

Tzu Chi Holds Free Clinics in Bangkok and Sao Paulo

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
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Volunteers held free clinics in Thailand and Brazil -- and succeeded in attracting more than 400 people in the middle of a World Cup game.

Bankok

Volunteers in the Thai capital of Bangkok have long been taking care of the health and welfare of local residents. As part of this, they recently held a clinic at a local school, offering a general health check, dental care, eye examinations and other specialist services. Among the patients was a 71-year-old grandfather, Ms Boontham, who suffers from blurred vision. When he heard of the clinic, he was so happy that he could not sleep the night before and came to line up at first light in the morning. "I am almost blind," he said. "I cannot read big posters. When I went to see the doctor before, I was told that my eyes were too small for an operation. Today I came here to find a glimmer of hope." Another patient, a 50-year-old lady named Snong, brought a coin bank. "What does it matter if I can only contribute one or two baht a day?" she said. She will slowly collect the money, passing on the Tzu Chi spirit.



It took a great deal of work to arrange the clinic – by volunteers, medical professionals, community workers and staff of the school which hosted the event. "I am very grateful to the Tzu Chi foundation for organizing this free clinic to safeguard the health of community residents," said the principal, Mr Predawan. All the services offered are badly needed by local people; the doctors said that they were happy to help a good cause. "I have a good feeling," said one volunteer Doctor Punyawee, "Today's event gave me a deep sense of satisfaction and great joy, because we can see the happy expressions on the faces of the patients. That is what makes us doctors happiest."



San Paolo

The event in Sao Paulo, Brazil, was held in the Julio Diniz School in Itaquera district, the fourth such free clinic the foundation has held in the school. The time happened to coincide with the World Cup football match between the national team and Portugal, which gripped the nation. The volunteers feared that this would diminish the attendance, but over 400 people came. This was because the community has come to appreciate the clinic – and the school for hosting it. "These free clinics help the residents in every way, especially those living in poverty," said volunteer Wu Qunxin. "Because of this, the students and their parents have learned to respect and cherish this school. There is a sense of trust and security." The volunteers prepared food

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baskets and delivered them to those in need at home. A simple conversation and loving embrace warmed the heart of everyone, helping to give them courage to persevere.