

Tzu Chi Delivers 550 Blankets to Fire Victims in California

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Volunteers of the Tzu Chi Foundation delivered 550 blankets to victims of devastating forest fires in Paradise City, northern California.

“Camp Fire” broke out on November 8 on the eastern side of Paradise City. By 6.00 p.m. on November 9, according to the latest figures of the California Forest and Fire Prevention Bureau, 6,173 buildings had been completely destroyed, including homes, restaurants, shopping malls and petrol stations. A community hospital was reduced to rubble. A total of 6,453 residents were affected.

On November 9, the Tzu Chi branch of Northern California immediately put into action its care system. The volunteers delivered 500 blankets to the victims who had been evacuated into three large-scale reception centers; they also provided care for the victims. They also plan to hold a meeting of all the volunteers to mobilize help and arrange how to divide the work.

After they were moved to the reception centers, many victims showed signs of disorientation. One lady from Paradise City was escaping from the fierce heat, but her car broke down twice on the road. So she ran for her life in panic and was not able to bring anything. In the center, she received the care of Tzu Chi and realized how she had escaped from a tragedy.

The volunteers delivered many boxes of blankets to a reception center. The local temperatures had fallen to below 10 degrees during the night. After they received the blankets, the recipients were full of gratitude and warmly shook the hands of the volunteers. Although their hands were cold, the recipients said: “I thank you for your warm heart. You are really good to us.”

One recipient was a lady named French who had been evacuated from a fire in northern California. She asked the lady volunteer what was the meaning of the Tzu Chi name printed on the blanket. This was because she immediately felt the warmth of love and wanted to know who brought her this friendship in the winter cold.

During the course of the distribution, the volunteers could see with their own eyes the scars left on the hands of those who had endured this terrible fire. They felt very sad. Volunteers hoped that this could bring them a feeling of safety and relief.