

Tzu Chi USA Gives Financial Aid to Survivors of California Wildfire

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
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The Tzu Chi Foundation in California has distributed blankets and cash cards to victims of devastating wildfires. It has also launched an online registration system for people in need of help. Since July 23, the Carr Fire has burnt over 241,000 acres and destroyed more than 1,000 buildings near Redding, 200 miles north of San Francisco in the state of California. That is an area larger than New York City. The fire has killed at least seven people; 38,000 have been evacuated.

Tzu Chi volunteers assembled a disaster relief survey team. On August 11 and 12, they held the first wildfire relief distribution and provided cash cards, blankets, and emotional support to individuals and families hit by the disaster. The second distribution is expected to be held on the 18th and 19th, from 8:30 AM to 6:00 PM at 2685 Hilltop Dr., Redding CA 96002.



The volunteers have launched an online registration system to provide emergency financial aid to those affected by the Carr Fire. People can register through the internet without the need to travel long distances or take the day off from work. It saves a lot of processing time and reduces the costs. Volunteers use text messages to inform recipients when and where to collect the financial aid.

Mr. Theodore is a retired soldier who spent his life savings on his house. When he fled from the approaching flames, he only had a copy of an antique bible with him. Three days later, his beloved dog passed away. After receiving the cash card, he was moved to tears and told the volunteers that the cash card was his only possession. Volunteers comforted him and wished him the best; they believe that he will stand up strong again.

Mrs. Roberta is a teacher. When she read the condolence letter from Master Cheng Yen, she was overwhelmed with emotion. She wants to share the Jing Si Aphorisms with her students. Next to her were her husband and mother; they all took a bamboo bank and to put in small amounts of money. Even though their resources are limited, they wish to follow the example of Tzu Chi volunteers and help others in need.



Every family has its own story. For Mr. Eddie, it was one of heart-break. On the night of the fire, he was home with his wife and two great-grandchildren. He went out to a nearby supermarket to

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stock up on necessities. Unfortunately, while he was out, the fire jumped over the river and enveloped his house.

By the time he received a phone call from one of his great-grandchildren, a five year-old boy, Eddie was unable to enter the control area. The boy kept asking him to come and rescue them. But he could only stand there and stare helplessly at his burning house. The three family members trapped inside kept the phone connected until the last minute.

Three days later, he was informed that the bodies of his three missing family members had been found. However, he was not beaten by this terrible tragedy. He has turned the grief into strength and organized a team to help other survivors. This is the beauty of compassion and human nature. Residents, the government, NGOs and volunteers are working together to help each other and get through this difficult time.

For more information please goes to www.tzuchi.us