

Tzu Chi Provides Second Large Distribution in New York

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation

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On November 17 and 18, the foundation held its second large-scale distribution in the states of New York and New Jersey. From October 29 to November 18, volunteers in the United States have distributed debit cards to over 10,000 families, provided over 8,000 servings of food and provided concern to more than 15 areas affected by Hurricane Sandy.

It has been three weeks since the hurricane made landfall and devastated the northeast of the United States. Thousands of homes in the New York area still lack running water and electricity; residents are struggling to recover. Tzu Chi volunteers from 17 countries and regions are raising money and moving the hearts of people to help the survivors of Sandy get through this difficult period.

On November 17 and 18, the volunteers held the second large-scale distribution in New York and New Jersey. Many traveled from Vancouver and Toronto in Canada and Boston, Chicago and California in the U.S. to participate. One group drove 12 hours by car from Toronto; as soon as they arrived, they started work. The relief items included eco-blankets, scarves, cans of vegetarian food and emergency funds of US\$600 in the form of pre-paid debit cards.



On November 18, it was a cold but fair day. During the distribution, many of the hurricane victims could not believe that the emergency fund and goods came from a charity in Taiwan. Many were moved to hear the story of the bamboo bank era, how the foundation began by raising NT\$0.50 cents (approximately one cent U.S.) from one person each day in 1966. Some were willing to make a donation to help others in need.

In Staten Island, after received a debit card, one recipient told volunteers: “for someone who had lost everything, the \$600 debit card means the whole world.” A pregnant woman who lost everything after the hurricane also told volunteers that she felt that she had seen heaven that day.

A mother of two daughters came to the distribution and told a volunteer that she was there to return the bamboo bank. It was two days ago the lady received relief from the foundation and heard its history and the story of the bamboo bank and how 30 housewives saved a small amount of money each day. She was touched and shared the story with her daughters after she went home.

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