

## New Year Meal, Gifts to Care Recipients in Hualien

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To celebrate the upcoming Chinese New Year, Buddhist nuns and volunteers prepared a delicious meal, gifts and other services for 300 long-term care recipients and their families at the headquarters of the foundation, the Jing Si Abode, in Hualien. It was held on January 26, a week ahead of the New Year of the Rabbit on February 3.

It was a major logistical operation to prepare a meal of six dishes and one soup – all vegetarian -- for 150 tables. In the kitchen were six master chefs and more than 90 volunteers, under the direction of volunteers Cheng Yuchu and Tsai Yuegui. Made a commissioner in 2001, Cheng has been in charge of this annual event for the last 12 years and worked with five other volunteers to prepare the menu. She has a long experience of preparing food for large numbers of people, with her record of 3,000 at one sitting. She has also taught lessons in preparing vegetarian food to inmates of Hualien prison, to encourage them to take up this good habit. Each of the six dishes was delicious and healthy and given an auspicious name, to bring good fortune as well as nutrition, such as 'reunion hotpot', 'assortment of riches' and 'good luck cakes'. Tsai Yuegui said that it was no simple matter to organize such a large event once a year. "We want to celebrate the New Year together with the care recipients and want them to take home with them blessings and good fortune." They prepared for each guest an orange and an apple as symbols of peace and good fortune. Volunteers served the guests at each table, to ensure they are had a plentiful supply of delicious food.



The volunteers arranged free activities in addition to the meal. These included medical consultations, hair cuts and the writing of calligraphy on scrolls to hang in their homes. After the meal, they held a distribution of goods to the guests, including instant noodle, grain powder, black-sugar and other kinds of biscuit and instant soup, as well as 12 household items including towels, toothbrush and toothpaste and an 'environmental bag' for them to carry their shopping. The nuns and volunteers presented them items personally to the guests, to show their love and respect. It rounded off a day of joy and happiness for everyone.

On January 28, the volunteers visited an old people's home in Hualien, to reach those people unable to attend the event two days before. They delivered winter goods and red envelop and a spirit of warmth, so that they can start the Year of the Rabbit full of hope.