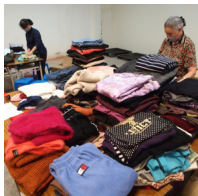


## Taiwan Volunteers Prepare Clothes for Syrian Refugees

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation  
Thursday, 18 October 2012 13:22

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Volunteers in the north Taiwan city of Sanchong filled three containers full of winter clothes for Syrian refugees who have escaped to Jordan and sent them off for distribution by local volunteers. They collected enough old clothes to fill 1,100 boxes.

Since the start of the civil war in Syria in March 2011, an estimated 350,000 of its people have fled to neighboring countries in search of peace and security. Jordan has received the most. Most are living in tents in the desert, subject to sweltering heat in the summer and bitter cold in the winter. Jordan is struggling to find the resources to feed, clothe and care for these people.

To help them, volunteers in Sanchong and Neihu organized a collection of old clothes to send to Syria. They realized that, with the coming of winter, the refugees will be in need of warm clothes to endure the cold weather. So, on October 1, nearly 70 volunteers from Sanchong gathered at a warehouse in the city, for the task for sorting and preparing the clothes for shipment. Volunteer Yeh Ming-chu first explained to the others the principles of how they would do the sorting. Then everyone set to work, opening the bags of old winter clothes and dividing them into different categories. They especially picked out those with long trousers and long sleeves; because Syria is a Muslim country, women normally wear clothes that cover all their legs. The volunteers neatly folded the clothes into boxes; they estimated that it would take 10 days to complete the job. They were put into 1,100 boxes, enough to fill two containers. They hope this symbol of the love of everyone in Taiwan can reach the Syrian refugees so far away and that they can feel the warmth of humanity.



“Giving of yourself without asking for anything in return naturally brings happiness,” said Zhang Yun-ying, who has been a volunteer for many years. “It brings happiness and blessings.” She always remembers this saying of Master Cheng Yen. Seven years ago, she retired from a clothes factory and could have stayed at home enjoying her retirement. But she chose to come to the Tzu Chi branch to serve. If anyone needs helps, she feels duty-bound to provide it – whether it is making instant rice, recycling or spreading the foundation’s message, you can always see Yun-ying happily giving of herself.

She is 76, with grown-up children; her youngest grandchild have already graduated with a master degree. She was surrounded by clothes she was holding and said: “I do not know where these clothes will be sent. I only know that they were be used to help people. The brothers and

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sisters (volunteers) here are very good to me and look after me. I take Tzu Chi as my place of spiritual growth. Because I wish to sort the clothes, I can create good links with many people. This makes me more and more happy. I do not feel tired at all!" In the radiance of her smile, you could see happiness shining through.



Another volunteer was Lin Rong-di. Because she took a day off work, she was able to use her precious holiday to take part in a volunteer activity for the first time; she had been invited by her mother. She is 24 and works in a medical organization; when she understood the principle of Tzu Chi in sending the old clothes, she felt very moved. "In the course of sorting the old clothes, I see the sincerity of so many brothers and sisters," she said. "They are very diligent in taking the clothes, sorting them into different categories, piling them up and putting them into boxes. Everyone is exercising their wisdom and ability and working together. It is extremely efficient. Not only does it make everyone feel the principles of 'thankfulness, respect and love' toward those who are being helped. You also realize that you must treasure the good fortune you have now. After understanding this, you must create blessings."

Rong-di hopes that, if she has time in the future, she will continue to make links with those who help others.

"Great Love knows no national boundaries". As each box was filled with clothes and piled up, they were like an accumulation of the goodness so many people. The neatly folded clothes will be taken to the people of Syria far away, taking with them the blessings of everyone in Sanchong. They will bring the warmth they need to carry them through the winter.

By Li Gui-zhen, Sanchong