

Young Volunteers in Hawaii Clean Beach to Celebrate 20th Anniversary

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
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On July 14, to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the [Tzu Chi Collegiate Association](#) (Tzu Ching), young volunteers in Hawaii came together to clean the beach of Ala Moana Beach Park. Tzu Chings around the world held similar events, as part of their effort to protect the Earth.

On July 8, the Hawaii Tzu Chings invited all those who had signed up for the beach-cleaning to gather for a meeting at which they explained the missions of the foundation. They also held a game called 'Survivors', which was designed for everyone to understand the significance of the event.

In the game, everyone played the role of a tourist who was trapped on a remote island. With little food and construction materials, each team had to develop a strategy to survive.



After the game, Ma Guang-shun, president of the Tzu Chi Collegiate Association in Hawaii, shared the startling fact that there is an enormous lake of garbage in the Pacific Ocean between California and Hawaii; it is known as the 'Great Pacific Garbage Patch'. It consists mainly of man-made plastics and other debris thrown away by people; it is estimated to cover an area twice the size of Texas and weigh 3.5 million tons. Ma said the beach-cleaning was not only to maintain the good image of Hawaii, but also to reduce the volume of trash that flows into the ocean; this waste also endangers wildlife.

This meeting was designed to help everyone understand the meaning and purpose of the environmental protection campaign. Each young volunteer shared their thoughts and proposals and listened to the philosophy of Tzu Chi in environmental protection. It was the first large-scale event organized by the Tzu Chi Collegiate Association of Hawaii.

In the Hot Sun, Everyone Works Hard



July 14 was the day to clean the beach. The volunteers were divided into four teams and given different assignments. Everyone did their best to clean up their area they were assigned. After their hard work, they felt a great happiness from looking at the beach. After cleaning their areas, the Tzu Chings also helped to remove the deadwood. Some picked up plastic and sticks in the rock areas, some stayed at the bank to catch the deadwood and others helped to carry the wood to the side of the road. They then contacted park volunteers to take the wood to the ground where it is kept and dealt with.

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After finishing the work, Ge Bin, a Tzu Ching team leader, asked everyone to relax and be very thankful for all the resources of nature. Ma expressed his gratitude that everyone had worked together to clean up the plastic debris in the rock area. This contribution by these young people of Hawaii to the global effort to save the Earth was the first opportunity – and a valuable one -- for them to plan and implement a large-scale event from scratch. They shared the heavy burden of preparation, overcame all the difficulties, protected the environment and enriched their own minds.

Article by Ma Guang Shun (in Chinese)