

慈濟快報

TZU CHI EXPRESS



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"When we care for others with deep sincerity, our heart of love is the noble seed that brings great blessings." - Master Cheng Yen

When great compassion rebuilds a family's home

Reported and Photographed by Donna Abigail L. Bula

The successive home visitation activity within Tacloban City and nearby municipalities early in October led Tzu Chi volunteers to meet the poorest families in the area and witness their suffering. The Teñedo family, who are squeezing themselves together in a small shanty made of scrap materials such as rusting corrugated sheets, are among those who left an impression among the volunteers.

Belinda Teñedo, 41 years old, grew sickly after she gave birth to her youngest child. She suffered from long bouts of cough and severe headaches. After consulting a physician at Jose Reyes Medical Center in Manila in 2009, she was found to have TB meningitis, a life-threatening infectious disease that causes inflammation of the membranes that surround the brain and the spinal cord.

After taking the prescribed medicines, Teñedo's condition slightly improved. The family decided to go back to Tacloban City. But as they ran out of money to maintain her medications, Teñedo completely lost her ability to walk in 2011.

"My condition now is very hard for me. I am always thinking that I will be able to contribute help to my family like taking care of my kids and their education if only I can

walk," laments Teñedo.

In August this year, Teñedo's husband brought her to Tzu Chi's medical mission at the Leyte Progressive High School. She was given a free Acupuncture treatment at the Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) Department, which somehow eased her suffering.

But according to the acupuncturist who attended to Teñedo, what she really needed are sessions of therapy so she can fully regain her ability to walk.



▲ Tzu Chi volunteers arm themselves with hammer and handsaw to personally help in renovating the house of the Teñedo family.

But her husband's income of Php200 as a pedicab driver can hardly suffice the family's daily needs, send their four children to school, and still afford Belinda's medications.



▲ Tzu Chi volunteers arrive at the Teñedo family's house. They bring with them a sack of rice, biscuits, used clothing and food.

Between the imposing concrete houses at the V&G Subdivision in Tacloban City, the family's shanty is almost hidden from sight, making their pleas for help unheard. People would look at the village and the first thing they will see are the sophisticated houses, never imagining a poor family might be squatting inside it.

The family has been living this way for the last 7 years. When Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan) happened, their house was badly destroyed. The family had to scavenge for materials to rebuild it again.

Having witnessed their dire condition, Tzu Chi volunteers felt deeply for Belinda and her family. On October 20, unable to stand idle any longer, they mobilized to rebuild the family's home. A week prior to this, Tzu Chi volunteers led by Jaime Go, together with his grandsons, had brought the Teñedo family a sack of rice, a carton of biscuits, used clothing, and ready-to-eat food to somehow ease their daily burden.

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When great compassion ...

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“When we saw that regardless of their living condition they do not neglect their children and still give them the proper education that they need, we really felt that the help that we are planning to give them will be worth it,” says Tzu Chi volunteer Fritz Salazar.

Twelve Tzu Chi volunteers contributed into the cause by donating their money and armed themselves with hammer and handsaw to personally carry out the renovation. The project lasted two days.

“This will serve as an early Christmas blessing to the Teñedo family,” shares Salazar.

Belinda’s husband, Romeo, was out early to drive his pedicab when the Tzu Chi volunteers showed up, announcing that they will rebuild the family’s home. After receiving a call from his son, Romeo came home to see the volunteers in blue and white uniform busily working.

“I am really thankful that our house is being rebuilt and our situation will somehow improve unlike before,” says Romeo.

BE PART OF TZU CHI’S GREAT LOVE MISSION

*“Use wisdom to contemplate on the meaning of life.
Use resolve to organize the time you are given.”*

- Jing Si Aphorism by Master Cheng Yen

Join our Tzu Chi Family! Help spread seeds of love and sow blessings for all mankind.

There are different ways of helping with the missions of Tzu Chi. Get the chance to be involved to the following activities:

Disaster relief, community work, recycling, home visits, hospital visits, institutional outreach, and many more.

You may also contribute your talents in writing, photography, videography, video-editing, voice recordings, cooking, program planning, audio-visuals, translations, and many more. You may contact 732-0001 local 215 to express your intention to volunteer with Tzu Chi Foundation. Or you may also visit our office at Still Thoughts Hall, 76 Cordillera corner Agno Streets, Brgy. Doña Josefa, Quezon City.



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Romeo Teñedo, the husband of Belinda, accepts the eco-friendly blanket along with other housewarming gifts from Tzu Chi volunteers during the turnover of the house.

His daughter, Rubylyn, echoes her father’s gratitude. According to the 14-year-old Rubylyn, whenever it rained, they were unable to sleep at night as their roofs keep leaking.

“Sometimes we used my sister’s project at school like cartons to cover us from the rain showers brought by the heavy winds,” she says.

Beginning this day, the family will no longer be disturbed by heavy rains at night. Tzu Chi volunteers replaced the family’s roofs with new corrugated iron sheets, the flooring with new plywood, and the walls with coco lumber and plywood. They also installed a metal sink in place of the old one.

On October 21, the day of the turnover, Tzu Chi volunteers also handed the family with housewarming gifts such as eco-friendly blankets, new pillows, plates, spoon and forks, furnace, and used clothing.

“We are very thankful to the Tzu Chi volunteers for helping us rebuild our house because we cannot do it alone with my father working only as a pedicab driver. We are now happy with our new house and most importantly we are complete as a family,” says Rubylyn.

Belinda is just as grateful.

“I am really thankful to Tzu Chi Foundation because they reached us with their help. If not because of the Tzu Chi volunteers, we will always feel helpless,” she adds.



▲ The Teñedo family are now living in a more comfortable home after Tzu Chi volunteers repaired their crumbling down shanty.