

## Volunteers in Suzhou Make 250,000 Dumplings for Charity

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Ahead of Dragon Boat Festival on June 16, volunteers in the east China city of Suzhou are making 250,000 vegetarian rice dumplings, for sale to raise money for scholarships for poor children and rebuild schools in the Sichuan earthquake zone. This is the 12th year volunteers in Suzhou have conducted this program.

In the province of Jiangsu and a population of 6.3 million people, Suzhou is one of the most important industrial cities in China. To make the dumplings, more than 800 volunteers gathered from all over east China; some traveled over seven hours, from the neighboring provinces of Jiangxi, Hubei and Anhui. They are working intensely for eight days in a row; it is like a factory production line.

Everyone knows that a few extra dumplings mean more hope for needy children. One volunteer who came from Anhui was Xu Tao: "I came to serve because I only helped local children before," she said. "Through this charity work, I can help children in Sichuan, Guizhou and Jiangxi and spread love far and wide." The dumplings are made of glutinous rice, in the shape of a pyramid, and wrapped in bamboo or reed leaves; the tradition among Chinese people is to eat them during the Dragon Boat festival.



Another volunteer was Zhu Aiping, who is suffering from leukemia and in the process of undergoing over 30 chemotherapy sessions to cure it. "Seeing the commitment of the volunteers is an inspiration to me. I want to be like my brothers and sisters and do my part." Everyone helps each other with their problems, like getting sleepy teenagers out of bed in the morning.

What drives them forward is the knowledge that the proceeds from the sale will help needy children in many parts of China, including those rebuilding their schools after the devastating earthquake in Sichuan two years ago.