

Volunteers Provide Hot meals to New Yorkers Hit by Hurricane Sandy

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation

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Tzu Chi volunteers in New York provided 700 hot meals to residents of New York forced to leave their homes because of the devastating Hurricane Sandy. They made 520 of the meals at Tzu Chi's branch office and bought the remaining 120 at a restaurant because of a shortage of time. They delivered them to a shelter in Manhattan where residents had been evacuated to avoid the storm.

Sandy was one of the worst storms to hit the Caribbean and the United States in recent history. It took more than 20 lives in the Caribbean and, on October 29, reached the eastern United States. It caused serious flooding in the states of New York and New Jersey and left 4.8 million homes without power.

In the early morning of October 30, members of the foundation's New York branch who live in New Jersey and New York went straight to work. First, they recorded the damage in their neighborhoods; some used smart phones and others cameras.

In Bergen County, New Jersey, there was serious flooding, trees had collapsed and roads were blocked. "I am here in Glen Rock, New Jersey. In the entire neighborhood, nobody has power any more. Electricity is gone," said program editor Nils Aucante. Power cables had been brought down. In Brooklyn, traffic was gridlocked with buses and cars; one could imagine that people had to abandon their cars due to the heavy rain and flooding the night before.



Fortunately, the area of Flushing, Queens, where Tzu Chi's New York office, is located, had normal power supply; supermarkets and stores were open. A newspaper hawker yelled: "It has never been seen in one hundred years." One shop owner felt very lucky that he could run his business normally. "There's no subway or bus," he said. "There are fewer people walking on the street. But life is gradually resuming."

The city's subway system was facing the most devastated flood in 100 years; all trains were suspended. The bus system gradually resumed. "We run on a Sunday schedule," said one bus driver. "We are going to have a bus every 15 minutes to Queens, Bronx and Brooklyn. Manhattan is a little bit shaky."

The Tzu Chi volunteers were ready to do relief work immediately. The city branch is in Queens, which was not badly affected. The Office of Emergency Management requested that they provide 1,000 servings of hot meals each day for four days to a shelter in Manhattan. They set to work at once and began their preparations.

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...the Tzu Chi Foundation, a Buddhist-inspired humanitarian organization, has been providing hot meals to New Yorkers hit by Hurricane Sandy, including those who are homeless and have lost their homes.