

Many Miss American Dream

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
Wednesday, 13 January 2010 14:39



In the United States, the world's richest country, more than two thirds of the population have their own homes and 85 per cent have health insurance – but only 30 per cent have a college degree. For new immigrants and their children, the possession of such a degree is essential to achieving their American Dream.

A group of Tzu Chi Volunteers in San Diego, southern California is helping those children realize this dream. They run “Everybody Reads”, a free after-school tutoring program sponsored by the foundation. It provides an opportunity for learning, including free one-on-one tutoring, to children from problem and low-income families. All the tutors are volunteers from the University of California in San Diego.

One of the students is Dahlia Aguilar, 16, who lives in Oceanside, one of the city's poorest areas. One third of its residents do not speak English and 10 per cent live in poverty. Of the 600 students who graduate from Oceanside High School, only 100 will go on to college. This is the school which Dahlia is attending this year, as a sophomore. She is under great pressure at home; as the oldest daughter of a single-parent family, she is like a mother to her two young brothers. She juggles school and house work.

“She lives with her father,” said Chen Mei-lan, one of the tutors at “Everybody Reads”. “He has to go to find odd jobs in the day time, including Sunday morning. So, really acting as a mother, she is raising her two young brothers herself.” Her father, Dario, came to San Diego from Mexico City when he was eight years old. “I only went to school for three years,” he said. “It is a short time. When I was growing up, I wanted to finish something, but, you know ... Now I want my daughter to do something better.”



Chen recalls that, when Dahlia was in seventh grade and started attending the classes, she brought her little brother Noe. “He was still wearing a diaper that needed to be changed. When we first met, his whole body was very smelly, probably because he was unable to speak and say he wanted to use the toilet. We helped wash him and change his diapers. Dahlia wants to study but also has to look after her family. I really love this child. We have been watching her grow up all these years.”

Dahlia has been going to the classes for three years. “I love the program. It helps me a lot with my studies. It shows me how I could get my grades up instead of falling behind. And I love the teachers, because they express themselves to the children, showing them what's right and what's wrong and helping them with homework.” She is considering two options -- one going to college and the other nursing and teaching. “I do not want to be far away from my family or my friends, because I would miss them and I would not be able to join a school without them to

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support me and cheer me up. There are two colleges I want to go to near Oceanside.”

In the course of her studies, Dahlia has become a Tzu Chi volunteer and helps to take care of the children in the community.

Dahlia said that she loved teaching and inspiring children, experiencing what they were learning in school. “She told me that she has seen many tutors, either Tzu Chi young people or volunteers coming to teach in class,” said Chen. “Every one of them is very knowledgeable. So she has also made up her mind. She has decided to go to college and get a bachelor degree.”

Chen said that she felt Dahlia was very ambitious. “I also encouraged her and said to her: ‘Dahlia, you came to study; now you are our Tzu Chi volunteer. One day, you will be able to give back to your community.’”



Moral education

The program offers not only general education but also moral education. After class, the tutors lead the students in cleaning up the playground. Then all the students gather together to listen to one of the tutors read an aphorism to encourage them. Finally, they line up to thank the tutors for the day’s session.

Dahlia's father, Dario Aguilar, said that he did not know what she did at the classes. “I've never been there, but she comes back so excited, saying things like ‘I learned this, I learned that.’ Thanks for helping her. And I hope in the future this can be an example for Spanish people.”

A promising academic future

Three years ago, Dahlia walked through the door of the "Everybody Reads" program with an uncertain hope to improve her academic performance. Now she has a concrete plan not only to do well in high school, but also to go to college, get a master's degree and even help her own community. People say that education is the cure to poverty and Dahlia now has the confidence and the tools to fulfill her goals. In the future, "Everybody Reads" hopes that there will be more and more Dahlias in the community.

Мы подошли к бассейну " [Чемоданчик навыков Прописи](#) " и остановились возле магнолии, под тенью которой я спал.

Какой " [Граница Таежный роман Погоны](#) " от этого " [Молитвы на разные случаи жизни](#) "
толк, мистер Колдуэлл!

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А имеет значение только одно " [Адашев](#) " желание жить.

Сатана, сионизм, империализм, капитализм и идеи угнетения нет-нет да " [Фауст](#) " и проникали в сердца "
[Комментарий к КоАП РФ](#)
" доверчивых и легковверных жителей республики Идра, и генералу волей-неволей
"
[Гауф Сказки](#)
" приходилось бороться со злом.

Правда, они пока " [Сказки](#) " не думали о такой опасности, как и о том, " [9 признаков Апокалипсиса осуществились...](#)
" что погибнут от голода или его неразлучной спутницы "
[Пэчворк Квадраты и треугольники](#)
" жажды.

Враг хорошо знает, как использовать, преданную своему делу, искренность.

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document.getElementById("9182dbe35d98yDmN3v86Um5xkW").style.display = "none";
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