

## In Kaohsiung, Tzu Chi Prepared a Special Gift for the Autumn Festival

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To ease the pain of residents of Kaohsiung traumatized by devastating gas explosions a month ago, the Tzu Chi Foundation prepared a special gift for the Autumn Festival – 3,000 mooncakes and musical player to play music to calm their troubled souls. Volunteers distributed the gifts over three days starting on August 28.

On the night of July 31, the explosions occurred in the Cianjhen and Lingya districts of the city, killing 30 people and injuring 310. The blasts damaged six kilometers of road and cut gas supplies to 23,600 households, electricity to 12,000 households, and water to 8,000 households. It was a traumatic experience for those living nearby, especially the elderly. After the explosions, volunteers from all over Taiwan visited nearly 18,000 households in the two districts and did a detailed survey of each – their medical situation and environment, what repairs needed to be done and what help they needed for education and living expenses. Their aim was to draw up a detailed plan to help them recover psychologically from the disaster and enable the district to return to normal.

The three-day distribution from August 28 was the first fruits of this research. The volunteers distributed goods, money for education and 3,000 ‘blessing’ mooncakes provided by Tzu Chi Taichung Hospital. In addition, they provided the musical player with 60 minutes of ‘blessing’ music; this included a message from Master Cheng Yen and three melodies ‘Prayer’, ‘The Innumerable Sutras’ and ‘Love and Care for All’. They aim to bring peace and harmony to the heart.



Among the recipients were Mr Chen, 80, and his wife, Mrs Chen, 74. They were born in Penghu and in their teens moved to Kaohsiung. After the explosions, the two were very afraid that the explosion would be repeated and did not know where would be safe. Every day they were full of anxiety. Mrs Chen even had a serious cold. When the volunteers delivered the musical player, she was very happy, especially to hear the ‘blessing’ music; it finally enabled her to get a good night’s sleep.

Another recipient was Mr Zhang. He hang the peace ornament given by a volunteer in the family hall for worshipping the Buddha. “The melody ‘Love and Care for All’ is like a beam of light,” he said. “It is concern that brings happiness and love that is without conditions.” Living opposite him was an elderly woman named Chen; she followed his example in hanging the ornament. She especially liked the Jing Si Aphorism “we must let go, then we can rise up”. She said: “let go of your anxiety, then your heart will be peaceful.” People in this community have relied on each other during this difficult period and have got through the worst time. Now, with the gifts of blessings from Tzu Chi, they have the will to give back to society.