

Tzu Chi Volunteers in Durban South Africa Start Winter Distribution

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
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The Agriculture and Food Agency of Taiwan donated rice to Tzu Chi Foundation. By the end of May, first delivery of the donated rice, weighed 120 tons, has already arrived overseas to South Africa. 20 tons out of the delivered 120 tons of rice, packed in 2000 bags of 10 kg each, was sent directly to Durban. Starting from June, Tzu Chi's volunteers in Durban will start the winter distribution and continue visiting the community, handing bags of rice to each corners in the village in person, sending message of love and help the poor to survive through the cold winter.

On June 12, Durban's Tzu Chi volunteers went to the village for charity distribution. 9:30 in the morning, volunteers gathered close by the bus stop in Ispingo, 6 cars, packed with rice from Taiwan, eco blankets and volunteers went into the mountain by the M35 Highway. Once they passed a sign, that had the name of the area, Folweni on it, the wide and flat road started to become muddy and narrow. The recent continuous rain in Durban has made the road rugged with holes, difficult to drive on. It is not easy to reach to the poor community, to poverty.



Outside of the house, the volunteers unloaded the rice and blankets. Inside of the round house, built by iron sheet, with projector and video and sound equipment, there were around 80 people sitting on the ground, listening to the volunteers sharing about the winter distribution. Next to the iron-sheet-built house, there was a even smaller mud house. Inside of the mud house was Khalathi (Tzu Chi volunteer), preparing meals for the orphans using wood logs. Khalathi had a vegetable farm next her house, supporting meals for the orphans. Around 60 children in the community don't have to go hungry. She also regularly takes care of 9 sick patients.

Volunteers distributed rice and blankets according to the name list. The also provided the orphans food to eat. Afterwards, Tzu Chi's volunteers moved on to the second distribution location, Doris Mthethwa's home.



When the volunteers arrived in Doris' house, there were already hundreds of villagers, including children at the door, happily waiting for the volunteers' arrival. They were the orphans and people being taken care of by Doris and volunteers Sbongile Cele and Zibuyile Gwola. In the kitchen, there were abundant food, prepared for the orphans, such as pumpkin casserole, lettuce, sweet peas, rice, corn powder, etc.

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Next to Doris' house, there lived a family of 3 generations. 68-year-old grandma, Ellen Ndaba and 89-year-old mother, Mary Jane. They both sit in the chairs by the door, holding a walking stick. Grandma Ellen, kneeled to help her mother putting on shoes. Sometimes she brushed up her mother's collars and organizing her hair. The two elderly smiled watching the volunteers going in and out busy with chores. Grandma Ellen's 48-year-old daughter, Priscilla Ndaba was waiting in line for the distribution.

After the distribution ended, volunteers followed Priscilla back home. In order to take good care of her mother, 68-year-old Grandma Ellen is still sleeping with her mother in the same room. Priscilla couldn't go out to work because she had to take care of the elderly. Therefore, she earned for their living by doing some sewing work at home. After the second distribution, Tzu Chi's volunteers continued on the M35 highway, Folwni's main street. The south and the north of the street are very different. The south is crowded and populated. The North is poor and barren. It was in the north of the M35 highway that Doris met the volunteer Thoko Brower, also the last stop for distribution today.



Thoko's house was actually located in the south, the fair area. Since she became a volunteer last year, she learned from Doris how to execute great love. Caring for the sick people and orphans in the village, moreover, she felt that the poor families in the north should also be taken care of. Therefore, she crossed the main street and came to this area to help the villagers. Also, she had led new volunteers Mabongji Ngcobo into the charitable act.

The journey of charity distribution has finally ended. Around 3 in the afternoon, the temperature has decreased. The mother who was waiting for the distribution, wrapped her thin-clothed child with the warm blanket right after she received it. With the 10kg bag of rice on her head, she held her child's hand, happily walked back home. What a beautiful picture! Today's distribution of 233 packs of items made 208 families warm and full for tonight; moreover, it also gave showed the priceless and formless great love.

Translated by Kay Tsao