

Foundation Starts 2nd Phase of Village For Typhoon Survivors

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On March 12, the foundation started work on the second phase of a community in southern Taiwan for survivors of Typhoon Morakot, which struck the island in August 2, 2009. It aims to move 254 families into their new homes by the second anniversary in August this year. A total of 954 families live in the first phase. Previously, all lived in mountainous areas; after the typhoon, the government designated these areas as too dangerous to live in.

Morakot devastated the south of Taiwan, leaving 461 dead and 192 missing and causing about NT\$110 billion (US\$3.7 billion) in damage. It caused heavy rainfall which triggered enormous mudslides and severe flooding. Tzu Chi volunteers were among the first to reach the stricken areas, providing hot meals, daily necessities, medical care and scholarships for students. They also provided care and spiritual support for those who had lost their homes and their livelihoods. They spent a total of NT\$180 million (US\$6.1 million) on scholarships, meal fees and other expenses for 14,395 students. This enabled them to continue their studies despite the typhoon.



The foundation launched a global fund-raising appeal for the survivors; it raised NT\$4.65 billion (US\$158 million). Its largest post-typhoon project was construction of a Great Love community in Shanlin township, on the northern outskirts of Kaohsiung, the second city of Taiwan. Work began on November 15, 2009; the families moved in during 2010, after contractors and staff took shifts work on the site and during weekends and holidays. The community contains 954 housing units, four churches and other social and community facilities. They were built to withstand an earthquake of up to eight on the Richter scale and winds up to class 17. These 954 account for 51 per cent of the 1,864 families who received permanent homes from charitable organizations in Taiwan. The second phase, with 254 units, will be built next to the existing site and to the same standards.



Since the completion of the first phase, volunteers have continued to visit the community, to provide material and spiritual support and training for the residents. As of the end of April this year, the volunteers had made a total of 370,000 person-visits to the site. All paid for their own travel and eating expenses, giving their own time and saving the foundation the equivalent of NT\$550 million (US\$19 million). As of the end of March this year, 36 per cent of the residents had found work in their new setting. A further 10 per cent are undergoing training, with the help of the foundation. More than half are students or elderly people and are out of the workforce.