

## Starting A Renewed Life in A Clean Space

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation  
Wednesday, 17 February 2016 00:00

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"After I recover, I will get a job to support myself." said Mr. Shih, who had been receiving care from Tzu Chi for a long time. As the Chinese New Year approached, Tzu Chi volunteers helped him with home renovation and medical services. He was determined to say goodbye to the depression in his life. With accompany and blessing from Tzu Chi volunteers, he finally found a job and also a brand new start for the New Year.

### Bad habits wait to clear out

On January 12th in 2013, the weather suddenly turned chilly and windy but the activities of Tzu Chi volunteers were not influenced by this. By 7:30 in the morning, more than thirty volunteers from Tzu Chi International Medical Association and Alian District in Kaohsiung, Taiwan had gathered at Mr. Shih's place and prepared to help him with the cleaning, disinfecting and repairing his living environment.

"I didn't know that there are houses like this in central Alian District, surrounded by the high-rise buildings." Watching the shabby and humid house and the barren surroundings, everyone felt sympathetic and bad for him.

Aged 50, Mr. Shih lives alone in the ancestral house. He once suffered from tuberculosis. This made him reluctant to go outdoors and interact with his neighbors and friends. Volunteer Liu-Chih Sung Chang, who had been giving care to Mr. Shih, said "Mr. Shih was depressed and melancholic. Moreover, he had no income. Tzu Chi not only constantly gave him support, but also provided health consultant service of TIMA so that the situation can be improved substantially."

Hung-Dian Hung, a Kaohsiung TIMA member, got the report from the visiting group and asked about the health condition of Mr. Shih. He pointed out that, the first thing was to identify his health condition, and then improved his life condition by cheering him up and helping resume his work. Hung-Dian Hung said "It's not that he was unable to work, but he didn't dare."

### Team work repairs the house

Watching a group of volunteers help him to clean up his place, Mr. Shih wanted to join them but could hardly breathe. Tzu Chi volunteers quickly settled him down in the chair, and the TIMA volunteers immediately started to take care of him.



The work started with emptying, disinfecting, cleaning and clearing the house, as well as getting the broken segments off the wall and removing the broken ceilings. The volunteers made space

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for the follow-up constructions and complete renovation. Their hair and clothes were even covered with spider webs. Volunteer Chieh-Shang Hung, who was responsible for the woodwork, was really impressed by this scene and said "Tzu Chi can change a person's personality and make them more compassionate. Therefore, I feel pleased and relaxed every time my elder brother (Dr. Hung at Tzu Chi International Medical Association in Kaohsiung) invites me to join them."

Mr. Huang, a neighbor of Mr. Shih, was touched and told us, "Tzu Chi is so kindhearted. I've never seen other organizations that can call up so many people in such a short time." He even offered donation to support the renovation. Another neighbor, Mrs. Liang, also provided her tables for the volunteers to use and helped prepare the meals and drinks.

### Happiness of moving into new house

Among the Tzu Chi volunteers, there were people with different skills, including plumbing and electricity, woodwork, cement and painting. They divided the labor and started installing a water heater and screen doors, as well as repairing light switches and the doors. All the rooms were painted and the floors indoor and outdoor were changed to cement.

Every volunteer adjusted their schedules to ensure continuous work going on. Finally after two weeks' effort, all the work was done. Mr. Shih's home had discarded the mess in the past and now had brand-new look. After 14 days the painting had dried, and on January 27th at around eight o'clock in the morning, Tzu Chi volunteers helped Mr. Shih to move into his new place.

In the early morning, Tzu Chi volunteers gathered in front of Mr. Shih's place and made sweet balls. They set up a temporary gas stove for cooking. Wei-Chen Hung, a kid from Kaohsiung, poured the sweet balls in the pot when happily saying "Moving into the new house, cooking the sweet balls." At the same time, the male volunteers were busy moving in the large pieces of furniture like a sofa, a bed and a closet, and the female volunteers were busy with cleaning the furniture. All of them worked together and settled everything down in less than 1 hour.



People ceremoniously sang the song "Immeasurable longevity and bliss" for moving into the new house. Every volunteer brought one type of home goods to express their good wishes, including rice, fruits, appliance, instant noodles, kitchen utensils and quilts. They entered the house one by one while speaking out their sincere blessings.

Apart from giving her blessing to Mr. Shih, Tzu Chi volunteer Yuan-E Chen also expressed her expectation like his family. "Health is the most important. After recovery, instead of staying at home by yourself, you should vow the good will to make a contribution to work for the recycling station."

Dr. Guan-Da Wu used his vacation to help with the cleaning work. He said "It is a good affinity

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between Mr. Shih and me. What's more, it helps me to realize that there are many people in the world who need help. I told myself to be content with and cherish what I got. Don't be greedy."

### **A new life starts**

In addition to Mr. Shih's life quality, Tzu Chi volunteers also took him for physical examination in San Tai Hospital, including electrocardiogram, ultrasound, blood and lung inspections. The doctor told him that his lung was functioning normally now, but there was a minor problem with his liver. To be sure, the volunteers then took him to Huei Ren Hospital. After further examination, the doctors told Mr. Shih that his liver was fine and did not worry too much about it, but he needed to take good care of his health.

Mr. Shih was much relieved after hearing the doctor's words. He said "I am not good at expressing myself. Thanks so much for everyone's help. After I recover, I will get a job to support myself."

It didn't take long for Mr. Shih to find a long-term job in a factory. Dr. Hung-Chung Lin at Tzu Chi International Medical Association recalled "One week ago he gave a call to me, saying he wanted to commit suicide and felt so sorry for Tzu Chi. Today we can see his bright and cheerful face. The volunteers helped him rise from the hell to the heaven." Dr. Lin wished a happier life for Mr. Shih.

Tzu Chi International Medical Association works together with the community volunteers to help the sick and suffering people regain the confidence to live and greet the new year of hope independently.

Article by Chih-Kung Chu in Kaohisung, 2013/01/13~2013/01/14

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