

Tzu Chi Brings Red Bean Rice to Hurricane Survivors in Haiti

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
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Volunteers from the Tzu Chi Foundation have been bringing food and zinc sheets to the people of Haiti devastated by Hurricane Matthew in October. The food includes instant red-bean rice developed specially to meet the tastes of Haitian people – something greatly appreciated by the residents. The volunteers are also assessing other emergency needs, such as drinking water, first-aid kits, beds and shelter.

In early October 2016, Hurricane Matthew struck Haiti and left coastal areas flooded and canals overflowing into the streets in Port-Au-Prince and surrounding towns. The people are still recovering from the catastrophic 2010 earthquake, the cholera outbreak that followed it, and the severe flooding caused by Hurricane Sandy in 2012.

The volunteers are conducting disaster relief in providing meals. In response to the food shortages, the foundation transported instant rice from Taiwan and brought it to the worst-hit areas. After the hurricane, many survivors did not even have their own bowls or plates for daily meals. Therefore, Tzu Chi USA brought over 3,000 sets of reusable bowls and spoons.

Days after the earthquake, the volunteers noticed the shortage and set up seven food stations to provide meals for over 1,000 survivors each day. However, in some disaster-hit areas, due to bad communications and roads that had been cut, the situation of some residents remains unknown. Therefore the volunteers have been paying extra attention to the needs of people in every district they pass.



On a return trip after completing a distribution of hot meals in a remote area, the volunteers saw a center for elderly people that had been damaged by the hurricane; it is run by the Catholic Church. Senior residents have been relocated to a nearby school; living conditions are difficult. The Sisters were looking for assistance from outside and met the volunteers. One resident said that eating the red-bean rice was like taking vitamins.

The dehydrated instant red-bean rice is the product of Taiwan; it is easy and quick to prepare. To suit the taste of Haitian people, volunteers tried many times to season the red bean rice to find the right recipe. When tasting it, the residents were touched that a Taiwan product could taste so much like they food they are familiar with.

In addition, most houses in Haiti, whether built of timber or brick, use corrugated zinc sheets on the roof. After Hurricane Matthew, all the roofs of the houses were damaged. Seeing the urgent need to repair, the volunteers have begun to purchase new zinc sheets for the survivors to

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rebuild their homes.

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