

Manila Fire Survivors Give Money for Haiti

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Last month a fire broke out in a district of Manila, leaving over 300 families homeless. Tzu Chi volunteers rushed to provide rice, blankets, clothes and cleaning items – and inspired the survivors to donate money for the people of Haiti.

The fire broke out on the evening of January 16 – four days after the [Haiti earthquake](#) – in Baseco Compound, next to the port of Manila. A couple was having a fight and threw items at one another, including a gas lamp, which started the fire. It spread quickly and left 311 families without homes. They were enraged that this had happened due to something so pointless. A total of 62 volunteers, including some residents of Marikina, another part of Manila who had received help after typhoon Ondoy last September, took part in the aid distribution; each family received 10 kilos of rice, thermal blankets from Taiwan, cooking ware, clothes, slippers, soap and other household items. Almost all were moved to make a donation for the survivors of the Haitian earthquake.



"In my heart, my mind and soul, I prayed for the victims, especially those buried in the rubble," said Precilla Luguibes. Oscar Sevilla, 49, said that he had been deeply touched by the foundation's unconditional love to people, whatever their race and religion. "I do not have money in my pocket. I borrowed from a friend so I can donate to the victims in Haiti." Pregnant with her seventh child, Melania Muchocana said that, although the fire had consumed most of her belongings, she was determined to donate a peso or two. "We should not always be the one asking help, thinking only about our own welfare," she said. "We should also learn how to share our blessings with others. I am a little ashamed that I gave only one peso. It is far too little compared to the packages of aid we have received from Tzu Chi." She was also moved to look after her parents better and follow the ideals of filial piety which the volunteers had spoken of. "I used to disobey and fight with my parents. Now I realised that, as long as my parents are alive, I have to respect and really take good care of them."

The people of Baseco Compound suffered a tragedy because of an argument between a couple. But, in their distress, they found the compassion to help those worse off than themselves.