

Donation Drive for the Benefit of Typhoon Haiyan Survivors

Written by Angeli Adviento, Nyanza Nakar
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“The huge tragedy brought about by Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan) has given us an opportunity to unite and help one another in order to ease the suffering of our fellowmen,” a volunteer mentions at the launch of Tzu Chi Foundation’s donation drive on November 18.

To date, Tzu Chi Foundation, a non-governmental organization, has conducted surveys, medical missions, and relief activities for thousands of affected families residing in Ormoc and Tacloban in Leyte from November 13 to 16.

The group will return again to the province on November 19 to start its rehabilitation efforts through the launch of a cash-for-work program and to continue its massive relief activities that aim to benefit about 10,000 families.

Around 120 volunteers have come together for the donation drive. The activity aims to gather the love, compassion of the public to reach out to fellow Filipinos in Leyte.

Aside from the Philippines, volunteers and supporters from many Tzu Chi offices worldwide, such as Taiwan, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Canada and United States of America, are also soliciting donations to help the calamity victims.

Holding donation boxes and placards with the slogan, “Healing Disasters with Great Love,” the volunteers are divided into different groups and they walk around the streets of Binondo and Sta. Cruz, Manila in the morning. In the afternoon, they continue to solicit donations at 168 Shopping Mall through the support of the establishment’s management.



Even though Aurora Fortuna has not yet earned anything from selling newspapers, she drops a five-peso coin in the donation box held by Tzu Chi volunteers. She clearly remembers the organization’s goodness after her cousin, who lives in Marikina, was given assistance in the aftermath of Typhoon Ondoy in 2009.

“If I had a bigger amount (right now), I would donate more. But this morning, this is the only amount I can give,” she says.

She shares that it saddens her to watch the news regarding families affected by the super typhoon. “We should pray to God and help them.”

“We know that many of them have lost their livelihood and many victims are as poor as I am. That’s why I willingly share whatever I have,” says Fely Seco, 54, who owns a small cafeteria in

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Binondo. She is happy to donate 20 pesos.

Aside from giving a monetary donation, Seco also encourages her family in Laguna to donate old clothes through their local government.

Meanwhile, as 36-year-old Edgar Bacharo comes across a group of volunteers on Yuchengco Street in Binondo, he tells his five-year-old son Adrian to drop his coins into the donation box. “I really feel pity for the disaster victims because aside from adults, many children also lost their lives,” Bacharo says after watching the news.

In an interview, Bacharo shares that it is only right that at an early age, children should learn the importance of helping others, a value that they can bring with them until they grow old.

“I told him (Adrian) that whenever someone collects donations, he should give even just a peso because when those coins are gathered, it would mean a lot in helping other people,” he says.

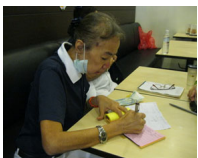
The donation drive also proves that no one is too rich or too poor to extend help. On the streets of Sta. Cruz, Manila, Tzu Chi volunteers have visited offices and approached street vendors to kindly ask for their donations.

Upon seeing Tzu Chi volunteers in his office, businessman Leoncio Tiu immediately welcomes them and humbly takes a donation box to ask for solicitation from his employees. Tiu is familiar with Tzu Chi’s work and supports its drive to help, especially in times of disaster.

“I’m very glad that we are able to give a little help to the victims who suffered a lot. We are also happy to be able to send help with the spirit of Tzu Chi’s great love,” says Tiu, who runs a business by selling plastic wares.

While for fruit vendor Efren Bacani, 42, dropping a 20-peso bill into the donation box is not only a chance to help others but also to return the Buddhist group’s generosity.

“I have known Tzu Chi way back in 2009, when our family was helped after a fire on Oroquieta (Street). My donation is only small but I’m happy to help out,” says Bacani, who has been a fruit vendor for 25 years.



A deep sense of service

Despite having a stage-four lung cancer, Tzu Chi volunteer Ong Piac Ching has willingly taken part in the donation drive. Undergoing weekly chemotherapy has made her weak and thin, but deep concern for the typhoon victims is a huge inspiration for her to continue doing volunteer work.

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“I stay inside the house most of the time since I started undergoing chemotherapy a year ago. Whenever I see news of disasters happening in the country, it breaks my heart to see that people are suffering greatly. I have always wanted to help them,” she shares.

Her eyes swell with tears as she shares her desire to do more for the disaster victims. “Through God’s guidance, I wish to help more people. I consider (my illness) as a second chance in life. That’s why I will continue helping others as long as I can.”

While many Filipinos have been affected in Eastern Visayas due to typhoon Yolanda, which is considered one of the strongest typhoons ever recorded in history, the disaster serves as an inspiration to awaken everyone’s goodness.

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