

COMPASSION & RELIEF

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Quarter Century of Compassion



Tzu Chi in the USA
1989 - 2014



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From Tiny Seeds Grow Mighty Trees

In May 2013, National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD), a national coalition that coordinates major organizations in disaster relief, held its twenty-first annual gathering in Portland, Oregon. On May 14, the second day of the conference, NVOAD presented its annual Member of the Year Award. This year, the recipient was Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation.

As the announcement was made, representatives of dozens of major national and international relief organizations saw the compassionate face of Dharma Master Cheng Yen appear on the television screens flanking both sides of the stage. They heard how the great aspiration of one individual had brought together compassionate people all around the world to serve like the thousand eyes and thousand hands of Guanyin (Avalokiteśvara), the Bodhisattva of compassion. It was a milestone for Tzu Chi in the United States, an affirmation of more than two decades spent diligently developing a compassionate mission in a new land.

Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation was originally founded forty-seven years earlier in April 1966 by a twenty-nine-year-old Buddhist nun in a poor, rural county of Eastern Taiwan. Following

the instruction of her mentor, Venerable Master Yin Shun, to work “for Buddhism and for all living beings,” Dharma Master Cheng Yen encouraged her followers, thirty local housewives, to save just a couple cents of their grocery money each day to help the poor. The amount was small enough that it would not negatively impact their lives, but when pooled together over many days and from many people, it could make a great impact to help those in need.

In order to save more money to donate, these first followers began to request slightly smaller portions during their daily grocery shopping trips. As they did, they shared the story of the budding organization with vendors and fellow shoppers, who then saw that they too could make a difference for others by giving very little of themselves. Before long, the message was spreading and more people were donating and joining the organization. At first, Tzu Chi volunteers helped a handful of sick and elderly individuals in their local community, but as more people joined the mission, their reach quickly expanded across the island as they served people in need with individual charity services, financial support, and winter relief distributions.

As time passed, Tzu Chi's services expanded from charity to encompass medicine, education, and humanistic culture, and the scope of its care grew rapidly. In 1972, Master Cheng Yen initiated a weekly free clinic to serve those unable to afford medical care. Fourteen years later, the first state-of-the-art Tzu Chi General Hospital was opened in Hualien, the first of six Tzu Chi hospitals in Taiwan to date. In September 1989, it was followed by a nursing college, as a way to both train talented professionals to serve at the hospital and provide career opportunities for local underprivileged aboriginal women. The nursing college, in turn, was followed by a medical college, which later became Tzu Chi University.

In December 1989, Tzu Chi's first overseas office opened in Alhambra, California. After serving the people of Taiwan for over two decades, Tzu Chi's spirit had been carried abroad by pioneering volunteers who were inspired by Dharma Master Cheng Yen's calling to give back to the local community where they made a living and raised a family, wherever that community happened to be.

Twenty-five years after it was first carried abroad, Tzu Chi now has more than ten million volunteers and donors in fifty countries

worldwide, and its volunteers have provided relief in more than eighty countries. These great milestones have been reached through the perseverance of countless dedicated volunteers who make a tremendous positive impact on their surrounding communities by sharing their compassionate care and giving without asking for anything in return.

Here in the United States, Tzu Chi has grown from that first office in Alhambra to include offices in twenty-seven states, with community clinics, schools, academies, and bookstores spread all across the country, as well as long-term support extended to several nations in Central America and the Caribbean. The path so far has been long, and often arduous, but worth every step. 🌱

Sharing the Dharma & Taking It to Heart

The causes and conditions that spread the Tzu Chi spirit from Taiwan to the United States arose from a tiny seed. At the very beginning, it was the couple Mr. Siyuan Huang and Mrs. Jingnian Li, as well as “Silicon Valley Granny” Shiu Chin Wang Lin, who devoted themselves to recruiting and cultivating bodhisattvas in Northern California. In Southern California, Shiu Yun Tsai and Stephen Huang were also mindfully spreading seeds of love. Just as drops of water steadily wear away stone, their perseverance spread Tzu Chi’s love throughout the country. Even though the seeds are tiny, under the right conditions they become great trees that produce fruit and more seeds that will fall to the earth, take root, and grow. ‘One’ can give rise to ‘infinity’ and make a profound and far-reaching impact.

Though Tzu Chi’s Four Missions developed together in the U.S., Charity still led the way. Through emergency assistance, care for the homeless, Happy Campus, regular visits to senior homes, and more, Tzu Chi volunteers’ love reached every corner. During the 1992 Los Angeles riots, as many shops owned by Caucasians and Asians were targeted by attacks, a rioter helped a Tzu Chi donating member from Taiwan escape danger because he was grateful for Tzu Chi’s contributions to the poor and marginalized.

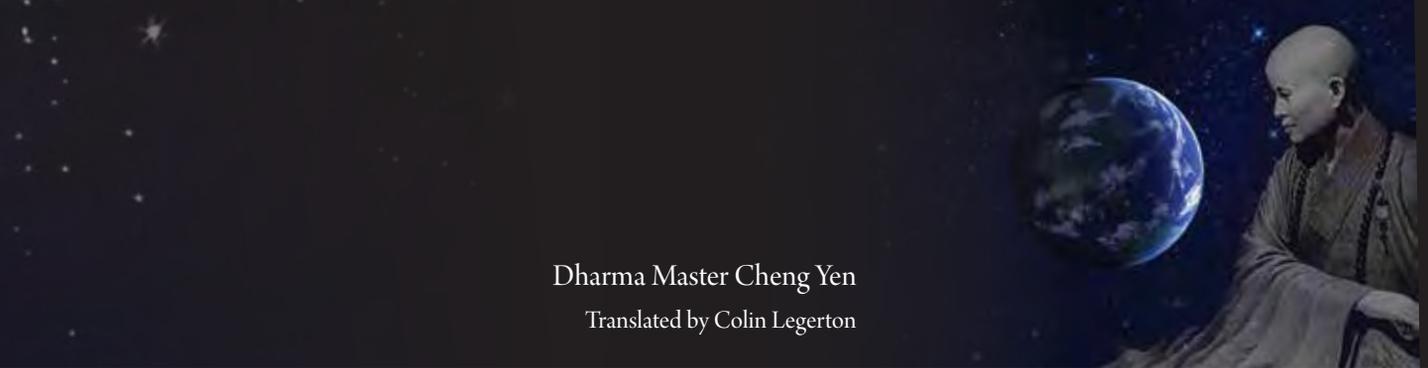
During the September 11 attacks, we watched on our television screens as the hundred-story Twin Towers of the World Trade Center toppled, and I felt deeply that hatred leads only to conflict and misfortune. Only love can bring an end to disaster. In response, Tzu Chi initiated the “One Person, One Good Deed” campaign to settle minds and mitigate disasters, and volunteers established three service centers to provide hot meals, interpretation, and emergency cash for victims’ families.

As the world’s wealthiest and most powerful country, we expect the United States to recover quickly from a disaster and for disaster victims

to receive care immediately. But when Hurricane Katrina breached the levees and flooded New Orleans, so many lives were lost and homes destroyed overnight. The deeper impermanence and fragility of human life was exposed. With a spirit of “taking on all the world’s problems and serving all the world’s people,” Tzu Chi volunteers began to distribute cash cards to address survivors’ urgent needs. For evacuees scattered to other states, Tzu Chi volunteers in each area continued the chain of love.

After Hurricane Sandy struck, Greater New York was left paralyzed, without power or running water and facing a shortage of gasoline. The disequilibrium of the Four Elements, the frailty of the land, and the impermanence of human life were seen in the blink of an eye. Tzu Chi volunteers nationwide rushed to the scene to provide comfort and care. With hearts full of gratitude for American assistance in the past that has allowed Taiwan to flourish, we sent Jing Si Instant Rice, blankets, and other relief materials. I am grateful to EVA Air and China Airlines for shipping these materials free of charge. Tzu Chi volunteers throughout Greater New York activated the Bamboo Bank Spirit, helping people realize their spiritual riches and understand that they too have the strength to help others.

Aiming to safeguard life, health, and love, U.S. Tzu Chi volunteers expanded their services into the medical field. Fearlessly overcoming difficulties, they established free clinics and community clinics to serve ill and suffering people unable to afford care. They purchased Great Love mobile medical vans and provide traditional Chinese medicine, vision, dental, and general medical services to impoverished farm workers, community members, and schools. They also supplement emergency disaster relief with medical services. It is especially gratifying to see so many compassionate doctors, nurses, and lab technicians who have been inspired to join and serve society with their loving hearts.



Dharma Master Cheng Yen

Translated by Colin Legerton

The aim of education is to impart principles of propriety and instill virtue. Tzu Chi Academy—where children are cultivated with humanistic culture—now has more than twenty campuses across the country. From preschool onwards, Academy teachers use Chinese to teach Jing Si Aphorisms and cultivate pure hearts and minds, while imparting life etiquette and humanistic principles. Children are born with innocent hearts and pure love. Education is like a field, and children are all seeds. Only when teachers mindfully and lovingly spread these seeds, cultivate, irrigate, and care for them, can they grow healthy and strong. At the Walnut campus in California, an educational foundation blueprint is being drawn. Tzu Chi already has preschools, kindergartens, and an elementary school. In the future, the goal is to establish a middle school, high school, and university. Education must take root and flourish, and I am very grateful for all they do.

“Bodhisattvas arise due to the needs of suffering people.” In 1998, when Hurricanes Georges and Mitch caused severe damage throughout Central America and the Caribbean, Global Headquarters in Taiwan joined with U.S. bodhisattvas to extend support by providing disinfecting supplies, relief goods, and medical services. When six cargo containers full of clothing and supplies were sent later, U.S. volunteers took on sole responsibility for holding distributions in each country. Because we in Taiwan were separated by the vast ocean, U.S. volunteers continued to care for these ‘nearby’ countries, but they too had to change planes and endure several hours of exhausting travel. I am very grateful to U.S. bodhisattvas for courageously shouldering this responsibility. After the 2010 Haiti earthquake, especially, they joined with volunteers from neighboring countries to take turns providing care and holding distributions. In the end, they even built three sturdy, stately schools which stand as beacons of hope on the broken land.

I am also grateful to the Mission of Humanistic Culture for mindfully supporting Charity, Medicine, and Education with words, images, videos, and translations and for their devotion to recording true stories of compassion into Tzu Chi’s Great Sutra Treasury. They actively transmit the Jing Si Dharma Lineage and advance the Tzu Chi School of Buddhism, whether by carrying Jing Si Aphorisms into prisons to awaken lost souls, through introducing these aphorisms to hotels across the country to bring purification to people’s minds, or even more recently, by promoting environmental, vegetarian concepts to supermarkets via Jing Si Instant Rice.

The territory of the United States is vast, its population is over three hundred million, and it remains an exceptionally powerful nation. For over a decade, it has been struck by one disaster after another, both natural and man-made. The United States must awaken; only then will the world be at peace. For Tzu Chi volunteers, especially, the burden is heavy and the journey is long. I hope that all people can quickly seize time to cultivate vast fields of blessings, for only then can all people be reached.

Seeing bodhisattvas in Taiwan and abroad diligently walking the Bodhisattva Path without worrying about time, money, or physical strength, all I have to offer in return is the Dharma. I am very happy to see that, since July, volunteers have been gathering at 5:30 AM each day in offices all across the country to listen to my Dharma talks. In this way, master and disciples can join together for a Dharma-assembly over the internet. I hope that my disciples and I may have an affinity of the Dharma-marrow that will last life after life, so that we may forever be family in the Dharma. Moreover, I pray that Tzu Chi’s missions can continue operating in the United States without end. 🌱



After a Quarter Century Following My Teacher

A couple days ago, a wealthy businessman asked me about my background. He had heard that I used to run my own business but had given everything up for a teacher and an organization. He was very curious: why had I done this?

I told him that I joined Tzu Chi and have remained active for these twenty-five years without faltering all because of one person: Master Cheng Yen, my mentor and the person I will follow my whole life. Why has she had such a powerful influence on me? How was it I became so drawn in when I first met her that I quickly took refuge and made a vow to serve as her “feet” by traveling the world on her behalf? When I think back about the me of twenty-five years ago, I find that I didn’t even understand it at the time. Only now do I see that all along there was an even more important person behind her pulling me in as well—the Buddha.

It’s always been interesting to me that even though the Buddha was born in India, very few people there are Buddhists. They say that he is neither God nor a god, neither a deity nor a creator... so why follow a simple man? It is precisely because he was just a man that I follow him. If the Buddha were a god, could I then become a god just from studying him? Of course not. But since he was a man, if I learn from him, I too can become enlightened just as he did. This is the important message that he shared. This is why my dear teacher Dharma Master Cheng Yen changed her entire life. She too was willing to follow because he was an ordinary human being. Of course, her mentor Dharma Master Yin Shun’s guidance to work “for

Buddhism and for all living beings” also made a deep, lasting impression, impacting everything she has done since.

What moves me most deeply about Master Cheng Yen is that she truly does what she says and says what she does. For an illustrative example, she follows three lists of ‘threes’. First, there is her new year tradition. At the beginning of each new year she asks not for good health, but for wisdom and acuity. She asks not for a lighter burden, but for greater strength. She asks not for everything to go as she wishes, but for perseverance and courage to deal with whatever happens. Second, there are the ‘three non-contentions’: “If we do not contend with affairs, then affairs will remain undisturbed. If we do not contend with people, then people will be friendly. If we do not contend with the world, then the world will be peaceful.” Third, she shares with us her mindset: “There is no one in this world that I do not love, no one I do not trust, and no one I cannot forgive.”

Twenty-five years ago, I never would have believed that anyone could actually accomplish these. But over the years, I have seen Master do exactly that. She does not ask for good health or for things to go as she wishes, and especially not for less responsibility. Instead, she constantly takes on greater responsibility. Otherwise, we would not have the Tzu Chi of today. The ‘threes’ motivate her every action every day, and to this day I have never met another person like her.

Part of the great responsibility that Master undertakes is the dedication to a life of self-sufficiency embodied in the Jing Si Abode philosophy of “no work, no meal.” I deeply

admire her wisdom and dedication to insist on making her living separate from Tzu Chi. From tilling fields, growing vegetables, and making textiles by hand at the very beginning, to coordinating international disaster relief and drawing up blueprints for hospitals and schools, Master has always been personally involved. From tiny baby shoes to vibrant campuses, she lights the way with her own hard work and dedication.

If Tzu Chi were a more traditional Buddhist organization, perhaps she would have just built a little temple where people could chant the sutras. Instead, she chose charity, medicine, education, and humanistic culture. Are these so easy to accomplish? Even today, almost three decades after Tzu Chi's first hospital opened, Master still agonizes over each and every one. Back in the beginning, she had nothing. Then she made a great vow and brought it to life. Now there are six hospitals, a university, and a television station. Master always chooses the most difficult projects, and she does not give up.

Master Cheng Yen's courage, compassion, and wisdom are the pillars of Tzu Chi's achievements and the draw that has brought so many people into the Tzu Chi family. But Tzu Chi has also benefitted from the incredible affinity of time. Master founded Tzu Chi in 1966, not long after the government fled to Taiwan in 1949 at the end of the Chinese Civil War. It was a difficult time. Two wars had just ended, the economy was struggling, and the people were forced to rely on foreign aid from the United States. But Master Cheng Yen understood

how to seize time and took advantage of the opportunity to help people in need.

Not long after Tzu Chi was founded, Taiwan's economy gradually began to improve, and Master's missions grew as people had more to donate. Her compassion is rooted in her Buddha mind, and her wisdom is founded in the Buddha's wisdom. She understands how to seize an opportunity. Master often talks about always being present in the moment. She doesn't need to go around wondering what time will be the right time. When you are always present in the moment, right now is always the right time. In 1991, she carried out a Tzu Chi disaster relief mission in Mainland China. Had she waited instead and then tried to go now, it would have been too late because of China's restrictive policies. This is just one example of Master's foresight and wisdom. Seeing how she grasps time so precisely, you cannot help but admire her.

As Tzu Chi nears its half-century birthday in Taiwan, it has reached its quarter-century milestone in the United States. Twenty-five years is not a very long time, but neither is it short. In recent years, Master has often said, "If the United States does not awaken, the world cannot be peaceful." Living in such a large and influential country, US Tzu Chi volunteers especially need to put Master's teachings behind our actions and break through whatever difficulties may arise in order to achieve our mission. Only in this way can we fully repay the grace of the Buddha and our teacher. 🌿

Stephen Huang



25 Years and Just Getting Started

Looking back over the first quarter century of Tzu Chi's journey in the United States, I am especially grateful to all the volunteers who worked so hard to develop Tzu Chi in the early days, as well as all the kindhearted donors who generously supported them. Many of these volunteers are still contributing to Tzu Chi today in cities all around the country. Starting from nothing, they overcame countless obstacles. With determination and perseverance, they carried the spirit of compassion and giving throughout the country. They built the solid foundation on which we now serve in the Four Missions of Charity, Medicine, Education, and Humanistic Culture, both here in the United States and throughout the Americas.

Volunteers back then built the foundation, but there is still much more work for us to do. A quarter of a century is a great achievement, but it is not the end of the road, just a landmark along our path. It is an opportunity to reflect on the past and make sure that we remain headed in the right direction. It is a time to look back and ask ourselves: Have we grown, or are we still the same people we were when we first encountered Tzu Chi? Have we eliminated our bad habits and reduced our waste? Have we improved our attitude toward those around us? If we encounter a minor inconvenience—another driver cutting us off on the freeway, perhaps—do we become angry and vengeful, or do we calmly let it go?

We should also look around and ask the same questions of our communities. It seems

like every day we see news about shootings, violence, riots, disaster. Clearly there is a long way to go before we can reach Master Cheng Yen's three wishes: for hearts to be purified, society to be harmonious, and the world to be free from disaster. We care for our community, our country, and our Earth, but still we see ever more violence and ever more disasters. Why?

Master Cheng Yen often talks about the "mind effect." What this means is that our thoughts and attitudes influence our surroundings, giving rise to the reality we see around us, good or bad. For instance, we create waste through our daily habits by greedily seeking what we want instead of simply fulfilling what we need. This waste we create then pollutes the environment, changing the climate and increasing the frequency and intensity of natural disasters that impact countless people. If we change our mindset and modify our habits, and then make a positive impression on others so that they may do the same, we can actively begin to make a major difference in improving the world on a large scale.

We should do what we can to mitigate disasters, but when disasters do strike, it's important to remember that they impact all people. Disasters make no distinction of skin color, nationality, language, social standing, or any other characteristic; they affect all of us the same.

This is where we still have a lot of work to do. We need to expand the Tzu Chi family so that we can reach all victims of disaster. Even

after twenty-five years in the United States, Tzu Chi remains largely an organization of Chinese-speakers. Of course, this was natural. Master Cheng Yen speaks in Mandarin and Taiwanese, and Tzu Chi was brought to the United States by immigrants who were most comfortable sharing Master's teachings with members of their own community in their own language. But these teachings are meant for all, so we need to do our part to share them in more languages and with more people. Now it's our turn to build on the foundation forged over the past twenty-five years by welcoming more people into the Tzu Chi family and expanding the mission of compassion together. Even though the words we use may be different, the spirit will remain the same.

It is not hard to see why we need to share Tzu Chi more broadly. Master Cheng Yen has always called on us to serve all people regardless of ethnicity, nationality, or religion. No matter what may separate us, she reminds us that our blood is all red and that we all share the same earth and the same sky. Often, though, the minor barriers that divide us make it difficult to reach those who need our help the most. During the Haiti earthquake relief effort in 2010, for instance, one of the most serious difficulties we encountered was the language barrier. There were so many people that needed help, but it was very hard for our U.S. team to communicate with them without speaking either French or Haitian Creole. But now that there are active local teams of motivated Haitian

volunteers who both understand Tzu Chi's spirit and speak the local languages, they can much more effectively uncover and address the needs in their communities as they provide long-term care and support.

But such communication barriers are not just a concern of international relief, they also exist here at home. After Hurricane Sandy, we saw the extent to which the United States is truly a melting pot. In the most severely affected communities of New York and New Jersey, volunteers not only needed to use English to communicate with storm victims, they also had to seek out people who could help translate their words into Spanish, Russian, Urdu, and other languages. To truly carry out our Tzu Chi missions and care for all our communities, Tzu Chi needs to become a melting pot just like the country we call home.

This is my hope for the future: that Tzu Chi volunteers not only *serve* people of every ethnicity, nationality, and religion, but that Tzu Chi volunteers *are* people of every ethnicity, nationality, and religion. We all share one home, so we need to work together to protect our home and each other. Just as many drops of water join together to become a river, the more of us who join together with a common goal, the greater our strength will be. 🌱

Han Huang

Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation

Leadership: Past & Present

Tzu Chi registered in California as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in 1985. In 1989, the Tzu Chi Regional Office was established, which became Tzu Chi USA Headquarters in 2001. Tzu Chi Education and Medical foundations were established in 2004 and 2005, respectively.



Stephen Huang
Executive Director of Global Volunteer Affairs
Past-CEO, Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation



Shiu Yun Tsai
Past-CEO
Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation



Han Huang
Chief Executive Officer
Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation



William Keh
CEO, Tzu Chi Medical Foundation
Past-CEO, Tzu Chi Foundation



Austin Tsao
Past-CEO
Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation



Debra Boudreaux
Past-CEO
Tzu Chi Medical Foundation



Paulina Luan
Chief Executive Officer
Tzu Chi Education Foundation

Tzu Chi Regional Directors

Tzu Chi is organized into nine regional service areas, which coordinate and support local offices to best meet the needs of their communities. Each region is headed by a regional director.



George Chang
 Northeast Region
 Flushing, New York



Jackson Chen
 Mid-Atlantic Region
 Cedar Grove, New Jersey



Yingfa Chen
 Greater Washington D.C. Region
 Reston, Virginia



Chong Hsieh
 Midwest Region
 Darien, Illinois



Yuanliang Ling
 Central Region
 Richardson, Texas



Taishan Huang
 Southern Region
 Houston, Texas



Minjhing Hsieh
 Northwest Region
 San Jose, California



Jerome Fan
 Pacific Islands Region
 Honolulu, Hawaii



Michael Tsai
 Western Region
 San Dimas, California

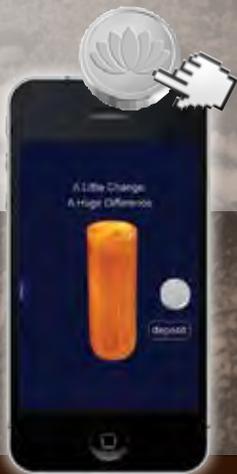
TZU CHI'S BAMBOO BANK SPIRIT

When Dharma Master Cheng Yen founded Tzu Chi in 1966, she fashioned coin banks from bamboo and asked her lay followers—thirty housewives—to save NT\$0.50 (about US\$0.02) from their grocery money every day to help the poor.

One follower asked, "Can't I just donate NT\$15 each month?" But Master refused. She explained that though the amount was the same, it was important to give rise to a kind thought each and every day.

From these humble beginnings forty-eight years ago, Tzu Chi has grown into a global NGO with ten million volunteers and donors in over fifty countries, because it collects not only donations, but also kind hearts.

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Seeds of Kindness Are Sown (1989-1997)

Every achievement grows out of the seed of determination.

Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen

Seeds (1989-1997)





First Seeds Are Planted



Early volunteers like Mr. and Mrs. Huang (front center) introduced Tzu Chi to the community.



A quarter century ago, the seeds of Tzu Chi's Great Love floated across the sea from Taiwan to the United States. The seeds took root in foreign soil, and soon they grew and flourished.

In 1980, Mr. and Mrs. Huang in Sacramento, California, felt the call of Dharma Master Cheng Yen's compassionate spirit, the understanding that "when others hurt, I feel their pain." And so they vowed to devote themselves to promoting Tzu Chi in North America and started raising charity funds. Two years later, realizing that limited manpower was impeding their efforts, they asked Master Cheng Yen for permission to establish an official Tzu Chi office in the United States. With the support of author Xie Bingying, Mr. Feng in Canada, and an American lawyer, the Huangs successfully established Tzu Chi's United States Regional Office, which in 1985 was approved as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in California.

At the same time, Shiu Yun Tsai was diligently introducing Tzu Chi in the ethnic-Chinese enclaves of Los Angeles County. With her introduction, entrepreneur Stephen Huang visited Taiwan to have an audience with Master Cheng Yen. He was deeply moved by both her self-reliant spirit embodied by the "no work, no meal" philosophy and her great vow to build a hospital. He vowed to promote the spirit and missions of Tzu Chi in the United States in a systematic and organized manner.

Following the Master's instruction to "rely on your own efforts by utilizing local resources," Stephen Huang provided a building he owned in Alhambra, California, to serve as the Regional Office's first home. To show her support, Master Cheng Yen sent a "Jing Si Hall" placard to hang over the door. With that, the first overseas Jing Si Hall was opened on December 9, 1989. Tzu Chi was so well received that the small office was soon insufficient to accommodate everyone, so Tzu Chi moved across town to a bigger space in Monrovia on October 27, 1991.

The early development of Tzu Chi in the United States could never have happened without "tea parties," or informal Tzu Chi introductions held in individuals' homes. Whenever the opportunity arose, Stephen Huang and a few of the other early commissioners would travel all across the country to hold tea parties and introduce Tzu Chi. Those efforts paid off and Tzu Chi offices quickly began springing up in cities across the country.

Tzu Chi's backbone is charity. When there were only a handful of Tzu Chi volunteers in the United States trying to grow the organization in an environment and culture so different than what they were accustomed to, these first volunteers diligently studied how to carry out charity cases in their local communities. When disasters happened, they joined in assisting



Top: "Jing Si Hall" placard (left). Tzu Chi's first homes in Alhambra (center) and Monrovia (right).

Volunteer leaders from across the country gather at USA Headquarters in San Dimas in 2006.



the affected, and through engaging in charity work, they learned understanding, tolerance, contentment, gratitude, and appreciation of their own blessings.

As insurance and healthcare costs in the United States are exceptionally high, many individuals, including new immigrants, have difficulties accessing care. In November 1993, through the hard work of Dr. Chin-Lon Lin, the Buddhist Tzu Chi Free Clinic officially opened its doors to help the poor and ill receive complimentary or affordable healthcare in Western medicine, Chinese herbal medicine, and dentistry. This clinic remains in Alhambra, in the building that served as the original Tzu Chi office.

In the realm of education, Tzu Chi Youth Group was founded in April 1991 as a way for volunteers' children to have an opportunity to participate in charity work and experience kindness, compassion, joy, and unselfish giving. On September 11, 1994, the first overseas Tzu Chi Academy was established. In addition to weekly Chinese lessons, teachers also emphasized character development and life skills in order to inspire love in their students' hearts.

United States volunteers also followed in Hualien's footsteps in developing the Mission of Humanistic Culture. Since 1990, Tzu Chi has used various media, including radio, television, and magazines, to record the footprints of Great Love and to spread Tzu Chi's humanistic culture.

As Tzu Chi volunteers endured hardships and paved their own path in a new country, in less than a decade, the Four Missions of Charity, Medicine, Education and Humanistic Culture firmly took shape.

Transplanting Tzu Chi from Taiwan to a completely different culture in the West was a daunting but exciting task, and one that required innovation to accomplish successfully. When it was opened in 1993, the Tzu Chi Free

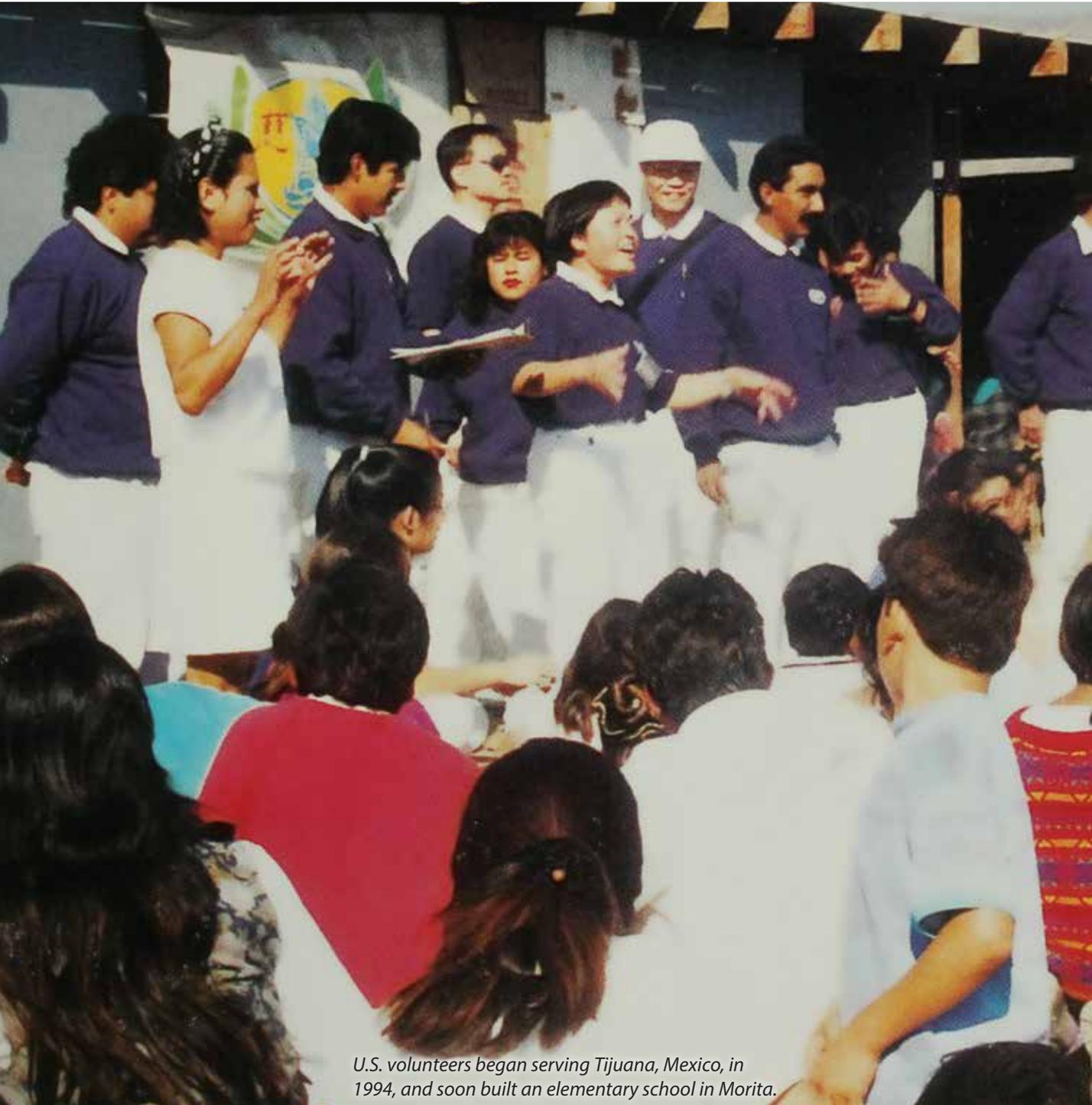
Clinic in Alhambra was the first time Tzu Chi's medical mission had been taken overseas, and many countries have since followed suit. More visibly, the "blue sky and white cloud" uniform now recognizable the world over were a creation of US volunteers, as were the now-standard practices of international disaster relief and street fundraising.

In April 1991, one of the deadliest tropical cyclones in history struck densely-populated Bangladesh, leading to heaving flooding and over 138,000 deaths. In matching white t-shirts and blue jeans, US Tzu Chi volunteers took to the streets to encourage people to give a dollar for the relief effort. They called on everyone to "know your blessings, cherish them, and create more blessings." By giving up just a cup of coffee or less, they could help disaster survivors. Within a month, these volunteers had raised more than \$157,000, which they then donated to the American Red Cross to support post-disaster rebuilding efforts in Bangladesh. Thus they wrote the prologue to Tzu Chi's own international disaster relief legacy.

That summer, the United States Regional Office decided to replace the white t-shirts with the same navy blue color used in Tzu Chi commissioner uniforms. As blue jeans come in a wide variety of shades, and thus a group wearing blue jeans would appear more chaotic than orderly, the decision was made in 1993 to wear white jeans instead. When a large group of US volunteers all clad in matching white pants and blue t-shirts paid a visit to Dharma Master Cheng Yen, she felt that while this outfit was convenient for working, a collar would make it look more dignified. In summer 1994, the white-collared blue shirt and white jeans—the "blue sky and white clouds"—became the standard uniform for Tzu Chi volunteers all around the world. Today, this uniform is widely known in many countries. It represents the "living bodhisattvas" or "blue angels" of Tzu Chi and the organizational standard of truth, goodness, and beauty. 🌿



Extending a Hand to Those in Need



U.S. volunteers began serving Tijuana, Mexico, in 1994, and soon built an elementary school in Morita.



Charity is the essence of Tzu Chi. From the beginning, Tzu Chi volunteers throughout the United States have used experiences learned from Taiwan to bring comfort to those in hardship. In the early days, volunteers began by regularly delivering joy to seniors and the disabled in nursing homes, while also distributing clothing to the homeless and destitute on holidays and in the cold of winter.

Love knows no bounds. On Christmas Eve 1991, U.S. volunteers donated half a cargo container full of new and secondhand clothing and toys to an American Indian reservation in the mountains of Arizona to help the locals pass a warmer and more pleasant winter. In September 1995, a team of ten volunteers and youth group members spent the Mid-Autumn Festival with inmates at a detention center in Long Beach to bring warmth to those behind bars.

Whenever calamities strike, Tzu Chi volunteers extend their hands to those affected. In late August 1992, Hurricane Andrew inflicted heavy damage on South Florida. Tzu Chi volunteers from the Northeast and Southern regions formed the Florida Disaster Relief Team, arriving in Miami in September to assess the damage and distribute relief aid to the fourteen most severely affected areas.

During the Great Flood of 1993 that deluged the American Midwest along the Mississippi and Missouri rivers and their tributaries, Tzu Chi volunteers from the Kansas and St. Louis offices traveled deep into the disaster areas in both July and September to distribute drinking water and emergency cash. In late October, as wildfires raged in four counties of Southern California, volunteers from the Los Angeles area dispensed relief cash in four disaster areas to more than one hundred severely affected households.

When a major earthquake struck Los Angeles on January 17, 1994, volunteers arrived in Northridge, the epicenter, on the very same day to distribute drinking water and food. Neighboring Santa Clarita became the primary center of relief assistance, as relief supplies were distributed daily and a mobile shower vehicle was provided for those without water and electricity.



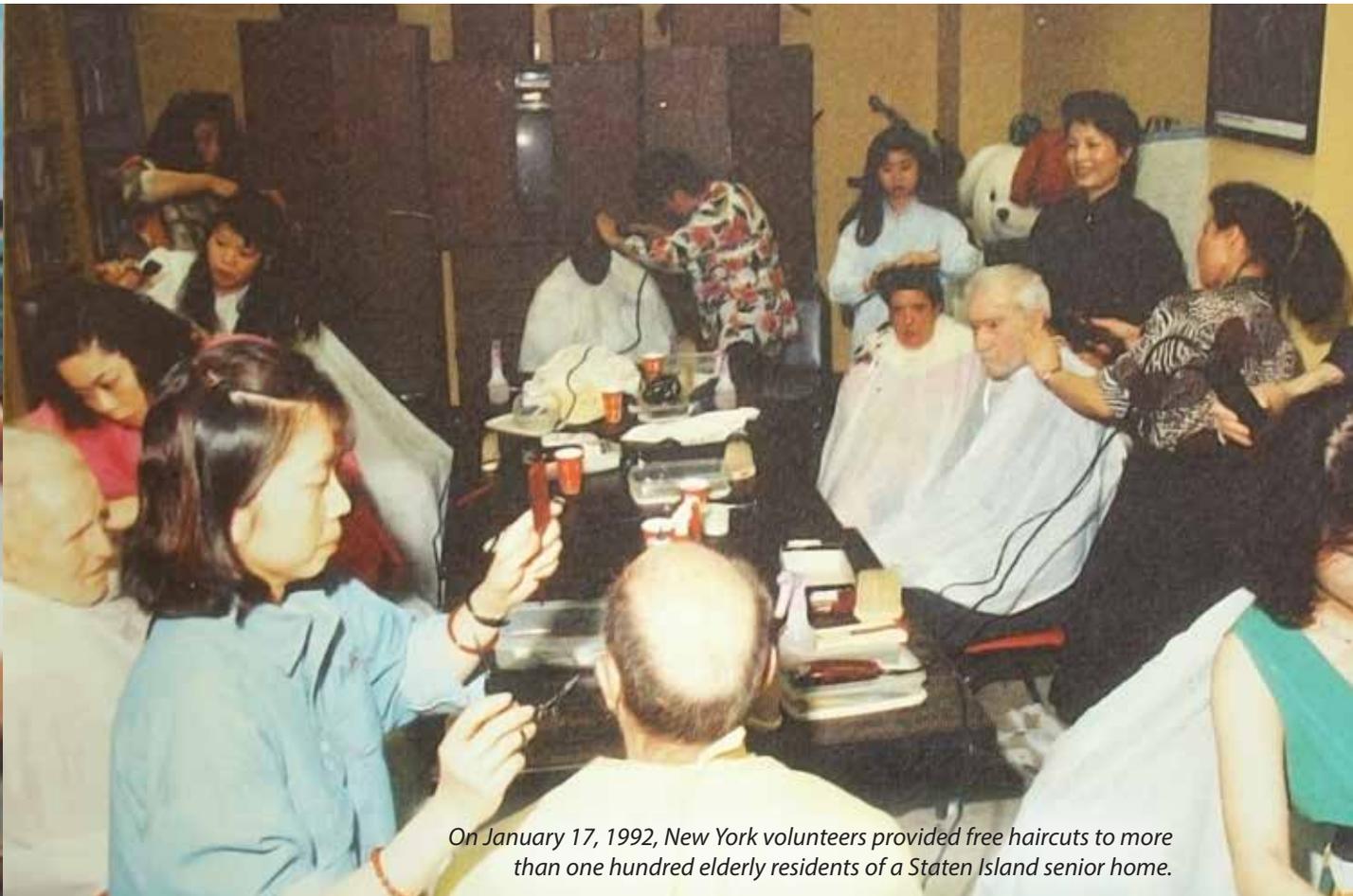
As Tzu Chi provided medical relief to refugees of the Rwandan Genocide in 1994, volunteers actively raised funds, such as here in Chicago.

In October of the same year, a historic flood inundated Texas with water reaching chest-high. Tzu Chi volunteers in Houston handed out relief cash five times, benefiting a total of 136 households. At the same time, volunteers from Los Angeles flew to Alaska to provide relief funds to four dozen households affected by severe flooding there.

In early 1995, heavy rains ravaged California, turning two dozen counties into disaster zones. A volunteer team went to assess damage and found that residents of Santa Barbara's Deluxe Mobile Home Park, which was situated in a low-lying area and primarily low-income, had sustained especially heavy damage. After

the flood waters receded, twelve volunteers brought their own shovels and buckets to help clean the mud from doorways and along the walls. They also handed out relief cash.

On February 23, 1995, a small plane carrying tourists from Taiwan crashed near the Grand Canyon, killing seven passengers. U.S. volunteers accompanied the victims' families to Flagstaff, Arizona, and assisted them in identifying bodies and possessions and conducting memorial services. They also distributed relief cash, and assistance was provided to two wounded sisters who required long-term hospital care. On August 29 of the same year, a tour bus with fourteen tourists from



On January 17, 1992, New York volunteers provided free haircuts to more than one hundred elderly residents of a Staten Island senior home.

Taiwan on board overturned near the Hoover Dam. Several passengers died, and the rest were injured. Volunteers immediately mobilized to deliver relief cash, provide interpretation services, and help fill out death certificates and arrange memorial services.

In February 1995, as Tzu Chi volunteers from the United States were holding a relief distribution outside Tijuana, Mexico, they discovered that the local community had only one school, which leaked when it rained. So, they decided to build a new school. The new Morita Tzu Chi Elementary School was completed in November 1996. After it opened, Tzu Chi began annually sponsoring three excellent students

who most needed the assistance. This assistance included not only scholarships, but uniforms, stationery, backpacks, and more. At the time, this was the top quality school in Tijuana, and it prompted local government officials to speed up the process of building a high school for the local community.

In these early days, Tzu Chi also established scholarship programs to help exceptional young students of all races to have access to higher education. With their continual contributions in local communities and their dedication to providing relief when disasters strike, in a few short years volunteers firmly stamped Tzu Chi's footprint on U.S. soil. 🌱



Southern California volunteers fundraise for victims of the 1994 Northridge quake.



Volunteers sweep the streets in Seattle, Washington.



(Left) Charity sale in Miami, Florida. (Right) Senior home visit in Houston, Texas.



Volunteers donate foodstuffs in Lansing, Michigan.



Path to Relieve Suffering



Buddhist Tzu Chi Free Clinic opens in Alhambra, California, in November 1993.



In 1989, Tzu Chi's first home in the United States was established in Alhambra, California. In the largely Chinese-American community of the surrounding San Gabriel Valley, seventy-five percent of recent immigrants had insufficient insurance coverage, and sixty percent of seniors aged sixty-five and older did not have insurance at all. The area was also home to many undocumented immigrants and homeless individuals. Across each of these demographics, many lacked access to transportation and encountered language barriers, leading to all kinds of difficulties in making a living as well as in seeking medical treatment. In an effort to bring light to those caught in the dark corners of society, when the Tzu Chi office was moved to Monrovia, the original location in Alhambra was transformed into a free clinic providing medical services to those in need.

Through the hard work of Dr. Chin-Lon Lin, Buddhist Tzu Chi Free Clinic (now Buddhist Tzu Chi Medical Center) officially opened in November 1993 to offer free treatment in Western medicine, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), and dentistry to those meeting low-income eligibility. With both Western and Eastern styles of medicine housed in the same facility, doctors were fully equipped to provide treatments from both traditions, a unique characteristic of Tzu Chi's care. Since even many of those with medical insurance had no dental coverage, the clinic also offered dental services to meet this important need.

Alongside dedicated medical personnel, ninety-five percent of the daily administrative work at the clinic relied on volunteer labor, as volunteers from all different backgrounds activated their compassionate hearts to contribute their time and energy.

In addition to the free clinic, volunteers began holding regular community health promotion events to provide health information and resources to members of the community. They obtained flu vaccines to distribute during the flu season to seniors, children, and individuals with poor immunity. They also organized and offered physical examinations and necessary immunizations for elementary and high school students before the beginning of each school year, and provided dental checkups for students in the neighboring school district.

Even in the very early days, the Free Clinic medical team began holding occasional medical outreaches. After the major Northridge earthquake in January 1994—just two and a half months after the clinic opened—medical volunteers traveled to the epicenter alongside the disaster relief team to treat patients affected by the quake. The same year, Tzu Chi held its first major medical outreach as more than twenty doctors, dentists, nurses, and pharmacists



traveled to rural San Bernardino County to provide a major medical clinic for farm workers.

In 1995, medical volunteers even crossed the border to deliver medical relief in Pipila and other impoverished communities of Tijuana, Mexico. In order to provide effective medical care, the dental team specially ordered portable dental equipment. As time went on, they continued to tinker with and improve these portable tools and facilities in order to increase mobility and function.

In March 1996, Tzu Chi established a bone marrow examination laboratory at the Free Clinic, which held annual events to test and register individuals for the bone marrow donor registry. This



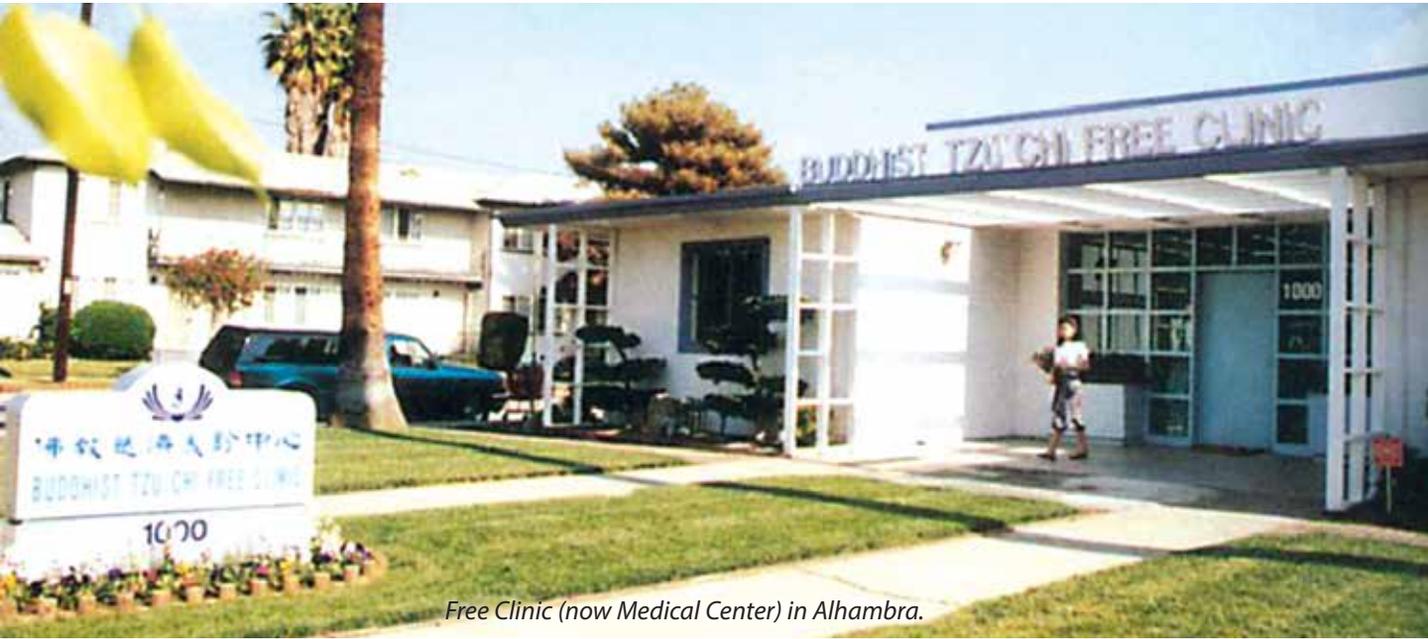
lab was ultimately combined with Tzu Chi's bone marrow donor registry in Taiwan, which is now the world's third largest such registry.

When Buddhist Tzu Chi Free Clinic first opened its doors in 1993, the majority of patients seeking treatment were of Chinese descent. Later, Hispanic patients began to increase in percentage year after year. In 1997, another Buddhist Tzu Chi Free Clinic was established in Honolulu, Hawaii, to serve local low-income patients without health insurance. With this, Tzu Chi's free clinic services took a great stride forward toward accomplishing Tzu Chi's medical mission: providing compassionate medical care to any patient in need of care, regardless of race, nationality, or religion. 🌿





Dharma Masters from Jing Si Abode (second row center) offer guidance as Free Clinic celebrates its first anniversary in 1994.



Free Clinic (now Medical Center) in Alhambra.



Volunteers learn first aid and CPR.



Inspiring Young Hearts



Youth group members help teach Jing Si Aphorisms to young Tzu Chi Academy students.



Tzu Chi's goal in education is not only to instill knowledge and skills, but more importantly to inspire loving hearts. When Tzu Chi was still newly established in the United States, youth groups and academies were among the first endeavors aimed at achieving these goals.

In those days, many of the early volunteers had children in elementary and junior high school, so they decided to organize their children and give them a group to belong to while learning the Tzu Chi spirit of kindness, compassion, joy, and giving. On April 14, 1991, the Tzu Chi Youth Group was established to provide them this opportunity.

As Tzu Chi's missions expanded, so too did the activities of the youth group members. Accompanied by adult volunteers, they soon began to perform at homes for the elderly, sweep the streets in Chinatown, distribute sleeping bags to the homeless, and sing and perform for young children in shelters. They also held recycling events to bring new life to old items, attended care visits and community relief distributions, and much more. Inspired to support their elders, they started holding fundraising activities for Tzu Chi's charity work, including charity concerts and carwashes. At this time, they raised more than \$40,000 to support Tzu Chi's famine relief efforts in Mongolia in 1992 and 1993.

The first Tzu Chi Academy outside Taiwan held its first class on September 11, 1994, offering weekly Chinese language and character education classes every Sunday at a middle school in Monrovia, California. Through Jing Si Aphorisms Education and activities, teachers emphasized character education and life skills in order to wholly develop their students' minds, bodies, and souls. This positive environment and focus on putting lessons into action attracted many parents to the program. Another key characteristic of the Tzu Chi Academy was that volunteer room mothers in each classroom cared for students and supported teachers while volunteer room fathers maintained security for the campus.

Such classes quickly sprouted up at Tzu Chi locations all across the country. Within the next two years, New York, Texas, and Hawaii had each established Tzu Chi Academies, and in October 1996, Tzu Chi's education team held the first national conference to gather together leaders of all Tzu Chi Academies to share experiences, exchange ideas, and develop curriculum. Through their close collaboration, academies grew and flourished throughout the nation. 🌱



Los Angeles Tzu Chi Academy holds a graduation and promotion ceremony for students.



(Top) Students and teachers of the first Tzu Chi Academy.
(Bottom) Youth group members enjoy a team-building activity.





Sharing the Dharma



Early volunteers share Tzu Chi books with the community.



The Mission of Humanistic Culture spreads Tzu Chi's core values while recording the footprints of compassion and Great Love through print publications, videos, websites, translations, and more.

When Tzu Chi was newly established in the United States, Global Headquarters in Hualien was already producing *Tzu Chi Monthly* magazine, *Tzu Chi Readers' Club* biweekly newsletter, and *Tzu Chi World* radio program. At that time, the internet was not yet widely used, so sharing information overseas was difficult. For Tzu Chi volunteers in the United States to learn from Taiwan's experience and encounter Master Cheng Yen's teachings, they largely relied on copies of magazines and cassette tapes mailed from Hualien. As soon as these spiritual resources were received, the tapes would be quickly copied and sent with magazines all across the country. These would then become the primary sources for new materials produced and broadcast in the United States.

In 1990, Tzu Chi volunteers began broadcasting a weekly program, *Tzu Chi World*, on local Chinese radio in Los Angeles, California. In 1994, this show starting airing daily to give listeners more opportunities to encounter Master Cheng Yen's Dharma teachings and understand Tzu Chi's activities and philosophy.

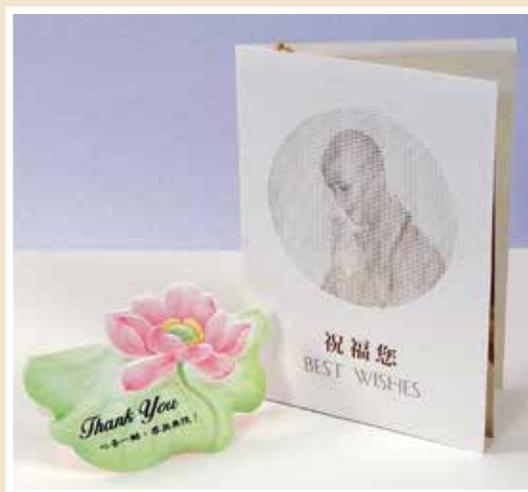
In 1991, Jing Si Aphorism promotions began broadcasting every Wednesday and Thursday evening via North American satellite. The following year, Taiwan's Chinese Television System (CTS) started broadcasting these same promotions twice daily on their channel in the United States, and their Los Angeles correspondent frequently reported on Tzu Chi's U.S. activities for the Taiwan audience. Rey-Sheng Her, now Tzu Chi Spokesperson and Humanistic Culture Development Department Director in Hualien, resided in Los Angeles at the time. Each Saturday, he produced and hosted a ten-minute program entitled *Tzu Chi World* on the local Chinese-language television station.

The Dharma can be spoken, and it can also be expressed through images and the printed word. In May 1991, the first local Tzu Chi publication, *Tzu Chi World U.S.A.*, emerged in the form of a four-page, tabloid-sized newspaper. In those days before computers were common, volunteers across the country faxed and mailed their local news stories to Tzu Chi USA Headquarters, where one editor and several volunteers gathered these records of important events and wrote out the news character by character before typesetting and printing. Thus they fulfilled their mission of sharing Tzu Chi news each month. Starting as four pages entirely in Chinese, in 1993

the paper was expanded to include a single page in English. In 1995, it was further expanded to ten pages, including four in English.

In order to allow more community members to encounter Tzu Chi and inspire their loving hearts, Tzu Chi USA started offering a number of community groups and classes, including a chorus, lessons on the percussive instruments

used in Buddhist ceremonies, a vegetarian cooking course, health education, and more. After six quarters of vegetarian cooking classes were held, students collected their favorite recipes and compiled them into a cookbook, hoping to encourage more people to adopt a vegetarian diet to benefit their own health, the planet, and all living beings. 🌱



In the early days, books and gifts were produced and teachings were shared on the radio.



Great Love Sprouts Forth (1998-2005)

Never lose courage. Never lose faith. Nothing in this world is impossible when you are determined.

Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen



Sprouts (1997-2005)

Three Centuries of Compassion
Tzu Chi in the USA
1984 - 2014



Connecting with the Community





U.S. and South American volunteers provide earthquake relief in Peru in 2007.

The year 1998 was an early watermark for Tzu Chi. Master Cheng Yen has often said that because the United States is so prominent on the world stage, U.S. Tzu Chi volunteers are all playing an important role. Beginning in 1998, Central American countries suffered one natural disaster after another, and each time, U.S. Tzu Chi volunteers traveled there to assess damage and provide relief. From finding their bearings at the beginning, followed by several years of continuous action, they developed the strength and ability to undertake major cross-border relief efforts. Medical volunteers also began to join the missions to deliver clinic services and carry the development of Tzu Chi's missions another great stride forward. At the same time, disaster relief and community care in the United States also experienced a great breakthrough.

In 2001, Tzu Chi USA Headquarters was established to coordinate all the service areas throughout the country. The same year, the world was shocked by the tragedy of the terrorist attacks in New York on September 11. Worried about the state of the world, Master Cheng Yen started the "One Person, One Good Deed" movement, calling on all people to eliminate hate with love and especially encouraging U.S. volunteers to take greater responsibility for purifying minds and bringing society into harmony. Beginning with September 11 in 2001 and carrying through the 2003 California wildfires and Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Tzu Chi volunteers never stopped working to help their communities, doing their



Volunteers introduce Tzu Chi in Cleveland, Ohio.



In New York, Dr. Tso-Long Hsu greets each patient with a warm, genuine smile.

best to work together with widely recognized organizations to help disaster survivors. Even though their efforts were frequently rebuffed in the early days, they kept diligently striving. With a spirit of gratitude, respect, and love, and a disaster relief culture focused on warm human interaction, they slowly began to earn notice, and through their experiences, they developed the practical, effective system of distributing emergency cash cards.

Through book donations across the country, Tzu Chi volunteers grew closer to their local communities while broadening and deepening their care for the poor and suffering. Because healthcare is expensive in the United States, Tzu Chi volunteers set up free clinics and health centers in Los Angeles, New York, and Hawaii to help improve the health of community members. Volunteers from the clinic in Hawaii also served patients in several Pacific islands through care visits. After earning several years

of experience at the Buddhist Tzu Chi Free Clinic in Alhambra, California, volunteers began to hold major free clinic events in locations that traced the seasonal movements of migrant farm workers to better provide care to this underserved community. These movements took volunteers from Southern to Northern California, especially encompassing the enormous Central Valley, which in turn inspired the birth of the Central Valley Medical Team. The need to be more mobile and reach more people also led to the development of portable dental instruments and the fully-stocked Tzu Chi Great Love Mobile Clinic vans. These innovations allowed Tzu Chi's medical service to reach more deeply into remote communities in need.

All of Tzu Chi's missions aim to purify people's hearts. In this period, more and more Tzu Chi Academies were established across the country, and all their classes began with Jing Si Aphorisms and were founded on strong ethics



Children learn the joy of giving in Raleigh, North Carolina.

and morals. In 2003, Tzu Chi's Education Mission took a further step by incorporating Tzu Chi's humanistic culture as an official class, while also painstakingly developing materials and methods to encourage children to live out Jing Si Aphorisms in their daily lives and cultivate habits of showing love and respect to others. All across the country, Tzu Chi Academies started promoting "Return to the Bamboo Bank Era," encouraging young students to save a small amount of change each day in order to make a major difference. The Missions of Education and Charity collaborated on the "Send Love to South Africa" project, motivating Academy teachers, parents, and students to gather books and stationery for underprivileged students in South Africa, with the intention of activating the goodness and love already within the children while cultivating positive moral examples.

As Tzu Chi drew closer to surrounding communities, having English-language materials

became increasingly important, so the Mission of Humanistic Culture shifted its longstanding focus on Chinese-language materials to begin promoting an English-language website and English-language magazine. From this point forward, all materials were developed in both Chinese and English, with some in Spanish as well. The Tzu Chi USA Translation Team also started adding English-language subtitles to Master Cheng Yen's daily program *Life Wisdom* on Da Ai Television, so that English-speaking viewers could also take in Tzu Chi's Dharma spirit.

Following the development of their respective missions, the Education Foundation and Medical Foundation were established in 2004 and 2005, respectively, carrying Tzu Chi to another major milestone. 🌱



Giving Books, Giving Love



Volunteers in the Washington D.C. area donate books and encourage children to read.

Many people think of the United States only as a country of vast wealth, but in fact roughly fifteen percent of Americans—more than forty million individuals—live in poverty. Many of them are children. In 1999, Tzu Chi volunteers in Southern California reached out to help. They began by looking for schools where more than ninety percent of the students participated in the National School Lunch Program for free or reduced-price meals. They chose several of these schools with a particularly high percentage of families living below the poverty line and then offered to donate books to the school libraries.

At first, the volunteers' efforts were often rebuffed or met with hesitation because of cultural differences and the religious affiliation. However, through persistence and hard work, the Tzu Chi volunteers were able to gain the

trust of school administrators and teachers who agreed to accept the book donations. Starting in 2000, Tzu Chi frequently donated books to school libraries and classrooms and even held donations in which they gave one book to each student throughout an entire school. This effort quickly expanded from Southern California to Northern California and then all the way across the country to Washington D.C.

As Tzu Chi volunteers built partnerships with schools through annual book donations, they expanded their support to include tutoring programs, holiday gift baskets, and free clinics. In Southern California, a school would nominate ten of the most underprivileged families each year, and Tzu Chi would hold a winter relief distribution for them. A school representative would also accompany Tzu Chi volunteers as they visited each family to give them holiday

San Francisco volunteers share Tzu Chi's spirit with sign language at a book distribution.





gift baskets. In addition, if a family was in need at other times throughout the year, the school would notify Tzu Chi.

Tzu Chi volunteers began a partnership with Noble Avenue Elementary School in the North Hills neighborhood of northwestern Los Angeles in 2002, through which volunteers started a monthly tutoring course known as Everybody Reads to help students falling behind in reading to improve their skills.

In 2003, Tzu Chi Free Clinic's mobile medical van began regular outreach visits to schools throughout Southern California to offer dental checkups for students and share health insurance and government aid information with parents and to remind them that they could ask for school help when applying for services.

TzuChi volunteers in Northern California and the Central Valley joined the book distribution project in 2004. Through this process, they also learned about the special needs of several schools, including John Muir Elementary School in San Francisco, where many students' families live well below the poverty line, with some even staying in homeless shelters. The school

requested Tzu Chi's assistance in providing food for these families. Through this introduction, a longstanding partnership was born between Tzu Chi and several local elementary schools in low-income communities, which later grew into the Happy Campus Program.

After distributing books to schools each year, volunteers would invite principals, teachers, and district administrators to Tzu Chi USA Headquarters for tea, in order to thank them for their partnership and give them an opportunity to come into contact with Tzu Chi's philosophy and Jing Si Aphorism Education. During the 2005 appreciation tea party, Vice-Principal Edwin Gomez of San Bernardino's Lytle Creek Elementary expressed that he and Principal Irma Gastelum had already thoroughly read the donated copies of *Jing Si Aphorisms* and agreed with the philosophy contained within. Not long after, Principal Gastelum moved to Bing Wong Elementary, and Mr. Gomez became principal at Lytle Creek. Through the hard work of volunteer Diana Mu and the Headquarters education team, Jing Si Aphorism Education was adopted into Lytle Creek's curriculum and an affinity was formed with Bing Wong. 🌿

Love Conquers Hate after 9/11

On September 11, 2001, nineteen members of the radical terrorist group al Qaeda hijacked four airliners to carry out attacks on the United States. One airliner crashed into the Pentagon outside Washington, D.C., two crashed into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, and one was diverted to crash into the Pennsylvania countryside after passengers resisted the hijackers. Nearly three thousand people were killed on that tragic day, including more than four hundred police officers and firefighters.

Tzu Chi USA Headquarters established an emergency relief coordination center immediately after the disaster. The next day,

New Jersey volunteer Huei-Ju Lin learned that some roads to the disaster zone had reopened, so she boarded a ferry to Manhattan and walked from 42nd Street all the way to Ground Zero—a distance of roughly four miles. As only first responders and medical personnel were being allowed in at the time, she was able to enter the area with her medical credentials from New Jersey's Palisades Medical Center. Experiencing the scorching heat at the ruins of the towers, she realized that there was a great need for bottled water for rescue crews and the wounded. She quickly called Tzu Chi volunteers in New Jersey and New York and asked for their help. They then passed the news along to more



Volunteers pay respect to those who lost their lives on September 11.



Volunteers deliver drinking water and other supplies to the Salvation Army after 9/11.



volunteers, friends, and relatives, and they spread out in all directions to buy bottled water. Soon, more than thirty volunteers were rushing water and supplies to the Salvation Army office near the Chelsea Piers. Another group of Tzu Chi volunteers traveled to the family assistance centers to provide Chinese-English interpreting.

Austin Tsao, then CEO of Tzu Chi, quickly traveled to New York to oversee relief efforts. On September 18, Tzu Chi's very first cash relief distribution was held at the Salvation Army service center, with affected families receiving five hundred dollars each to help pay unexpected costs and ease their minds as they navigated through a difficult time. The next day, Tzu Chi volunteers were permitted to enter the New York City Family Assistance Center at Pier 94 to assist and provide interpreting for people looking for missing family members and friends or seeking government assistance. Volunteers also distributed cash cards and daily necessities and set up assistance centers in New Jersey's Liberty State Park and New York's Chinatown.

On October 13, 2001, just a few days after the United States launched military action in Afghanistan, Tzu Chi Global Headquarters in Hualien initiated the "One Person, One Good Deed" movement, aimed at freeing the world from disasters. On the same day, Tzu Chi volunteers held a memorial service in New Jersey's Liberty State Park, directly across the Hudson River from the World Trade Center site, to pray for victims and their families and for world peace.

Tzu Chi's three service centers stayed open until December 28. During the three months they were in operation, volunteers delivered over \$1.6 million in aid and provided assistance to more than 3,300 families. 🌱



Displaced by Katrina, Embraced by Tzu Chi



Dr. Huei-ju Lin comforts a Hurricane Katrina evacuee in Houston, Texas.



On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina viciously struck the Gulf Coast, pounding Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana, and sending large waves crashing into Florida and Texas. In low-lying New Orleans, fifty-three protective levees were breached by the Category 5 hurricane, allowing the storm to submerge eighty percent of the city. In total, 1,836 people were killed and roughly thirty thousand were evacuated, while property damage exceeded \$108 billion. It was the costliest hurricane, as well as one of the deadliest, in U.S. history.

For thousands of New Orleans residents who were evacuated to Texas, the city of Mesquite served as a reception and processing center. On September 1, just a couple days after the storm, Tzu Chi volunteers started providing meals to social workers serving at the site and distributing toilet paper, wet wipes, and bottled water to evacuees.

On September 2, Tzu Chi Global Headquarters in Hualien released Dharma Master Cheng Yen's open letter to hurricane survivors, in which she called on Tzu Chi volunteers all around the world to gather their love to help New Orleans. Beginning the next day, Tzu Chi volunteers throughout the United States and in forty countries around the world took to the streets to raise funds and hold charity bazaars to gather donations for supporting hurricane survivors. With these donations, Tzu Chi USA Headquarters started purchasing supermarket gift cards to provide to survivors.

The majority of evacuated residents were housed at large facilities, including the George R. Brown Convention Center and Astrodome in Houston, as well as the Will Rogers Memorial Center in Fort Worth. Starting on September 4, hundreds of Tzu Chi volunteers from across the U.S. and Canada started holding relief distributions at evacuation centers in Houston and Beaumont. They distributed checks for emergency aid as well as gift cards to be redeemed for needed supplies. Storm survivors who had relocated to New York, New Jersey, Illinois, Kansas, Arizona, and elsewhere also enjoyed the care and financial support of local Tzu Chi volunteers.

On September 1, Tzu Chi volunteers Yuanliang Ling and Jason Yeh started visiting Dallas City Hall every single day, hoping to meet the mayor and explain that Tzu Chi wished to help the evacuees currently housed in the Will Rogers Memorial Center. After six days, they finally made contact with the help of Gaytha Davis, coordinator of the City of Dallas Mayor's Back-to-School Fair, which Tzu Chi had long supported. Through



With gratitude and respect, volunteers distribute cash cards to evacuees in Fort Worth, Texas.

her introduction, they were able to meet the deputy mayor and receive his approval. On September 9, they entered the center and held their first distribution for storm survivors.

At the end of September, another hurricane, Rita, struck Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi, so Tzu Chi volunteers again visited affected areas to distribute needed materials. On October 15 in Beaumont, Tzu Chi volunteers for the first time distributed emergency debit cards with the Tzu Chi logo printed on them. They were able to distribute to 1,393 families of police officers and firefighters affected by the storm. From that day forward, Tzu Chi's emergency debit cards

have been one of the most important tools for providing immediate relief to disaster survivors.

After Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Tzu Chi volunteers served more than twenty-five thousand affected families—sixty-eight thousand individuals—across a total of fifteen states, while distributing more than \$4.5 million in relief aid. As a result of these relief efforts, Tzu Chi volunteers in Dallas were invited to attend a charity organization planning meeting held by the Governor's Division of Emergency Management, and Tzu Chi became one of the organizations that the local government turns to for immediate relief. 🌿



Helping disaster survivors takes compassion and love, not just cash and supplies.



Volunteers in New York raise funds to support Katrina survivors.



*(Top) Volunteers comfort Katrina survivors.
(Bottom) Volunteers serve hot meals at an Arlington evacuation center.*





Medical Care Reaches Far & Wide



Medical volunteers have long held regular outreach events to serve the community.



With the high cost of health insurance in the United States, and the high out-of-pocket costs incurred even for those with basic coverage, access to affordable medical care has long been a major problem for many Americans. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, roughly 15 percent of Americans, or approximately forty million individuals, went without insurance every year.

A couple of years after Tzu Chi's first free clinic was established in Alhambra, California, volunteers in Hawaii established a free clinic in their Honolulu office in May 1997. At first, the clinic was open twice a week to give uninsured, low-income patients an opportunity to see the doctor. In May 2000, a new location allowed the clinic to expand its services, with medical professionals providing services in pediatric care, gynecology, internal medicine, surgery, ophthalmology, and cardiology five days a week. Medical resources are often hard to come by on remote Pacific islands, so the Hawaii clinic team began traveling to other islands to provide care through medical outreaches. This included two major outreaches on American Samoa in 1998 and 2003, as well as an outreach in Chuuk, a state of Micronesia, after it was hit by Typhoon Chataan in 2002.

The Tzu Chi Northeast Regional Office in Flushing, New York, established a partnership with Elmhurst Hospital Center, so that beginning on September 13, 1997, Elmhurst's mobile medical van parked in front of the Tzu Chi office each Saturday to provide diagnoses and various health checkups to patients, many of whom were day laborers or part-time workers without medical insurance. In 2003, the regional office and Elmhurst expanded their partnership, establishing the Tzu Chi-Elmhurst Hospital Family Health Center in downtown Flushing.

In 1994, not long after Tzu Chi Free Clinic opened in Alhambra, medical volunteers began holding community health outreach events. Building on this experience, they held their first major outreach in 1998 in rural San Bernardino County, serving 636 farm workers and their family members and beginning a pattern of following the seasonal migration of farm workers to better provide them with healthcare. As they did so, Tzu Chi's medical care expanded from Southern California to the Central Valley and eventually all the way up to Northern California, sparking new medical teams in both areas. Beginning in February 1998, medical volunteers also accompanied the disaster relief team from Taiwan to

provide medical relief to flood survivors in Peru and deliver medicine and food to victims of disasters and wars in Afghanistan and Senegal.

Through their experiences traveling to medical outreach events, Tzu Chi dental volunteers continually developed and improved portable dental tools. In 2000, they created the first Great Love Mobile Dental Clinic, a van equipped with two dental stations and a comprehensive array of equipment, including

an X-ray machine, electrocardiogram machine, instrument sterilization area, and digital imaging equipment, allowing their comprehensive service to penetrate more deeply into remote communities.

In 2005, the Buddhist Tzu Chi Medical Foundation was officially established, marking another milestone in the progress of Tzu Chi's Mission of Medicine in the United States. 🌿



Hawaii volunteers have traveled to several remote Pacific islands to provide medical care where it is lacking.



*(Top) A doctor promotes basic hygiene in California.
(Bottom) A young student receives a vaccine in Texas.*





Support & Encouragement



Volunteers participate in Relay for Life to help find a cure for cancer.



As taught by the Buddha, illness is one of the eight kinds of suffering in life. In order to help relieve more beings of this suffering, Tzu Chi strives to gather medical practitioners from all around the world to treat not only the illness, but also the patient's heart and mind, while providing basic healthcare and preventive education everywhere. In October 1996, the Tzu Chi International Medical Association (TIMA) was founded in Hualien to serve this great purpose. In the United States, medical volunteers held preliminary meetings in 1998 in Hawaii and 1999 in Los Angeles, then officially established the United States branch of TIMA in 2000.

Following California and Hawaii, New York, Houston, Atlanta, and Chicago also established their own TIMA chapters, gathering dedicated and kindhearted medical professionals who were eager to contribute to their communities. By the end of 2004, seventeen chapters had already sprouted up around the country. To this day, TIMA volunteers care for the health of community members throughout the year. When disasters strike, whether at home or abroad, they accompany disaster relief teams to deliver medical care to survivors. When Katrina struck New Orleans in 2005, U.S. TIMA members quickly set off to deliver medical care to survivors housed in evacuation centers.

Seeing that many members of the Chinese-speaking community did not know how to help themselves or seek help from others when facing disease, Southern California TIMA and the Free Clinic established a cancer support group in 2000 with members meeting at the clinic each month so that cancer patients and their families could offer each other support and encouragement while sharing experiences and resources. A similar cancer support group was started in Houston in 2002, while others followed in New Jersey and Dallas in 2004.

Each year, four hundred thousand people in the United States rely on dialysis to take over vital kidney functions. Since there had not previously been any organizations offering support for Chinese-speaking dialysis patients, Tzu Chi volunteers in New York started a dialysis support group in 2001 to give patients a forum for sharing their experiences, helping them to feel that they are not alone and thus trying to bring them greater confidence and hope. TIMA in Houston started a similar group in 2002, and Northern California followed suit in 2005 to bring together dialysis and kidney transplant patients and their families every other month to give them spiritual and practical support. 🌿



Educating the Whole Person



*An Academy teacher in New Jersey
shares a lesson in 2004.*



In its Educational Mission, Tzu Chi's philosophy is to educate the whole person. Since the first Tzu Chi Academy was established in Los Angeles in 1994, more academies have been steadily established throughout the country, one after another. In addition to teaching Chinese, teachers carry out Jing Si Aphorism Education, imparting values and morals through Master Cheng Yen's teachings. In 2000, when Los Angeles Tzu Chi Academy Principal Grace Yin returned to Taiwan to meet Master Cheng Yen, the Master especially emphasized that Tzu Chi's education must stress kindness, compassion, joy, and giving, as well as self-restraint and respect for all life.

In 2003, the education team held an eight-week course to provide resources for teachers. Using the Los Angeles Academy as a model, they brought together Tzu Chi philosophy and professional educational wisdom and developed teaching materials to share with all of the Tzu Chi Academies. From this point forward, Tzu Chi's humanistic culture officially entered the standard curriculum at all Tzu Chi Academies in the United States. Through activities such as sign language, environmental protection, flower arrangement, and more, teachers brought Jing Si Aphorism Education to students. In addition, the education team set a major theme each year in conjunction with Global Headquarters in Hualien and designed separate age-appropriate teaching materials based on this theme for low, middle, and high grade levels.

At the first national education conference in 2002, the "Return to the Bamboo Bank Era" project was kick-started for all academies throughout the country. The objective of this project was to motivate students to engender a kind thought every day. Students were encouraged to adopt bamboo banks to learn the value of giving. In 2004, Tzu Chi's Missions of Charity and Education jointly promoted "Send Love to South Africa," calling on students in every academy around the country to donate or help collect donations of books, stationery, and toys to be sent to South Africa for students in Tzu Chi's elementary and nursery schools there. By the end of 2013, this successful drive had been held four times, and more than 150,000 books, 120,000 stationery supplies, and 25,000 toys had been donated.

In 2004, Buddhist Tzu Chi Education Foundation was officially established, marking another milestone for Tzu Chi's Mission of Education in the United States. 🌱



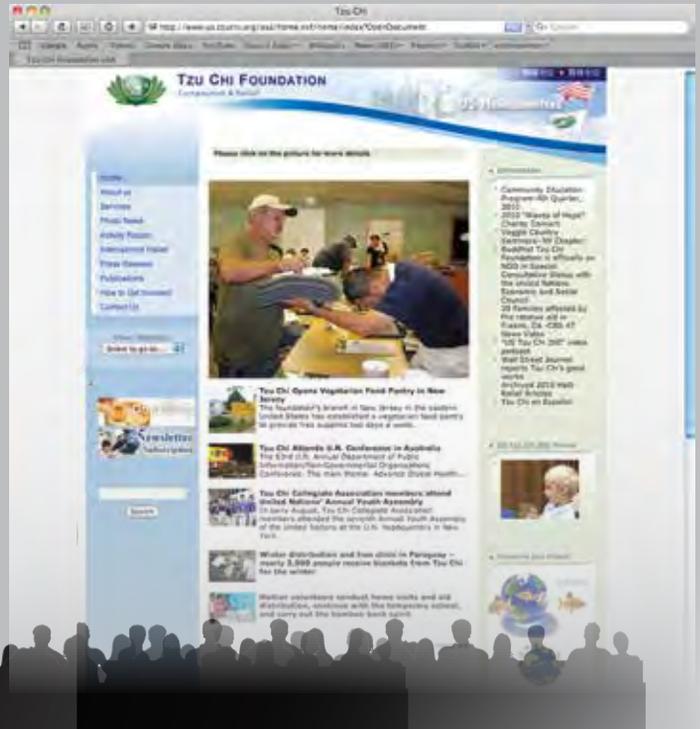
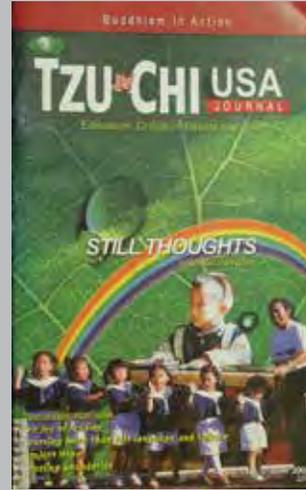
Students at San Dimas Tzu Chi Academy pack materials to send to South Africa.



Hawaii Tzu Chi Academy students actively raise funds for California wildfire victims in 2007.



Delivering the Dharma in English





As Tzu Chi's Missions of Charity and Medicine have grown to touch more people around the world, the availability of English-language materials has become increasingly important. *Tzu Chi World U.S.A.*, Tzu Chi's first publication in the United States, went into print in 1991. At the time, it was a four-page newspaper written entirely in Chinese. Two years later, in August 1993, it started to include one page in English. In 1995, it was expanded to ten total pages, four of which were in English.

In 2000, *Tzu Chi World U.S.A.* shifted its format from a newspaper to a magazine, and it began to include stories with much more depth, as well as more English content. In 2002, *Tzu Chi USA Journal* was launched as a quarterly magazine with content entirely in English, and *Tzu Chi World U.S.A.* returned to being a purely Chinese publication.

In 1999, a group of local Tzu Chi volunteers in the technological hub of California's Silicon Valley first set up an English-language website for Tzu Chi. Just as they were testing the functionality of the website, the 921 Earthquake struck Taiwan on September 21. Volunteers translated the news as it arrived from Taiwan and posted it on the new website immediately. These news reports inspired many people to donate money to the Northwest Regional Office to support the relief effort. Volunteer Meishiang Hsieh, who was responsible for this Northern California English-language website, then organized the English web translation team in 2000 to create a formal group to handle translation.

Around the same time, volunteer Stephanie Fan, leader of the cultural team at Tzu Chi USA Headquarters, started organizing and training a group of volunteers to translate *Life Wisdom*, Dharma Master Cheng Yen's daily teaching on Da Ai Television. Thanks to their hard work, the first broadcast of *Life Wisdom* featuring both Chinese and English subtitles aired on April 1, 2000. These broadcasts bring the Dharma Master's words and the spirit of Tzu Chi to English-speaking people around the world.



Volunteer Stephanie Fan speaks on Tzu Chi's environmental philosophy during World Environment Day 2005 in San Francisco.



Houston Tzu Ching set up a recycling center at the Southern Regional Office to do their part for the environment.

every day. The English subtitles on the daily program have continued ever since.

On September 15, 1999, Da Ai TV signed a contract to broadcast Dharma Master Cheng Yen's speeches and Tzu Chi Foundation news to Tzu Chi volunteers all around the world via satellite. When the Tzu Chi Mid-Atlantic Regional Office in New Jersey held a memorial ceremony in Liberty Park for the families of 9/11 victims in 2001, it marked Da Ai TV's first live global broadcast.

In 2001, Tzu Chi USA Headquarters established a team to set up Chinese and English websites for all of the offices and service centers in the United States. In 2007, the Humanistic Culture Development Department website team upgraded the site to be even more functional and feature richer content. At the same time, the department produced brochures and promotional materials in Chinese, English, and Spanish to introduce Tzu Chi to the general public in the United States and abroad. 🌱



Reaching out to Latin America



Volunteers hold a medical clinic and relief distribution in La Romana, Dominican Republic, in 2002.



Registering as the hottest year on record at the time, 1997 in its latter half witnessed a record-breaking El Niño event that caused unusual extremes of weather and precipitation across both North and South America. The warm, wet winter throughout the United States then led into the deadliest hurricane season in two centuries. This combination of winter storms and fall hurricanes led to widespread flooding and mudslides throughout Central and South America as well as the Caribbean.

Flooding in Peru affected more than 330,000 individuals while damaging 70,000 homes. When Ms. Yuling Huang returned from Peru to Hualien in May for Tzu Chi's annual gathering, she delivered news of the disaster, and Dharma Master Cheng Yen asked U.S. Tzu Chi volunteers to go assess the situation. Seven volunteers from California, Illinois, and Texas, including medical professionals from Tzu Chi Free Clinic, traveled to Lambayeque under the leadership of Hsueh-Jen Lin to assess the damage. This was the first time that U.S. volunteers had taken on the responsibility of carrying out disaster assessment. With the support of volunteers from Global Headquarters, they then planned and carried out disaster relief activities. In August, Stephen Huang, then Director of Tzu Chi's Religious Affairs Department, led nine volunteers from Taiwan and eighteen from the United States and Argentina to visit seventeen villages in the disaster areas of Chiclayo, Lambayeque, and Ferreñafe, where they held four days of distributions, providing supplies, medicines, and medical services to more than two thousand affected families.



Relief goods were distributed in Honduras in 1999.



Tzu Chi La Romana School in the Dominican Republic is inaugurated in 2000.

In September 1998, Hurricane Georges charged through the Caribbean, striking several island nations. With a government invitation, volunteers William Keh and Robert Lynch were sent to join a damage assessment team of Taiwanese NGOs, marking the first time that Tzu Chi volunteers visited Haiti and the Dominican Republic. One month later, Hurricane Mitch swept through Central America, and Tzu Chi

sent volunteers from the United States to assess damage yet again. At year-end, volunteers went out on the streets of both Taiwan and Los Angeles to raise funds to support Central America and the Caribbean. At the same time, Tzu Chi volunteers from both countries traveled to Polo and La Romana in the Dominican Republic, where they distributed food and daily necessities to a total of 850 families



Volunteers provide relief in Honduras in 1999.

while providing medical care for a thousand people. Volunteers also traveled to Tegucigalpa, Honduras, and delivered items to help improve sanitation and health in the flooded areas.

In late January 1999, as the relief effort still carried on in Central America, a major earthquake in Colombia killed nearly two thousand people. Following Dharma Master Cheng Yen's instruction, Stephen Huang, who was already in Central America for disaster relief,

put together a small team that traveled twice to Bogotá to conduct disaster assessment. In February, more than four dozen volunteers from the United States, Taiwan, and Argentina again visited Colombia to carry out relief distributions. Through distributions in three communities, they gave out 8,700 portions of food, enough to feed each recipient for two months, and also provided medical care for 650 individuals. 🌿



Great Love Villages in El Salvador



On January 13, 2001, a 7.6-magnitude earthquake struck the Central American nation of El Salvador. It was followed by a steady stream of both large and small aftershocks, culminating in another quake of 6.8-magnitude precisely one month later. These two major quakes were responsible for 1,300 deaths and 9,000 injuries. In addition, 150,000 homes collapsed, 180,000 were damaged, and more than 1.5 million individuals were affected. Property damage exceeded \$1.6 billion.

On January 15, just two days after the first major quake, Tzu Chi volunteers from Southern California traveled to El Salvador to support International Search and Rescue Operations Taiwan. At the same time, Tzu Chi Religious Affairs Department Director Stephen Huang and Deputy Director Zachary Tse led thirteen U.S. Tzu Chi volunteers into the disaster area. Focusing on the area around Sacacoyo, they carried out immediate disaster relief and provided free medical care for two thousand people. From February 2 to 6, a total of 141 volunteers from the United States, Canada, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, and El Salvador provided medical care for 1,603 residents of three areas around Sacacoyo. They also distributed goods, one-month supplies of foodstuffs for seven thousand people.

After the second major quake struck on February 13, seventy-eight volunteers from Taiwan and all across the Americas led a second





disaster relief team to provide rice to seventeen thousand families across three affected cities, helping them to get through this incredibly difficult period.

In addition to providing food, medicine, and genuine care to sustain survivors' bodies and souls, U.S. Tzu Chi volunteers went a step further by taking on the major project of building Great Love homes for 1,175 families in the hard-hit communities of Sacacoyo and Chanmico. In Sacacoyo, the project had two phases. The first phase resulted in 119 rebuilt homes, which were presented to their new residents in a ceremony on August 11, 2001. In the second phase, 221 homes were dedicated on February 13, 2002, to commemorate the first anniversary of the second quake.

In Chanmico, the second Great Love Village—with 835 homes, a community center, a school, and a medical clinic—was dedicated in a ceremony on October 31, 2003. The country's president, Francisco Flores, personally cut the ribbon alongside Tzu Chi volunteers, and a bishop also came to lead Mass. Beginning on October 30, Tzu Chi volunteers carried out three days of relief distributions and medical outreaches in the new Great Love Village as well as Ahuachapan and Santa Ana.

Through these experiences and more, volunteers gained international disaster relief experience and honed their abilities. 🌿



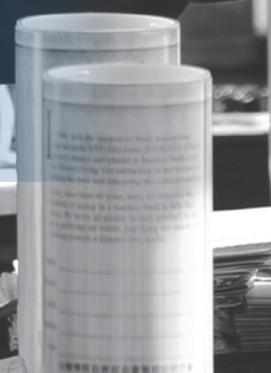
Tzu Chi rebuilt two entire villages in El Salvador.



Branching out to All (2006-2014)

When there are many good people, the power of blessings and kindness is great.

Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen



Branches (2006-2014)



善念時時生
慧命日日增



Bringing Light to Dark Corners



Affected residents line up for a relief distribution after Hurricane Sandy.



As the United States sank into recession in 2008 and many millions lost their jobs, countless people were left without medical insurance, unable to afford even the most basic healthcare. In this difficult time, the need for Tzu Chi's compassionate care grew even greater.

Responding to this need, Tzu Chi volunteers around the country not only expanded existing services, but added new projects as well. These included Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) free tax reporting, care for underprivileged students and their families through the Happy Campus Program, and New Jersey's Tzu Chi Food Pantry full of nutritious food for families otherwise unable to afford it.

After many years of perseverance and dedicated service, Tzu Chi now started to earn the acceptance and recognition of other major organizations. Tzu Chi was accepted as a member of National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD) in 2006, signed a memorandum of understanding with the American Red Cross in 2008, and was granted special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 2010. Tzu Chi's methods of preventing the "second disaster" of disaster relief by avoiding unnecessary garbage, as well as the major relief impact after the devastation of Hurricane Sandy, earned much notice and appreciation. During the NVOAD annual conference in 2013, Tzu Chi was awarded the Member of the Year award, having been nominated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

In addition to continuing to provide care for several Central American countries, Tzu Chi volunteers from the United States and elsewhere responded quickly when Haiti was struck by a major earthquake in 2010. They not only carried out aid distributions and free medical clinics in the disaster area, but also rebuilt schools and trained local volunteers to compassionately and effectively serve their own communities.

Responding to medical needs both at home and abroad, Tzu Chi volunteers not only continued holding regular

medical outreach events for patients in remote areas, but also worked closely with partner organizations to organize major clinic events that could reach thousands of patients each. After disasters including Hurricane Katrina, flooding in both the Midwest and Bolivia, and the major earthquake in Haiti, Tzu Chi medical volunteers from across the United States joined together with disaster relief teams to provide services when and where they were needed most. In doing so, they also sowed the seeds of love on foreign soil by motivating locals in Bolivia and Haiti to form their own Tzu Chi International Medical Association (TIMA) chapters to serve their local communities.

In addition to roving medical vans delivering care to far-flung communities, Northern California volunteers began holding weekly dental services in Milpitas in 2013, while additional permanent clinic facilities were established in Southern California to better provide low-cost, high-quality services to the community. Following changes to the national healthcare law, Buddhist Tzu Chi Free Clinic in Alhambra became Buddhist Tzu Chi Medical Center in 2013.

Tzu Chi opened its first school in the United States in 2006. As of 2014, there are now a total of five Tzu Chi Great Love schools in operation in California and Texas. Like the weekly Tzu Chi Academy classes, these schools employ bilingual Chinese and English education while emphasizing character and morals. Since 2007, several Tzu Chi offices have also started holding community education classes in order to provide local residents with lifelong learning opportunities and spread the seeds of kindness.

Since September 2006, volunteers have held forty-minute Character Education classes twice a month at Lytle Creek Elementary, a

public school in San Bernardino, California. In Dallas, Texas, volunteers have long supported the Barack Obama Male Leadership Academy (BOMLA), where they also provide regular Jing Si Aphorism classes. In June 2012, BOMLA Principal Nakia Douglas and four of his students traveled to Tzu Chi's spiritual home to volunteer and learn at Hualien Tzu Chi General Hospital and Tzu Chi's recycling center in Sanchong. Their experiences there led to recycling, environmental protection, and community volunteerism becoming key components of the BOMLA curriculum upon their return.

Since 2007, eight Jing Si Books & Café locations have opened their doors in five states. Inside a calming, serene atmosphere, one can find spiritually enriching materials, including Dharma Master Cheng Yen's books in several languages as well as innovative products and all-natural foods developed by the nuns of the Jing Si Abode. In December 2012, EcoVerse: Jing Si Books & Café opened in downtown San Diego. It combines the serene Jing Si atmosphere with a community center hosting presentations, workshops, and discussions on living an environmentally friendly lifestyle.

After the major earthquake hit Haiti on January 12, 2010, Tzu Chi's first monthly e-newsletter was sent out at the end of the month to keep volunteers and donors updated on relief efforts. It has been sent every month since. Beginning in 2012, the Tzu Chi translation team strengthened their efforts to make Dharma Master Cheng Yen's teachings accessible to English speakers, supplying English subtitles to more Da Ai Television programs while also translating Master's books. By April 2014, Jing Si Publications had published six new books that present the Tzu Chi spirit in English.



Since 2011, Tzu Chi volunteers across the country have been actively promoting the four-language (English, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese) editions of *Jing Si Aphorisms* to local hotels and motels in order to provide travelers with words of comfort, inspiration, and guidance along their journey. In December 2013, Tzu Chi also sent copies of *Jing Si Aphorisms* and *Tzu Chi USA Journal* to prison inmates throughout the country. Within the next few months, more than 140 thank-you letters were received from eighty-eight inmates in twenty-two states. A dozen of these inmates even initiated monthly donations to give back to the community.

All across the country, volunteers in several states have continued to hold regular beach and park cleanup activities to beautify their communities. With the knowledge that a vegetarian diet is one effective method for combating global warming, many volunteers have not only become vegetarians themselves but have worked hard to share the benefits of that lifestyle with others. To truly turn the world into a Pure Land free from disasters requires all people taking on the great responsibilities of eating a vegetarian diet, recycling, and practicing environmental protection. One by one, Tzu Chi volunteers are leading the way. 🌱



Relief amidst Recession

As the subprime mortgage crisis hit and the housing bubble burst in the mid-2000s, nearly two decades of economic growth came to a sudden halt as the United States quickly sank into recession in 2008. As a result, the unemployment rate rapidly doubled, from roughly seven million individuals in 2008 to more than fifteen million in 2009. It did not dip back below ten million until 2014. With so many people unable to find jobs and the economy struggling in so many ways, millions of families fell below the poverty line, making it harder to pay rent, put food on the table, and access much-needed services.

In this difficult time, the compassionate care of Tzu Chi volunteers became ever more vital to their communities. Whenever disaster struck, volunteers immediately traveled to the epicenter to assist the most vulnerable among those affected. While their care was most evident in major disasters, volunteers were also very active after the many local disasters that quickly slipped out of the news cycle, but caused great pain all the same.

Throughout this period, volunteers added new community service programs while broadening and deepening the scope of their many care programs already in place. In New Jersey, for instance, volunteers opened a weekly food pantry on September 10, 2010, in order to provide fresh fruits, vegetables, and other vegetarian food to locals who otherwise could not afford nutritious food for their families. At the same time, volunteers across the country continued their regular visits to senior home residents and homeless people, in order to deliver hot food and warm care to many people in need of companionship.





Volunteers in San Francisco serve underprivileged young students through the Happy Campus Program.

The Tzu Chi Scholars program, which offers thousand-dollar college scholarships to graduating high school seniors, grew more than fifty percent between 2009 and 2012, from 211 to 329 recipients nationwide. During the same three-year span, IRS-certified volunteers nearly doubled the number of families they served through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, by providing free income tax

return preparation to 1,731 low-income families in 2012, up from 879 households assisted in 2009.

Among the most notable developments in this period was the growth of the Happy Campus Program, which arose from the earlier book distribution project and was officially established in 2009. As of 2014, volunteers were providing a variety of compassionate services,



Volunteers held weekly hot meal distributions in Los Angeles's Skid Row for several years.

including school supply donations, weekly food backpacks, tuition support, uniform distributions, recycling and environmental classes, character education courses, hygiene and health classes, medical clinics, perfect attendance awards, teacher appreciation luncheons, family support, and after school tutoring to underprivileged students in twenty-nine schools spread from California to

New York, and even down to Haiti. Recently, volunteers in San Francisco have expanded the Happy Campus Program into the Happy Family Program, as volunteers have begun to venture into the community to carry their support into students' homes by helping economically disadvantaged families obtain furniture and other necessities. 🌱



Indianapolis volunteers provide weekly tutoring sessions for Burmese refugee students.



Partnering for Relief



In Iowa, volunteers pray before a relief distribution after the 2008 Midwest floods.



After the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and another bout of Southern California wildfires in 2007, natural disasters seemed to be ever more devastating and frequent in the years that followed. In addition to annual outbreaks of tornadoes, blizzards, hurricanes, floods, droughts, and wildfires throughout the country, the United States was struck by the disastrous spring of 2011, during which hundreds of tornadoes led to more than five hundred deaths and the worst Mississippi River flooding in years added nearly four hundred more. In 2012, the Northeast was struck by Hurricane Sandy, the most devastating storm since Katrina, which caused more than \$65 billion in damages and affected countless individuals, especially in vulnerable communities.

In the midst of these disasters, Tzu Chi volunteers continued to carry out their vow to compassionately relieve suffering. Thanks to a growing number of partnerships with other organizations, volunteers were able to help others in an increasingly efficient manner. In June 2006, Tzu Chi was admitted to National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD), a coalition of disaster relief organizations that in 2013 recognized Tzu Chi as its Member of the Year. Tzu Chi was nominated for the award by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), another organization with which Tzu Chi volunteers have frequently collaborated over the years.

Building on a partnership that had been steadily growing over years of disaster relief, Tzu Chi and the American Red Cross signed a memorandum of understanding on June 18, 2008, agreeing to work hand in hand to complement each other in disaster relief



Los Angeles volunteers raised funds for those affected by numerous wildfires in 2007.

Victims of 2007 Texas flooding found warmth in Tzu Chi's eco-friendly blankets, which are made from recycled plastic bottles.



operations. On July 19, 2010, Tzu Chi was awarded special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), allowing Tzu Chi volunteers to better coordinate with other global nongovernmental organizations for carrying out international disaster relief.

These major partnerships, along with many others forged over the years, have helped Tzu Chi volunteers expand the scope of their disaster relief efforts as they serve with gratitude, respect, and love, and always strive to be first to arrive and last to leave. 🌱



Compassion in Action after Sandy



Residents of Union Beach, New Jersey, line up for a relief distribution after Hurricane Sandy.



On October 22, 2012, the storm that would become Hurricane Sandy started gathering strength as it ventured north through the Caribbean. By the time it crashed head-on into New Jersey, Sandy was being called a “super storm” for its sheer ferocity. Responsible for over one hundred casualties in the United States alone, and nearly three hundred total, Sandy was the deadliest hurricane since Katrina and the second costliest storm in US history. Sandy affected twenty-four states, caused sixty-five billion dollars’ worth of damage, left millions without electricity in the cold of winter, and severely flooded the Northeast. Many had to evacuate their homes, as hundreds of thousands of homes were damaged or destroyed, with countless personal belongings washed away or destroyed.

Though many Tzu Chi volunteers lived in the disaster zone themselves and were even personally affected, they still saw the storm as an opportunity to serve others. The very next morning after the storm, volunteers began assessing the damage and planning for relief.

At first, they gathered daily at several locations in New York and New Jersey to provide hot soup, blankets, and case management services to warm both bodies and souls. Soon, the response grew into Tzu Chi’s largest relief undertaking ever. Volunteers held dozens of relief distributions at locations throughout New York City, Long Island, and along the Jersey Shore, distributing roughly ten million dollars in emergency cash aid to nearly sixteen thousand affected families, while also providing more than nine thousand eco-friendly blankets, as well as Jing Si Instant Rice, hygiene kits, and more. This major relief effort later earned Tzu Chi recognition from the White House as a Champion of Change and was a key factor in Tzu Chi’s earning the NVOAD Member of the Year Award.

Throughout the relief effort, Tzu Chi volunteers worked closely with churches, local governments, charities, and other organizations in order to directly



For over a month after Hurricane Sandy, New Jersey volunteers gathered frequently to prepare blankets and goods for distribution.



reach the individuals in greatest need. These collaborative efforts deeply touched community members. Many locals, including two mayors, put on Tzu Chi volunteer vests to contribute their time, and nearly eight thousand aid recipients requested their own bamboo banks so that they could help others just as they had been helped themselves.

As a new year dawned, the immediate relief phase of cash distributions came to an end, but volunteers continued to care for the most

vulnerable local communities. At the same time, many recipients were so touched by Tzu Chi's efforts that they chose to go through volunteer training and dedicate their time to Tzu Chi, many of them utilizing their language skills to help Tzu Chi connect more deeply with some of New York's many immigrant communities. Within the storm's devastation the seeds of positive affinities had been planted. 🌱



In the final months of 2012, volunteers held dozens of relief distributions throughout New York and New Jersey.



Going Mobile to Reach More



Tzu Chi's mobile clinics serve patients in remote medical outreaches as well as major clinic events.



As the United States economy soured in 2008 and beyond, the already significant need for Tzu Chi's medical services grew even greater as many individuals were left without access to medical insurance or affordable healthcare. Having had a decade of experience in conducting medical outreach events, Tzu Chi volunteers were able to expand these efforts to reach even more people in need. At the same time, Tzu Chi partnered with more organizations with which they shared a common goal, thus increasing the collective positive impact on the community through collaboration.

In California's Central Valley—the breadbasket of the nation—Tzu Chi Fresno volunteers began holding medical outreach events for uninsured migrant farm workers back in 2001, the same year that the first mobile medical clinic was commissioned in Southern California. Fresno received its own medical clinic van in 2008, followed by another in 2010, and volunteers inaugurated their first permanent medical office in 2012. With these new facilities and a dedicated local team, volunteers continued to offer weekly clinic hours in Fresno while driving the mobile vans up and down the highways of the Central Valley to offer outreach events in remote communities at least once every month. Just north of San Jose, volunteers in Milpitas, California, also began offering weekly dental services in 2013.

Elsewhere, volunteers reached many communities through post-disaster medical relief. After providing medical care to Hurricane Katrina evacuees in Houston in September 2005, volunteers continued their support of storm survivors with a weeklong clinic in New Orleans in February 2006. Two years later, volunteers provided medical relief to flood survivors in both Iowa and Bolivia. After the major earthquake devastated Haiti in 2010, volunteers from thirteen states and several other countries served more than fifteen thousand patients over two months of medical care in Port-au-Prince. In doing so, they also motivated a team of local medical volunteers who later held their first major medical clinic in March 2013—an event which helped more than six hundred patients.

Meanwhile, collaborations with several other community service organizations allowed Tzu Chi volunteers to make an even greater impact. A partnership begun with Remote Area Medical (RAM) in 2005 brought several large-scale medical outreach events to



Since 2009, Tzu Chi Medical Foundation has partnered with several medical organizations to hold numerous multi-day clinic events.

fruition, including eight consecutive days of medical treatments in Northern California in 2011, during which time Tzu Chi volunteers treated nearly fourteen thousand patients. Cooperative projects with other organizations, including Care Harbor, Kaiser Permanente, the Flying Doctors, Molina Healthcare, One Legacy, and more, resulted in the genesis of several successful major annual medical clinics held throughout Southern and Central California, including CareNow LA (now Care Harbor) since 2011, Care 4 a Healthy I.E. (in the Inland Empire) since 2012, and Healthy Fresno since 2013.

In 2009, volunteers began offering twice-weekly dental care each winter to Los Angeles County homeless individuals through a partnership with the East San Gabriel Valley Coalition for the Homeless and several local churches. In 2012, Tzu Chi Medical Foundation signed an agreement with the Association of Organ Procurement Organizations (AOPO) to jointly promote cornea, organ, and tissue donation throughout the country, in order to bring assistance to individuals in need of transplants and change the mindset of the people in communities hesitant to donate organs after death.

In Southern California, the number of permanent clinic locations also increased to serve more communities. Tzu Chi Community Clinic in South El Monte, in operation since 2005, opened a dental clinic in March 2008. In November 2010, an additional Tzu Chi Community Clinic was opened in Wilmington to assist underserved communities south of Los Angeles. On the occasion of the Tzu Chi Medical Mission's twentieth anniversary in the United States, and in response to new healthcare regulations, Buddhist Tzu Chi Free Clinic in Alhambra, California, officially became Buddhist Tzu Chi Medical Center in 2013.

Through all these activities, medical volunteers throughout the United States and abroad built on their growing relationships with local communities and collaborative partnerships with like-minded organizations to both broaden and deepen the scope of their care to the many individuals who lack access to medical insurance and affordable healthcare. Whether traveling to remote communities and scenes of disaster or welcoming patients to permanent clinic locations, medical volunteers delivered compassionate care with a warm smile and a loving embrace. 🌿



Tzu Chi Vision Mobile Clinic was added in 2013 to conduct eye exams and make eyeglasses.



Imparting Knowledge & Virtue

After years of providing quality education and character development through weekly Tzu Chi Academies and programs in conjunction with other schools, Tzu Chi's Mission of Education reached a major milestone in 2006: the first Great Love Preschool & Kindergarten.

On September 12, 2006, this first school opened in Monrovia, California. It was followed two years later by Dallas Tzu Chi Great Love Preschool & Kindergarten in Richardson, Texas. In 2013, the third location opened in Walnut, California, with another following in Houston, Texas, one year later. The first Tzu Chi Great Love Elementary School opened just a few blocks from the Monrovia preschool in 2010.

Each of these preschool, kindergarten, and elementary schools offers bilingual education in English and Mandarin Chinese while enriching young students' knowledge through a multicultural education. The goal is to educate the whole person by teaching character and morals. Parents joyfully witness their children become more polite, more empathetic, and consistently willing to help the environment by recycling.

One mother of a Dallas preschool student noted that even within a month her son was reminding her not to waste water. Another student asked his mother to carry a reusable bag with her to the supermarket to save plastic bags. These children truly internalize Tzu Chi's humanistic education.

Throughout the country, Tzu Chi Academies also seize every opportunity to impart these kinds of lessons. For instance, before Halloween, Tzu Chi Academy teachers in New Jersey, New York, Seattle, San Francisco, Southern California, and other locations have encouraged students and parents to utilize recycled materials or secondhand clothing to make their costumes as a creative method of actualizing the philosophy of cherishing resources and protecting our environment.

During the 2009 Send Love to South Africa book donation drive, Tzu Chi Academy students nationwide collected three times as many new and used books, stationery items, and toys as they had during the same project several years earlier. Packaged together with cards handwritten by the students, the goods





San Dimas Tzu Chi Academy students creatively repurpose recycled materials to welcome in the Chinese New Year.

filling two cargo containers were sent to South Africa, where they were distributed to students of Tzu Chi's elementary and nursery schools in Ladysmith. The Education Department collected all the news reports produced about the donations by Da Ai Television and many photos taken in South Africa and incorporated them into their humanistic curriculum at every Tzu Chi Academy location. When the students saw

their own books and toys now being treasured by children in South Africa, they were filled with joy and better understood the meaning of appreciating and cherishing what they had.

When Tzu Chi volunteers traveled to Haiti to provide hurricane relief in 2009, the education team incorporated their experiences into curriculum materials to complement a



Students at Great Love Preschool & Kindergarten in Dallas learn that used milk cartons need not be thrown away.

unit on living a simple life. At the same time, they started the Send Love to Haiti project, encouraging students across the country to donate stationery and write personal cards to students in Haiti.

In recent years, Tzu Chi has also started providing community education courses, following Dharma Master Cheng Yen's belief that "education should exist not only in school classrooms, but should be widely spread to every corner of society. The guiding principle of forming Tzu Chi's community education center is to spread good seeds in the field in every person's heart."

In summer 2006, a team of thirty-eight experienced members of Tzu Chi's Education

Mission from Taiwan, including the president of Tzu Chi University, visited Tzu Chi USA Headquarters to hold a national humanistic education camp and plant seeds of Tzu Chi's community education in the United States. Since then, various Tzu Chi offices throughout the country have been holding a wide variety of community education courses, including parent-children classes, calligraphy, vegetarian cooking, and much more. Through these classes, they give community members an opportunity for lifelong learning and a chance to delve deeper into Tzu Chi's humanistic spirit of truth, goodness, and beauty. Students can then share this spirit with their families and friends, as they enjoy a happier, healthier life. 🌱



At Hawaii Tzu Chi Academy, vegetarian cooking provides a lesson in compassion and environmental awareness.



Character Education for Public Schools

Since September 2006, Tzu Chi volunteers have been holding biweekly forty-minute character education classes at Lytle Creek Elementary, a public school in a poor community of San Bernardino, California.

Tzu Chi's education team has developed a full curriculum of ten themes to be covered each year: respect, responsibility, gratitude, giving, compassion, courage, contentment, emotional management, filial piety, and tolerance. They started with classes for first and second graders and then accompanied these students through the remainder of elementary school.

As the students grew older, and were facing more complex situations, volunteers developed materials that addressed these topics in more sophisticated, age-appropriate lessons. After disasters like Hurricane Sandy and the earthquake in Haiti, education volunteers immediately incorporated them into the curriculum and asked the school to hold a school-wide assembly. Focusing on the topic of Giving, they led the students to consider, "What do children in the disaster area need right now? What can we do to help?" Through these lessons, they learned the meaning of compassion and that "many drops of water come together to make a river"—even if each student could do very little to help those affected by disaster, together they could do a lot.

In summer 2013, when the first two classes of first graders to go through Tzu Chi's character education curriculum were preparing for promotion to middle school, the final theme they studied was Giving. The students decided to tidy up the campus in order to provide a cleaner environment for the younger students to enjoy. In doing so, they experienced the joy of giving.

Since 2009, Tzu Chi volunteers have also brought the second-grade classes of Bing Wong Elementary School, another San Bernardino school, on a field trip to the Tzu Chi USA Headquarters every year to offer a condensed curriculum in character education and environmental protection.

Beginning in 2012, Tzu Chi volunteers have partnered with Charles H. Lee Elementary in Azusa, California, to provide character education during morning homeroom. One teacher shared that "Tzu Chi has opened the children's hearts. Now they understand how to care for others." Through this partnership, the students' grades have also shown improvement,





Bing Wong Elementary students visit USA Headquarters annually to learn to care for the earth.



Principal Douglas and BOMLA students join Dallas volunteers to raise funds after Hurricane Sandy.



Tzu Chi volunteers have been holding character education classes at Lytle Creek Elementary since 2006.

and since 2013, first graders have attended character education classes every other week.

In 2012, second and third graders of Fred Ekstrand Elementary in San Dimas visited Tzu Chi on a field trip to learn how to Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle. Since then, the whole school has started recycling plastic bottles in their classrooms. In March 2013, Tzu Chi's education team visited the school to provide the second graders a lesson in converting food scraps into compost and even gave them a chance to try it out for themselves. One of their teachers then converted an unused flower bed into a nursery to teach the children to grow vegetables. Principal Lucinda Newton happily said, "The more the students understand about the world, the more they know how to care for the Earth."

Since the school first opened in 2011, Tzu Chi volunteers in Dallas, Texas, have cared for and delivered regular Jing Si Aphorism lessons to the students of the Barack Obama Male

Leadership Academy (BOMLA). This has clearly had a positive influence on the students. In June 2012, Principal Nakia Douglas led four of his students to visit Tzu Chi's spiritual home in Hualien, where they served as volunteers in Tzu Chi Hospital and visited the Sanchong recycling station to sort recyclables together with local volunteers. When they saw bottles piled as high as a mountain, the students started to think, discuss, and eventually put a recycling plan into action. After returning to the United States, they started promoting recycling and recycling education. From this point forward, recycling and environmental protection became required learning at BOMLA, and students now serve as volunteers in their community by helping to clean parks or by participating in other environmental activities. Many have also inspired their parents to join them in serving the community. 🌱



Extending the Dharma to All



Tzu Chi volunteers donate books to the University of Pennsylvania in 2009.



As Tzu Chi's missions have developed and grown in the United States, volunteers have had more and more interactions with other organizations and thus a greater need to communicate Tzu Chi's philosophy and values in English and other languages. As such, *Tzu Chi USA Journal*, a quarterly magazine, debuted in 2002 to share stories important to the Tzu Chi community in the English language. After thirty issues in a small format, it expanded in 2012 to the current size. Like its Chinese counterpart, *Tzu Chi World U.S.A.*, each new issue has been made available online since 2010.

As Dharma Master Cheng Yen has published many books of teachings over the years, a great drive was initiated in 2012 to make more of her work available in English. In just the first two years of this project, several books, including *Life Economics*,



Using Tzu Chi USA Journal, volunteer George Chang introduces Tzu Chi in Haiti.



Volunteers began a project to share Jing Si Aphorisms with prisons and jails in 2013.



Karen Lauringer—then first lady of Kirkland, Washington—selects a book about Master Cheng Yen to read.



Dharma as Water (Volume 1), From Austerity to Prosperity, The Essence of Filial Piety, and Jing Si Aphorisms: The Fundamentals of Virtue, have been published.

At the same time, Tzu Chi USA Translation Team's support in providing English subtitles for Da Ai Television programs expanded to include such programs as Dharma Master Cheng Yen's Dharma teachings of *Wisdom at Dawn* and *Essence of the Bodhi Mind*, stories of recycling volunteers in *Grassroots Bodhi*, and true stories of real-life Tzu Chi volunteers in *Da Ai Drama*. At Tzu Chi USA Headquarters, posters, brochures, and promotional materials have continued to be developed in Chinese, English, and Spanish, while Jing Si Aphorism bookmarks in Japanese and Haitian Creole and children's books in Zulu and Sesotho were also designed to support volunteers in other corners of the world.

To deliver Master Cheng Yen's teaching to the Chinese-speaking community, volunteers in both Southern and Northern California continued to broadcast weekly local radio programs. In 2009, Tzu Chi USA Media Center started producing a weekly television program in English, *US Tzu Chi 360°*, which is broadcast on Da Ai TV and also made available online and on select public television stations. In July 2011, *US Tzu Chi 360°* expanded from six-minute to twenty-four-minute episodes to share in greater detail stories of Tzu Chi volunteers and projects in the United States and abroad. By summer 2014, thirteen public television stations in seven states were also broadcasting episodes of *US Tzu Chi 360°*.

Between 2007 and 2014, eight Jing Si Books & Café locations opened in five states to introduce the community to Dharma Master

Cheng Yen's publications and other valuable books and innovative products created by the Dharma masters of the Jing Si Abode. Since July 2010, a Chinese and English website (jingsi.us.tzuchi.org) has given customers throughout the country access to Jing Si products that benefit both body and mind. In December 2012, the very first Jing Si Books & Café independent of a Tzu Chi office opened in the heart of downtown San Diego. It is connected with EcoVerse, Tzu Chi's flagship environmental community center, where community members can learn and share skills to better care for self and environment.

Since 2011, Tzu Chi volunteers throughout the country have diligently shared a four-language (English, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese) edition of Dharma Master Cheng Yen's *Jing Si Aphorisms* with hotels and motels, so that the concise words of wisdom contained within may provide inspiration and guidance to travelers on their journeys. As of May 2014, these volunteers had visited more than two thousand hotels and motels nationwide, of which roughly 730 had accepted donations of more than sixty thousand copies of *Jing Si Aphorisms*.

Since December 2013, hundreds of copies of *Jing Si Aphorisms* and *Tzu Chi USA Journal* have also been donated to jails and prisons to share Master Cheng Yen's wisdom with inmates. As of June 2014, eighty-eight inmates from twenty-two states had sent more than 140 letters to Tzu Chi to thank volunteers for the moving and inspirational words and to request additional resources. Several of these inmates even joined the Power of Five movement, sending checks or postage stamps each month to donate to Tzu Chi's mission of love. Though the monetary value of these donations may be small, the kindness contained within them is enormous.





Protecting Mother Earth



Long Island volunteers join in New York City's annual Five Boro Bike Tour to help the environment.



Dharma Master Cheng Yen has long called on Tzu Chi volunteers to contribute back to the communities they live in. Following her call, Tzu Chi volunteers in the United States often participate in events organized by local governments—including litter cleanups in parks, streets, beaches, and rivers—as a way of serving their communities. In many areas, volunteers also organize annual summer camps for children. As part of these camps, students learn about the importance of recycling, using resources wisely, and reducing carbon emissions both in the classroom and through active participation. Environmental philosophy can take deep root in youthful hearts, however young their age.

Many Tzu Chi offices around the country double as recycling collection and education stations. At the Houston office, Tzu Ching collegiate volunteers established a recycling station in 2002. In addition to collecting recyclable resources, they started to utilize every opportunity to promote environmental concepts through such methods as holding community workshops and charity rummage sales. Since 2010, Northern California volunteers have used free time after work and school to regularly sort paper and plastic recycled items at the Asus Computer recycling center in Fremont, California. Each month, fifteen tons of paper is collected, equivalent to three hundred twenty-year-old trees. By collecting plastics, they also reduce the amount of non-biodegradable waste that goes into landfills to harm the environment.

In 2012, EcoVerse, a first-of-its-kind environmental community center, opened in the heart of downtown San Diego, California. EcoVerse offers a variety of free community seminars and workshops to bring the concepts of sustainable living and zero waste to the community. On March 19, 2014, EcoVerse offered a class on repurposing used plastic bottles as planters for the first time to People Assisting the Homeless (PATH), a San Diego organization serving the local homeless community. Interested students brought recycled plastic bottles as their tuition. This class showed participants that recovered plastic bottles not only can be resold, but also can be creatively reconfigured to contribute to a beautiful environment.

An overwhelming majority of climate scientists agree that the planet's climate is warming due to human activity, much of which can be attributed to modern consumer culture. To combat this worrisome trend, Tzu Chi volunteers try to find simple ways to reduce carbon emissions in everyday living, such as by carrying reusable cups, bowls, and utensils instead of using Styrofoam cups, paper plates, and plastic utensils, which would create more garbage polluting the environment. After the 2010 Haiti earthquake, Tzu Chi not only

distributed enormous amounts of relief goods, they also sent these reusable items to the disaster area. Volunteers used them not only for their own meals, but also to distribute hot meals to survivors, so as to avoid the “second disaster” of mountains of disposable plates and utensils. Recipients were encouraged to keep and reuse them.

Scientists have shown that meat production is in fact the largest single contributor of greenhouse gas emissions that damage the

environment and lead to global warming. For this reason, following a vegetarian diet is a very effective way of combating climate change. In recent years, contagious diseases, such as avian flu, SARS, foot-and-mouth disease, and mad cow disease, have been spread through meat consumption or close proximity with animals meant for consumption, so Dharma Master Cheng Yen has long been calling on everyone to improve their health as well as the health of the planet by following a vegetarian diet.



In Houston, Texas, volunteers introduce Tzu Chi's eco-friendly blankets made from recycled plastic bottles.



Young volunteers in Austin, Texas, work hard to clean their community.

Tzu Chi volunteers throughout the country seize every opportunity to promote the benefits of vegetarianism. In 2010, they started the Veggie Country Passport initiative, encouraging people to become citizens of “Veggie Country” by vowing to eat a certain number of vegetarian meals and then tallying them in their Veggie Country Passport. That Halloween, volunteers in New York, San Francisco, and Los Angeles all donned vegetable costumes and went out on the streets to knock on doors and invite community members to taste the delicious flavors of vegetables.

Tzu Chi volunteers strongly believe that the best way of sharing the virtues of vegetarianism is by practicing it themselves and then being positive role models to those around them. Only then can the world be made a Pure Land free from disasters. 🌿





Love Transcends Borders



A graduation ceremony at Tzu Chi's school in La Romana, Dominican Republic, is a joyous occasion.

Continuing Care in Central America

After a week of heavy tropical storms along the Pacific coast led to heavy flooding throughout Central America in early October 2011, local Tzu Chi volunteers in Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala immediately sprang into action to assess damage, to provide cash and material relief, and to arrange for further support. At the end of the month, teams of volunteers from the United States traveled south to meet and support them.

During previous hurricane and earthquake relief efforts in 1998 and 2001, respectively, Tzu Chi volunteers from the United States had taken the lead in providing relief to local disaster survivors. By the time U.S. volunteers returned in 2011, they only needed to support the local volunteers already active in the three affected countries.

When volunteer teams arrived from the United States to the disaster zones, donated funds from Tzu Chi USA Headquarters were used to purchase supplies locally to both support survivors affected by heavy flooding and loss of homes and crops, and help spur



*Commencement at Morita Tzu Chi Elementary
in Tijuana, Mexico.*

the local economies. These supplies included 126 temporary shelters, over two thousand blankets, eighty tons of corn flour, ninety tons of beans, and more. Distributions were held in

flooded areas throughout all three countries, including in the two Salvadorian villages that Tzu Chi had rebuilt after the 2001 earthquake. In total, volunteers distributed over three hundred



After flooding in Central America in 2011, volunteers hold a distribution in Honduras.

tons of food and daily necessities to more than fourteen thousand affected households.

During these relief distributions, love and compassion were again kindled locally.



In Guatemala, a local radio news reporter joined the volunteers during the distribution. In Honduras, a mayor shared his time to help. Existing volunteers found themselves recharged, and new individuals joined the mission.

The local volunteers' dedication to Tzu Chi and serving their communities was especially evident a couple years later in February 2014. At that time, eighty-one volunteers from four Central American countries gathered together in Guatemala City to participate in an all-day volunteer training course held entirely in Spanish. The seeds of love are blossoming in Central America, thanks in part to the dedication of United States volunteers who have sown and nurtured these seeds for more than a decade.



Volunteers and care recipients pay love forward.



Three Port-au-Prince schools rebuilt by Tzu Chi after the quake reopened in May 2013.

Rebuilding Hope in Haiti

On January 12, 2010, a 7.0-magnitude earthquake struck near Port-au-Prince, Haiti. It left a quarter of a million dead and another million or more homeless, and led to an ongoing cholera epidemic that has killed at least eight thousand more. Tzu Chi volunteers wasted no time in delivering compassion and relief, entering the disaster region just one week after the quake and staying for months afterward—a quick and thorough response which was possible in part due to the expertise gained and the relationships formed during hurricane relief efforts in 2008 and 2009.

In the immediate relief period, generous donors in 36 countries contributed relief funds while 262 volunteers paid their own way to Port-au-Prince to hold 84 distributions that benefited 196,411 people with 110 tons of instant corn powder, 80 tons of instant rice, 6,000 tents, 40,000 tarps, and more. In addition to material relief, medical volunteers held a series of free clinic events in which 73 volunteer doctors treated more than 15,000 earthquake survivors with both general and alternative medical treatments, as well as dental and chiropractic care.

After the immediate relief phase ended in May 2010, volunteers focused on sowing seeds of goodness by encouraging disaster survivors to take on compassionate projects in their



Earthquake survivors participate in Food for Work.



U.S. volunteers and local Haitians express mutual gratitude during earthquake relief in 2010.



own communities, and by supporting them with food, funding, and administrative support. This included Food for Work programs, through which nearly four thousand participants received hot meals for cleaning their own neighborhoods, as well as a temporary school begun in March 2010, which later grew into long-term tuition support, tutoring, hot meals, and family visits through the Happy Campus Program.

As time passed, Tzu Chi rebuilt three Catholic schools, which opened in 2013, as well as a preschool and kindergarten. Local volunteers began tending a moringa orchard in 2011 and educating locals about moringa—a nutritious, drought-tolerant plant that offers solutions to malnutrition and deforestation. Local volunteers also began to regularly provide individual care to the needy, distribute rice, and hold medical outreach events. Their example in turn has inspired a new group of volunteers in Cap-Haïtien, six hours to the north, which first held relief distributions for flood survivors at the end of 2012.

Thanks to the tireless dedication of compassionate Tzu Chi volunteers, not only did tens of thousands of earthquake survivors receive the material and medical relief they needed in the wake of disaster, but many were also inspired by the compassion they experienced to become volunteers themselves and thus continue the cycle of love by serving others in their communities. Just as the seeds of love were planted and began to sprout in the United States, so too they are sprouting in Haiti. 🌱



Earthquake relief also included much needed medical care.



Paying Love Forward



Touched by Tzu Chi volunteers' compassionate care, many care recipients have resolved to help others just as they were helped.



One Good Deed Begets Another



David Kassel

In 2003, the Cedar Fire burned more than two thousand homes in Southern California's San Diego County. David Kassel's was one of them. With the four-hundred-dollar check he received from Tzu Chi, he purchased boots, rakes, hoes, and a wheelbarrow to help him clear his property and start rebuilding his house. As he saw other fire victims looking lost and uncertain about where to go next, he thought, if Tzu Chi volunteers could come all this way to help complete strangers, then he too should do something for his own community.

Even though the fire left him with nothing, David still had something to offer: his experience. A decade earlier, his parents' home had also burned to the ground, and he had learned all about insurance, contracts, licenses, and building codes. To share this experience, he began contacting other fire victims and established the Cedar Fire Rebuilding Resource Group to share ideas and information while helping hundreds of people rebuild not only their homes, but also a greater sense of community. Other such organizations soon followed in the San Diego community, helping countless people rebuild their homes and communities.



Paul Sanguesa

Paul Sanguesa's childhood was filled with loneliness, fear, and a lack of love. He ran away from home at twelve, started doing drugs, and spent time in juvenile hall, jail, and finally prison, until Paul found God and decided to change his life at the age of forty-two. After his release, he had difficulties finding work, so he stayed at the Salvation Army Adult Rehabilitation Center for training and guidance. As he graduated from the six-month program and embarked on his new life in 2009, Paul sought treatment for his teeth, which had become ragged through years of drug use. After being refused help elsewhere, Paul's search for dental care led him to Buddhist Tzu Chi Free Clinic.

At the clinic, Dr. Shirley Chen not only provided careful treatment, but sincerely listened to his story. She gave him an encouraging hug as he left, and Paul felt genuine loving affection as he never had before. After graduation from the Salvation Army program, Paul was given an opportunity to give back by sharing with students the harm caused by drugs and alcohol, while also helping others make their transition back to society just as he had. Paul became a Tzu Chi volunteer and has been providing Spanish translation during medical outreach events ever since.



John Reyes

When Hurricane Sandy devastated the Northeast in October 2012, New York resident John Reyes's home was so badly damaged that it was completely unlivable. Meanwhile, the shop where he worked was forced to close, leaving him with no job. Just when he felt all alone out in the cold, a friend introduced him to Tzu Chi, explaining that he could seek help there. Visiting Tzu Chi's office in Chinatown, John not only received three hundred dollars in emergency cash aid, but also the sincere care and warm embraces of the volunteers. Feeling loved unconditionally, he determined to become a volunteer himself in order to share that same feeling with others.

As a Tzu Chi volunteer, John has provided Spanish-English interpreting during relief distributions and charity case home visits, while also sharing his warmth and compassion through smiles and embraces. After attending training classes as a Tzu Chi Community Outreach Associate, he led a team of volunteers through the narrow alleyways of Brooklyn at the end of 2013 to visit care recipients in needy communities and supply them with emergency cash cards and materials.



Shaw Mo

Over the past half-century of internal conflict in Burma, hundreds of thousands of people have fled their homeland for refugee camps across the border, and roughly fifteen thousand have ultimately settled in Indiana. After spending the majority of their lives in these camps, many of the young people have never received any formal education or even seen a computer before they arrive in the United States.

Hoping to give these students a chance for a bright future, the small team of local Tzu Chi volunteers in Indianapolis started providing weekly English, math, and computer tutoring in 2010. One of their students, Shaw Mo, quickly stood out as a leader. When other students were not in class, she called and checked up on them. As soon as she grasped a concept during tutoring, she turned around and helped explain it to struggling classmates. Whenever volunteers wanted to help a family in the community, Shaw Mo always volunteered to make the connection and serve as translator.

After graduating high school in 2013, Shaw Mo started attending college with a Tzu Chi scholarship to study nursing. She hopes to give back to her community by serving their medical needs. A compassionate individual deeply touched by Tzu Chi's care, Shaw Mo donned the Tzu Chi volunteer uniform in 2013 as the first Tzu Chi seed in her community.



Russell Archer

An immigrant from the island nation of Trinidad and Tobago, Russell Archer entered Princeton University in 2012 to study Civil Engineering with a Tzu Chi scholarship. As Russell received his thousand-dollar scholarship and bamboo bank during the 2012 scholarship award ceremony in New Jersey, he vowed to fill the bamboo bank to the brim. Growing up in an impoverished family, he relies on the school and outside scholarships to cover his tuition and room and board, so it took him a full year to fulfill his vow. But he succeeded nonetheless and mailed the heavy bamboo bank

back to the regional office as a sincere demonstration of his gratitude and dedication.

When Russell returned home for summer vacation, he took the bus to the Tzu Chi in Cedar Grove, where he served the community through the Tzu Chi Food Pantry. With a joyful heart, he helped separate fresh fruits and vegetables and carry items to customers' cars. When each person left, they all displayed smiling faces and warmly expressed their gratitude, showing the true spirit of "gratitude, respect, and love." 🌱



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New Books by Dharma Master Cheng Yen

Several new books of Dharma Master Cheng Yen's teachings are now available in English from Jing Si Publications.

From Austerity to Prosperity

The Power of the Heart

Life Economics

Dharma as Water (Vols. 1 & 2)

The Essence of Filial Piety

Jing Si Aphorisms: The Fundamentals of Virtue

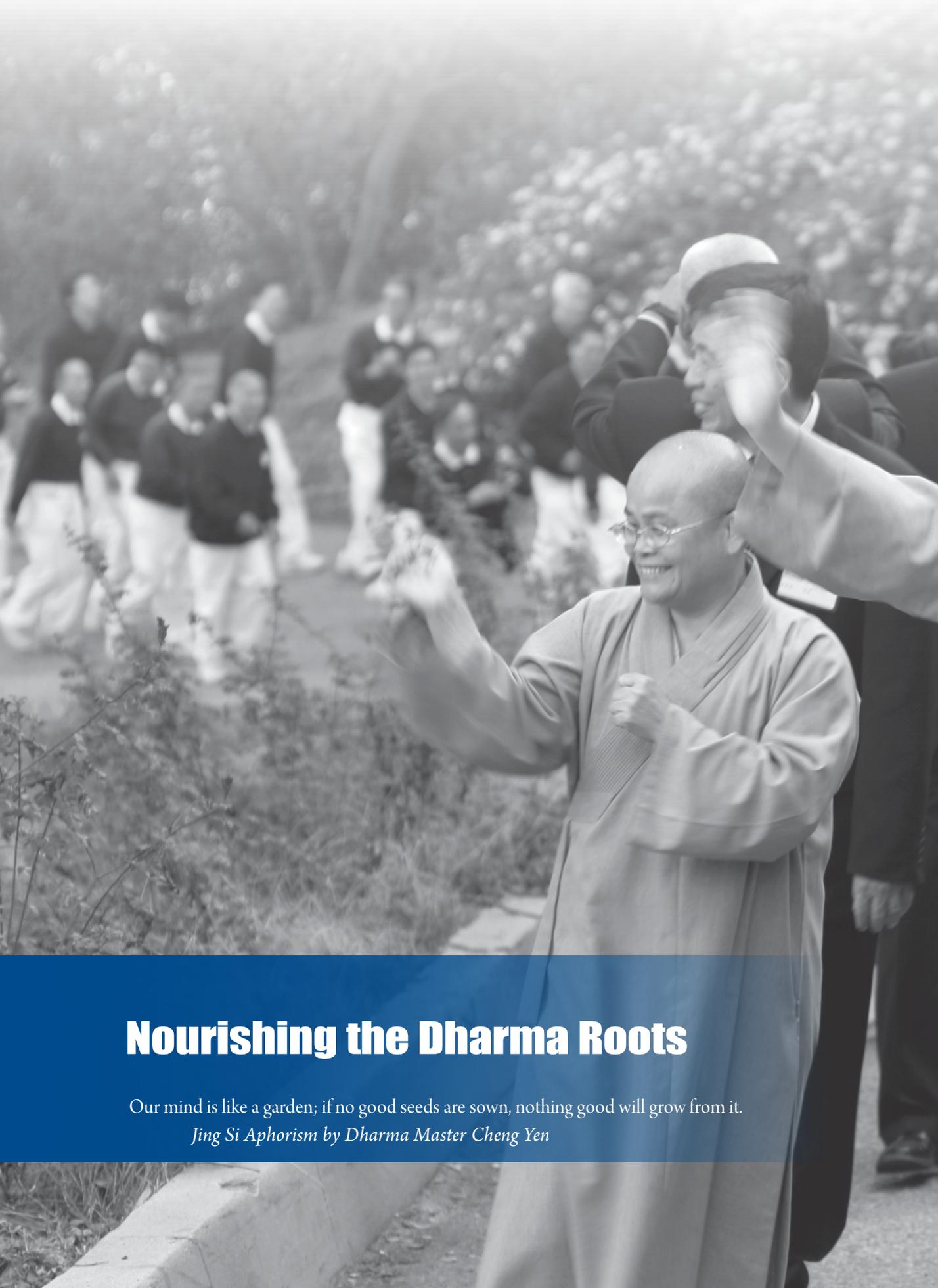
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Dharma at the Core



The Sutra of Infinite Meanings adaptation is presented in Southern California.



After seeds are sown, they begin to sprout, grow, and branch out. The branches rely on nutrition supplied steadily by the roots, otherwise they will be unable to grow tall and strong. Twenty-five years ago, the seeds of Tzu Chi were sown on American soil. As Tzu Chi blossomed, it has been continuously fed by the nutritious Dharma of the Jing Si Dharma Lineage. Over a quarter of a century, it has grown steadily without deviation.

Since 2003, Tzu Chi volunteers in the United States have diligently followed the lead of Global Headquarters in Hualien to hold an annual three-in-one celebration of Buddha Day, Mother's Day, and Tzu Chi Day each May. Whether indoors or outside, the solemn Buddha Bathing Ceremony and heartwarming Mother's Day celebrations provide a perfect occasion for volunteers and community members to gather together to pray for a better world and express their gratitude to the Buddha, their parents, and all living beings.

In 2002, Tzu Chi Global Headquarters in Hualien developed a musical adaptation of the Sutra of Profound Gratitude toward Parents to express the spirit of the Buddhist sutra through music, sign language, and dramatic performance. Tzu Chi volunteers in several cities across the United States brought this adaptation to their local communities to help more people realize the depth of parents' love. In 2006, the Sutra of Infinite Meanings was similarly adapted for music and sign-language as more than two hundred volunteers and staff in Southern California brought the sutra to life on two occasions.

For Tzu Chi's forty-fifth anniversary in 2011, Dharma Master Cheng Yen called on Tzu Chi volunteers to study the Compassionate Samadhi Water Repentance and learn to carry out the Buddha's teachings in daily living, cleanse filth from their hearts and minds, and eliminate habitual tendencies. Volunteers across Taiwan brought the Dharma as Water musical adaptation to life in twenty-six performances, while volunteers in the United States began weekly study groups to more deeply explore the meaning of the text. After two years of study groups focused on the Compassionate Samadhi Water Repentance,



"Fulfill My Dream" (top) and "From Vow to Action" (bottom) are presented in Northern California.





Southern California volunteers developed and premiered the "From Vow to Action" Dharma boat commemorating Ven. Jian Zhen's indomitable spirit.

暗把雙眼淚哭乾
They hide away to shed countless tears



Volunteers bring the Sutra of Profound Gratitude toward Parents to life in New York.



volunteers throughout the United States began weekly group study of the Sutra of Infinite Meanings, hoping to reach Master's goal of "awakening self and others while cultivating both blessings and wisdom."

Throughout the twenty-five hundred year history of Buddhism, numerous historical figures have provided virtuous models worthy of study. In the mid-2000s, Tzu Chi undertook major projects to profile two of these individuals and share their stories with modern society. *Rhythms Monthly* magazine spent five years tracing the steps of Xuanzang, a seventh-century monk who journeyed to India to gather Buddhist sutras for translation, and created a stunning photographic exhibition portraying both his historic journey and the modern state of the areas he visited. Meanwhile, Da Ai Television also spent five years developing the animated film *Ven. Jian Zhen* to retell the inspirational epic tale of an eighth-century monk who overcame incredible obstacles and five failed voyages to successfully cross the sea and share the Dharma with Japan.

United States Tzu Chi volunteers not only studied the two Dharma masters' spirit, but also energetically introduced them to the Western world. *Rhythms Monthly's* photographic exhibition, *Journey to the West*, was displayed in several cities, including at United Nations Headquarters in New York. In 2011, when the animated film *Ven. Jian Zhen* premiered in Los Angeles, volunteers prefaced it with a performance choreographed to the film's song "From Vow to Action," which symbolized the titular monk's hazardous journey through turbulent waters to reach Japan. Through this performance, they brought the audience to understand his steadfast and fearless conviction. Since then, the performance of "From Vow to Action" has not only accompanied showings of *Ven. Jian Zhen* from coast to coast, but even been carried back to Taiwan and all across the globe.

As United States Tzu Chi volunteers have transcended space to carry on the Dharma lineage, so have Tzu Ching (members of the Tzu Chi Collegiate Association, or TCCA) transcended time to share the Dharma with all ages. In 1998, a group of college students began holding annual retreats to study and share their experiences with one another. In May 2002, Tzu Chi USA Headquarters officially established a team to centralize and support all the student-members. After graduating college, many Tzu Ching volunteers have continued on to become deeply involved in Tzu Chi's missions as adults. As the first generation of Tzu Chi volunteers in the United States grows older, this group of motivated young people now provides the backbone of Tzu Chi in the United States as they continue to carry on the mission of purifying hearts. 🌱



Learning from the Past



The Journey to the West photographic exhibition journeys throughout the U.S.



A millennium and a half ago, the monk Xuanzang journeyed to the west and gathered Buddhist sutras to translate into Chinese. A century later, the Venerable Jian Zhen traveled east to Japan in order to spread the Dharma. To commemorate Xuanzang's spirit of dedication, Tzu Chi's *Rhythms Monthly* magazine spent five years retracing his steps and taking thousands of photographs to reflect changes from ancient times to the present. Da Ai Television also spent five years to produce an animated film, *Ven. Jian Zhen*, which tells the moving story of how this Dharma master overcame hardship and danger, failing five times to reach Japan by sea until finally succeeding on his sixth attempt to reach the shores of Japan and share the Dharma with the local community.

The two monks, Xuanzang and Jian Zhen, both demonstrated incredible perseverance in overcoming danger and setbacks to achieve their goals without ever giving up. Tzu Chi volunteers, who often travel very long distances to provide relief, deeply felt the significance of their journeys and greatly admired these two historical figures. For this reason, they wished to share their spirit with the modern world.

From December 2005 to March 2007, the *Journey to the West* photographic exhibition toured the United States, from Northern California down to Southern California, then through Texas and over to New Jersey and New York. From December 11 to 15, 2006, the exhibition was even displayed at United Nations Headquarters in New York City. On its first day there, more than three hundred people from twenty countries came to view the exhibition. Volunteers also selected ten representative photographs from the exhibition to create a United Nations souvenir stamp collection, so that the story of Xuanzang could be sent out to all corners of the earth.

On January 8, 2011, *Ven. Jian Zhen*, an animated feature produced by Da Ai Television, premiered in the United States. To celebrate the event, Southern California Tzu Chi volunteers chose the song "From Vow to Action" from the film's soundtrack, for its melody reminiscent of crashing waves, and choreographed a dance routine of roughly three dozen male volunteers recreating a boat pushing forward through stormy seas. For the song "Fulfill My Wish," accompanying sign language was presented by a group of female volunteers. Between singers and performers, a total of 108 volunteers helped the audience gain a greater understanding of Venerable Jian Zhen's unbreakable spirit as he overcame countless difficulties and dangers to carry the Dharma across the sea to Japan.





Venerable Yin Hai of Dharma Seal Temple visits the photo exhibit.

As succeeding public performances were held in Northern California, New Jersey, and New York, many people throughout the country were able to experience the moving impact that Venerable Jian Zhen left on history. For the two screenings held in Northern California, volunteers invited Tzu Chi Academy students, teachers, and parents to participate in the performance. From thirty-eight participants in the first performance, the Dharma boat grew impressively large with 108 in the second. This majestic spirit pierced into the hearts of participants and attendees alike. In addition, the “Fulfill My Dream” sign language and choral team also grew to 108 individuals apiece, with participants as young as five years old.

As Ven. Jian Zhen traveled from Taiwan to the United States, so the “From Vow to Action” Dharma boat traveled back to Taiwan from the United States. When Tzu Chi volunteers in Taipei celebrated the Auspicious Seventh Lunar Month outside Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall in 2012, the animated film was broadcast and 108 entrepreneurs volunteered their time to perform the Dharma boat. Since then, the boat has sailed from Taiwan all around the globe, confirming that the Venerable Jian Zhen has transcended both time and space to deliver a great truth from the past: even though you may face turbulent seas and all manner of difficulties, when you make a great vow, you can achieve your goal. 🌿



Dharma in Songs & Signs

第九功德難思議

The ninth inconceivable



In 2002, Tzu Chi Global Headquarters in Hualien created a musical adaptation of the Sutra of Profound Gratitude toward Parents, which employs music, sign language, and dramatic performance to bring people closer to the Buddha's teachings, so that they may realize the depth of their parents' grace and understand why Master Cheng Yen says that "doing good deeds and being filial cannot wait."

In September of the same year, Tzu Chi volunteers in both Los Angeles and Texas performed the adaptation. In Texas, volunteers from six cities came together to put on performances in Houston, Dallas, and Arlington. In the year that followed, further adaptations were presented in Northern California, Chicago, and along the East Coast. The Chicago performances not only brought together volunteers from all across the Midwest, but also attracted many community members, as well as Tzu Chi Academy students, teachers, and parents. Participants ranged in age from five to eighty and represented all different sectors of society.

In New Jersey, New York City, and Long Island, volunteers overcame the difficulties of freezing winter temperatures to hold two sign-language musical events. In Northern and Central California, volunteers held five performances between January and April 2003. That same March, two performances were held in Southern California's Orange County. Feeling that this was a wonderful opportunity for humanistic education, students of Irvine Tzu Chi Academy were encouraged to attend with their parents. In Northern California, Cupertino Tzu Chi Academy waited until 2012 for the students to present highlights of the performance in conjunction with the current theme of "gratitude and filial piety." All told, 120 students, teachers, and family members performed together during the graduation ceremony.

The Sutra of Infinite Meanings (left) and the Sutra of Profound Gratitude toward Parents (right) are presented in Southern California.





*Northern California Tzu Ching present
"Fulfill My Dream" in sign language.*

As Tzu Chi reached its fortieth anniversary in 2006, Master Cheng Yen encouraged her disciples to adapt the Sutra of Infinite Meanings for music and sign language, so that Tzu Chi volunteers could enter deeply into the sutra teachings and purify their hearts. Treating the performance as group sutra study, more than two hundred Southern California Tzu Chi volunteers and staff members sincerely brought the sutra to life through their efforts both onstage and backstage for performance in both October and November.

On the occasion of Tzu Chi's forty-fifth anniversary in 2011, Dharma Master Cheng Yen called on Tzu Chi volunteers to study the Compassionate Samadhi Water Repentance text and to "awaken to the karmic law of cause and effect, thoroughly repent, and cleanse with Dharma-water." She asked everyone to carry out the Buddha's teachings in daily living, cleanse the filth from their hearts and minds, and eliminate habitual tendencies. Volunteers across Taiwan responded enthusiastically, bringing the Dharma as Water musical adaptation to life in twenty-six performances throughout the island.

That May, Tzu Chi USA Headquarters established a Compassionate Samadhi Water Repentance group study team that traveled

around the country to introduce the profound meaning of Master's call to more Tzu Chi volunteers. The team encouraged volunteers to let the Dharma into their hearts through group study, to perform the sutra through sign language, to deeply consider the sutra's true meaning, and to absorb the words into action, speech, and thought. All across the country, volunteers started holding weekly group study sessions. Tzu Chi offices in the Midwest Region are widely spread across a dozen cities in seven states—some of which are separated from each other by hundreds of miles—so local leaders gathered on conference calls to share what was discussed in each session and plan how to promote group study in the community.

Group study for the Compassionate Samadhi Water Repentance continued for two years, as volunteers cycled through the text three times. In 2013, the group study focus switched to the Sutra of Infinite Meetings, with volunteers again receiving the Dharma-marrow of the teaching weekly in order to achieve what Master Cheng Yen expects of all Tzu Chi volunteers: to bring oneself and others to awakening and cultivate both blessings and wisdom. 🌿



Volunteers watch a video during a group sutra study session.



Bathing the Buddha

*Buddha Bathing at
the Southern Regional
Office in Houston.*



During Tzu Chi's thirtieth anniversary in 1996, Dharma Master Cheng set the second Sunday of each May as Global Tzu Chi Day. In 1999, the second Sunday of May—already celebrated as Mother's Day in Taiwan as in the United States—was decreed by Taiwan's government to be the official celebration of Buddha's birthday. From that time forward, Tzu Chi joined together all three celebrations—Buddha Day, Mother's Day, and Global Tzu Chi Day—as a single celebration focused on expressing gratitude to the Buddha, parents, and all living beings.

In the next couple years, Tzu Chi Global Headquarters in Hualien held annual gatherings for global volunteers each May and also celebrated the “three-in-one” holidays, while encouraging all volunteers unable to return to Hualien to celebrate in their own home countries. In 2003, due to the outbreak of the SARS epidemic across Asia, Tzu Chi stopped holding the annual global get-together for health concerns, but instead requested that volunteers hold three-in-one Buddha Day, Mother's Day, and Global Tzu Chi Day celebrations in their own communities.

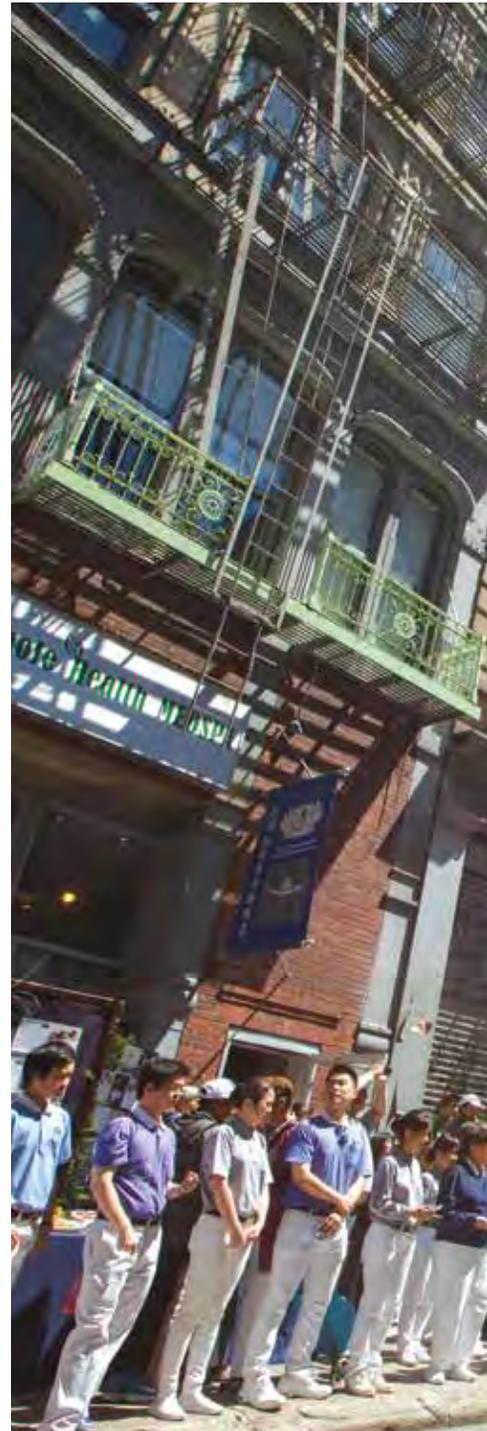
Since 2003, Tzu Chi volunteers all across the United States have been holding these annual celebrations in offices, parks, city streets, university auditoriums, and various other locations both big and



Buddha Bathing in Dallas.

small. Each year, volunteers invite the wider community to come join in a solemn Buddha Bathing Ceremony and warm Mother's Day celebration. Volunteers and community members gather together in towns all across the country to show their sincere gratitude to the Buddha, their parents, and all living beings, to cleanse their hearts through the actions of the Buddha Bathing Ceremony, and to pray for the whole world. 🌿

Buddha Bathing at USA Headquarters.



Buddha Bathing in Flushing, New York.





Taking up the Torch



U.S. Tzu Ching gain international volunteering experience in South Africa in 2011.



In 1989, a number of college students in Hsinchu, northwestern Taiwan, began to organize tea parties to introduce the Tzu Chi spirit to their classmates. At the same time, they also used their free time to join Tzu Chi commissioners on visits to charity care cases. The following June, this student group traveled to Hualien Tzu Chi General Hospital to volunteer, and through serving they gained life wisdom beyond what they could learn in a classroom. On May 31, 1992, they officially established Tzu Chi Collegiate Association (TCCA). College students who are members of TCCA are known as “Tzu Ching” (Chinese for “compassionate youth”).

In the 1990s, college students across the United States and Canada decided to join Tzu Ching to do their part for the community. Spread across many distant cities, however, they were only able to connect via the internet until July 1998, when they met in Hualien to attend the annual Tzu Ching summer camp. After returning home, they gathered together again in September in San Francisco and held the first planning meeting for North America Tzu Ching (NATC), discussing a constitution and website for the North American organization.



Tzu Ching participate in the annual United Nations Youth Assembly.

New York Tzu Ching help promote Jing Si Publications.



On June 12 and 13, 1999, fifty-three North American Tzu Ching from fifteen cities gathered in Los Angeles and joined a medical outreach and relief distribution trip to Mexicali, Mexico. When an officer training camp was held the following June, 106 Tzu Chings from twenty-two different areas came for the training. All of the event planning, curriculum design, registration, and materials were taken on by North American Tzu Chings themselves.

In May 2002, a team was established to coordinate Tzu Ching affairs across the country. In August 2006, US Tzu Ching attended the annual Youth Assembly at United Nations

Headquarters in New York for the first time, using the opportunity to introduce Tzu Chi's humanistic culture to youth leaders from all around the world. In August 2011, Tzu Ching from five states undertook the group's first overseas aid mission, traveling to South Africa for two weeks to deliver donated books, support local Tzu Chi volunteers, and learn to appreciate their own blessing by witnessing others' suffering.

At first, Tzu Ching primarily consisted of Chinese-speaking students, but as time passed, more and more American-born-Chinese and non-Chinese students joined. To adapt to this



Southern California Tzu Ching sort recyclables at USA Headquarters in San Dimas.

growing multiculturalism and help Tzu Ching connect more deeply with the surrounding community, English replaced Chinese as the primary language of Tzu Ching events as of the tenth anniversary retreat in 2008.

As of the end of 2013, forty universities and communities throughout the United States have Tzu Ching chapters, with a total of more than nine hundred members. To date, 105 United States Tzu Ching have gone on to become certified Tzu Chi commissioners and Tzu Cheng Faith Corps members, with twenty-five even finding employment with Tzu Chi,

either in Taiwan or the United States. While many veteran Tzu Chi volunteers are first-generation immigrants who may encounter communication barriers when carrying out Tzu Chi work in their communities, this difficulty poses no problem to Tzu Ching, who study in the United States and have often grown up here. This next generation of volunteers are in the perfect position to take on the responsibility of passing down Tzu Chi's mission of purifying hearts and sharing Dharma Master Cheng Yen's spirit of compassion with more Americans. 🌱

The River of Time (1989-2014)

A small sample of significant firsts and major milestones.

In 1966, Master Cheng Yen founded Tzu Chi in Hualien, Taiwan.



Siyuan Huang and Jingnian Li promote Tzu Chi in Northern California. Tzu Chi registers in California in 1985.

1989

Dec 1989. First overseas Tzu Chi office opens in Alhambra, CA.

1990

Mar 1990. Volunteers take on first charity case.

1991

Apr 1991. U.S. volunteers conduct street fundraising for the first time to support Bangladesh after typhoon.

Apr 1991. Tzu Chi Youth Group is founded

May 1991. U.S. Tzu Chi's first publication—*Tzu Chi World U.S.A.*—debuts.

1992

Sep 1992. Relief distribution held in Miami, FL, for victims of Hurricane Andrew.

Dec 1992. Annual scholarship program for low-income students is started.

1993

Jul 1993. After Mississippi River flooding, volunteers deliver water and aid money to victims.

Nov 1993. Tzu Chi Free Clinic opens in Alhambra, CA, to provide medical services to low-income and uninsured patients.

1994

1994. U.S. volunteers begin cross-border care for Tijuana, Mexico.

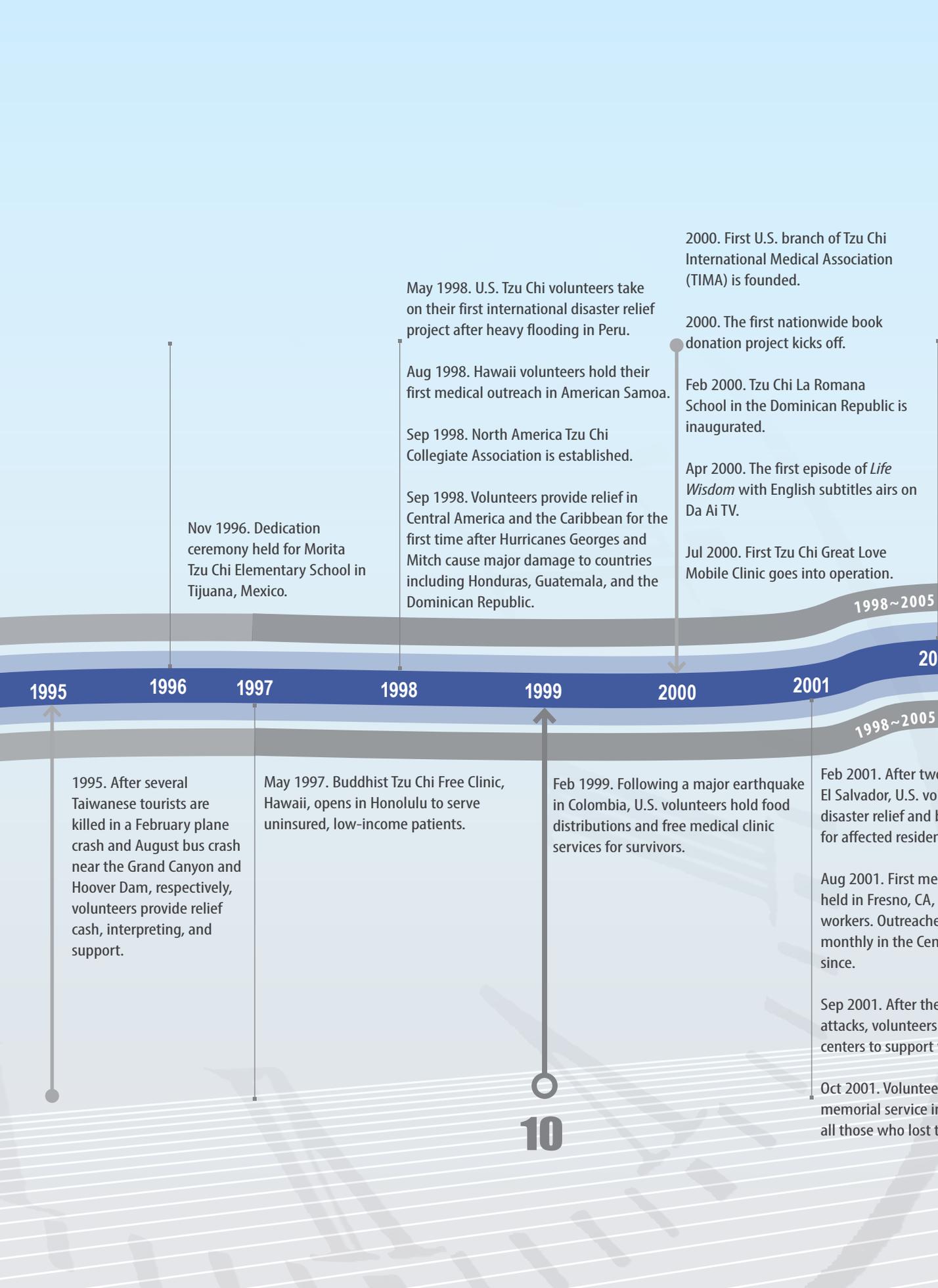
Apr 1994. Tzu Chi Free Clinic holds its first outreach for needy communities.

Sep 1994. First Tzu Chi Academy opens in Monrovia, CA, to teach Chinese and character education.

Oct 1994. After historic flooding in Houston, TX, volunteers provide cash relief to over 100 families.

1989~1997 Seeds of Kindness Are Sown

1989~1997 Seeds of Kindness Are Sown



1995

1995. After several Taiwanese tourists are killed in a February plane crash and August bus crash near the Grand Canyon and Hoover Dam, respectively, volunteers provide relief cash, interpreting, and support.

1996

Nov 1996. Dedication ceremony held for Morita Tzu Chi Elementary School in Tijuana, Mexico.

1997

May 1997. Buddhist Tzu Chi Free Clinic, Hawaii, opens in Honolulu to serve uninsured, low-income patients.

1998

May 1998. U.S. Tzu Chi volunteers take on their first international disaster relief project after heavy flooding in Peru.

Aug 1998. Hawaii volunteers hold their first medical outreach in American Samoa.

Sep 1998. North America Tzu Chi Collegiate Association is established.

Sep 1998. Volunteers provide relief in Central America and the Caribbean for the first time after Hurricanes Georges and Mitch cause major damage to countries including Honduras, Guatemala, and the Dominican Republic.

1999

Feb 1999. Following a major earthquake in Colombia, U.S. volunteers hold food distributions and free medical clinic services for survivors.

2000

2000. First U.S. branch of Tzu Chi International Medical Association (TIMA) is founded.

2000. The first nationwide book donation project kicks off.

Feb 2000. Tzu Chi La Romana School in the Dominican Republic is inaugurated.

Apr 2000. The first episode of *Life Wisdom* with English subtitles airs on Da Ai TV.

Jul 2000. First Tzu Chi Great Love Mobile Clinic goes into operation.

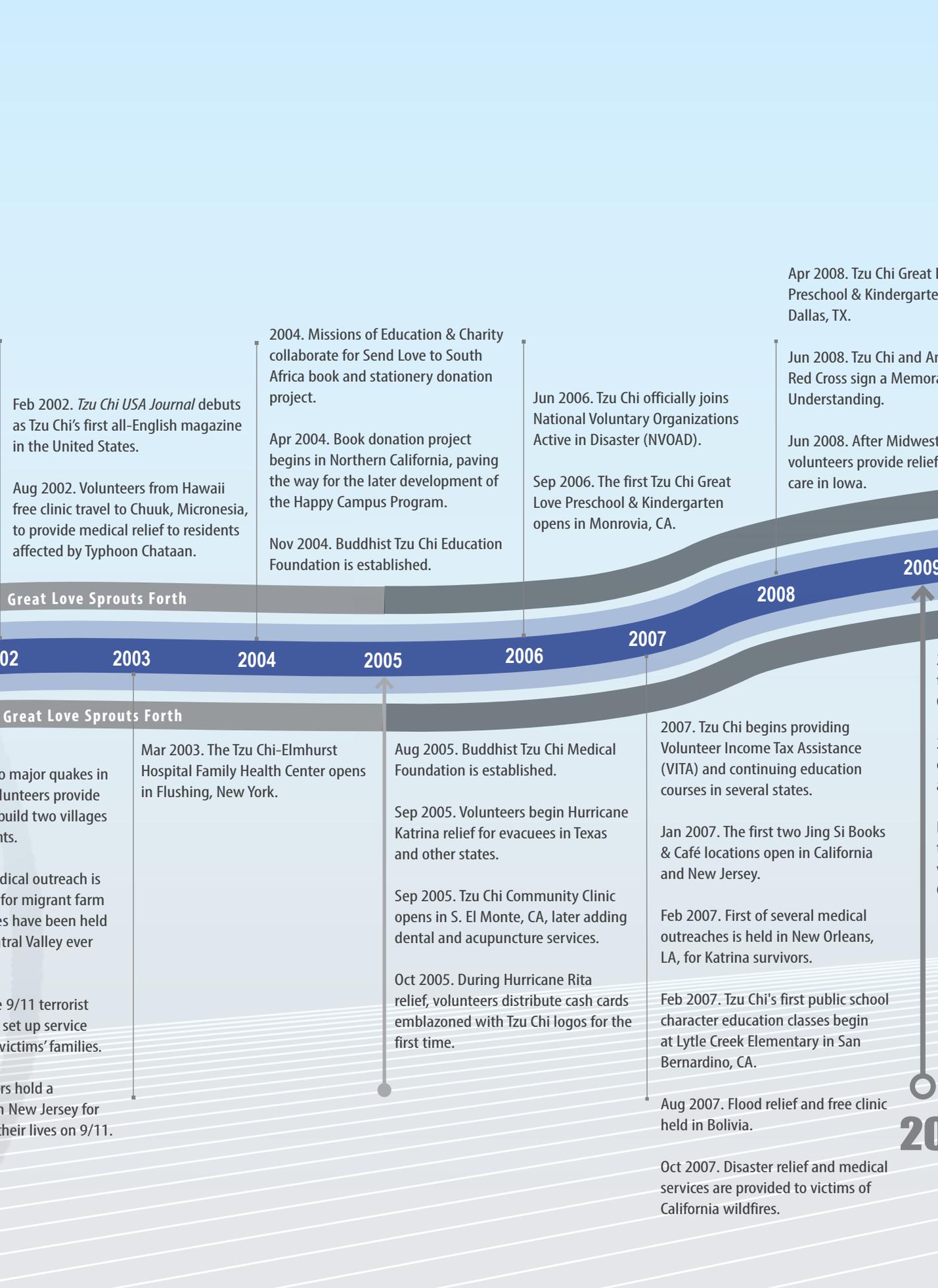
2001

Feb 2001. After two earthquakes in El Salvador, U.S. volunteers provide disaster relief and health care for affected residents.

Aug 2001. First medical outreach held in Fresno, CA, for farm workers. Outreach held monthly in the Central Valley since.

Sep 2001. After the September 11 attacks, volunteers provide support centers to support victims.

Oct 2001. Volunteer memorial service in Los Angeles for all those who lost their lives on 9/11.



Feb 2002. *Tzu Chi USA Journal* debuts as Tzu Chi's first all-English magazine in the United States.

Aug 2002. Volunteers from Hawaii free clinic travel to Chuuk, Micronesia, to provide medical relief to residents affected by Typhoon Chataan.

2004. Missions of Education & Charity collaborate for Send Love to South Africa book and stationery donation project.

Apr 2004. Book donation project begins in Northern California, paving the way for the later development of the Happy Campus Program.

Nov 2004. Buddhist Tzu Chi Education Foundation is established.

Jun 2006. Tzu Chi officially joins National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD).

Sep 2006. The first Tzu Chi Great Love Preschool & Kindergarten opens in Monrovia, CA.

Apr 2008. Tzu Chi Great Love Preschool & Kindergarten opens in Dallas, TX.

Jun 2008. Tzu Chi and American Red Cross sign a Memorandum of Understanding.

Jun 2008. After Midwest flooding, volunteers provide relief care in Iowa.

Great Love Sprouts Forth

Great Love Sprouts Forth

Major quakes in California. Volunteers provide relief and help build two villages in the mountains.

Medical outreach is provided for migrant farm workers. Free clinics have been held in the Central Valley ever since.

After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Tzu Chi sets up service centers to help victims' families.

Volunteers hold a memorial service in New Jersey for those who lost their lives on 9/11.

Mar 2003. The Tzu Chi-Elmhurst Hospital Family Health Center opens in Flushing, New York.

Aug 2005. Buddhist Tzu Chi Medical Foundation is established.

Sep 2005. Volunteers begin Hurricane Katrina relief for evacuees in Texas and other states.

Sep 2005. Tzu Chi Community Clinic opens in S. El Monte, CA, later adding dental and acupuncture services.

Oct 2005. During Hurricane Rita relief, volunteers distribute cash cards emblazoned with Tzu Chi logos for the first time.

2007. Tzu Chi begins providing Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and continuing education courses in several states.

Jan 2007. The first two Jing Si Books & Café locations open in California and New Jersey.

Feb 2007. First of several medical outreaches is held in New Orleans, LA, for Katrina survivors.

Feb 2007. Tzu Chi's first public school character education classes begin at Lytle Creek Elementary in San Bernardino, CA.

Aug 2007. Flood relief and free clinic held in Bolivia.

Oct 2007. Disaster relief and medical services are provided to victims of California wildfires.

2009

20

Jan 2010. After the Haiti earthquake, hundreds of volunteers provide months of emergency relief and medical care, before transitioning into long-term care projects.

Jul 2010. Tzu Chi is awarded Special Consultative Status with United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

Sep 2010. Tzu Chi Food Pantry goes into operation in Cedar Grove, NJ

Nov 2010. Tzu Chi Free Clinic opens its doors in Wilmington to serve southern Los Angeles.

Apr 2012. Tzu Chi Mobile Clinic office opens in Fresno, CA.

Jun 2012. Tzu Chi holds the first annual Care 4 a Healthy I.E. (Inland Empire) multi-day clinic in San Bernardino, CA.

Nov-Dec 2012. After Hurricane Sandy devastates the Northeast, volunteers provide blankets, food, and \$10 million in emergency aid to the affected.

Dec 2012. EcoVerse: Jing Si Books & Café opens in downtown San Diego, CA.

Jul 2014. Rotary International recognizes Dharma Master Cheng Yen with the Award of Honor.

2006~2014 Branching out to All

2010

2011

2012

2013

2014

2006~2014 Branching out to All

2009. *US Tzu Chi 360°*, a weekly television program about U.S. Tzu Chi, begins production.

2009. Happy Campus Program grows out of earlier book donation projects and relationships with needy schools.

Dec 2009. Volunteers begin providing twice-weekly dental care for a winter homeless shelter in Southern California.

Apr 2011. Tzu Chi and Remote Area Medical (RAM) hold an eight-day medical clinic event to serve thousands of patients in Sacramento and Oakland, CA.

May 2011. *Time* recognizes Dharma Master Cheng Yen on the TIME 100 list of the world's most influential people.

Aug 2011. U.S. Tzu Chi Collegiate Association volunteers travel to South Africa to support and learn from local volunteers.

Summer 2011. After scores of tornadoes throughout the country, volunteers visit affected areas to provide relief.

2011. Happy Campus Program expands to Port-au-Prince, Haiti, with tuition assistance for students in three schools, as well as tutoring and hot meals.

Oct 2011. The Roosevelt Institute presents Dharma Master Cheng Yen with the 2011 FDR Distinguished Public Service Award.

Mar 2013. Volunteers hold the first annual Healthy Fresno free clinic event in Fresno, CA.

Apr 2013. Tzu Chi is recognized by the White House as a Champion of Change for Hurricane Sandy relief efforts.

May 2013. Dedication ceremony held for the three Port-au-Prince schools built by Tzu Chi for the Sisters of St. Anne.

May 2013. Tzu Chi is named NVOAD Member of the Year.

May 2013. Weekly dental clinic service begins in Milpitas, CA.

Jun 2013. The first Tzu Chi Vision Mobile Clinic debuts. It is Tzu Chi's fifth mobile clinic overall.

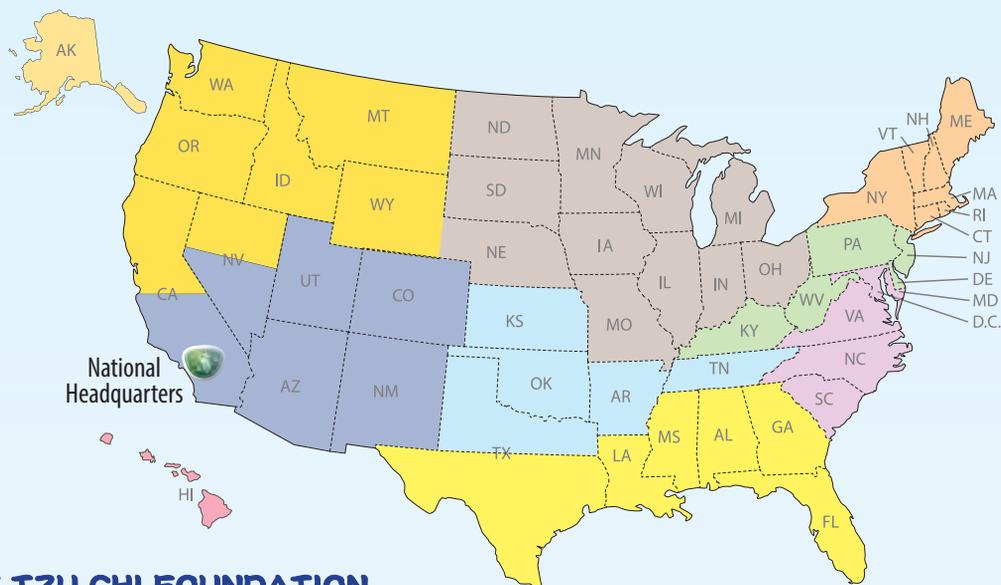
Nov 2013. Buddhist Tzu Chi Free Clinic in Alhambra, CA, is renamed Buddhist Tzu Chi Medical Center.

Dec 2013. Copies of *Jing Si Aphorisms* and *Tzu Chi USA Journal* are sent to prison inmates across the country, building on hotel donation project begun in 2011.

Tzu Chi Locations



TZU CHI FOUNDATION, U.S.A. LOCATION DIRECTORY



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- | | | |
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Brookfield, WI 53005

TZU CHI

A BRIEF HISTORY...

On April 14, 1966, Dharma Master Cheng Yen founded the Tzu Chi Merits Society in Hualien with the support of thirty housewives who each put aside a couple cents of their grocery money every day to establish a charity fund. During the first five years, they helped a total of thirty-one elderly, ill, and poor people from fifteen families. As word spread, more people participated and the program gathered strength. It spread beyond Hualien: across the island and around the world.

Today, Tzu Chi is a nonprofit charitable organization with ten million volunteers and donors in roughly fifty countries worldwide. Over the past forty-eight years, Tzu Chi's four missions—Charity, Medicine, Education, and Humanistic Culture—have grown from the seeds of gratitude, respect, and love, and Tzu Chi's activities have expanded to include international disaster relief, bone marrow donation, community volunteerism, and environmental conservation.

In the United States, Tzu Chi operates nine regional service areas with more than eighty offices nationwide. Volunteers give back to their local communities through family services, emergency disaster services, homeless services, school support programs, college scholarships, income tax reporting assistance, relief distributions, holiday care packs, free and low-cost medical clinics and outreaches, preventive health education, cancer support groups, character education curricula, community education classes, and production of positive, inspiring media.

Whenever disaster strikes at home or abroad, Tzu Chi volunteers deliver cash aid, hot meals, and emergency relief supplies directly into the hands of disaster survivors. Over the years, US Tzu Chi volunteers have actively provided relief after such major disasters as 9/11, Hurricane Katrina, the 2010 Haiti earthquake, and Hurricane Sandy.

In recent years, Tzu Chi volunteers' charitable work has been increasingly recognized by the global community. Tzu Chi was granted special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council in 2010 and honored as a White House Champion of Change in 2013. Dharma Master Cheng Yen was presented with the Roosevelt Institute's FDR Distinguished Public Service Award and named to the TIME 100 list of the world's most influential people in 2011, and honored with the Rotary International Award of Honor in 2014.



SPREAD THE SEEDS OF LOVE





**Tzu Chi in the USA
1989 - 2014**



Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation
佛教慈濟基金會

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Give without
expectation,
and give with
gratitude.

*Jing Si Aphorism by
Dharma Master
Cheng Yen*

