

The 10th Anniversary of Tzu Chi Great Love Village in Jakarta

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It is the tenth anniversary of the 1st Tzu Chi Great Love Village in Jakarta, Indonesia. Away from the polluted Angke River ten years ago, the 1,100 households are now living with improved conditions and hope for a better future.

"The people of Angke River used to live in unlicensed buildings, which were very disordered and caused negative health impacts on the people," commented Sutiyoso, Ex-Governor of Jakarta. "However, there was an enormous improvement in their comfort and living conditions after they moved into the 1st Tzu Chi Great Love Village. Thanks to the local government and Tzu Chi for driving this project forward."

Now that the Angke River has been beautified, the World Bank has also visited the Great Love Village hoping to learn from Tzu Chi's experience as an example of international poverty relief in Jakarta. "I think the Tzu Chi volunteers have achieved a great result with the Great Love Village and that was the reason of our visit," said George Soraya, Lead Urban Specialist at the World Bank office in Jakarta. "We need to learn from these Tzu Chi volunteers the ways to give back to our society."

Treated with five different means—Sewage Pump-out, cleaning, disinfection, free health clinic, and village construction—Love converges at Tzu Chi Great Love Village

Back in the year of 2002 when Jakarta was suffering from the flood, Dharma Master Cheng Yen hoped that volunteers in Indonesia could treat the pollution in Angke River using these five means together. The construction of Tzu Chi Great Love Village began in order to settle the illegal residents living beside the river.

The Vice Chief Executive Officer of Tzu Chi chapter in Indonesia, Mr. Sugianto Kusuma, said, "Cleaning the Angke river is the turning point for Tzu Chi. The cleaning of the river and construction of the Great Love village are the collection of love from everywhere. Master has continuously to urge everyone to recruit loving hearts and funds. This is possible because of all the business owners, Tzu Chi volunteers, and supportive members of the public. The power of great love brought the Great Love Village one to fruition."

Resident in Great Love Village One, Wahyusri, who has since started a new life, said, "When we were moving to the new village, I was really hesitant because it was a completely new environment and we did not know what future my job holds. I even thought that the Tzu Chi volunteers had a hidden agenda for us to move."

Great Love had eliminated all doubts, Residents were inspired to help

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Wahyusri was really doubtful about the kind intentions of the Tzu Chi volunteers. But the volunteers used their actions to eliminate all the doubts. In Great Love Village One, there was a free health clinic, school, and occupational training center to help the residents get on their own feet. The management staff, Sugiyono said, "In the first few months since they moved in, everyone still had a bad habit of littering, so we established the recycling stations to teach everyone how to sort out the trash. Then we had an occupational training center in the community to help raise the economic status for each family."

After ten years, the residents were like a huge family. Not only do they regularly recycle, but some of them have donned blue and white uniforms and became Tzu Chi volunteers.

Wahyusri said, "I am really lucky to learn so much from Tzu Chi, including quitting many bad habits. I am here because I was touched and inspired by many volunteers. They treated me like family. We have a comfortable home, now I should contribute my part to help the needy."

Second Free Health Clinic in 10 Years, Aiding cataract patients

To celebrate the 10 year anniversary of 1st Tzu Chi Great Love Village, Jakarta, Indonesia, the Tzu Chi volunteers hosted a free health clinic. The scenes at the first free health clinic a decade ago were replayed. More than 250 patients were treated in the two-day clinic, including surgeries for cataract patients. They also made special arrangements for the patients' family to help clean the feet of the patients. Cirigalu, who brought her father for a surgery, was really touched.

At 6:00 am, Galluru came to the Great Love Village with his daughter Cirigalu. They had to take two bus transfers to get there. But they did not find the journey arduous as soon as they thought about how his eyes can finally regain their sight. Galluru said, "I hope I can regain my sight quickly so I can continue to work and reduce my daughter's burden. I think I can still work, but my eyesight is poor."

Love and Care for the Residents, The Doctor's Care Never Change

Poverty and sickness comes hand in hand. The free health clinic in Great Love Village was built to safeguard the health of the poor. Its mission has never changed for the past ten years. The chief coordinator of the clinic, Ruteoni said, "We hosted the free healthy clinic again to revisit the memories of the last clinic. This is our initial mission when we built the hospital—to provide free health care."

Cataract surgeries are desperately needed by the locals. When the volunteers arranged for the families to help clean the feet of the patients, Galluru's daughter Cirigalu realized, at that moment, happiness is really that simple. "I never had a chance to help clean my father's feet, now I feel really moved. This is my chance to care for him when I accompany him here for his surgery." Cirigalu said with great emotions.

For the past ten years, the Tzu Chi International Medical Association have hosted 92 free health clinics, to send this love and care to the hearts of all the patients.

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