

## Little Ann's Big Aspiration

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation  
Thursday, 12 October 2017 17:11

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### [ [Master's Teachings](#) ]

The Buddha has always taught us to harbor compassion and give of ourselves for the happiness, safety, and wellbeing of everyone. Nowadays, the world's climate is out of balance, which leads to frequent natural disasters. When these happen, people suffer. To live out the spirit of compassion and bring happiness to people, we have to help people to understand the link between climate and disasters, take action to mitigate them, and inspire people to give love. There is a child in South Africa who uses her compassion and wisdom to do this.

Ann Chu, a 10-year-old girl, was born into a Tzu Chi family; her grandparents and parents are all Tzu Chi volunteers. In this loving family, she has been taught to help people. One day, Ann read an article in a children's newspaper. She learned that petroleum comes from underground, and processing it creates air pollution. She also read about the UN Climate Change Conference and how eating vegetarian can help reduce the global temperature. At that moment, Ann realized that her family had been protecting the environment because they had been eating vegetarian for many years. Then, she heard about Tzu Chi advocating vegetarianism at the UN conference through a campaign called [Ethical Eating Day](#), which encourages people to go meatless on January 11. Feeling inspired, this girl told her mother, "Mom, I want to do something for our Earth."

Her mother didn't really think much of it. Nevertheless, she encouraged her daughter, "Sure, go ahead."

Ann got to work. First, she asked her father for some art and craft supplies. Then, she wrote down some ideas for promoting vegetarianism in her community. Having decided to make bookmarks to give out, she pondered about how to phrase the words so that they could touch people and encourage them to go vegetarian. After doing this for several days, Ann felt that the process was taking too long, so she invited her cousin, Amelia Chiang, to help her. In the following weeks, the two girls made 65 bookmarks by hand. They were ready to go into the community.

On August 9, 2016, Ann and Amelia, accompanied by Ann's mother, went around the neighborhood to carry out their campaign. They knocked on people's doors, talked to neighbors, and gave out bookmarks. They told people, "Mother Earth is suffering from a fever, please save the Earth! One way to do it is going vegetarian. Please remember to go meatless on January 11."

Many adults were inspired by their compassion for Mother Earth at such a young age and agreed to participate. Ann would then ask for information such as their name and home address, so that she could follow up and remind them when January 11 was approaching. However, the pair also encountered people who turned them down and said that they cannot live without meat. Despite this, each time they faced such a setback they continued on to the next house. At the end of the day, they successfully inspired 22 households to pledge.

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Even though Ann is young, under the good influence of her parents and grandparents, she has a big aspiration to help the Earth. What she did was truly remarkable. She cherished the Earth with compassion and came up with this campaign to promote a meatless diet with wisdom. As Tzu Chi's [Ethical Eating Day](#) campaign is ongoing, Ann will continue her effort to promote vegetarianism.

From Dharma Master Cheng Yen's Talks

Compiled into English by the Jing Si Abode English Editorial Team, with the help of Tzu Chi volunteers