

Philippines Congress Honors Tzu Chi Foundation

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
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[Tzu Chi formally recognized](#)

The Philippines Congress formally honored the foundation for its 17 years of exemplary humanitarian service in the country, especially its work in helping the people of Marikina, a district of Manila, to recover from a typhoon in September 2009. It was the first time the Congress has honored an NGO in this way since 1993.

On February 23, 110 volunteers and staff of the foundation were present in the House of Representatives to attend the presentation of Resolution 64 by House Speaker Feliciano "Sonny" Belmonte, Jr. and Marikina Second District Rep. Romero Federico "Miro" Quimbo to Alfredo Li, Chief Executive of the foundation in the Philippines. It expresses the appreciation and commendation of the House of Representatives to the foundation for its invaluable service and assistance to the Filipino nation. "Today the Tzu Chi Foundation was honored in a proper venue, in this case, the House of Representatives," Li said. "I am very proud and happy that the contributions of Master Cheng Yen and Tzu Chi Philippines for the past 17 years have been formally recognized by the Philippine government. As a volunteer, I am very much satisfied with this distinction and commendation."

In an interview, Representative Quimbo said he felt duty-bound to write a resolution honoring the foundation for its critical role in assisting his district, Marikina, after the devastation caused by Typhoon "Ondoy" (Ketsana) in September 2009. "They deserve all the recognition they can get, as they provided valuable assistance in helping Marikina get back on track," he said. "I estimate that Tzu Chi provided half of the help that enabled us to recover immediately. The group's teachings against gambling, gossiping, smoking, drinking and eating meat and especially the value of recycling and showing compassion and charity to the less fortunate were very timely at that time of calamity and natural disasters. The resolution honoring Tzu Chi is the first of its kind to be given in 18 years."



His sentiments were echoed by Roy Loyola, representative of the First District of Cavite, one of the bill's co-sponsors. "The organization very much deserves the commendation it has obtained from Congress," he said. "I have known many members of Tzu Chi since my days as mayor of Carmona. A lot of my constituents benefited from the numerous medical and relief missions they have undertaken. Tzu Chi volunteers are known for their selflessness and untiring devotion to help the needy. In recognition of their efforts in helping our less fortunate countrymen, I am pledging to donate a small portion of my priority development assistance fund to Tzu Chi so that they can continue with their good work."

House Speaker Belmonte also praised Tzu Chi members for keeping a low profile despite doing much-needed relief work during times of fires, floods, and other natural calamities. "I have been

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a three-term mayor in Quezon City -- the area where the foundation is based. Despite their gruelling relief work, they have never visited the city hall to ask for recognition or support. But I know that, once disasters like fire, floods, earthquakes and other calamities strike Quezon City or other nearby areas, they are the first ones to arrive and succor victims," he said. "This commendation is well deserved and will act as passport or identification card when the organization deals with other government agencies or officials during their relief work."

Two volunteers from Marikina, Lilia Zarate and Siony De Guzman, expressed joy over the recognition given to the foundation. They praised it for helping them get back on their feet shortly after Typhoon Ondoy through its cash-for-work program. The two praised Tzu Chi volunteers for teaching them about the value of recycling, charity and compassion. "These lessons have made us more complete individuals," they said. "We are joyful that our organization, which has been helping us for so long, has been finally commended by the government."