

## Tzu Chi Built Homes to Flood Victims in Honduras

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation  
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The Tzu Chi Foundation gave 408 homes to flood victims in the central American state of Honduras and also organized a free medical clinic, giving them rare access to a doctor. The President of Honduras in person attended the handover ceremony of the third batch of homes.

In October 2011, the country was hit by devastating floods, which caused great distress to the population. Zhang Hong-cai, a Tzu Chi volunteer in Honduras, joined with other volunteers from the United States and went to the city of Choluteca in the south, one of the worst hit areas. They carried out large-scale distribution. Temporary houses were also built in Macovia city.

In January 2013, Tzu Chi built 30 permanent homes in Monjaras, Macovia. In August that year, they continued their work, completing 130 homes, bringing the total to 160.



The construction of these homes was due to the work of volunteer Zhang Hong-cai who carried out detailed evaluation of the flood-affected areas. In September 2015, the local government approved the construction of a third group of homes; they started work on 248 houses in a Great Love Village.

Volunteer Zhang said: "this place was wasteland. From the beginning of construction until now, it was about six months. But actual construction was less than four, as rain delayed our work."

The delay caused by the rainy season showed even more clearly the importance of the homes to the poor residents, so that they would not again have to worry about extreme weather. Irma Lzeth Amador, a victim of the floods but now one of the Da Ai Villagers, said with a happy smile: "thank you, Tzu Chi, for building me a home. I am a single mother with four children and owning my own home is my biggest dream. Thank you, Tzu Chi, for fulfilling that dream for me. I am simply speechless. With this house, I can now live in safety."



On June 24, over 1,000 Hondurans, including President Juan Orlando Hernandez Alvarado, gathered to celebrate the completion of Tzu Chi's Da Ai village in Choluteca and the handing over of 244 new homes to the flood victims. In his speech at the ceremony, the President said: "Tzu Chi has helped Hondurans by giving them homes to live in. A house is the symbol of the

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family. For these families who could not afford a home and could only live in a place made out of cardboard and tarps, life was difficult.”

He came not only to thank Tzu Chi for its assistance but also to bring house-warming gifts for each new home-owner. These were an eco-friendly stove and a water filter system, to give every family a fresh start in their new lives. He added: “starting from today, you have the homes built by Tzu Chi. I am providing my full support and giving each household an eco-friendly stove and a water filter system.”

Mr Y.L. Kuo, representative of the Embassy of the Republic of China (Taiwan), said: “Tzu Chi has done much for these people. One can see the gratitude written on their faces. I believe that spreading this love from Taiwan is our job here and we must continue to do so.”

Tzu Chi volunteers from the United States also joined with their blessings. They saw how the local government and people had worked well together, doing a great deal of work, and were full of gratitude. William Keh, the CEO of the Tzu Chi Medical Foundation in USA, shared his feelings: “The speeches of the President and Mayor both praised Tzu Chi’s great love by bringing here the love of volunteers from around the world. The spirit of Tzu Chi will continue.”

The next day, June 25, in the Great Love Village, the foundation held a free medical clinic with eight doctors, providing general medical, pediatric and dental services. In addition, 23 medical students from the capital came to act as interpreters, as well as nine volunteers from the Tzu Chi International Medical Foundation in the U.S. joined the event.



Early in the morning, a large queue formed in front of the clinic. This was because the cost of seeing a doctor makes it extremely difficult for the poor; they must haggle over every cent. Miranda, who came to see a dentist, said: “for me, it is the first time to attend a Tzu Chi clinic. In Honduras, it is extremely expensive to see a dentist. Poor people do not have this money to spend.”

The young medical students accompanied their cousins from the countryside in doing the interpretation. William Keh, CEO of the U.S. Tzu Chia Medical Foundation, said: “the medical students were very happy. The patients were very satisfied with the services we provided.”

One of the patients said: “I want to thank everyone so much, especially those from the Tzu Chi Foundation. I feel that I am not alone.” This Great Love was the discreet gift of volunteers of Tzu Chi, enabling the poor of this village to feel that they are not alone.