

Tzu Chi's Aid for Hulu Langat Flood Victims

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
Saturday, 24 March 2012 11:55



A 12-hour heavy evening downpour on March 7, 2012, caused flooding in a few districts in Selangor, Malaysia, including Hulu Langat. Upon receipt of the news, a team of Tzu Chi volunteers immediately went to assess the situation. On March 9 & 10, a relief distribution and caring work was carried out.

The small township in the Hulu Langat District, known as "Batu Empat Belas" to the Malay community, or "Ngah-Ngat" to the Chinese community, is located at the 14th Mile of Hulu Langat Road.

Chong Choon Fatt, Head of 18th Village, told volunteers, "The small town had suffered a massive flood in 1971, when the water level was more than 10 feet high and immersed almost all houses under the water. This second massive flood was devastating." He also volunteered to take the volunteers to Kampung Sungai Serai located at the 14th mile.

The affected area was vast

A heavy downpour started at about 5 pm on March 7, and by 9 pm, water had risen to a dangerous level, reaching 8ft at one stage, and almost submerging all houses along the 12th to 14th Mile Hulu Langat Road. Buildings in the town centre were also badly affected. About 1,000 people had to be evacuated to 7 evacuation centres.



The flood only subsided on March 9 morning. After volunteer Lin Yan Li received a call for help from her Malay colleague, the first batch of 6 volunteers went to Taman Indah Jaya at 4 pm that same day to assess the situation. By then, the victims had returned to clear up the mess left by the flood.

With assistance from Dusun Tua's Constituency Coordinator, Mohamad Jan bin Sulong, volunteers obtained the relevant data of the affected families. The following day, when a second batch of 19 volunteers conducted a further assessment, they found another large number of settlements which needed help. They managed to gather particulars of 138 affected families in 5 more villages, namely Taman Indah Jaya, Kg Rantau Panjang, Kg Semungkis, Jalan Sg Sop, streets along the road leading to Ngah-Ngat Seafood and Beer Garden, and Kg Jawa.

On March 11, 120 volunteers were dispatched to Kg Sungai Serai to conduct door-to-door visits on 193 families. A group of volunteers also helped an elderly Chinese couple to clean up their grocery shop.

The scale and magnitude of the flood was beyond description as there were fallen fences and

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uprooted trees, not to mention the mess left in homes, shops and mosques.

The flood had caused great losses to the residents of Hulu Langat! Cleaning up was a huge job for every home and shop.



There is love in the world

Head of Village, Hj Ramly Bin Yunan of Kg Jawa, is a retired civil servant. He revealed that flooding is a constant problem faced by the village. This time, it was massive; and the villagers would not be compensated as they have no official land titles to their houses.

Hj Ramly added, "Despite the frequent flooding, no villagers will move away as the mud brought by the flood has enriched the soil. This creates good income for the villagers in the cultivation and harvesting of Bunga Kantan (Wild Ginger Flower)."

Concerned about his villagers, the Village Head acted fast in making rounds in the village and collecting data of the victims. He then handed over the relevant data to the volunteers, and took them on a door-to-door visit, explaining the purpose of the volunteers' visit. He was, indeed, a great help in the relief assessment.

Hj Ramli said, "It is the natural duty for man to help one another". Hence he is extremely helpful towards the villagers, and is greatly respected for that.

The owner of Econsave hypermarket would normally distribute relief goods for the daily needs of disaster victims. This time, without exception, he sent truck-loads of groceries to the victims. Several Malay communal organizations also came forward to help with cleaning and washing up.

Grateful to have survived the disaster

As they were making their door-to-door visits, the volunteers were suddenly confronted by a resident of a Malay house, who angrily shouted at them: "You people from the government office, you have come too late!"

Hj Ramli calmed him down and explained that Tzu Chi is a NGO, and that the volunteers were there to help. Upon hearing this, the angry person smiled and apologised for his outburst.

A woman in the same house told all present that no government officials or organizations had so far come to their aid. Tzu Chi volunteers were the first. She also mentioned that she cared more for caring visits than material aid.□

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