

Master's Letter to Friends in Australia

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
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Dear Friends in Australia:

La Niña has been causing abnormal weather patterns in the world. Starting in end of December 2010, heavy rainfall and subsequent flooding devastated Queensland. We can see that streets in the city center have become like rivers. The situation is even more severe in low-lying areas, where over 2 million people have evacuated from their homes.

It is truly heartbreaking to see damages and casualties continue to rise due to persisting torrential rain and floods. Our hearts are with you - we can feel your pain.

Despite the disaster, there are also compassionate people to help. I am truly grateful to the Tzu Chi volunteers in Australia, despite all difficulties, have immediately established emergency coordination centers to carry out humanitarian relief work.

The volunteers are helping with clean up, distributing hot meals, blankets and emergency gift cards to bring warmth and daily necessities to our dear friends in this time of difficulty. The volunteers will also initiate a fundraising campaign and go on the streets to inspire everyone's loving kindness. The road to recovery will be long and arduous, but hand in hand, heart to heart, we are at your side.

Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation originated in Taiwan. The Foundation was established in 1966 with the principle of Great Love. Starting with 30 housewives who saved fifty cents New Taiwan Dollar (approximately two cents AUD) from their grocery money each day to help the poor, the Foundation is now present in 50 countries of the world. Tzu Chi volunteers everywhere are involved in giving back to their local communities. Regardless of religions, ethnicities, nationalities or socio-economic status, Tzu Chi delivers strength and hope to the suffering people.

As we all live on the same planet, it is everyone's duty and responsibility to look after our Mother Earth. Disasters serve to awaken people's awareness. We must not hurt it any further, but to protect and cherish it.

Although we are far apart physically, my heart and mind is there with you. I am confident that with faith, love and courage, you will soon get back on your feet, to embrace a bright and promising future.

Shih Cheng Yen
Founder of Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation
January 13, 2011