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Tzu Chi 2019 Annual Lunar New Year Blessing Ceremony

On 17th February, Tzu Chi New Zealand held its annual Lunar New Year Blessing Ceremony. Early in the morning, dedicated Tzu Chi volunteers were busy setting up festive decoration, preparing translator devices and festive gift packs, assisting with parking and directing traffic, and preparing the vegetarian lunch.

At the entrance, a bamboo bank corner was set up for guests, returning with their bamboo banks that were filled with donations saved throughout the past year. At 10am, Tzu Chi volunteers guided the 348 guests into the hall for the ceremony.

The ceremony started with the venerable Master Zhi Guo leading the participants to pay respect to the Buddha. The event opened with a drum performance, symbolising the rising dawn bringing blessings and hope. It was followed by blessings of the New Year and gratitude to the past year by several guests.

Every year, the "Tzu Chi Year in Review" has been a highlight for the audience and volunteers alike. It is a video showing the journey of Tzu Chi volunteers in 2018, spreading the love around the world. The warmth, love and care of the images moved many of the audience to tears.

"Nurture gratitude, respect for one another, and love life. Foster the spirit of harmony, avoid conflicts and cultivate blessing together." Looking back, 2018 was plagued by disasters and environmental pollution. Master Cheng Yen reminded everyone to becoming vegetarian and eating less meat as a way to protect the environment and to respect and love life.

Everyone received a red envelope of blessing and wisdom from Master Cheng Yen. It is also hoped that everyone is able to start the auspicious lunar new year of the golden pig with a new slate and a happy mind.

“Tzu Chi New Zealand 2018 Year in Review” showed the audience the effort and contribution of New Zealand volunteers in 2018. The oldest Tzu Chi volunteer, John Sato, who joined Tzu Chi eleven years ago, shared with everyone “I do not understand Chinese and Taiwanese language, but we have a common language – love. Regardless of our ethnicity and religion, we are one family”.

At the end of the ceremony, everyone was given a New Year gift pack before enjoying a healthy and delicious vegetarian lunch.



Jing Si Book Store Health Seminar: -Depression and Mental Health-

On 23 February, Jing Si books store held a seminar on "Depression and Mental Health". In New Zealand, one in every four people has depression or another mental health issue.

Working for Middlemore Hospital, registered nurse, Lina Chan talked about the misconceptions of mental health issue, that there is an increase in recent years due to social pressure, but this does not mean that depression is the result of over thinking. Due to a lack of understanding, mental illness stigma is widespread in society, thus the seminar aimed to educate the audience about depression.

Ms Chan opened up Q &A for the audience to gain more understanding of these issues. There are many reasons for depression to occur, it can happen from hormonal changes during menopause to lack of sunlight in autumn and winter.

In helping the depressed, the most effective ways include active listening and good companionship. Ms Chan suggested various ways of helping oneself in getting out of a depressed mood, such as learning to challenge negative thoughts, writing a diary to name a few. She also encouraged the audience to be more attentive to and caring for people around them such as elderly who are prone to depression.

In promoting good mental health, she urged people to stay active, make new friends, learn new things, and make one-self useful.



Jing Si Chinese Class Hard-pen calligraphy competition

On 2 March, Jing Si Chinese class held a hard-pen calligraphy competition; the winners were awarded certificates in the following week. Through the competition, teachers encouraged students to write Chinese strokes with confidence and learn the importance of stroke order.

One of the students Danna shared with everyone “Writing Chinese is not hard, we just have to practice.” This year, Jing Si Aphorisms were used as the template to copy, allowing students to not only write the words but to understand the wisdom behind what they are writing.

We are here for you

Tzu Chi NZ have been caring regularly for single-parent families in the community.

Most of them are referrals from school social workers in Otago where Tzu Chi has formed a relationship with them to help students.

Uniforms and stationery are the main items of donation.

In addition to home visits, Tzu Chi tries to provide daily necessities according to family needs, such as bed sets, bedding, electric heaters, washing machines, and wardrobes.

Volunteers not only give out aid but listens to their troubles and encourages them to participate in volunteer activities to help others too.





Tzu Chi New Zealand Open Day

Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation NZ was established in 1999, moving to Otara in 2004, making it our 15th anniversary here in Otara. Tzu Chi missions include charity, medicine, education and humanist culture. Each year Tzu Chi provides various assistance to the local community such as financial aid for an emergency, scholarship, donation for facilities and equipment used for education, health screening, food distribution, donations for low-income families, donations for school uniforms, books, stationery, etc.

On 8th March, Tzu Chi NZ held an open day for the community in partnership with Auckland City Council and Otara-Papatoetoe Local Board. An array of activities included musical sign language, Tzu Chi Year in Review, and environmental projects including eco-enzyme, disaster relief technology and recycling station, along with vegetarian food and craftwork display.

On the day, many of Tzu Chi friends and neighbours came to support and learn more about what we do. Lotu Fuli, chairperson from Otara-Papatoetoe Local Board, visited Tzu Chi Foundation for the first time. She was happily surprised by the touching stories of Tzu Chi and amazing work that Tzu Chi has done around the neighbourhood.

Dubs Rai, principal of Mayfield Primary School, brought some students to attend the open day. After watching the video of Tzu Chi work around the world, he shared with the audience that it was the first time he had ever seen his students shed tears, having been touched by what Tzu Chi has done. He said that it is the best education, the education of action and love that the children could be learnt.



台灣佛教慈濟慈善事業基金會紐西蘭分會

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