

## Tzu Chi in Chile Helps Children with Special Needs to Play Their Music

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation  
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Volunteers of the Tzu Chi Foundation in Chile provided musical equipment for a group of children with special needs, enabling them to complete a theatrical performance successfully.

In the South American country of Chile, there is a group named “Huellas de Inclusión (“footprints of inclusion”)” which provides counseling services and organizes assistance programs for children with mental disabilities and their parents. Together with Karina Graciela Guerrero Valderrama, a special education teacher, the parents have set up a small performing group. Through different kinds of performances and constant practice, it nurtures the self-confidence and sense of life of the children. This is no simple matter; they must overcome their own disability and lack of co-ordination. But their determination drives them to complete the performance – they are happy and not tired.



Because of a shortage of funds, the organization has been unable to provide specialised sound system for the group; often in the past, the performances faltered half way through. From the end of 2017, Tzu Chi volunteers began to visit the organization. In March 2018, they donated the musical equipment which the group needed on stage. There followed a period of practice. Then, on July 7, the group gave their first performance, to which the volunteers were invited. They were happy to see the joy and happiness of the children and parents at the performance.

The children are not professional. But their will to live drives them to practice regularly and succeed in completing public performances. They have greatly moved the audiences, who see the spirit of the children in not giving up on life and their future.



While the performances have been important to the children, they had to work with old equipments. It often let them down – half way through, the music would stop or go wrong. Tzu Chi volunteers purchased two speakers, one mixing console as well as two cordless microphones. In addition, volunteer Liao Qin-jiu donated three big mirrors from his company so the children in the drama group could see themselves act when they practiced and make corrections accordingly. This will make the performance even more beautiful and attract applause from the audience. In this way, they can raise more funds for the group.

On July 7, the Tzu Chi volunteers went to the Colegio Palmares Oriente in Quilicura. There

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were painting on ceramic plates, hand-made woolen clothes, water colors and a performance on stage. A volunteer of the organization said: “before, we did not have such good musical equipment. Its donation by Tzu chi volunteers has made everyone very happy. This is the first performance in which it has been used.”

The children came on stage. One moment their hair waved, another they were giving flying kisses; they were wearing hand-made woolen costumes. They received the warm applause of the audience. Karina said: “today’s activities give hope to our children that they can show their ability and fulfill their potential. At the same time, it is a model for other foundations and groups.”



One mother said: “my daughter has been taking part on the foundation’s activities for six months. Their help and love has helped her make progress. Add to that the gift and care of Tzu Chi – we are so blessed!”.

After the performance, the children saw the happiness on the faces of the Tzu Chi volunteers. While they could not express in words their gratitude, both sides felt the warmth of the other. They wanted to thank them for the gift of the musical equipment, enabling them to complete their performance smoothly. The volunteers hope that the children can continue with their rehearsals and performances, enabling them to show their courage and sense of life, and move so many people.