TIMA Treats 1,600 People at Free Clinic in Manila

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation Sunday, 30 May 2010 00:00



On May 30, members of the <u>Tzu Chi International Medical Association</u> (TIMA) treated 1,640 people at a free clinic in Marikina city, a suburb of Manila, capital of the Philippines. It was TIMA's 129th free clinic in the country.

A total of 95 medical professionals and 355 local volunteers took part in the clinic, held in the Barangay Fortune district. Volunteers hired a vehicle to carry elderly people and those who have difficulty in moving to the site.

Before the clinic opened, a long queue formed in the bright light of the early morning. Among them was a very happy man of 60, Jacinto, who was having his eyes examined. "I am going to read because I finally have glasses. Thank you very much, Tzu Chi. I am so happy." Not so fortunate was a 14-year-old boy named John who is on crutches. He had a bacterial infection in the bone of a foot that was not treated and had the foot amputated; the dreadful disease has re-appeared. His mother Generosa hoped that the TIMA physicians could find a cure. "I want the doctor to examine my son's right foot because the wound on it has not healed. He went a lot to the hospital before the amputation. Now the other foot is infected." Another victim of poverty was 24-year-old Leonarda; a tumor on her lower jaw has been left untreated and grown to the size of a grapefruit. "It has already been 24 years," she said. "It looked normal before but started to grow in 1993. I want to have it removed. The doctors said that, if I do not, the cancer cells will spread all over my head."

The physicians did their best to solve the problem of each patient immediately. But some were more complicated; they had to re-schedule them for future treatment. Among the volunteers was a 15-year-old girl, Jennifer, who was happy to help others despite being in considerable pain; she suffers from scoliosis. "All we need is to be willing," she said. "Although my spine is crooked and I get very tired, the happiness I receive from helping other makes me forget all my pain." It was Typhoon Ketsana in September last year that brought the volunteers to Marikina city. They did all they could to secure the livelihoods of its people then; they are continuing this responsibility today, with pride and joy.

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