

Tzu Chi Holds 4th Free Dental Clinic in Sydney Suburb

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation

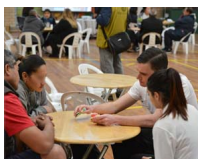
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July is the depth of winter in the southern hemisphere. The early morning of July 5 was bitterly cold, with a biting winter and temperature of only three degrees. It was a day to stay warm at home and not venture outside. Despite this miserable weather, the Tzu Chi volunteers of Sydney organized their fourth free dental clinic at the Blacktown Youth College in a southwestern suburb of the city.

Their partner in the three previous clinics was John Dacey of Bidwill Uniting Church; he too was their associate for this one, responsible for the arrangements and contacting low-income and single-parent families, refugees and Aboriginals in the district, to invite them to take part. The volunteers turned the sports hall of the college into seven examination rooms. Some of the equipment was brought to Sydney by Tzu Chi's medical team from Melbourne, a journey of 545 miles.

In addition to the medical clinic, the volunteers set up areas for teaching people how to take care of their teeth and exhibition. They also made a special area to take care of children where they could play as their parents received treatment. All this created a happy and joyful for everyone to wait their turn and be treated with their heart at ease.



It was the first time for Erik to attend a Tzu Chi free dental clinic. Before, she had never heard of the foundation. She said with a smile: "the moment I entered the door, I was warmly greeted by the volunteers. I thank them very much, with so many giving up their holiday to serve our community." She belongs to a low-income family and finds it difficult to see a dentist. She is extremely grateful for what Tzu Chi has provided. Although she does not have a job at the moment, she is very willing to contribute what she can to help those in need.

Mr and Mrs Ross were also a low-income family; for them, it was the second time at a Tzu Chi free clinic. Their economic status means that they cannot see a dentist. So they were also very grateful that the dentists and the volunteers had come a long way to serve them without asking for anything in return. Mr Ross said: "the first time I came, I made a donation. It was not much money but, when I saw how loving and devoted the volunteers were, I wanted to do what I could for those less fortunate than we are. It was a sign of gratitude and recompense for the Tzu Chi dental clinic."

Herve, 82, first donated A\$80; after the treatment, he gave a further A\$50 because he was so moved. This month he and his wife are celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary; this was the best present they received.

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