

## Say No to Drugs! Be the Boss of Your Own Life.

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation

Tuesday, 30 September 2014 11:23

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“When a child transitions from primary school to high school, the child’s curiosity for the world grows. Because of this, it is of utmost importance to integrate anti-drug programs in their high school education.” Ke Chiyan, principal of the Kaohsiung Municipal Da-Yi Junior High School, who expressed his concerns about the unhealthy temptations from the outside world, is an avid advocate of anti-drug educational programs.

Earlier this year, Da-Yi Junior High decided to revise its new student orientation program so the new students can better adapt to the new school environment before the term commences on September 1st.

When Tzu Chi’s Anti-Drug committee contacted the school to promote their anti-drug educational programs, they were warmly welcomed and received tremendous support. Students and teachers from all three grades (Grades 7 to 9) took part in the courses. The first round was held on Tuesday, August 26th, which was the second day of the new student orientation. There were 200 Grade 7 students who participated, as well as several Tzu Chi volunteers, the Anti-drug committee and 30 Great Love Mothers.

### Instilling an anti-drug awareness in the children



Tzu Chi volunteers Ji Xiumiao and Jiang Ruyi prepared educational videos for the children to understand the three common drug types. The first type is Central Nervous System (CNS) depressants, also known as sedatives and tranquilizers, which includes heroin and morphine. The second type is CNS stimulants such as cocaine and amphetamine. The third type is Lysergic Acid Diethylamide (LSD) and other drugs, which include LSD and marijuana. Through reading passages and a puzzle contest to see who is the quickest to finish, students are able to skilfully distinguish the drugs by appearance and confidently recall the drug types, after effects and other related information.

Afterwards, the students played another game. 8 students representing their class have to place a white cloth that is soiled by black ink in a basin of water. However, no matter how hard they washed, the cloth could never be as clean and white as before. The white cloth represents the glorious teenage years. Once a child touches drugs, it is like tainting oneself in the black ink. No matter how hard we scrub and wash, the mark cannot be removed, the stain will always remain.

Ye Zhiyu, a Grade 7 student from Class 4 said, “My white cloth only had a small black stain, however the previous student’s cloth was very soiled. When I washed my cloth after him, it became dirtier and dirtier. From this game, I realize that we should not try things that we should

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not do to satiate our curiosity, otherwise we will live in regret". At the same time, he realized how powerful peer pressure is and believes in the Chinese saying that one takes the behavior in one's company. He hopes he can be a positive influence to other people as he does not wish to be someone who cannot make his own judgements and who receives negative influences.



The Great Love mothers also performed an entertaining and hilarious role play that left everyone roaring with laughter. The performance taught the students six ways to say no to drugs. The first way is to be firm when saying "When I say no, it means no". The second way is to let your conscience be your guide: be your own boss. The third way is to tell a white lie and say, "My mother said I cannot since I am not feeling well". The fourth is a form of self-mockery: "You tell me I do not have the guts. Well, fine, I really do not have the guts to do this". The fifth way is to be evasive and change topics whenever possible. Finally, the last way is to make up an excuse and say you have to leave first.

When the emcee Ji Xiumiao quizzed everyone, the students were able to quickly recall each of the ways to say no to drugs. Seeing how attentive the students were throughout the program, Ji smiled and said: "Well done, all of you did listen carefully! There is a Jing Si aphorism that says, "To do whatever should be done is wisdom; to do whatever should not be done is ignorance". When the children heard this, they said they will use the methods they learnt today, and will be a clever and prudent person.

### Reflecting upon his past; Sharing his regrets.

"Never touch drugs, otherwise you will lose your money, your personality, your family and friends. Everything precious that belonged to you will vanish and then you will realize, you have nothing, you do not even know who you are..." Tzu Chi volunteer Zhong Jiongyuan earnestly emphasized this message to the students.



Zhong was once a curious youngster who went to jail six times for dealing with drugs. He remembered the marks which drugs scarred him for the rest of his life, and recounted his experiences to the students in a choked voice. "If I could start life anew, I would choose to be a good child. I would not let my parents worry". Last September, Zhong was released from jail. He was grateful for the Tzu Chi volunteers' warm support and bravely decided to take this opportunity to share his experiences with everyone as a precaution. He wanted to share a life lesson, a life lesson which he learnt the hard way.

Zhong quoted Master Cheng Yen and said, "There is no bad person in this world; there is only a person who has done something wrong". Awakened, Zhong left his bad habits. While he

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operates a Chinese tofu dessert (*douhua*) store, he is also a Tzu Chi volunteer. He hopes to seize this opportunity to find the virtues and goodness in life again and to work hard to patch up relationships. “Now, I will greet my parents everyday and serve them tea. As my youngest son observed my daily actions, now he starts to serve me tea. I finally realize how important it is to know your place and stay on the right path. Being filial and doing good deeds is the most virtuous life path”. Zhong’s touching and candid sharing inspired everyone.

Later, many children came up to Zhong and told him how touched they were at his filial piety and his courage to start anew. Liu Zhongyi, a Grade 7 student from Class 4 said, “Not only am I impressed by his actions, but after hearing his experience, I know I will never touch drugs. If I know someone who is taking drugs, I will also persuade him to stop.”

### **Be the boss of your own life. Create a beautiful future with your own hands.**



According to data, 54.7% of teenagers in Taiwan take drugs due to peer pressure; a whopping 96% take drugs to satisfy their curiosity. When the students heard this, they were shocked and realized, ignorance is their largest enemy. This is why anti-drug education is of utmost importance.

The principal Ke Chiyan said Tzu Chi volunteers prepared a very educational anti-drug program for the students. He said that when a child transitions from primary to junior high school, the child experiences a big change in life and becomes curious about the world. Ke is very concerned about the children’s tendency to idolize people coupled with the growing number of social media reports about the drug behaviors of popular idols. He used to work at the rural areas and realized that many children there generally know very little about anti-drug information and need more education. Even if they move to the city, there are still differences. Because of this, it is important to support children as they grow and mature, to be a role model and provide a good education to protect both their physical and spiritual health. This way, these young seedlings will be able to sprout and flourish, resilient and stable against outside forces.

“The true happiness of life, is how you realize yourself and believe in yourself. Don’t borrow other people’s power to strengthen yourself otherwise, you will stray towards the other’s path and lose control of your own freedom”. Near the end of the event, Mr. Lin Junzhi, the Health Education coordinator gently reminded the students to “be the boss of your own life”. He told them that when he was still at school, he was bullied for his aboriginal identity. Lin added, “however, because I knew how to protect my own heart and not be influenced, I am able to be a teacher today”. One could not help feeling inspired hearing his determination and ambitions for the future.

An anti-drug program not only instills an anti-drug resilience in the children’s hearts, but also allows people to see the power of love and compassion in purifying one’s heart to create a harmonious society, and a beautiful world.

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