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Buddha Day, Mother's Day, Tzu Chi Day

After a long night of rain, the sky cleared up on the morning of May 13th, seemingly to welcome the guests to the auspicious occasion of Buddha Day, Mother's Day and Tzu Chi Day.

"Happy Mother's Day!" Tzu Chi youths greeted mothers of all ages at the entrance by pinning the carnation flower to their clothes. Guests arrived with smiles and bamboo banks in their hands. At 10:45am, the ceremony started with a welcoming speech to all the 356 guests from many countries including Taiwan, Hong Kong, China, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, New Zealand, Australia, South Korea and India.

With serenity and a pious heart, twenty four Tzu Chi volunteers presented the candles, symbolising the light that shines brightly within us, the fragrance water which washes away our afflictions, and the fragrance flower, symbolising the soft fragrance of dharma.

Venerable Master Zhi Guo led everyone in the Buddha bathing ceremony, paying homage to the Buddha and showing our gratitude to Buddha, our parents and all sentient beings.

All participants celebrated the occasion of Buddha Day, Mother's Day and Tzu Chi 52nd anniversary with joy and enthusiasm. Everyone listened intently to Master Cheng Yen's explanation on the true meaning of Buddha Day and wished that dharma will be ever present in the world, and that the world will be harmonious.

Director of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office, Zhou Zhong Xing, shared his experience working with Tzu Chi Foundation "Tzu Chi is a humanistic organisation. Tzu Chi's great works and spirit touches people's heart and brings together the power of goodwill and volunteerism."

One of the families attending the ceremony was the Toala family. Tzu Chi volunteer had invited them to come along after a caring home visit. The family of seven took part in the solemn Buddhist ceremony, the youngest being only one year old. All the children were quiet for the whole event, absorbed in the joys of dharma.

At the same time, a transportable Buddha Bathing stand was specially prepared for the immobile guests. The ceremony finished at midday.



Diversity Forum of Otara-Papatoetoe Local Board

Otara-Papatoetoe Local Board organizes three diversity forums every year and invites various organizations in South Auckland to participate. The forum creates a platform for multi-ethnic community leaders for gain mutual understanding, share ideas and promote upcoming events, therefore enabling cross-cultural participation and integration.

On the night of 8th May, four Tzu Chi volunteers attended the forum at the Manukau Cultural Centre in Auckland. The theme are "Celebrating the cohesion of the intercultural community". Li Yong Jie, Specialist Advisor of Auckland City Council had invited Tzu Chi Foundation and South Auckland Indian Wardens to introduce our organisation to other groups and the general public.

"I would like to ask people who have heard of Tzu Chi to raise their hands." As the few hands went up, everyone applauded to welcome the Tzu Chi volunteers on stage. Tzu Chi volunteer introduced Tzu Chi's bamboo bank era, our Four Missions of Charity, Medicine, Education and Humanist Culture, the Tzu Chi footprints of Great Love in New Zealand to the "We are family" sign language performance. At the end of the introduction, Tzu Chi volunteers invited the audience to attend the upcoming Buddha Day on 13 May.

Next, Rana shared photos and talked about the first multi-cultural festival which was held in Manukau on April 3. After the forum adjourned, many participant were curious to know more about Tzu Chi Foundation and volunteers were able to answer their questions. At the end of the night, everyone were happily interacting with each other and anticipated on working together in the future.



Buddha Day Ceremony for Jing Si Chinese Class

On 19 May 2018, Tzu Chi Jing Si Chinese class students attended the Buddha Day ceremony. The ceremony started with the explanation of the Buddha bathing ceremony symbolising gratitude to our teachers, parents and all beings and why that is important.

As the music started, twelve students, accompanied by their teachers, walked in harmony towards the Buddha bathing stand carrying their candle, fragrant water and fragrant flowers.

This is the first time attending the ceremony for many of the students so the teachers and volunteers patiently guided them in performing the ceremony. After the ceremony, a student, Xie Xin Yue said "I am going home to thank my parents for caring for me as I grow up". A young student Wen Ju thought seriously for a while and said "When the teacher is teaching, I should be well-behaved and be quiet, and not wriggle around."

Hopefully, this ceremony would enable students to understand the idea of showing gratitude for teachers, parents and all being. We sincerely hope that these children will grow up becoming loving little bodhisattvas.



Caring visit in the winter season— school uniform and furniture

Dawson School social worker referred Tracey, a single mother of 13 children, to Tzu Chi Foundation. Tracey had struggled to provide uniforms and stationery for her children, as well as beds and other furniture for her house. May 16th, Tzu Chi volunteers made a caring visit to Tracey at her house. Tracey's house were cold and damp with sparse furniture. As the winter was approaching, Tracey could not afford to pay for the electricity to effectively heat the house.

On 21st May, Tzu Chi volunteers organised for the children to receive their stationery from their teachers. On 28th May, five Tzu Chi volunteers had a second visit to Tracey's house with two beds and uniforms for the four school aged children.

Tzu Chi volunteers shared stories of the bamboo bank era with the family, encouraging the children to save a little money every day for emergency use and to help others in the future. A little money like droplets of water can pool together to help those in need!

Caring visit in the winter season

Tzu Chi volunteers visited **Noataga** in Otara with donated items on the morning of May 26th. **Noataga** is a single mother of six who lives with her children in state housing, they slept on old mattresses with clothes scattered about the room as they didn't have any shelves or cupboards to put their clothes in.

Tzu Chi volunteers had visited and assessed her case. This visit was to bring the donated washing machine, a single bed and a clothing cabinet to the family. **Noataga** thanked Tzu Chi and vowed to be a volunteer in her spare time. She hoped that one day, she is also able to help another too.



Working with Whangarei South Rotary Club

On 17th May, four Tzu Chi volunteers travelled to Whangarei to attend the meeting. Tzu Chi volunteers introduced Tzu Chi, from Tzu Chi Four Missions, Eight Footprints and the bamboo bank era, to Tzu Chi local footprints, scholarship programme and financial aid for students in low decile schools.

Members of the Rotary listened with amazement and interested as the volunteers talked about environmental protection and how the blankets used in international relief are made of recycled plastics, as well as the multi-purpose folding bed and instant rice. To conclude the presentation, Tzu Chi volunteers led member of the Rotary Club in a sign language song "We Are Family".

When Tzu Chi volunteer demonstrated the specially designed Jing Si multi-purpose folding bed and instant rice, Sandra, a member of South Whangarei Rotary Club, who just came back from Bangladesh was very interested in purchasing the products for Bangladesh as the country suffers from frequent floods.

Ian, a retired principal, was very interested in Tzu Chi's scholarship programme for students of low decile schools. He was touched by Tzu Chi's prizegiving ceremony and how it helped to instil pride in the student.

Whangarei South Rotary Club has been working with other organisations to make Emergency Response Kits for families in the region and when they saw the instant rice, they indicated their interest in working with Tzu Chi to include the instant rice in their emergency response kits.

Whangarei South newly appointed president, Craig, was thrilled to see the translated Jing Si Aphorism book. He said that they share a proverb in each club meeting, and that he would be able to share Jing Si aphorisms with the members in the future. Craig also mentioned that he would like to invite Tzu Chi to join their national events in the future.



Interfaith Concert – Sound of the Sacred

In the evening of 28th May, 11 faith groups in Auckland including Tzu Chi NZ gathered at the Fickling Convention Centre getting ready to perform at the concert, hoping to bring peace and harmony through sounds and music.

This is the first concert organised by Auckland Interfaith Council (AIFC). Lucy, the president of AIFC started the night off with a warm welcome and hoped that this concert will help faiths groups cultivate understanding and harmony. Ravi who attended Tzu Chi's event last year was impressed with Tzu Chi's sign language performance and asked if Tzu Chi would like to take part in the concert.

Before the concert began, Tzu Chi volunteers utilised the time to introduced Tzu Chi to the general public and other faith groups through the use of New Zealand Tzu Chi Foundation's leaflets, Jing Si bookmarks and bamboo banks.

The concert commenced at 7.30 in the evening, 11 faith groups presented their items, which included meditation music, Indian traditional musical instruments performance, vocal group from Sri Chinmoy, choir from St Mark Church, Tzu Chi's sign language performance, guitar solo and et cetera.

"Music is the key to the soul." Sri Chinmoy's local organiser, Jogyata Dallas, said "Tzu Chi's sign language performance "Love and Care" is outstanding, the beautiful performance is one of the top attraction for the evening concert."

The concert was completed with "the Song of Peace" by all performers, with the hope of spreading love through music which transcends cultural, social, religious and political boundaries.



Are you the next victim?

Telephone fraud is on the increase in New Zealand. In preventing monetary loss and or other forms of hurts caused by scam, New Zealand Police is working on increasing public awareness.

On 16 June, Tzu Chi and New Zealand Police co-organised a seminar on telephone fraud. Asian liaison officer Mr Zheng spoke at the seminar. Mr Zheng said that telephone fraudsters target people of various age groups and various ethnicities pertaining to their vulnerabilities. Common scams include obtaining bank password by pretending as bank staff, fake kidnapping call, and fraudster pretending to be from the consulate or government.

New Zealand Police encourages the public to share information of fraud through reliable online social networking sites, and urges people to be aware of new tricks as telephone scams are becoming increasingly sophisticated. Following the talk is the Q and A session where the audience shared their experiences and sought advice.

Ms Tang, an audience commented that one must stay calm when receiving a scam call, and try to obtain as much information as possible during the call without believing in what the fraudster said. Another audience Mr Sun said, "One should not deal with the scammer alone, it is better to seek help from the police, friends or relatives."

Mr Zheng hoped that this seminar could yield a multiplication effect in spreading and raising awareness of telephone fraud among the Chinese community, and in learning how to deal with it. Mr Zheng further commented that "New Zealand Police works with Tzu Chi because we believe that Tzu Chi can disseminate information to the Chinese community efficiently. "



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