

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

April 8, 2012

Visiting the Home of Heroes

As we are entering 2012, Vietnamese people still face bad economic following high living cost and inflation. Especially in March, the gasoline price suddenly increased more than 10%, and the gas price increased over 20%. This increased the doubt about the future.

Tzu Chi members in Vietnam were concerned about the people's current troublesome situation, and collaborated about relief with the Red Cross chapter

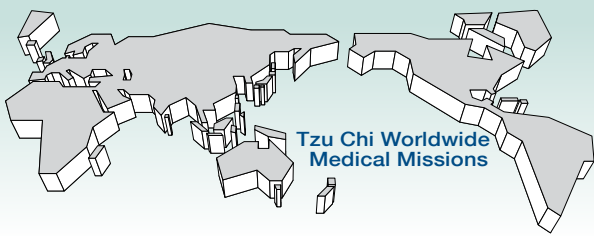
of Ho Chi Minh City. Following five free clinic days, they extended their hands to suburb areas' underprivileged people. They plan to have community free clinic days four times in suburban areas of Ho Chi Minh City to bring warm care to those suffering from bad economics.

Meet at the Home of a Hero

Sunday, April 8 was the first free clinic day. The location is the "home of heroes - Cu Chi County." After one-and-a-half-hour drive, four big buses brought nearly two hundred volunteers and medical staffs to help nearly five hundred people of An Fu District and An Ren District within the county.



In Ho Chi Minh Tzu Chi free clinic, volunteers assisted a disabled lady to see a doctor.



Cu Chi County was the Vietnamese Communist Party's underground base during the Vietnam War. It is known for its underground tunnels. Many locals participated and died during the war. Therefore, the government praise the area, gave it the name, "home of heroes". The government also set up special fund so each district would have a medical center. The big building is envied by other locations but due to a lack of equipment and medicine, people do not pay much attention to it. The government encouraged Tzu Chi to use the medical center for free clinic day, so they can promote and encourage people to use the medical center for treatments more often.

This time they only have half day for free clinic day. With everyone working together, we were able to treat nearly five hundred people within four hours. Besides pediatric and dental services, we also provided preventive medical treatments, such as blood sugar testing, sonograms, and ECG. As usual, the doctors were friendly and careful during the treatment and the volunteers offered tea and treats while people waited. This has become a standard of Tzu Chi's free clinic day. Volunteers said that each time, they experience a different feeling; but seeing people smiling, they are touched and full of joyfulness.



Besides seeing a doctor, this free clinic also provided health exam service such as blood sugar test, ultrasonic exam, EKG.



Photo shows a doctor is checking for an elderly carefully.



A high school student at Ho Chi Minh City Taiwan school spent time to be a volunteer in this free clinic.



Tzu Chi volunteers Shi-Chin Lin and Shue-Feng Fon explained the contents and usage of a Family Emergency Kit.



Doctor Yong-Sheng Chen, at the age of 95, attended Tzu Chi's free clinic to cure patients by Vietnam's traditional medicine.

The Love from Taiwanese School

This free clinic day receives great support from the Taiwanese School in Ho Chi Minh City. In the past several years, many large events of Tzu Chi, such as the once a year Buddha's Day, Mother's Day, Tzu Chi Day, and October blood drive, are held there. Since President Chisong Chou assumed the school business, he actively led teachers and students participating in free clinic days. Chou mentioned many times that he envies many of his friends who retired to become volunteers of Tzu Chi.

Teacher Chun-Ron Wei used to be a young Tzu Chi volunteer. Since she came to Vietnam for nearly two years, she finally had a chance to connect with Tzu Chi. It was like homecoming to her. The other teacher, Yi-Cui Yang has been participating in Tzu Chi's free clinic events since over ten years ago. Each time, the experience gives her a different experience. After connecting with Tzu Chi, Master Cheng Yen's words of wisdom give her strength whenever she is at a low point. Therefore, Tzu Chi as her family and safe harbor.

Medicine Warms the Heart of the People

The emergency kit has always been an urgent need for people living in remote area. We provide families with emergency medical supplies kits, which include Tiger Balm, Metromin, ointment, bandits, cotton ball, and tapes. People are thankful for them. Vo Thi Tham said that from the moment she was at the clinic to the time she received her medicine, she received caring service and hoped Tzu Chi could come every several months.

Two volunteers who came the first time, Wei-Jin Wen and Li-Mei Lin, recently completed a training camp designed for entrepreneurs. They were impressed with the Tzu Chi and Master Cheng Yen. They continue to be vegetarian after returning to Vietnam. They were once again touched by Tzu Chi members humble and kindness when severing others.

The free clinic was successful and started a new milestone.



Diaries of Tzu Chi Hospitals

