

Chilean Quake Survivors Welcome Tzu Chi's Aid

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
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The foundation carried out its second day of aid distribution in Chile at the farming town of Cobquecura, in the Biobio region; they gave the aid to 3,200 people. The volunteers received a warm welcome from the residents and their representatives.

Many of the residents lived in mud brick houses which collapsed in the earthquake on February 27, which registered 8.8 on the Richter scale. Now they live in tents or in the ruins of their half-destroyed home. The volunteers set out for the town early on a misty morning; before eight o'clock, the residents were lining up outside a vocational school, where the aid was to be distributed. "The houses here are all made of mud bricks," said one of them. "Now I have nowhere to live, so I have to stay in the place where I raise my pigs." The volunteers distributed boxes of supplies and 1,792 blankets to 896 households; they helped a total of 3,200 people.



Chilean representatives came to the town to express their thanks and support for the foundation's work. Among them was Senator Alejandro Navarro Brain, who said: "you not only came to give us material help but also brought the survivors spiritual comfort. On behalf of the nation and the Biobio region and my family, I thank Tzu Chi people all over the world." The indendant – governor – of the region, Jacqueline van Rysselberghe, also made a special journey to the town that day to show her support. "A month after the earthquake, the survivors now need help getting through the winter. We need blankets and food and, in the longer term, the disaster area needs to be rebuilt," she said. "If permanent homes cannot be built, then pre-fabricated homes are an option." The town's mayor, Roberto Cordova Pichilemu, agreed. "Now the most important thing is to give victims housing. It is worrying because a lot of people are living outside, so we urgently need pre-fabricated housing." There is a shortage of roofing material, so some residents may have to live in tents for 18 months.

It was a warm and emotional day, as the Chilean people expressed their traditional hospitality to the visitors who had come from so far away. There were many hugs and kisses, as the local residents expressed their gratitude on the faces of the volunteers.