October morning, Jing Si Chinese classes reopened. Food Parcel/ food voucher Distribution was therefore rescheduled to 1:30 in the afternoon. Auckland was under alert level one, the limits on the number of people who can attend a social gathering or an event relaxed. While residents of the community who came to collect food parcels were not required to wear a mask, all 22 Tzu Chi volunteers took the initiative to wear masks, clean their hands, taking temperature and scanning the official QR code.

Food distribution was carried out previously under dazzling sunlight which was hard for the volunteers to read the name list. Volunteers set up a shelter for the sun this time. As the situation of COVID-19 was getting better, the limits on social gathering increased from 10 to 50 people. Some people came with their whole families. Mathews and Paulicia Olivier came with their three children, after collecting the food parcel, they chatted leisurely with Tzu Chi volunteers. The event was held in a warm and friendly atmosphere.

The survey conducted on 3 October showed that white rice was the most popular food item, while spaghetti ranked the lowest. The food parcel contains cans (spaghetti, tomatoes and fruits), breakfast oats, toothbrushes, toilet rolls and white rice. Overall, 320 beneficiaries from 41 families benefited from the food distribution consisted of 67 food parcels and \$3135 worth of food vouchers.





Community Food Parcel / Food Voucher Distribution-4

The lack of rain this winter in New Zealand has led to drought and water shortage in Auckland. A downpour occurred on 31 October while the Food parcel/food voucher distribution was underway. Tzu Chi volunteers quickly moved the food parcels to the canopies and set up marquees for people lining up for food parcels. Despite the rain, brother Lin made sure everyone complied to the three steps measure: Hand sanitising, temperature check, and scanning the NZ COVID Tracer QR code.

In promoting environmental protection, Tzu Chi NZ encouraged people to bring their shopping bags. Many people brought their bags while some people returned the bags to Tzu Chi NZ after unloading the food items into the boots of their car. Tzu Chi volunteers surveyed on the spot on how to improve food distribution.

In the Hall, sister Deng and sister Liu explained and shared with the audience about vegetarianism after playing a short video. Tzu Chi NZ hopes to use a mild and gradual approach to inspire the compassion of people; while gently encourage people to go into vegetarianism.

Overall, 605 beneficiaries from 77 families benefited from the food distribution consisted of 123 food parcels and \$5565 worth of food vouchers.

The total donation for the four food distributions was \$18,882.50. 1410 beneficiaries from 187 families benefited from the food distributions consisted of \$5,787.50 worth of food parcels and \$13,095 worth of food vouchers.





Christchurch End of Year Food Parcel Distribution

Delta Community House suspended the hot food distribution to low-income families this year due to COVID-19. However, Tzu Chi has always remembered this group of people. Tzu Chi volunteers prepared year-end food distribution to them well and early this year. Due to the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 brought from overseas, Christchurch volunteers take on the entire task to save Auckland volunteers from flying to Christchurch.

On 26 October, Wang Ping, CEO of Tzu Chi New Zealand, flew to Christchurch to meet Christchurch volunteers for the end-of-year food distribution event. The food package consisted of 22 items including spaghetti, instant rice, tea bags, chocolate drinks, instant soup powder, peanut butter, breakfast corn-cake, biscuits, sugar, oil, oatmeal, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, etc.

In keeping everyone safe, Tzu Chi ensured one-way traffic flow to maintain social distancing. Volunteer Li distributed masks to everyone at the gate. Care recipients came from different parts of Christchurch. Their haggard looks showed that life is not better this year. Most of these people are affected by the Christchurch earthquake nine years ago. Due to old age or illness, they were unable to work, and can only survive on social welfare and charity assistance.

"I miss you." Elizabeth hit it off with sister Wang Ping although they only meet once every year. Elizabeth was disappointed that they could not hug each other, Sister Wang quickly gave her an elbow bump which cheered the elderly up immediately.

Tzu Chi encouraged everyone to support the one vegetarian meal a day to help eliminate COVID-19. Care recipients signed the petition immediately to show their supports.

The year-end distribution was like a small gathering of 37 old friends and volunteers. Although there was no hot food, and people could not sit down and chat, it was still great that these people got a chance to meet again and greet each other. Everyone was happy. Some care recipients wanted to know when the once-a-week hot food distribution will resume.

Tzu Chi have had discussions with the management of Delta Community House about the restrictions in number of people gathering during COVID-19, Delta House agreed to assist in controlling the number of people entering the venue; hopefully, by November the weekly hot food distribution could resume.





Jing Si Lecture-Summer Safety Hazards

Jing Si Book Store ran the above seminar on 14 November 2020. Liang-Kevin-Deng, the Ethnic Peoples Community Relations Officer of Tamaki-makau-rau, counties Manukau DHQ, and police officer, Paul Zhao spoke about the Summer Safety Hazards to 60 audiences from the Chinese community.

The speakers reminded the audience to wear a life jacket while enjoying outdoor water activities and be aware of rip currents. Also, it is advisable to travel with a company and carrying two or more communication devices when going for water activities. Another safety guideline is to inform friends and family about your outing schedule before departing.

One way to ensure personal safety when going out is not to carry a lot of cash and becoming the target of a robbery. Do not park in a quiet place, avoiding crime by keeping all valuables in the car boot.

The police encourage people to use www.snap.org.nz to register the valuable items in the house, this is useful should a burglary occur. The emergency telephone number is 111 while for non-emergency situation one should call 105. In reporting a crime, one should provide the police with exact information, information based on your speculation can mislead the police and affect their efficiency in solving the case.

The main reasons for car accidents in New Zealand are driving without a license, driving under the influence of alcohol, not wearing a seat belt, speeding and using a mobile phone. Each year 300-400 people died on the road. Currently, the allowance for speeding is 10kph exceed the speed limit while during festive holiday only 4 kph is allowed.

The purpose of holding a police seminar is to help reduce crime. Domestic violence accounts for 50% of the frontline police officer's time. Other social crimes are related to youth, traffic, organized crime, mental health and alcohol abuse. The Chinese community seldom report social crime for fear of stigma. The speaker encouraged the Chinese community to come forward and report so that they can get proper protection from the police.



Christchurch Tzu Chi Scholarship

Due to the Coronavirus epidemic and constant changes on travel restrictions, Tzu Chi New Zealand held the Christchurch Tzu Chi Financial Assistance Scholarship award ceremony online this year. Volunteer Timmy Tu presented the ceremony online from Auckland with fourteen Tzu Chi volunteers, while four Christchurch volunteers went to the school to award the certificates.

On November 21, Tzu Chi awarded scholarships to 5 students at St James School. And 24 students at Linwood College. In total, Tzu Chi awarded NZ\$13,500. The Principal of St. James Primary School, Josephine Barlow thanked Tzu Chi for the care and love for their students.

Tzu Chi Scholarship Programme is one of the ways Tzu Chi helps community schools. In 2014, Tzu Chi New Zealand introduced Tzu Chi Scholarship for the first time in Christchurch. Over the past six years, more than 300 primary and secondary school students in Christchurch and Auckland have benefited from the programme.

The Principal of Linwood College, Richard Edmundson said that due to Covid-19 unemployment in New Zealand had increased by 25% compared with a year ago. Many families are affected and some students transferred to other schools as a result. Mr Edmundson thanked Tzu Chi for the grant; he said, "Tzu Chi Financial Assistance Scholarship is even more important this year, I thank you on behalf of the students".





Auckland Tzu Chi Scholarship

On 28 November, Tzu Chi held the Auckland Tzu Chi Financial Assistance Scholarship award ceremony. 42 students received the awards, about 200 people attended the event. The scholarship recipients came from four schools in South Auckland: 13 from Dowson Primary School; 4 from East Tamaki Primary School; 7 from Mayfield Primary School and 18 from Manurewa Intermediate School. Tzu Chi awarded a total of 14,400 dollars in the Financial Assistance Scholarship.

The presenter started the event with a brief introduction about the history and philosophy of Tzu Chi. Speaking at the ceremony, Jenny Wards, a teacher at Dawson Primary School; Ms Roshni, Deputy Principal of East Tamaki Primary School; and Ross Devereux, Deputy Principal of Manurewa High School thanked Tzu Chi and the parents for supporting the schools. They encouraged the students to continue working hard in achieving their dreams. Ofa, a parent, expressed her heartfelt thanks to Tzu Chi for supporting community schools as always.

2020 is a tough year, with 1.4 million people lost their lives due to the Coronavirus epidemic. On top of this, natural disasters occur more frequent worldwide. Wildfires broke out in Australia and the United States, earthquakes in Turkey and Puerto Rico, explosions in Beirut, and floods in China, the Sudan, Cambodia, Vietnam and the South Island of New Zealand and Napier. At the end of the event, everyone prayed together, sending love and good wishes to the world.





End of year Food Parcel Distribution

On the 19th of December, the grand hall at Tzu Chi Foundation NZ Auckland branch sounded of music "Silent night.." The year 2020 has come to an end, festive days planned for family unions are not the same due to the Covid-19 epic. Some people can't return home, and many more are unemployed and struggling to make ends meet. Unemployment rates rises and many community charities work hard to collate resources in hopes to help those in need get through.

Tzu Chi New Zealand branch in Hamilton and Auckland held two end of year food parcel distribution events. Three days prior to the distribution, volunteers gather together and rush to the supermarket after work to collect food parcel contents back to the branch and spent hours packing them into the food parcels.

In the morning of the distribution day, young volunteers carried the heavy food parcels to position, luckily there were over a dozen of young volunteers on the day. Before the 10am start time of the event, recipients that have booked online started to arrive early, they started to queue in front of the entrance where they scanned the QR code for contact tracing, checked their temperature and sanitised their hands.

Our MC for the day Tweety introduced Tzu Chi and the benefits of vegetarianism and invited everyone to pray with us in their own way, and then every one sang "Silent Night" together. Levi one of the recipients and local resident in the community was very touched, he said "Tzu Chi is a very good organisation, and will help anyone who needs it, thank you Tzu Chi for giving me a food parcel, may you all have a safe Christmas holiday". On their way out of the hall, messages of thanks were left on the comments board, and some even vouch to have one vegetarian meal a day.

Litia, mother of 3 the youngest born just this year placed a \$5 note into the donation box and shared her thoughts with us "The parcel we receive from Tzu Chi takes care of our daily needs, the money I save from this I can use to buy other necessities like children diapers. I learnt a lot at Tzu Chi, to be grateful for what you have in every moment, and no matter how much money you save, you can help someone, thank you for Tzu Chi's help."

"Is it too heavy? Would you like me to help you carry it to your car?" Young volunteers carefully look after everyone, the food parcel is full with daily necessities.

Elderly people that live alone love corn flakes, add milk and that's one meal. "I live alone and the children come to visit some times, thank you Tzu Chi for looking after me." Tzu Chi's help touched an elderly's heart.

There were 45 volunteers at the event on the day, which inspired a lot of people, “I want to be a Tzu Chi volunteer” said Laine and her friend Puni and they filled out the volunteer form on the spot.

Visiting families in need.

Tzu Chi NZ contacted families that they've helped over the past year to check up on how they're doing, and sent the food parcel to some of those families. Sela is unable to leave her house as she has to look after the kids and her husband needs to go to work, so our volunteers delivered the food parcel to her house, Sela was overjoyed. Shirley sitting on her wheel chair welcomed volunteers with a big smile.

Tracy came to the branch to pick up the food parcel and felt warm just to be able to see Tzu Chi volunteers again, She remembered that every little bit count, so she took out some coins and donated it into the bamboo bank. Senitila also brought her daughter to Tzu Chi to pick up the food parcel.

There were 19 items in each food parcel including cereal, rice, canned food, sugar, flour, tea, coffee, noodles, biscuits, chocolates, jam, christmas fruit tarts and toilet paper. A total of 136 food parcels were received by 74 families.



Hamilton hot food and food parcel distribution

The first week of every month is Hamilton's hot food distribution to the homeless. On the 7th of December they also received a food parcel.

The hot food distribution is run by a group of experienced volunteers that have been volunteering continuously for a long time, all the volunteers are happy to be involved and the menu on the day was mixed vegetables fried rice, green salad, potato and egg salad, bread and desert.

The food parcel distribution this year was lead by chinese class teacher Chou and 4 young volunteers responsible for setting up the venue and delivering the goods. These young volunteers have all been with Tzu Chi Chinese class since they were 4 or 5 years old, after they graduated from class, they have been helping out at the chinese classes, helping them with studies and are our strong foundation at the Hamilton branch.

There were 12 items in the food parcel: Tooth paste, towel, shopping bag, tomato based pasta can, canned corn, canned fruits, baked beans, corn flakes, porridge, peanut butter, jam and biscuits.

Due to the pandemic this year, there are usually only around 40 people at the hot food distribution, due to the food parcel distribution, we have let them know in advance so the turn out was around 70 people.

Before the start of the meal, the staff gave a short introduction and everyone sang 'The Prayer'. Food was served promptly at 12pm and then they picked up their food parcel when on departure.



Inclusionz Charitable Trust Visit

Every year, Auckland City Council organises community cultural visit events, to allow communities from different cultural backgrounds to interact with each other. This year the event was lead by Inclusionz Charitable Trust. Rosa Chow brought 50 elderlies from the Otago and Papatoetoe region to visit Tzu Chi Foundation New Zealand.

"Good Day!" At 11:30am on the 1st of December 2020, a big tour bus arrived at the Tzu Chi Foundation New Zealand branch. The elderlies came dressed in lively colours and cook island patterns as well as flower head crowns. Once they got off the bus, the volunteers could feel the warm passion of the islands. The tour included visits to the recycling education station as well as the Jing Si cafe & bookstore, with the last stop being the grand hall.

The MC introduced the founding of Tzu Chi and the bamboo piggy bank days as well as the four main missions of Tzu Chi. "So cute!" A video was played featuring animals day to day activities and their emotions, it melted everyone's heart. "Animals have feelings and emotions like us, please love them and don't eat them." said the MC when promoting the reasons and benefits of vegetarianism . "We've never been a vegetarian before" during lunch time, the volunteers in the kitchen satisfied the cook island visitors taste buds with delicious vegetarian meals.

Music heals the heart, and can convey different emotions. The cook island visitors came with their own drum and guitar, they performed unrehearsed their traditional cook island song and dance. Our volunteers also enjoyed the music and the elderlies gave the flower crown they made to Tzu Chi volunteers, and our volunteers gifted in return bamboo banks for everyone to inspire them to donate for good. At the end of the visit, the elderlies sang a farewell song at the car park to conclude the day.



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