

## Fire in Pudu

Written by Lee Ren Hui  
Sunday, 12 July 2009 00:00

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Seven wooden houses located at Foss Road, Pudu, were destroyed in a fire which left some 30 residents homeless. Tzu Chi volunteers presented cash relief to the fire victims, who in turn, donated generously to other needy people through the bamboo banks.

Tzu Chi volunteers learned about the fire, which occurred at 2 am on July 12, 2009, through the newspaper the following day. Seven wooden houses were burned to the ground, leaving 30 residents homeless. The cause of the fire was unknown. It spread quickly because the wooden houses were built close to one another. Six fire engines and 48 firemen successfully controlled the fire and prevented it from spreading within half an hour of their arrival.

Volunteers arrived at the scene of the fire at 10 am on July 13. They visited local residents to find out more about the damages caused by the fire and the assistance they received from the government. Later, they went to the Social Welfare Department to obtain a list of the victims, and returned at 4 pm with cash relief for them.

The cash relief was handled out at the fire site. We could see a scrap metal collector digging through the debris and an old lady going through the ruins with a wooden stick looking for valuables. "This is my home. I am looking for anything valuable that was not burnt..."

Grandma recalled, "I was so frightened! When I awoke, I quickly alerted my entire family to run for their lives." She then paused and added with embarrassment, "I was so nervous that I even forgot to put on my dentures. You see I do not have teeth now. Actually, I came back to look for it..." and she was grinning from ear to ear as she said it.

### **Learn to be a blessed person**

After setting up the venue for presentation, a volunteer read the letter of consolation from Master Cheng Yen and introduced Tzu Chi. Thereafter, ten households (9 Chinese and 1

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Indian), comprising of 35 people, were presented with a cash relief of RM3,600 per household. Most of the elderly were accompanied by their children at the presentation.



The volunteers also brought along bamboo banks and shared with the victims the origin of the relief fund. The volunteers encouraged the victims to put some money into the bamboo banks and in so doing, were blessed for their good deeds.

After listening to the volunteers, 70-year-old He Yu Hua was the first to put some money into the bamboo bank. She also put her palms together as a mark of appreciation for the opportunity to become a blessed person. Others followed suit.

A concerned volunteer told Grandma He not to donate too much. She smiled her most sincere smile and told the volunteer, "My house is burnt, but I am alright. As long as our heart is open, everything will be alright." Grandma's open-mindedness taught everyone that we should face reality because sufferings do not last forever.

Grandma's daughter said her mother is a donating member of Tzu Chi, and contributes punctually every month. She said although they were victims, and have to stay with relatives, there are other people far worse off than them, and she would like to continue to help.

Victim Du Li Hong not only donated money into the bamboo bank, but she returned the cash relief intact to Tzu Chi. "The house that was burned down is my staff hostel. As Tzu Chi is a charitable organization, the money should be used to help other needy people instead." She thought the concern shown by the volunteers was much more precious.

The bamboo bank collected more than RM140, which represents the love of these fire victims for others in need, as well as, the support and affirmation from the public towards Tzu Chi. Their love is indeed great.

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