

Tzu Chi Helps Survivors of Taiwan Railway Accident

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation

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Volunteers of the Tzu Chi Foundation are working hard to help the survivors of a train crash in eastern Taiwan, which left 18 dead and 187 injured. They are caring for the injured and set up a service center to provide blankets, warm food and hot ginger tea. They have set up a medical station to care for those working on the rescue operation. Dharma Masters went to a funeral home to show their respects to the deceased.

On October 21, the Puyama Express 6432, carrying 366 passengers, was on its way from Shulin in north Taiwan to Taitung on the east coast. Just before 5 p.m., it derailed at Xinma station in Yilan. The Tzu Chi volunteers of Yilan country responded immediately. They went to Xinma station, set up a service center there and accompanied the injured before they were sent to hospital.



In its Luodong office, volunteers started emergency operations; 25 volunteers began to cook and prepare materials; at Xinma station, volunteers brought in hot ginger tea, hot meals, cookies, bottled water, sweet congee and eco-friendly blankets.

There were six Dharma Masters of Jing Si Abode and several staff members of the Foundation on their way to back to Hualien. After learning of the incident, they decided to discontinue their journey and join local volunteers. They took on different roles; some stayed in the office to arrange needed materials, some went to the station to provide assistance and others went to hospitals to care for those injured and their families.

There were two doctors of the Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital on the Puyama Express 6432 -- Dr. Chen-Lin Lee and Dr. Jing-Chun Her, husband and wife. They endured the terrifying experience of the derailment. The two immediately stood up and went to help their fellow passengers. In addition, Dr. Ing-Ho Chen, honorary superintendent of the Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital, went to the Poh-Ai Hospital in Luodong to help.



On the morning of October 22, members of Tzu Chi International Medical Association set up a medical station to care for those working at the crash site for long hours. These included rescue workers, policemen, fire fighters, railway staff, reporters, and others.

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Tzu Chi continues to provide whatever materials are needed both in the Xinma station and the hospitals. Volunteers divided into teams to accompany patients and their families. To pay their respects to the deceased, Dharma Masters and volunteers went to the funeral home. They also talked to the family and shared with them the concern of Master Cheng Yen.

Tzu Chi will continue to care and provide assistance. As many of the affected people are from Taitung and Hualien, volunteers in these counties will look after them.