

Relief work after flood and fires devastate the Philippines

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation

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Flood and fires devastated the Philippines, causing a poverty-stricken area in Quezon City, Manila to suffer tremendously from the disasters. On the 1st of October, Tzu Chi Philippines Chapter started delivering relief goods, emergency cash as well as 32,000 portions of instant rice to the disaster survivors.

Typhoon Ketsana hit the Philippines on the 26th of September, affecting more than 1.7 million people. The disaster also led to a death toll of 240 and more than half a million people lost their homes. Tzu Chi volunteers in the Philippines immediately began their relief work the next day. Dharma Masters from Jing Si Abode also bring with them the letter from Dharma Master Cheng Yen to Manila on the 29th. Dharma Masters along with the volunteers began to assess the damages as well comfort and care for the survivors. They plan to clean-up the disaster areas and conduct home visits and reconstruction work.

Due to electricity and water outage, residents in a poverty-stricken area in Quezon City lighted candles which led to fire accident. 700 homes were destroyed and more than 2,000 people were left homeless. Tzu Chi volunteer Lee Wei-Song, the CEO of Tzu Chi Philippines Chapter, was also affected by the flood. He led Tzu Chi volunteers to deliver 800 hot meals and 600 breads in Quezon City. Thus, the affected residents in Quezon City had their first hot meal after the flood from Tzu Chi volunteers. Volunteers also prepared shoes and clothes of all sizes to give to the affected residents. The affected residents received the goods with gratitude and tear in their eyes.

After Dharma Masters and Stephen Huang, Director of Global Volunteers, arrive in Manila on the morning of September 29th, they immediately flew to Cainta Province by chopper. There, they had a discussion with Mayor Ramon Ignacio about the reconstruction work. Marikina, a city that was selected many times as the most beautiful city in the Philippines was also severely damaged by Typhoon Ketsana as well.



Mayor Marides Fernando of Marikina had a meeting in the city sports center with the Tzu Chi volunteers. 120,000 households in the city were affected by the flood, with 60,000 homes being severely damaged. Currently, due to electricity and water outage, many of the affected households are unable to return to their home and still stay in the nearby school. The city government is worried about the hygiene issue, and their most urgent needs include construction materials as well as medical care and daily necessities.

Tzu Chi plans to distribute relief packages to approximately 500 affected households in a poverty-stricken area in Quezon City. The complete relief package includes a letter from Dharma Master Cheng Yen, eco-friendly blanket, pots, utensils, clothes, slippers, detergent, etc. (a total of 11 items). Tzu Chi also provides emergency cash of 3,000 Pesos to each household

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with four or less family members. If the family has five or more members, then Tzu Chi will provide 5,000 Pesos per household. If a family member has passed away due to the flood, Tzu Chi will provide additional 5,000 Pesos for the funeral. After the distribution work, Tzu Chi volunteers will also lead the local residents in doing street-cleaning work.

In severely damaged Marikina City, heavy machineries will be used to clean the streets and take out garbage. Tzu Chi volunteers will be leading the affected residents in cleaning their homes. In addition, emergency cash and relief goods will be distributed in the near future.

Written by: Dong Yuen Jian

Translated by: Jack Tseng, Grace Chen