Keeping Hope Alive
10 Years of Care in Haiti

A Decade of Milestones: Tzu Chi in Haiti

Rebuilding for Generations to Come

A Tzu Chi Way of Life: James Chen
Some Buddhist practitioners often get caught up in the written text.

If we can turn this written wisdom into practical action, we can open up a thousand eyes and mobilize a thousand hands.

In this way, we perfectly unite principles with practice and become true spiritual practitioners. 🌱
CONTENTS

03
Contemplative Wisdom
By Dharma Master Cheng Yen

04
Editor’s Note
By Ida Eva Zielinska

The Old Shoemaker and the King
By Dharma Master Cheng Yen

06
Dharma Stories
Tzu Chi in Haiti:
Reflecting on a Decade of Service
By Yiching Liao

A Decade of Milestones:
Tzu Chi in Haiti
By Ida Eva Zielinska

08
Keeping Hope Alive:
10 Years of Care in Haiti
By Ida Eva Zielinska and Dilber Shatursun

12
Rebuilding for Generations to Come
By Keziah Jean, Jennifer Chien, Yiching Liao

Stories

A Tzu Chi Way of Life
Featuring James Chen
By Jennifer Chien

From Darkness Towards Hope
Article based on content by Keziah Jean and Roselaure Charles

76
Keeping Hope Alive in Haiti
By Peter Lin and Ida Eva Zielinska

80
Words of Wisdom:
Paving the Path With Our Wisdom-life
By Dharma Master Cheng Yen

82
Dharma Q & A
By Dharma Master Cheng Yen

83
Spread Love Over the Sky and the Sea
Music & Lyrics (Chinese) by Hong Yu Tong
Translation by Tzu Chi USA Volunteers
Illustrations by Lily Kang

84
Tzu Chi USA Directory

The Editorial Team sincerely thanks all contributors and invites feedback and contributions. Please contact us at journal@tzuchi.us. Read the online version at tzuchi.us/journal.

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In Chinese, “Tzu” means compassion and “Chi” relief. Putting compassion in action to relieve suffering is the heart of our mission. We are a volunteer-based Buddhist organization, and embrace all of humanity as one family, offering charity, medical care and education across borders and boundaries. We serve those in need selflessly, and strive to awaken a spirit of giving in others. Only by working together can we build a better world for all.

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In this issue of Tzu Chi USA Journal, we look back with gratitude at the ten years that the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation, and Tzu Chi USA in particular, have been able to serve the needs of the people of Haiti since January 12, 2010, the day a magnitude 7.0 earthquake struck this beautiful nation and caused so much death and destruction.

Dharma Master Cheng Yen, Tzu Chi’s founder, was devastated upon hearing of this tragic event. She fought back the tears as she addressed an assembly of volunteers at the Jing Si Abode in Taiwan, the foundation’s global headquarters, and set the wheels of Tzu Chi’s aid in motion.

While this was the first large-scale aid effort, Tzu Chi’s presence in Haiti reaches back to 1998, following Hurricanes George and Mitch. The path of service from then until now is outlined in our fold-out Timeline, and documented in detail in the 100 photos reproduced here and part of the “Keeping Hope Alive: 10 Years of Care in Haiti” exhibition that opened at the Tzu Chi Center in New York on January 12, 2020.

From 2010 until today, Tzu Chi has been offering emergency to mid- and long-term aid, such as distributions of supplies, the provision of 900 tons of rice annually, and the rebuilding of schools that collapsed in the earthquake. Yiching Liao looks back at this care in one of our cover stories, “Reflections on a Decade of Service.”

In “Rebuilding for Generations to Come,” our feature story, Keziah Jean, Jennifer Chien, Yiching Liao trace how Tzu Chi rebuilt three schools and constructed a new one in Port-au-Prince. These projects truly represent a triumph of overcoming every obstacle to improve the educational opportunities for girls in Haiti.

Two of our portrait columns take you behind the scenes in Haiti in the days immediately after the earthquake. In “From Darkness to Hope,” Keziah Jean and Roselaure Charles reveal the depth of suffering that was inflicted on the Haitian people. Dr. Peter Lin shares about offering psychological counseling for survivors in “Keeping Hope Alive,” which carries the title of the Tzu Chi Center exhibit and introduces it. And our third portrait column presents James Chen, a dedicated volunteer whose efforts were invaluable in bringing the school construction projects to completion.

All combined, this issue’s in-depth presentation of Tzu Chi’s footprints of aid in Haiti over the past decade highlights the power and lasting impact of perseverance on the path of compassion in action. We hope our stories will inspire compassionate thoughts.
In life, if we can be content and do our duty, we will be happy. If we are not content, we will feel troubled by afflictive thoughts. If we only envy others’ lives, we will feel discontent and unhappy every day.

Thus, the Buddha taught us that we must take good care of our minds and be content with what we have. By no means should we be dissatisfied and compare ourselves with others, thinking that they are more talented than we are, or that they have better lives than we have. If we think this way, we will never be satisfied. Once, when the Buddha reminded his disciples to look after their minds, they didn’t understand what he meant. So, he told them a story.

Once there was a king who decided to put on commoners’ clothing and go to town. As he walked, the king saw vendors selling goods and workers doing manual labor. Finally, the king came across an old shoemaker. The king approached the shoemaker and asked, “Is it hard work to be a shoemaker?” The shoemaker replied, “Yes it is.” The king replied, “Really? Your job seems quite easy to me. If you think your job is so difficult, who would you say is the happiest?” The old shoemaker answered, “People say that the king, living in his magnificent palace, has great wealth and is served by fair maidens. He must be the happiest man in the world.”

Hearing this, the king thought, “Since he believes that I am the happiest man, why not let him experience what it is like to be me.”

The king had some drinks with the shoemaker, and after the shoemaker became drunk, he ordered his servants to take the shoemaker to the palace. The king then asked everyone in the palace to go along with his plan, and so they did.

In the palace, the king’s servants bathed the old shoemaker and dressed him in the king’s clothes. When the old shoemaker woke up, he found himself in a magnificent palace wearing fine, elegant clothes. He wondered if he was dreaming. Then, some maidens approached him and said, “My king, you have had a good night’s sleep. Please come, breakfast is served.” The old shoemaker enjoyed a sumptuous breakfast. After breakfast, the maidens sang and danced for him. Next, two ministers came and said, “My king, several of your ministers are here.
to report to you and submit documents for your approval." So, they led him to meet the ministers. During their presentations, the shoemaker had no idea what they were talking about, nor what advice or comments to give. By the end of the day, he was overcome with exhaustion. At dinner, he became drunk again. So, the king asked his servants to help the old shoemaker change his clothes and send him back home.

When the old shoemaker woke up, he saw that he was wearing his old tattered clothes, and he wondered who exactly he was. Was he a king, or an old shoemaker? As he was pondering this, the king came for another visit. He asked the old shoemaker, "Don’t you have work to do?" The old shoemaker replied, "I dreamt I was a king, but now I am exhausted from living his life."

After the Buddha finished the story, he addressed his disciples. "In this world, we all have our own karma. If we can be content and do our duties, we will lead a blessed life. Suffering comes only when we give rise to afflictive thoughts. But when we are free of afflictions, we can be at ease with every situation we encounter."

Indeed, when we are free of afflictions, no matter what situations we encounter, we will feel at ease. Take the old shoemaker for example. Although he was poor, he was very skilled in his craft. Had he been content with what he had, he would have enjoyed a peaceful and stable life. Why did he bother to envy others and dream about being a king? Indeed, life itself is just like an illusion or a dream. Though the shoemaker had worked all his life making shoes, didn’t he doubt whether that life was real? When he was in the palace, he believed he was a king and wondered if he dreamed about being a shoemaker, but after he left the palace and returned home, he wondered if he had dreamed about being a king.

If we can realize that life is like a dream, an illusion, a drop of dew, or a flash of lightning, and that it is impermanent in nature, we can feel content and blessed. The most blessed are those who focus on their responsibilities. Truly, we must take good care of our minds and always be content. 🌿
TZU CHI IN HAITI: REFLECTING ON A DECADE OF SERVICE

Article by Yiching Liao
Translated by Diana Chang
Edited by Ida Eva Zielinska
Haiti is a country with a lot of potential and a young population consisting of the hardest working people you can find in the world. And yet, their suffering will make you sigh with sorrow as you walk down the nation’s streets. Whenever Master Cheng Yen talks about Haiti, her conclusion will often be, “What should we do?”

In the decade since the earthquake struck on January 12, 2010, Tzu Chi has continuously cared for communities in Haiti. Our goal has been to reduce daily suffering while providing a beacon of hope for the future. But extending our charity mission to Haiti has been difficult. The challenges we faced are like tough exam questions. Despite the time and energy invested in study, there was no guarantee of success, because Haiti’s problems don’t have simple solutions.

Over the past ten years, Tzu Chi volunteers traveled back and forth to Haiti nearly a hundred times and saw how the same issues remain. No one could forget the helpless gaze of Haitians in desperate need of aid. Or how on their way to conduct a disaster assessment, they would see Haitians by the side of the road, scavenging for food.

It’s easy for a sense of hopelessness to set in when finding clean drinking water is problematic, and the only food available for the day may be a measly bowl of beans. Haiti’s poverty persists even if we see wealthy neighborhoods. Walls separate two distinct worlds – one with backyard swimming pools, manicured lawns, and private tennis courts; the other a place where hunger and scarcity are constant companions. And, the gap between rich and poor is widening, driven more by envy of those wealthier than lack of sympathy for those less fortunate.

Many realities of life in Haiti made it difficult to provide aid and advance Tzu Chi’s charity mission, but our volunteers didn’t give up on accompanying Haitians the full way. The bags of rice we’ve been distributing represent care and blessings from people around the world, while the hugs from our volunteers personally express Tzu Chi’s love and support. While these efforts may not solve all the issues in Haiti, as there are countless challenges to overcome, they embody our goodwill and heartfelt aspirations.

We all look forward to the day that Haiti’s land is completely clear of debris from past disasters, and its people’s lives have stabilized for decades to come. Only then will we be assured that we have found sustainable solutions to what once appeared as unsolvable problems.
## A DECADE OF MILESTONES: TZU CHI IN HAITI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Clothing Drive</td>
<td>Tzu Chi launched a clothing drive after Hurricane Georges and Category 5 Hurricane Mitch swept through the Caribbean. Four containers of clothes were distributed in Haiti on March 1st, 1999, marking the beginning of Tzu Chi’s aid efforts in Haiti. <em>Photo / Yuehnu Chen</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Mudslide Disaster Assessment</td>
<td>In 2004, Tzu Chi volunteers conducted a mudslide disaster assessment. <em>In 2004, torrential rains pounded the south-east of Haiti near the border with the Dominican Republic, causing severe landslides and nearly 1,500 deaths. The widespread destruction of roads and houses that occurred is shown here. Photo / Yuyun Tsai</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Hurricane Assessment</td>
<td>In 2008, Tzu Chi volunteers conducted a disaster assessment at local schools after four hurricanes struck Haiti back-to-back in 2008. <em>Photo / Gloria Chen</em></td>
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In 2008, a series of four hurricanes and tropical storms struck Haiti within a two-month period. Tzu Chi volunteers launched a disaster assessment. Tzu Chi volunteers conduct a disaster assessment and prayers on-site following a series of four hurricanes and tropical storms that struck Haiti within a two-month period in 2008. *Photo / Gloria Chen* 

(Left, right) On their first visit to Haiti in 2008, Tzu Chi volunteers receive an invitation to the National Palace in the capital, Port-au-Prince, where they meet then-President Rene Garcia Preval. *Photo / Gloria Chen*
In March 2010, the Port-au-Prince National Football Stadium becomes the main distribution and medical outreach site for Tzu Chi’s Haiti disaster relief team. The tent area is covered with plastic sheets provided by Tzu Chi. Photo / Hsinhuang Liu

On June 5, 2010, local volunteers in Haiti held their first distribution by themselves, providing food, blankets, plastic sheets, shoes, soap, medical kits and other supplies for Family Hope Orphanage. Photo / Lasya Rana

Local volunteers in Haiti organized and held their first distribution by themselves, providing food, blankets, plastic sheets, shoes, soap, medical kits and other supplies for Family Hope Orphanage.

A Christian entrepreneur in Taiwan donated a batch of modular houses made of PP corrugated boards, which were easy to assemble, waterproof, heat-resistant, and lightweight. Tzu Chi volunteers assembled 280 of these temporary houses for local residents.

After Tzu Chi launched the Happy Campus program to subsidize tuition for students in need, local volunteers visit low-income families to understand their living conditions. Photo / Tzu Chi USA

Tzu Chi’s Happy Campus program was officially launched in Haiti. Local volunteers visited the community and provided tuition subsidies to allow students from low-income families to return to school.

Tzu Chi volunteers promote the Happy Campus program at Ecole Mixte des Humanistes in Port-au-Prince. They tell the students about the program and join them for a group photo. Photo / Kaieh H.

In May 2010, 255 volunteers from Tzu Chi’s medical team participated in eight trips to provide free medical services in disaster areas, serving 15,264 individuals.

Tzu Chi volunteers hold a distribution of blankets at the local Notre Dame-Delmas parish. Photo / Sean Lee

Tzu Chi volunteers promote the Happy Campus program at Ecole Mixte des Humanistes in Port-au-Prince. They tell the students about the program and join them for a group photo. Photo / Kaieh H.

Tzu Chi launched a Food-for-Work program in Haiti in June, assisting a total of 3,770 local residents, while encouraging self-help, self-reliance, and the practice of helping others after the disaster.

The Tzu Chi relief team cooperates with Impact for God church to help students in need, local volunteers visit low-income families to understand their living conditions. Photo / Tzu Chi USA

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Tzu Chi volunteers promote the Happy Campus program at Ecole Mixte des Humanistes in Port-au-Prince. They tell the students about the program and join them for a group photo. Photo / Kaieh H.

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Tzu Chi volunteers visited a nursery garden in Pierre Payen village to study moringa planting, in the hope of using moringa crops to combat poverty, malnutrition, and deforestation in Haiti.

Students arrive to perform at the groundbreaking ceremony for Tzu Chi's construction project rebuilding Christ the King Secretarial School and College Marie Anne for the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Anne. Photo / Chingjung Yeh

The groundbreaking ceremony was held for Tzu Chi's construction project to rebuild three schools for the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Anne.

The groundbreaking ceremony was held for the construction of Kindergarten Durocher (Centre Educatif Carmen Rene Durocher).

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Students perform a traditional Haitian dance during the groundbreaking ceremony for Tzu Chi’s construction project rebuilding Christ the King Secretarial School and College Marie Anne for the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Anne.

Children pick up live moringa seedlings while Tzu Chi volunteers promote the cultivation of moringa trees to provide Haitians with a nutritious source of food that can improve health and combat the transmission of malnutrition-related diseases. Photo / Tzu Chi USA

Tzu Chi volunteers from the United States, Canada, and Haiti held a distribution of rice and supplies from Taiwan, for Little Schools of Father Bohem (Deux Des Petites Ecoles de Pere Bohem) – ORPEP schools and staff. From then on, large-scale rice distributions are provided 2-4 times a year.

A child is joyful after having received a shoe made by Tzu Chi volunteers, during the groundbreaking ceremony for a Tzu Chi campus in Haiti. Photo / Tzu Chi USA

A local resident proudly shows his earnings after participating in Tzu Chi’s Cash-for-Relief program in Jeremie after Hurricane Matthew. Photo / Asaian Jean

A groundbreaking ceremony was held for the construction of a Tzu Chi campus in Haiti.

A groundbreaking ceremony was held for the construction of Kindergarten Durocher (Centre Educatif Carmen Rene Durocher) in Soleil, Port-au-Prince, was officially given to the National Association of Girl Guides of Haiti (Association Nationale des Guides de Haiti - ANGH) at a dedication ceremony. Photo / Asaian Jean

Local residents are motivated to clean up their community through Tzu Chi’s Cash-for-Relief program. Photo / Tzu Chi USA

Kindergarten Durocher (Centre Educatif Carmen Rene Durocher) in Soleil, Port-au-Prince, was officially given to the National Association of Girl Guides of Haiti (Association Nationale des Guides de Haiti - ANGH) at a dedication ceremony. Photo / Asaian Jean

Local interviews in temporary houses at the Route Nueve area in Port-au-Prince, and assist in assembling them. Photo / Phanny Yang

Volunteers Kaier Hu (middle left) and Jean Denis Petit Pha (right) take a group photo with EUDEC students. Photo / Chingjung Yeh

Students are seen inside the kindergarten and keys to Ms. Georges (left), volunteer James Chen (middle) and architect Xiangg Ting (right) hand over a photo of the kindergarten and keys to Ms. Georges. Volunteer James Chen (right) and architect Xiangg Ting (left) hand over a photo of the kindergarten and keys to Ms. Georges. Photo / Chingjung Yeh

A child is proud to show off his earnings after participating in Tzu Chi’s Cash-for-Relief program in Jeremie after Hurricane Matthew. Photo / Asaian Jean

A child shows off her earnings after participating in Tzu Chi’s Cash-for-Relief program in Jeremie after Hurricane Matthew. Photo / Asaian Jean

Hurricane Matthew devastated Haiti, causing severe damage in cities such as Jeremie. Tzu Chi overcame transportation difficulties and supplied rice food, distributed rice, and provided the Cash-for-Relief program after the disaster.

As estimated 1.1 million people are affected by Hurricane Matthew, which struck Haiti on October 4, 2016, causing nearly 1,000 fatalities. Haitians are in dire need of humanitarian aid as they face the spread of a cholera epidemic, and endure dreadful living conditions.

This year also marks the fifth anniversary of Hurricane Matthew, which struck Haiti on October 4, 2016, causing severe damage in cities such as Jeremie. Tzu Chi overcame transportation difficulties and supplied rice food, distributed rice, and provided the Cash-for-Relief program after the disaster.

In 2015, Tzu Chi assisted the National Association of Girl Guides of Haiti (Association Nationale des Guides de Haiti - ANGH) in the construction of Kindergarten Durocher (Centre Educatif Carmen Rene Durocher). Volunteer James Chen (left), architect Xiangg Ting (right) hand over a photo of the kindergarten and keys to Ms. Georges (left), chairman of ANGH. Photo / Yves Haïna

In 2013, Tzu Chi assisted the National Association of Girl Guides of Haiti (Association Nationale des Guides de Haiti - ANGH) in the construction of Kindergarten Durocher (Centre Educatif Carmen Rene Durocher). Volunteer James Chen (left), architect Xiangg Ting (right) hand over a photo of the kindergarten and keys to Ms. Georges (left), chairman of ANGH. Photo / Yves Haïna

In 2012, Tzu Chi assisted the National Association of Girl Guides of Haiti (Association Nationale des Guides de Haiti - ANGH) in the construction of Kindergarten Durocher (Centre Educatif Carmen Rene Durocher). Volunteer James Chen (left), architect Xiangg Ting (right) hand over a photo of the kindergarten and keys to Ms. Georges (left), chairman of ANGH. Photo / Yves Haïna

Tzu Chi volunteers promote the Happy Education for students in need with subsidized tuition. Tzu Chi volunteers promote the Happy Education for students in need with subsidized tuition. Photo / Chingjung Yeh

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A child is proud to show off his earnings after participating in Tzu Chi’s Cash-for-Relief program in Jeremie after Hurricane Matthew. Photo / Asaian Jean

A child shows off her earnings after participating in Tzu Chi’s Cash-for-Relief program in Jeremie after Hurricane Matthew. Photo / Asaian Jean

A groundbreaking ceremony was held for the construction of a Tzu Chi campus in Haiti. Tzu Chi volunteers and guests participate in the groundbreaking ceremony for a Tzu Chi campus in Haiti. Photo / Tzu Chi USA

In 2011, Tzu Chi volunteers distribute temporary houses at the Route Nueve area in Port-au-Prince, and assist in assembling them. Photo / Phanny Yang

In 2011, Tzu Chi volunteers distribute temporary houses at the Route Nueve area in Port-au-Prince, and assist in assembling them. Photo / Phanny Yang

Local volunteers recruited a Haitian medical team for their first medical outreach for students at College Rousseau Carême (ROCA) and Ecole Miche Monseigneur (EUDEC).

Tzu Chi volunteers promote the Happy Education for students in need with subsidized tuition. Tzu Chi volunteers promote the Happy Education for students in need with subsidized tuition. Photo / Chingjung Yeh

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A groundbreaking ceremony was held for the construction of a Tzu Chi campus in Haiti. Working in collaboration with Father Zucchi Ange Olibrice, Executive Director of Little Schools of Father Bohnen (Oeuvre des Petites Ecoles de Pere Bohnen – OPEPB), Tzu Chi provided hot meal services for senior communities in Port-au-Prince.

Beginning in 2018, Tzu Chi and Father Zucchi, Executive Director of Little Schools of Father Bohnen (OPEPB), collaborate on providing meal services for senior communities near Cite Soleil in Port-au-Prince. Local volunteers in Tzu Chi vests also participate in serving meals to seniors. Photo / Keziah Jean

The construction of a Tzu Chi campus in Haiti was completed. 2018 January 1

Tzu Chi holds a shoe donation ceremony at a Little Schools of Father Bohnen (OPEPB) school. Photo / Keziah Jean

Tzu Chi holds a large-scale rice distribution for residents at Cite Soleil. Photo / Hector Muniente

2019 January 24 May 21
KEEPING HOPE ALIVE: 10 YEARS OF CARE IN HAITI

Tzu Chi volunteers traveled to Haiti to provide disaster relief after the tragic earthquake of January 2010. These 100 photos reveal the suffering and destruction caused by this catastrophe and document Tzu Chi’s decade long journey of care in response to it.

The emergency relief mission commenced with 84 distributions, which benefitted 190,411 earthquake survivors, while eight medical outreaches run by the Tzu Chi Medical Foundation provided free, quality care to over 15,000 patients.

In 2012, Tzu Chi began rebuilding three schools using earthquake and hurricane-resistant techniques. They included the College Marie-Anne (both primary and secondary school) and Christ the King Secretarial School. We later built Kindergarten Durocher in Solino - one of Port-au-Prince’s poorest neighborhoods - and opened a warehouse to store relief materials.

Tzu Chi relief teams also responded to floods in Cap-Haitien in 2014 (where we launched a Cash-for-Relief program for 1,600 residents in Blue Hills) and Hurricane Matthew in 2016.

We’ve also helped fight poverty and hunger by providing 900 tons of rice annually, distributed around four times a year since 2015, gathering more and more local volunteers to help. Here is a glimpse of our journey in Haiti over the last decade, filled with compassion, relief, and hope. 🌿
On January 12, 2010, one of the deadliest earthquakes in history strikes Haiti, destroying around 280,000 buildings, killing nearly 300,000 people, with three million affected. Photo / Tzucheng Liu
Photo taken on April 2, 2010. Destroyed buildings remain along the sides of streets for years after the earthquake.
Photo / Chingwan Chen

Photo taken on January 26, 2010, two weeks after the earthquake. Tzu Chi volunteers understand the importance of documentation to tell stories that inspire people to help. Photo / Calvin Hsi
A Haitian child stands in front of what remains of his family home. Photo / Tzucheng Liu
On January 18, 2010, just six days after the earthquake, a Tzu Chi USA disaster assessment team lands in the Dominican Republic and drives into Port-au-Prince. Entire communities in affected areas are in a state of shock. Volunteers from Tzu Chi USA and Canada begin immediate disaster relief.

As the mission continues, it becomes clear that Haiti faces a long road to full recovery, and evidence of the devastation remains visible even for years to come.

Photos / Tzucheng Liu
Numerous cadavers can be seen on the sidewalks in the city. Lacking access or sufficient burial grounds, families resort to burning the bodies in the streets to prevent the spread of disease. Photo / Liangwei Chang.

Tzu Chi volunteers enter Port-au-Prince on January 19, 2010, and begin their disaster assessment. Photo / Liangwei Chang.
Survivors chipping away at the rubble by hand is a common sight in the streets of Haiti after the earthquake. *Photo / Tzucheng Liu*
Starting in August 2008, four consecutive hurricanes and tropical storms hit Haiti, aggravating poverty and famine. Tzu Chi volunteers arrive on January 9, 2009 to begin disaster aid. **Photo / Gloria Chen**

Tzu Chi’s first large-scale distributions of rice and supplies in Haiti take place on January 15 and 16, 2009, at Ecole Foyer Culturel St. Vincent de Paul, a school in Port-au-Prince. **Photo / Bornain Chiu**
Tzu Chi’s first large-scale distribution of rice and supplies in Haiti takes place at the beginning of 2009 at Ecole Foyer Culturel St. Vincent de Paul, a school in Port-au-Prince. Photo / Tzu Chi USA

At Tzu Chi’s first large-scale distribution in 2009, volunteers hand over supplies to recipients with a bow to show their respect and gratitude for being able to serve – principle values of Tzu Chi. Photo / Bornain Chiu

The first relief distribution after the earthquake takes place on January 29, 2010. Tzu Chi volunteers lead a prayer during the distribution ceremony. Photo / Liangwei Chang
UN peacekeepers accompany and chaperone Tzu Chi volunteers to distribution events, making sure the volunteers and aid supplies arrive and leave the distribution sites unharmed. Photo / Chingwan Chen

US Army troops are another source of support for Tzu Chi volunteers, often providing protection during various distribution events. Photo / Chingwan Chen

Tzu Chi collaborates with the US Army and UN peacekeepers from Jordan, Peru, Brazil, India, China etc. UN peacekeepers from Brazil provide security at the supplies distribution and medical outreach event where this photo is taken. Photo / Chingwan Chen
Chaos can easily erupt at large-scale distribution sites. UN peacekeepers from Jordan guard entrances, helping to keep order during distributions.

Photo / Sean Lee

UN peacekeepers often participate in Tzu Chi’s distributions, assisting aid recipients where they can.

Photo / Chiasheng He
US Army troops accompany Tzu Chi volunteers and participate in distributions. Here, officers join a Tzu Chi Jordan and a local Haitian volunteer in giving tarps to earthquake survivors.

Photo / Sean Lee

Blankets and tarps are among the emergency supplies distributed to provide a waterproof covering for survivors’ temporary shelters, offering warmth on surprisingly cold nights in Haiti. Photo / Sean Lee
Tzu Chi volunteers also provide and build temporary housing during the emergency relief period.

Photo / Tzu Chi USA

With their houses gone, Haitian survivors live in tents after the earthquake. Tarps provided by Tzu Chi offer protection from rain and wind.

Photo / Chingwan Chen
Blankets are among the main items distributed in the emergency relief phase, since Tzu Chi’s first disaster assessment team experienced conditions in tents on cold nights in Haiti. Photo / Yenhuang Lin
From March to April 2010, Tzu Chi holds regular aid distributions at the National Soccer Stadium in Port-au-Prince. *Photo / Tzu Chi USA*

In May 2014, Tzu Chi returns to host a Buddha Bathing Ceremony in the National Soccer Stadium in Port-au-Prince where it held distributions for two months after the earthquake. *Photo / Georges Junior Devis*
Distribution ceremonies at the National Soccer Stadium include songs and dances to lift the spirits of earthquake survivors. Photo / Shuching Wu

At distributions, as recipients learn that the aid received comes from people around the world, they contribute what they can to pass the kindness on to whoever may need it next. Photo / Belinda Ling
A local Haitian volunteer carries an elderly woman to seek medical attention after she collapsed from fatigue during a distribution at the National Soccer Stadium. 

Photo / Jason
Tzu Chi volunteers from around the world participate in distributions at the National Soccer Stadium in Port-au-Prince, delivering love from over 30 countries where Tzu Chi fundraised for Haiti. Photo / Tzu Chi USA
Participants in Tzu Chi’s Food-for-Work program clean the streets of Port-au-Prince on March 16, 2010. Photo / Tzu Chi USA

Local residents participate in the Food-for-Work program and start to clean up the streets early in the morning to avoid the afternoon heat. Photo / Patrick Chou
Tzu Chi initiates the Food-for-Work program, recruiting 2,400 people to clean up the community, rewarding them with food supplies for each day of work. Photo / Tzucheng Liu
The Food-for-Work program includes a lunch meal for each participant, often providing Haiti’s staple meal of rice and beans.

Photo / Tzucheng Liu

Local women are employed to cook lunch meals for participants in Tzu Chi’s Food-for-Work program.

Photo / Tzucheng Liu
Bringing Medical Care to Haiti

Medical professionals and volunteers from the Tzu Chi International Medical Association (TIMA) flew in to help treat those injured during the earthquake, as well as those in need of medical attention for other issues, who had little to no access to it during a time of disaster.

During a medical outreach event, the relief team’s Haitian driver and bodyguard help with translation for Dr. Shirley Chen of the Tzu Chi International Medical Association (TIMA). Photo / Chiali Tsai
Dr. Minghuang Liao from Northern California gives a patient an acupuncture treatment to relieve her pain. 
*Photo / Chingwan Chen*

During Tzu Chi’s medical outreach, Dr. Amy Huang attends to a dehydrated, malnourished 3-week-old baby, prematurely born at 28 weeks, and sends it to the University Hospital of Haiti, then later the Miami Children’s Hospital for further treatment. *Photo / Tzu Chi USA*
TIMA doctors work alongside local Haitian medical professionals who provide translation and care to earthquake survivors.

Photo / Chingwan Chen

From February to April 2010, Tzu Chi holds eight medical outreaches, with 73 volunteers providing medical relief to 15,264 people. Photo / Sean Lee
Dr. Chen (kneeling) treats the wound on a girl’s leg during Tzu Chi’s medical outreach at the Overseas Engineering and Construction Company. A Tzu Chi Jordan volunteer and a Haitian medical professional assist.

Photo / Shirley Tseng
Supporting Schools From the Ground Up

As Tzu Chi transitioned from short- to long-term relief, plans were drawn up to rebuild a total of four schools. These institutions had been severely damaged or otherwise destroyed by the earthquake, proving how deeply disasters disrupt every facet of everyday life.
Sister Marjorie Fevrier, the principal of College Marie-Anne, gives a copy of the school deed to James Chen, a Tzu Chi volunteer.
*Photo / Chingwan Chen*

Tzu Chi volunteer James Chen conducts an assessment of the third floor of College Marie-Anne with nuns from the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Anne.
*Photo / Chingwan Chen*
Then Tzu Chi USA CEO, William Keh, presents the final rebuilding plan for the three schools to Sister Rita Larivee from the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Anne.

Photo / Tzu Chi USA

Students study in temporary classrooms while the reconstruction of their school is in progress. Photo / Chingwan Chen
The construction site of College Marie-Anne in 2013. Photo / Meihueh Lin

The rebuilding of College Marie-Anne progresses in 2013. Photo / Meihueh Lin
The grand opening of College Marie-Anne (primary and secondary schools) and Christ the King Secretarial School in 2013. The photo shows College Marie-Anne. Photo / Luca Yeh

The structural engineering of the structure makes it earthquake and hurricane resistant. Photo / Luca Yeh
Students perform a traditional Haitian dance at the grand opening ceremony on May 17, 2013, for the three schools that Tzu Chi rebuilt for the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Anne. Photo / Peter Chu

College Marie-Anne students and then Tzu Chi USA CEO, William Keh (middle), joyfully celebrate at the grand opening ceremony in 2013. Photo / Peter Chu
Tzu Chi hosts a donation ceremony for Kindergarten Durocher at Solino, Port-Au-Prince, in 2015.

Photo / Yaohua Hsiao
Tzu Chi volunteers and members of the National Association of Girl Guides of Haiti take a group photo at the groundbreaking ceremony for the rebuilding of Kindergarten Durocher, held on October 26, 2012 at Overseas Engineering and Construction Company. 
Photo / Felicia Hsu

During the Kindergarten Durocher donation ceremony in 2015, Tzu Chi volunteer James Chen presents the school plan to the principal. Photo / Yaohua Hsiao
A student expresses her gratitude for Kindergarten Durocher during the grand opening. Photo / Yaohua Hsiao

Students from Kindergarten Durocher perform a dance. Photo / Yaohua Hsiao
Setbacks Bring Opportunity

After floods wreaked havoc in northern Haiti in November of 2014, Tzu Chi volunteers established a Cash-for-Relief program, a form of humanitarian aid that encourages a community’s ownership of its socio-economic recovery by offering wages in exchange for community clean up work.

Residents of Blue Hills gather at a flood relief distribution site on December 17, 2014. Tzu Chi volunteers work with local community leader Father Valon Pierre of Paroisse Saint Martin de Porres church, who helps maintain order during the event. *Photo / Mike Tang*
A Tzu Chi volunteer assesses damage at a disaster site, alongside Philippe, a local vendor, who will provide road fixture equipment and materials. Photo / Tzu Chi USA
Tzu Chi USA and local Haitian volunteers oversee the Cash-for-Relief program, motivating locals to clean up their communities. *Photo / Mike Tang*

Heavy rain in Cap-Haitien causes severe flooding. In the neighborhood of Blue Hills, residents earn up to US $8 a day from Tzu Chi USA for their community cleaning work. *Photo / Mike Tang*
Residents of Blue Hills participate in Tzu Chi’s Cash-for-Relief program, which offers them funds for their work clearing floodwater and debris from their community. 
Photo / Mike Tang

Cash-for-Relief participants Samuel Joissaint and Telfort Louis enjoy a hot meal after a long day of work. Photo / Mike Tang
Residents gather at Paroisse Saint Martin de Porres Church in Blue Hills. Tzu Chi volunteers bow with gratitude before leading them through the Cash-for-Relief program. Photo / Tzu Chi USA

Tzu Chi volunteers lead Cash-for-Relief program participants in song and dance during a ceremony to lift their spirits and energize them for the work ahead. Photo / Mike Tang
Handling Hurricane Matthew

Haiti would experience a new blow with Hurricane Matthew in 2016. Reaching its peak as a Category 5 hurricane, it would rank the third strongest on record in the country to make landfall. Having implemented the Cash-for-Relief program before in Cap-Haitien, it was replicated after Matthew.

Hurricane Matthew devastates Haiti in 2016, leaving many residents homeless as a result of the severe damage to their homes. Photo / Keziah Jean
The residents of Jeremie wear volunteer vests as they participate in a Cash-for-Relief program launched by Tzu Chi USA and local volunteers, to clean up hurricane-affected areas. Photo / Keziah Jean

As it did in response to previous disasters, Tzu Chi launches the Cash-for-Relief program to encourage locals to take ownership of community cleanup while earning money. Photo / Keziah Jean

Women of Les Cayes, wearing Tzu Chi vests, join the Cash-for-Relief program by preparing hot meals for participants. Photo / Keziah Jean
Local volunteers are joyful to serve and receive a hot meal from Tzu Chi’s meal service in Les Cayes.
Photo / Keziah Jean

Tzu Chi volunteer, Steve Chiu, leads children in a sing-along during a hot meal distribution at Lycee des Jeunes Filles.
Photo / Keziah Jean
Tzu Chi holds a hot meal distribution at a shelter set up in Lycee Nord Alexis, a school in Jeremie, serving nearly 500 hurricane survivors. Here, a child enjoys a hot meal of rice with red beans.

Photo / Keziah Jean

Children are happy to receive a hot meal prepared and served by Tzu Chi volunteers.

Photo / Keziah Jean
A Cool, Dry Place

Seeing that a reliable and secure place was needed to store relief materials in the long-term, Tzu Chi volunteers opened up a warehouse in Port-au-Prince that could keep foods and supplies dry.
The construction of Tzu Chi Haiti’s warehouse campus starts with a groundbreaking ceremony on August 17, 2017. Photo / Keziah Jean

On January 11, 2018, local community leaders – such as Voodooist Augustin Saint-Clou – wore traditional attire as they attended the grand opening ceremony of Tzu Chi Haiti’s warehouse campus. Photo / Keziah Jean

The Tzu Chi Haiti campus is to act as a warehouse for Tzu Chi’s disaster and charity aid supplies in Haiti. Photo / Keziah Jean
A Grain of Hope

Although the distress from the earthquake was long over, the economic situation facing many Haitian families would remain strained, even years later. That’s why Tzu Chi USA began sending bags of rice to distribute to households, helping people stay nourished and strong enough to brave whatever came their way.

![Tzu Chi volunteers give bags of rice to local residents, expressing gratitude for being able to help with a respectful bow. Photo / Keziah Jean](image)
In 2017, Tzu Chi volunteers return to the areas hardest-hit by Hurricane Matthew in 2016, and provide large-scale rice distributions. Recipients wait patiently to receive aid.

*Photo / Keziah Jean*

A Haitian child beams after receiving rice from Tzu Chi.

*Photo / Keziah Jean*
Father Zucchi Olibrice, a Tzu Chi Haiti volunteer, and Tzu Chi USA volunteer James Chen explain the story behind Tzu Chi’s bamboo banks during a rice distribution. *Photo / Keziah Jean*

A local volunteer, James Ocean, proudly holds a bamboo bank made from a real bamboo trunk. *Photo / Keziah Jean*
Tzu Chi and local volunteers prepare bags of rice for a distribution in Cite Soleil.
Photo / Keziah Jean

Local residents try on new shoes while sitting on the bags of rice they received at a distribution.
Photo / Keziah Jean
A local aid recipient puts on the new shoes she received at a distribution. Photo / Keziah Jean
A resident of Cite Soleil holds a voucher and waits for her turn to receive a bag of rice.

Photo / Keziah Jean

Printed on each bag of rice is “Love from Taiwan,” conveying Tzu Chi’s expression of unconditional love.

Photo / Keziah Jean
A local resident heads home, carrying the bags of rice and new shoes she received at a distribution. Photo / Keziah Jean

Father Valon Pierre is Tzu Chi’s local partner for rice distribution in Cap-Haitien. He visits recipients’ homes, bringing the comfort of prayers as well as tangible aid by distributing bags of rice. Photo / Keziah Jean
Tzu Chi’s partnership with Father Valon Pierre extends to rice distributions at schools, benefiting students in Cap-Haïtien. Photo / Keziah Jean

Tzu Chi volunteer Father Zucchi Olibrice extends the rice distribution program to nursing homes in Cite Soleil, providing hot meals to seniors. Photo / Keziah Jean

In May 2018, Tzu Chi returns to host its rice distribution in Cite Soleil, and local residents happily return home with bags of rice. Photo / Keziah Jean
Nursing home residents demonstrate their gratitude for Tzu Chi’s aid through prayer. *Photo / Keziah Jean*

A resident thanks Father Zucchi Olibrice (left) for bringing Tzu Chi to their community. *Photo / Keziah Jean*
Staff and faculty often participate in rice distributions at schools, providing rice to families before the semester ends to ensure that students have food over the summer.

Photo / Keziah Jean

Tzu Chi media volunteers accompany relief teams on missions to capture important moments in Tzu Chi’s history. A Haitian child shows interest in what a media volunteer is documenting. Photo / Keziah Jean
A Tzu Chi volunteer helps a local resident transport the bags of rice she received at a distribution.

Photo / Keziah Jean
A steady flow of aid recipients carrying bags of rice can be seen exiting a distribution site on May 28, 2018. Since 2015, Tzu Chi annually provides a total 900 tons of rice, distributed up to four times a year. Photo / Keziah Jean

Since the 2010 earthquake, local Tzu Chi volunteers continue joining the effort and carry out Tzu Chi’s mission of providing aid to the people of Haiti. Photo / Keziah Jean
“These children should have been in school, but they were on the streets of Haiti with heavy buckets, doing what adults should do…”

Keziah Jean is a Haitian photographer who shares her love for Haiti through her work. Her photos tell many moving stories, yet it’s when taking pictures of children that she feels compassion the most, given the hardship they’re subject to in Haiti. Having documented challenging moments, she will reflect on how, “These should be a small percentage of daily life, such times of suffering and feeling sad.”

While there are some smiles to be seen from the children in Keziah’s photos, they emerged in trying circumstances as well; for instance, when they were lucky enough to get some food after prolonged hunger, or were taking a break from chores and could play with other kids their age.

As Master Cheng Yen says, “Education for children can’t be delayed because it’s their only hope.” Although rebuilding a school destroyed in an earthquake won’t save all Haitian children, it’s a move in the right direction, giving those students a chance to turn their life around after obtaining an education, and through them, bringing a measure of positive change to Haiti.
After a catastrophic earthquake struck Haiti in 2010, many damaged schools were razed to the ground. Tzu Chi volunteers, who had arrived to conduct a disaster assessment, were aware of Master Cheng Yen’s commitment to education and sought to locate schools for rebuilding. However, it wasn’t easy to determine where the schools had been, in addition to finding those who ran them, owners of the property, and so forth. The process was frustrating, Dr. Han Huang, former Tzu Chi USA CEO, explained: “Days went by without answers, and everyone started to worry as we continued the search.”

Since community churches are usually involved in disaster relief, almost every night, the Tzu Chi team would invite local priests and pastors to participate in video conference calls with Master Cheng Yen, to discuss potential rebuilding projects. One day, after the meeting, Master Cheng Yen remarked to the volunteers, “We saw priests and pastors, but why didn’t we see any nuns?”

Taking this as a cue, the team widened their scope of contacts, and soon enough, two Tzu Chi volunteers, Yuru Chou and Danel Georges, introduced the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Anne. The sisters ran three schools for girls in Port-au-Prince, which had mostly collapsed: College Marie-Anne primary and secondary school, and Christ the King Secretarial School. These institutions were known for being exceptionally well managed, and the credible education they provided was highly respected.

The sisters were preparing to resume classes for over 1,800 students, using temporary classrooms constructed from iron sheets and plywood. They were providing psychological counseling and had opened their doors to students from neighboring communities. Although these were private schools that charged tuition, located in the nation’s capital, the congregation had set aside funds to establish over ten schools in the countryside. And, tuition-free schooling was available to those who qualify. All of this was impressive, yet something else touched Tzu Chi volunteers even more: The sisters’ compassion.

Since the premises of the congregation’s schools were severely damaged, Tzu Chi had agreed to provide supplies and tents. However, when volunteers delivered the goods, instead of keeping them, the sisters handed everything over to families who had been gravely affected by the earthquake. Seeing their compassion for disaster survivors, volunteers brought more, and the sisters used the tents they received to create temporary shelter for the displaced.

Where’s My School?

Tzu Chi set out to rebuild two College Marie-Anne schools that had sustained extensive damage due to the earthquake. Photo/Chingwan Chen

Putting Their Own Needs Aside

The principals of College of Marie-Anne and Christ the King Secretarial School (middle) accompany Tzu Chi volunteer James Chen (right) as he conducts an earthquake damage assessment for the rebuilding of two College Marie-Anne schools. Photo/Chingwan Chen

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The sisters were genuinely selfless, as James Chen, the volunteer in charge of Tzu Chi’s school rebuilding initiatives in Haiti, recalled: “We visited them and saw that their living conditions were worse than those of other survivors. It had been a few months since the earthquake, yet the sisters themselves didn’t even have tents over their heads.” When Sister Bernadette Goda, the principal of Christ the King Secretarial School, learned that nearby residents had no food, she immediately shared whatever little she had, giving away half of it.

But the broader task at hand – rebuilding the three schools – would demand more than just compassion from the Catholic sisters: It would require ingenuity, persistence, and the willingness to accept a helping hand from representatives of a different faith.

Love Transcends Religion

The congregation was adamant above resurrecting its schools after the earthquake. Its first efforts procured funding from the Haitian government, which allowed the sisters to set up temporary classrooms and resume teaching. However, obtaining government resources for rebuilding was unlikely, given the extent of damages in the country, which included the collapse of the National Palace and Parliament building. Thus, the congregation attempted to be self-reliant, hoping to get assistance from its headquarters in Canada. But then, an unexpected source of aid appeared.

When the sisters first heard Tzu Chi’s offer to lend a helping hand, they were stunned. After all, it was hard to believe that a Buddhist foundation originating in Taiwan would provide ample reconstruction funds for Catholic schools in a foreign country. There was also the issue of trust to contend with: Many charitable organizations had come to Haiti and made promises of assistance, but few followed through, creating a climate of mistrust towards foreign NGOs.

To prove the sincerity of Tzu Chi’s commitment to the rebuilding project, at the request of Master Cheng Yen, Gary Ho, Tzu Chi Canada CEO, visited the headquarters of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Anne in Toronto, and established an ongoing stream of communications with those responsible for the education mission in Haiti. Approval from the congregation’s Canadian headquarters, a prerequisite for the project to move forward, was also obtained.

However, there were still hurdles ahead, demanding coordination between Tzu Chi volunteers in the United States, Tzu Chi Global headquarters in Taiwan, the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Anne headquarters in Canada, and the sisters on the ground in Haiti. James Chen, lead on the project, made around 40 trips to and from Haiti. While it sometimes felt like “mission impossible,” eventually property ownership documents were recovered, the
Haitian government approved the building plans, various technical and engineering issues cleared, and construction began, marked by a groundbreaking ceremony on January 21, 2012.

**Feats of Engineering**

The building project brought together architect Dr. George Tseng, from Miami, Florida, and Overseas Engineering and Construction Company (OECC), a trusted Taiwanese firm with extensive experience in over 15 countries, for which this was the 47th project in Haiti. Commencing the rebuild of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Anne’s schools in Port-au-Prince was certainly cause to celebrate in itself. Yet the construction would also introduce unseen benefits of vital long-term importance.

According to David Chang, the Deputy General Manager of OECC, construction in Haiti typically utilizes concrete blocks that are hollow and don’t contain steel bars or other materials for reinforcement. While such buildings may appear sturdy, when an earthquake or hurricane hits, they can easily collapse. The construction of the three schools would be different. David gladly shared that “as long as Haiti doesn’t get swallowed up by the sea, these buildings are here to stay for a thousand years.”

Raw materials, such as cement, high-strength steel, and steel bars, were imported and incorporated with the highest engineering quality control to meet guidelines of hurricane and earthquake resistance. In spite of high costs, fluctuations in international material prices, Haiti’s import tax rate, and the necessity to revise contracts five times to overcome such challenges and absorb unexpected expenditures, the overall project cost came in 15% below budget. Such attention to expenditure is essential on ventures funded by kind-hearted donors from around the world.
A Promise Made Is a Promise Kept

Following the earthquake, many people and many groups came to Haiti to help, and many people made many promises and said they would come back, but as the months passed, many people didn’t return, and many promises were broken. But to the Tzu Chi volunteers today, I want to say to you, "You came back, and you did what you say you would do, you kept your promise!"

Sister Rita Larivee, General Superior
Congregation of the Sisters of St. Anne of Canada

On May 17, 2013, Tzu Chi held a grand opening ceremony for the three schools it rebuilt for the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Anne. In accepting the schools, Sister Larivee declared that this gift represented more than buildings, “it’s a gift of hope in a country where hope was sometimes difficult to find following the earthquake. The real foundation for these schools is that compassion can work miracles.”

Sister Lucille Goulet, who had also come from Canada to accept the schools on behalf of the congregation, added that the project demonstrates how "a promise of unconditional love transcends borders."

As part of this earthquake disaster relief mission in Haiti, Tzu Chi volunteers also met Marie Ange Colinet, Chairman of the National Association of Girl Guides of Haiti. Having offered the association reconstruction assistance, Tzu Chi went on to rebuild Kindergarten Durocher (Centre Educatif Carmen Rene Durocher) in Solino, Port-au-Prince. At the grand opening on July 29, 2015, Tzu Chi volunteers felt their hearts soar with joy, knowing that the hard work they had invested was well worth it.
The happy smiles of students at College Marie-Anne. Photo / Luca Yeh
James Chen has been a dedicated Tzu Chi USA volunteer for the past 30 years. Closely involved in Tzu Chi’s charity and disaster relief missions in Haiti, he has traveled there 78 times, all at his own expense. Then, after retiring in his 70s, he became head of Tzu Chi San Gabriel Valley Service Center, a position that demands long workdays, which he committed to gladly.

Master Cheng Yen usually gives a teaching in Taiwan at five AM, a video recording of which Tzu Chi volunteers around the world watch at dawn in their time zone. And so for James, each day begins very early to maintain this cherished tradition. He sets up at the service center at four AM, then welcomes Tzu Chi volunteers as they assemble for Master Cheng Yen’s teaching at five.

James spends the rest of the day managing the general operation of the center, which includes preparations for scheduled classes and activities, and coordination of food distributions in the local community. Each workday ends after tidying up the center at night, then heading home to rest before resuming the same routine before dawn. For James, volunteering has indeed become a way of life.

His current commitment to service, extending far into his senior years, is remarkable. Yet in the eyes of fellow volunteers, James is best known for his dedication to Tzu Chi’s international disaster relief mission, particularly the rebuilding of four schools in Haiti’s capital, Port-au-Prince. Over 40 out of his 78 trips to Haiti were for that project alone, on which he was lead from the very start.

“Of course, it took a lot of hard work to search for schools damaged by the earthquake. I also needed to evaluate the possibility of a rebuild project,” he says. And then, there was the work of surmounting hurdles and steering...
the project successfully to completion. Through all of this process, he made a vow to work tirelessly, knowing how much Master Cheng Yen cares about education.

James is also in charge of Tzu Chi’s charity relief distributions in Haiti, an endeavor fraught with security challenges and other issues. He shares how sometimes people will ask, “Haiti is such a dangerous and difficult place to be, why did Tzu Chi choose to help there?” For him, the answer is simple: “The joy, gratitude, and touching moments of seeing so many people, tens of thousands of people, benefit from Tzu Chi’s distributions and have enough food for a few months, are priceless.”

The reasons James Chen gives for never complaining or turning away from the mission of serving others, even when faced with difficulties, are rooted in Master Cheng Yen’s Buddhist guidance, which points out that obstacles are part of the spiritual path. “All of this is thanks to Master Cheng Yen’s teachings and her establishment of Tzu Chi, which gives its volunteers an opportunity to learn from charity cases,” he says.

In teaching the Four Noble Truths (suffering; cause of suffering; cessation of suffering; path to cessation of suffering), the Buddha revealed that suffering is inescapable in life; however, the path of spiritual cultivation leads to ultimate liberation. Thus, James recognizes the wisdom in Tzu Chi’s path of volunteer service, in that through seeing the suffering of charity beneficiaries, “we realize why we have to learn and practice,” he explains, so “that’s why we’re grateful when we can give to people in need.”

And so, no matter how hard the task at hand, for James, it’s a precious opportunity for which he’s immensely thankful. Being a Tzu Chi volunteer makes him feel at peace and secure because he knows he’s on the right path. James hopes that more people will discover the joy that lies at the heart of the Tzu Chi path and will choose to become a member of this family of volunteers. As he says, likening the experience to tasting a new flavor of tea, “before you drink it, how can you describe it? To know and understand it, you must try it yourself.”

Many Cite Soleil residents will call out, “Tzu Chi!” when they see volunteers in their blue and white uniforms arrive on the scene.

James Chen (right) explains the story behind the Tzu Chi Mobile Food Pantry at Alhambra High School.
From Darkness Towards Hope

After the earthquake of January 12, 2010, every Haitian, from youngest to oldest, had a story to tell about the passage of this devastating event, which had claimed nearly 300,000 lives. Roselaure Charles, a co-author of this article and film student at the time, remembers the tragedy vividly.

For her, it all started while she was attending a class: “Suddenly, I felt strong vibrations on the ground. Not having understood what was happening, I raised my head to the ceiling and saw the wooden beams carrying the roof begin to vibrate and bend strongly. Walls and windows also began to shake.” Roselaure rushed outside, only to discover mayhem unfolding.

“Distraught, in an environment of panic and the cries of residents in the area, I ran home without shoes to reach my parents. I walked through dusty streets, past collapsed multistory buildings, others still standing but with wide cracks. Bloody bodies were strewn everywhere, people running. I saw somber scenes, people who had lost their legs, their arms. It was like a horror film.”

Roselaure’s fear of what may have happened to her own family grew with every step: “After hours of walking, I finally arrived home, but I didn’t see my family. This night was so long. Only the next day, in the afternoon, was I able to locate my loved ones. We were so happy to see that everyone is alive.” She was one of the lucky ones, as so many Haitians were mourning, most having lost a loved one, a friend, someone they knew.
In the aftermath of the catastrophe, explanations to justify why it had happened weren’t lacking. For Christians, it was the curse of God since Haitians practice too much voodoo. Others said it was because Haitians had abandoned their ancestors and culture for the benefit of Westerners. And scientists explained that it was a natural phenomenon, with the damage resulting from poor quality construction and inadequate environmental management.

The earthquake’s immediate impact was far-reaching, leaving millions traumatized, their lives turned upside down. Those who had the opportunity left severely impacted areas to live with friends and relatives elsewhere. Others spend nights in the streets, afraid to return to their damaged homes. And, many ended up gravitating to unoccupied grounds that spontaneously turned into camps for the displaced; Marta, age 33, being just one example.

Marta lost her husband and two children in the earthquake, escaping herself with her eight-month-old baby. She now lived in a tent containing a few items she could retrieve from the remains of her former home. The shelter was a refuge, yet Marta dreaded going outside, haunted by memories of the wounded crying for help from under the rubble. “I’m still terrified because I saw many children die,” she said in tears.

The state of affairs in Haiti was disastrous when Tzu Chi volunteers arrived to offer aid and moral support after the earthquake. Haitians were suffering materially and psychologically, and it was evident that the road to recovery would be long and demanding. And yet, Tzu Chi had come to assist the nation in the long term.

The photographs in this issue of Tzu Chi USA Journal, document the love and care at the heart of Tzu Chi’s aid mission in Haiti. And in fact, many are the work of Keziah Jean, a Haitian photographer and co-author of this article. 📷

Hurricane Matthew leaves a devastating trail of destruction across Haiti in 2016, striking another blow to many still struggling to recover from the earthquake of 2010. Tzu Chi’s long-term earthquake disaster relief encompasses aid for those affected by this hurricane as well. Photo/Keziah Jean

Disasters have repeatedly struck Haiti: Hurricane Matthew, in 2016, was just one of them. The face of this little boy, whom Keziah Jean photographed in the aftermath of that catastrophe, speaks volumes. Photo/Keziah Jean
On January 12, 2010, a catastrophic magnitude 7.0 earthquake struck Haiti, killing nearly 300,000 people and leaving over three million affected. Although Tzu Chi’s relief efforts for Haiti trace back to 1998, following Hurricanes Georges and Mitch, the earthquake marked the start of an extensive, continuous aid mission.

Ten years later, on January 12, 2020, the exact anniversary of this tragic event, Tzu Chi held the grand opening of a photo exhibit, entitled “Keeping Hope Alive: 10 Years of Care in Haiti.” The exhibition features 100 photographs documenting Tzu Chi’s aid in Haiti over the past decade, all displayed on the walls of the Tzu Chi Center in New York, and in this issue of Tzu Chi USA Journal.

The exhibition is a testament to Tzu Chi’s mission of compassion in action, as well as its disaster relief motto of being the “first to arrive and last to leave.” Although in Haiti’s case, our volunteers never left, and have been continuously supporting communities in this impoverished nation, helping alleviate hunger, providing health care, rebuilding schools destroyed by the earthquake, and more.

For most viewers, the photos reveal the depth of suffering in Haiti, as well as the joy of
those receiving much-needed aid and those giving it – Tzu Chi volunteers and partners, all grateful to be able to help. Yet, for some, they bring back memories of being in Haiti after the earthquake. Among them is Dr. Peter Lin, a licensed Psychologist and Professor in the Department of Psychology at New York’s St. Joseph’s College, who was part of Tzu Chi’s disaster relief team for ten days. He still recalls the experience vividly:

> When I first arrived in Port-au-Prince, left the airport, and looked at the damaged streets and destroyed buildings, my only feeling was, 'Wow, this is a living hell.'

As the only mental health professional in the relief team, I tried to provide crisis intervention, education, and emotional support for both survivors and aid workers. When major disasters happen, no one exposed can remain untouched. Not only are there physical injuries, but psychological damage is often present as well.

Dr. Peter Lin is also a volunteer photographer for Tzu Chi USA. He often documents precious moments at Tzu Chi’s events. Here, he captured Dharma Masters, who had traveled to New York from Taiwan, celebrating the grand opening of the Tzu Chi Center on October 13, 2019. *Photo / Peter Lin*

While earthquake survivors wait for medical services, Dr. Peter Lin, seated on empty baby formula cans, conducts a quick psychological triage with the assistance of a local volunteer translating from Creole to English. *Photo / Tzu Chi USA*

While survivors were waiting for medical services, I walked around and did a quick psychological triage. If someone seemed very depressed, I would sit and chat with him or her. Privacy wasn’t possible. Usually, when I started the conversation, other survivors listened. As my clients felt better, there was a ripple effect as surrounding survivors also expressed some sense of calm, experiencing a form of vicarious healing.

However, conducting psychological counseling was a challenge since most Haitians speak Creole, which I don’t, so I had a translator follow me around. Providing emotional support with an interpreter is like performing surgery while wearing boxing gloves. Still, although my translator might not have been able to interpret what I said precisely, love, respect, and gratitude don’t require translation.

The most crucial emotional support one needs after a disaster is compassion. In general, survivors respond better when they feel that others understand their pain. This understanding provides hope; hope can spread until they can finally stand on their own.

Peter Lin’s conclusion echoes what Tzu Chi has been doing in Haiti for the past decade: Keeping hope alive, spreading, and strengthening it through compassion and ongoing support. This aid has included rebuilding and new construction, medical services for 15,000 patients, relief distributions that benefited 196,000 people, and the provision of 900 tons of rice annually. And, we’re committed to offering this helping hand for years to come. 🌻
During the 2019 Overseas Advanced Volunteer Training Retreat, a group of Catholic nuns and priests were among the participants. I am very grateful, and I also greatly admire them for serving others and putting others above themselves. Father Zucchi Olibrice from Haiti formed the great aspiration to dedicate himself to the poorest places, to go among people who are suffering and care for more than 20,000 impoverished children. In Tzu Chi, we vow to help people in suffering, but simply aspiring to do so is not enough; we must actually do it. I am very grateful that we have this opportunity to help the people in Haiti along with Father Zucchi. Mr. James Chen from the United States has traveled back and forth to Haiti dozens of times. He was willing to endure the long flights and the difference in living conditions to care for and accompany the people of Haiti for the long term.

Truly, love is the warmest and most touching thing in the world. I greatly admire them for helping others and providing spiritual support. Tzu Chi volunteers from different countries have different faiths, but they all have gratitude, respect, and love. The love Tzu Chi volunteers have knows no boundaries. It is pure and makes no distinctions. They all share the same direction and extend their love to all people in the world.

At the retreat, because volunteers from different countries use different languages, sometimes, several layers of translation are needed. However, the true language is that of our hearts. Because we all share the same aspiration, although we may look different, we are all walking on the same path, which is the Bodhisattva-path. It is not a small path, but a great one. Furthermore, we have no difficulty expanding our limited love to unconditional love for the whole world; we just do it!

Sentient beings experience endless suffering, so the Bodhisattva-path is also endless. We must constantly interact with sentient beings and inspire love in every one of them. We must also recognize that time is very precious. I constantly encourage myself with the idea that I must make the most of my life every day, and that I must not spend any moment idly. In order to leave the Jing Si Abode and participate in the Year-end Blessing Ceremonies around Taiwan, I have also been working very hard. Although my steps are not very steady, when I put one foot forward, I can move the next foot right after. In this way, two feet can become a symbol of blessings and wisdom. Putting one foot forward, I hope everyone can create blessings. Putting the next foot forward, I hope everyone can awaken their wisdom. In conclusion, I hope that everyone can be diligent and steadfast in their path and cultivate blessings and wisdom every day. Everyone, please always be mindful!
Dharma Master Cheng Yen responds to questions from visitors, volunteers, staff, and disciples.

**From Prayer to Action**

**Q:** “Some Tzu Chi members often pray to the Three Treasures, the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha, to bring blessings and good fortune to everyone in the world.”

**A:** “We must do more than pray. Everyone should put their effort into doing good deeds, abiding by moral principles, and loving and respecting both the old and the young. This will bring blessings and good fortune to the world. If we are not actively doing good deeds, how can there be harmony and good fortune in the world?”

**Finding Our Strength**

**Q:** “It is so exhausting to help the poor. I see so many poor people, and I feel like we can never help them all. I feel very troubled by this.”

**A:** “It is normal for you to sympathize with those in trouble and be moved to offer them a helping hand. Even the Buddha could not deliver all living beings, yet he said, ‘I vow to deliver countless sentient beings.’ What we can do is to try our best to help the people we see when we have the opportunities.”

**Extending Great Love**

**Q:** “After hearing Master’s teachings, I feel that in order to improve education in society, we should start at home. But where do I start?”

**A:** “We need to start by educating the parents, teaching them to open up their hearts and love all children, not just their own. We should use a mother’s heart to love all living beings and a Bodhisattva’s wisdom to educate the children.”

Excerpts from Jing Si Aphorisms, Volume 2 compiled by Jing Si Editorial Group (Jing Si Publications, 2015). For more information, please visit Jing Si Books & Cafe (directory on Pgs. 86-88) or jingsi.shop.
Spread Love Over the Sky and the Sea

More than willing to give all my todays
A great future is more difficult than they say
The beauty on the outside
only shines when love’s within you
Together we pray for brighter days ahead

Blue sky always appears after the storm
The circle of love embraces right and wrong
I have no worries;
all my ups and downs have vanished
I don’t have much, I hope I can
give you my all

Spread love under the sky, hand-in-hand we are one
Despite the danger, face the wind and step forward
Spread love over the sea, vowing under the sun
No matter how far we must travel
Our dream stays the same

We’ll continue to go on, till forever
Reflection from the Illustrator:

In this song, one phrase, “A great future is more difficult than they say” especially stands out to me. It moves my heart but also brings me a sense of sadness. Often, in life, we feel inspired to walk on a path that brings us toward “a great future.” However, just as often, our heart wavers and we forget this inspiration. During these moments, I recall Master Cheng Yen’s words: “Once you have found your direction, just continue walking no matter how difficult it is or how long it will take.”

This song reflects the long and difficult journey to relieve suffering in the world. Life is impermanent, and while we might not have much time, we wish to give every day in the effort of helping others.

Illustrator/Author intro:

When I first heard this song in the early 2000s, I thought it was just a song about love over the sea and sky. Now, in 2020, I realize that this song paints the picture of the great love of Dharma Master Cheng Yen and Tzu Chi’s volunteers. I hope that this song, accompanied by my illustrations, can bring the message of love to people’s hearts and provide spiritual strength.

Lily Kang is a California State University of Long Beach Tzu Ching (Tzu Chi Collegiate Association) alumnus. She is currently an industrial designer and teaches children art during the weekends. In her spare time, she likes to draw and make gifts for her family and friends.

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For more information, visit TzuChi.US/APP
The Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation is a volunteer-based international non-governmental organization, established by Dharma Master Cheng Yen in Hualien, Taiwan, in 1966. From 30 housewives saving 50 NT cents (approx. US 2 cents) from their grocery budget every day to help the less fortunate, Tzu Chi has now grown to include over 10 million volunteers and supporters in 101 countries and regions. The foundation is dedicated to providing community and social services, national and international disaster relief, medical and charitable aid, education, environmental protection, and a bone marrow donor registry, while promoting humanistic values and community volunteerism.

Tzu Chi USA, the first overseas chapter of the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation, was established in Alhambra, CA in 1989. It all began when Stephen Huang, a wealthy American businessman seeking personal guidance, visited Dharma Master Cheng Yen in Taiwan. Meeting this gentle nun, who had created a powerful organization and was able to realize one seemingly impossible dream after another, solely for the benefit of others, changed his life. Filled with awe and admiration, Huang became a disciple and vowed to bring the spirit and mission of Tzu Chi to the United States, which he did by establishing Tzu Chi USA.

Tzu Chi USA began by mobilizing volunteers, then hosting "tea parties" where they could share their thoughts, experiences, and joy of volunteering. The events drew supporters and quickly inspired the creation of additional chapters. Today, Tzu Chi USA has 57 offices and facilities throughout the U.S., with volunteers and donors working tirelessly to make a difference in their communities. This is just the beginning of our journey, serving others unconditionally and sowing seeds of love and kindness in the Americas.

A User’s Guide to Tzu Chi Connect

Just downloaded our brand new app and need a few tips? We have you covered!

Who We Are:

With Tzu Chi Connect, you can access the latest news and real-time updates on our missions, round up your spare change over time in our digital bamboo bank to easily donate to the causes of your choice, share your experiences with Tzu Chi, or hear from others.

Let’s Get Started

Once you’ve gone through the short introduction, selected the causes that you’d like to support, and have taken some time to explore the app, you may wish to learn more about our “Spare Change” function. This is essentially the digital equivalent of our traditional bamboo bank.

For more information, visit TzuChi.US APP
Tzu Chi volunteers Grace and Tom Wong spot themselves in photos on display at the “Keeping Hope Alive: 10 Years of Care in Haiti” exhibit at the Tzu Chi Center in New York City. Photo/Nancy Wei