

Backpacks of Love" Filled with Food to Poor School Children

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
Wednesday, 05 March 2008 00:00



San Francisco Tzu Chi volunteers have helped out at the John Muir Elementary school since 2004, giving presentations and class counseling, and providing food as well as awareness on environmental protection. Knowing that the neighborhood is in a poor area where some kids do not have much to eat, volunteers prepare 27 "backpacks of love" for these children to eat during the weekend.

Many school children from low income family attend the John Muir Elementary School. Some of them live in shelters without kitchens. Therefore, the children are often without food for two days. Sometimes the children are so hungry that they steal ketchup packets from the local McDonalds.

To improve the situation, San Francisco Tzu Chi volunteers provide the children with "backpacks of love" right before school ends on Friday afternoon. Each backpack contains bread, breakfast rolls, canned food, fruit juice, and biscuits.



Every Thursday at 9am, Tzu Chi volunteers purchase food at the San Francisco Food Bank. The Tzu Chi volunteers then prepare backpacks that they personally bring to the school children and explain to them: "The food is for you to eat throughout the weekend. On Monday, remember to bring back the empty backpack back to the teacher so it can be used again next Friday."

The volunteers also prepare extra backpacks for the teachers so they can readily provide food to hungry children. These backpacks, regardless of what is in them, are a token of love and compassion for these children.

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