

Tzu Chi Built New Village in South Taiwan to Typhoon Victims

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation

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On September 23, the foundation opened a new village it built on the southern tip of Taiwan for victims of two typhoons that struck the island in 2005 and 2009. The village has 18 homes of different sizes and an activities centre; the homes come with televisions, kitchens and other equipment and were prepared as gifts to the new owners.

The opening ceremony for the Pingtung Manzhou Tzu Chi Great Love Community was held at 10.30 a.m. on September 23, with more than 200 people taking part. They were welcomed to the site by local residents and volunteers from the foundation. They included Huang Li-xiang, representative of the foundation, Cao Qi-hong, chief of Pingtung country, Zhang Heng-yu, chief secretary of the Executive Yuan's Morakot Reconstruction Committee, Xiong Shi-fan, chief of Manzhou township, Ou Xin-tong, architect of the project, and the residents of the village.

The ceremony began with a sign language performance of 'The Spirit of Great Love' by the volunteers. Then volunteer Chen Ou-lan read a letter of blessing from Master Cheng Yen: "disasters has passed. The homes have been rebuilt through the joint efforts of everyone. A week from now will be the Mid-Autumn Festival. With a sincere heart, I bless each and every one of the residents and wish them peace and happiness."

In a speech, Manzhou township chief Xiong Shi-fan thanked Tzu Chi for bringing the great love of everyone to where it was most needed and enabling the people of Manzhou to have secure homes. "With compassion comes virtue. We will continue the love," he said. Cao Qi-hong, chief of Pingtung country, said: "Great Love has no limits. Only because of this can it overcome every difficulty and regulatory constraints and rebuild this garden home. It has also brought everyone together to do recycling and protect the earth." Zhang Heng-yu, chief secretary of the Morakot Reconstruction Committee, said that this was a day for giving thanks and wishing all the residents security and happiness. Tzu Chi volunteer Huang Li-xiang said: "In 1976, Master Cheng Yen came from Hualien to Hengchun to visit the poor. She was moved by the lovely mountains, water and harmony of this place. I deeply believe that, now the disaster has passed, everyone will cherish the limited resources, have a good and sincere heart and will pray for blessings for Taiwan and peace in the world."



Tzu Chi and Manzhou were linked in October 2007, when the Pingtung branch organized a free medical clinic in the Hengchun peninsula of doctors and nurses from Kaohsiung and Pingtung. Every year since then, they have regularly held such a clinic in Manzhou township. Great Love means that medical care has no boundaries. The team came to the former Jiu Peng Primary school and took care of typhoon victims living there. For the people of this remote township, the warm and soft words of the volunteers were the best medicine.

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Work on the new community began in December last year. It contains 18 residential units and one building which is an activities center. It was built using the love of Tzu Chi people from 52 countries around the world, to provide new homes for victims of Typhoon Haitang in 2005 in Gangzai village and those of Typhoon Morakot in 2009 in Shuiling village. One of the new residents, 50-year-old Pan Ying-zong, said that, seven years ago, Haitang caused a mudslide that buried Gangzai. "My family lived temporarily in the Jiu Peng Primary School. It was a difficult environment, with no privacy. My wife left, leaving me with the heavy responsibility to look after four children. I am very happy to move in this permanent housing that blends with the natural environment. With the security it provides, I can finally put the problems caused by the typhoon behind me and begin a new life," he said.

The units and activities centre in the new village are made of strong and reinforced materials, which can withstand typhoons and earthquakes. The units came in three sizes – 14, 32 and 36 ping, suitable for 1-2, 3-5 and 6-10 people respectively. One ping is 3.3 square meters. The two larger units have two stories, with four bedrooms, two reception rooms, two bathrooms and one kitchen; they include one bedroom for elderly people on the ground floor. The small unit has one floor, with two bedrooms and two reception rooms, one kitchen and one bathroom. In addition, the foundation has donated televisions and kitchen equipment to the units, in the hope that the new residents can live comfortably.