

Tzu Chi Melaka's 2010 Study Grant Presentation

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
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Tzu Chi Melaka held five sessions of Study Grant Presentation Ceremony to distribute financial and medical aid to some 2,500 students and their immediate family members. It is hoped that such aid will help to lessen the burden of these low income families.

After months of home visits to access the applications submitted in June this year, Tzu Chi Melaka's volunteers held five sessions of Study Grant Presentation Ceremony at Melaka Jing-Si Hall (2), Yu Hsien Chinese primary school in Jasin (2) and Alor Gajah Chinese primary school in Alor Gajah (1) on October 31 and November 7, 2010 respectively.

More than 2,500 students, including the 200-plus children of Tzu Chi's care-recipients in Melaka, benefited from this year's Study Grant Scheme.

The presentation ceremonies were held at strategic locations in different districts to reduce the traveling expenses of successful applicants staying on the outskirts.



Free Clinic Visit Card

At the ceremony, each grant recipient was issued an official "Free Clinic Visit Card" which will enable them, and their immediate family members, to enjoy free medical services, such as western and eastern medicine, dental and ENT consultation, at the Melaka Tzu Chi Free Clinic Centre.

Xiong Zhao Di, a mother of three recipients at the ceremony held in Melaka Jing-Si Hall, has a bone spur problem (osteophyte) and could hardly straighten her back. When she learnt of the free medical service, she immediately visited the Free Clinic, after the event, to seek treatment for her condition.

One of Zanariah's children has a skin problem; and although she has prior knowledge about the free clinic service as her children were grant recipients for the past two years, she did not know how to apply for it. Now, she is happy that she can save on some medical fees for the skin treatment.

After watching the movie screened at the ceremony, Zanariah and children realized that there are less fortunate people around, and that they can be generous as well. For this reason, her two children have been saving money in their bamboo bank.

At Yu Hsien Chinese primary school, Standard 4 student, Nurhidayu, seemed to greatly

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appreciate the Free Clinic Visit Card because she held it very carefully in her hands. Her mother, who could not believe that a Buddhist organization would give a hand to Muslims, was convinced after attending the ceremony.



Generous recipients

This year, no cash was given out at the ceremony. Instead, the money will either be deposited into the recipients' bank accounts or issued in the form of Money Orders. The ceremony also focused on spreading the messages of "Environmental Protection" and "The story of Bamboo Bank".

At the ceremony held in Melaka Jing-Si Hall, Mr Aloysius Xavier, Principal of Kubu Tamil primary school, was invited to share with the parents, and children were subjected to experience writing with 1-cm long pencils.

Mr Li Bing Kun managed to get his two sons to sign up as donating members. He told them that they should start giving back a little to reciprocate the kindness extended to their family all these years. He also told his sons to help others when they are able to in future.

At Yu Hsien Chinese primary school, Form 4 student, Ruan Lv Pu, decided to donate the study grant he received this year.

Lv Pu's father passed away when he was three, and his mother is a rubber tapper. He has a brother, who has recently started working after completing his studies at a college, and a sister, who is studying in university on government grant. As such, his mother decided to donate Lv Pu's study grant to other needy people. She said, "I had gone through difficult times before so I know how people in difficulty feel. As such, I want to help when I can."



More than a study aid

Tzu Chi's Study Grant scheme does not only provide study aid to needy students. In the process of home visits, volunteers also looked into the overall need of each applicant's family. Some had been taken in as Tzu Chi's long term care-recipients after further assessments.

During their visits to schools to distribute the application forms, the volunteers also came across a school that needed some furniture. So, when someone wanted to give away their office furniture, they helped to put the two into contact.

Volunteers also helped to arrange for Tzu Chi Collegiate Association to provide tuition to students who are poor in their studies.

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For one grant applicant turned care-recipient family, volunteers helped to remove lice in the daughter's hair and also taught the single father how to take care of his children.

"In the early days, our study grant applicants were recommended by members of Tzu Chi Teachers' Association, and aid was given to only a few families. Later, we extended it to schools, and by so doing, we managed to reach out to more needy families," said Loh Siew Cheng, a member of the Teachers' Association and a Tzu Chi volunteer.

In the last few years, Tzu Chi volunteers have opened up more avenues for needy people to get assistance through this Scheme.

By Tzu Chi Melaka Documentary Volunteers

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