



Relief Mission in Taitung

Written by Yu-Juan Xu, Head Nurse of Nurse Practitioners, Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital

On August 17, 2009, I went with the volunteer clinic team of the Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital to Jiadong, Pingtung district, Southern Taiwan. Already 10 days after the flooding, stagnant water and muddy puddles were everywhere. The atmosphere was filled with dust and foul odor. The terrible environment was beyond description and it could only be comprehended on the site.

I was glad to see many carloads of

volunteers and teams of military personnel help moving waterlogged furniture along the roadside. It was particularly heart warming seeing people working hard for the victims when they were helpless. The love of human spirit still prevails across Taiwan. The volunteer clinic team consisted of doctors, nurses, pharmacists and the local volunteers (sisters and brothers of the Tzu Chi family). They visited village after village, house by house, in order to



In the disaster areas, volunteers came from all over the country to help clean-up their homes. It is clear that Taiwan is full of warmth and love.

provide the needed medical services. Many villagers had been cleaning up piles of mud and waterlogged furniture for ten days.

Everyone had varying degrees of cuts and wounds. Physical wounds can heal given enough time, but the psychological impact will linger on. Many people talked about the ordeal with distress and fear. Within half an hour the water rose to the first floor ceiling. People scrambled to run up to the second floor while the furniture like tables and chairs, refrigerators, beds, pots and pans, etc. were being washed away by the current. Staring at the empty living room and kitchen, a sense of powerlessness rose through my mind - everything can be gone in a moment.

When will they be able to resume their normal livelihood? Many people have gradually developed symptoms of anxiety and insomnia. At the moment, only love and continued support and companionship can comfort their wounded hearts. With compassion we can help them walk through the post-disaster trauma.

While the sun was setting, we rode the high-speed rail train back to Taipei. At the bustling Taipei Railroad Station the normal flourishing yet peaceful image contrasted with the desolate ruins of the disaster in southern Taiwan. It was a painful feeling as if we were in two different worlds. Master Cheng Yen taught us to “witness suffering in order to understand blessing.” I finally realized the true meaning of these words through the experience with the Pingtung volunteer clinic.



Many disaster victims overextended themselves in the clean-up after the flooding. Tzu Chi medical teams set up free clinics and passed out medical kits to families in the disaster areas, hoping to soothe the victims' suffering.





March on with Courage

Written by Chia-Yi Wei, Lecturer, Tzu Chi College of Technology

“Nursing” is an applied science based on theory and actual field work. Clinical science not only brings theories into the actual workplace but also introduces different aspects including the relationship between communication and cooperation, responsible attitude, problem solving, and ethics through interaction with patients and families, instructors, and medical team members. It also helps students to understand the importance of nursing and further develops general interest toward nursing as a lifelong career. Clinical training is essential in the nursing program and the clinical experience has major impact on the students’ decision to stay on. Therefore, the “clinical instructor” plays an important role during the internship.

Both Students and Teachers Need Tender Care and Encouragement

Research has shown that nursing school students often feel discouraged



“Internship is a big challenge for the nursing students. Both students and teachers need loving care and encouragement,” says Ms. Chia-Yi Wei.

and disturbed. The number of students choosing nursing as a career is gradually decreasing each year. While supervising the interns, I had a chance to listen to their opinions. The discussion often contains the following messages:

“Training is so tiring. There is too much homework. We don’t have enough sleep every day.”

“I was scolded by the instructor again today. An older classmate laughed at me for my ignorance.”

“What do I do? There is not enough time.”

“God knows what would happen tomorrow, I want to quit.”

These nursing students, between the ages of 18-20 years old, are at a period seeking recognition and self-realization. Their character, body, and mind are not fully developed, yet they have to face complicated clinical scenarios and lessons about the real life cycles. In addition, a lack of experience and professional knowledge causes different levels of stress.

On the other hand, clinical instructors have the responsibility of teaching and researching to advance science. They have great expectations from society, organization, and hospital employees. This generates great pressure among the clinical instructors. Instructors respond to students’ lack of professionalism with criticism, which students perceive as scolding. Therefore, both students and instructors need to be cared for and encouraged with love.

Education Instilled with Humanity and Respect

As a clinical instructor, I deeply feel the importance of “attitude”. We may be right sometimes. We may be wrong other times

such as in dealing with others. We learn to feel the smallest pulse as if to benefit others and know each other value with care, respect, understanding, and trust. Once people feel that they are being valued, trusted, responsible, and respected, then a humanistic education is achieved. That is the ultimate value of nursing.

My dear students, your unwavering giving is precious. The task of helping patients shampoo their hair was popular among the students. Every step was carried out with details and thoughtfulness because you care. When you see patients with dry skin, you automatically care for them with lotion. When you see lonely patients longing for families’ visit, you help them with radio or music they like. You even learn to listen to patients’ families because they need support as well. Your cooperation and teamwork are always present so patients are taken care of.

I see your effort everywhere no matter how small or seemingly unnoticeable. I saw the smiles from patients and families because of your care. Therefore, do not underestimate your contribution. Your work is selfless giving based on sincerity and gratitude, and that is called true love.

Good Habit and Good Attitude

The path of learning is difficult but once you overcome the rewards are boundless. The idea of internship is to provide an opportunity to learn by means



Photo depicts Lecturer Chia-Yi Wei and a student nurse during the clinical practice in the Intensive Care Unit.

of doing it. It is a golden opportunity to observe and research the best practice before going out on your own into the real world. I encourage everyone to take on the challenge with courage. It is a path to success.

Finally, I would like to remind students to pay special attention to “attitude”. Always approach others with good attitude and respect, and be responsible to yourself. Another important method of learning is time management. Good time management skills can accomplish the most tasks in the shortest time. I sincerely wish you success in the future which is a blessing for the

patients.

I would like to quote the lyrics from the Tzu Chi song “compassion” to end my wish to you.

Nurture compassion and kindness in suffering;

Use wisdom when tested;

Exert perseverance in difficulties;

Learn to be patient in times of laborious;

Appreciate the complexities of life;

Pursuit the ideal to go forward.

An Unexpected Trip for Health Promoting Hospital Convention in London

Written by Hui-Yen Liao, Vice Director, Department of Nursing, Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital

It was a great honor to participate in the 18th annual “Conference of Health Promoting Hospital” in London, sponsored by the World Health Organization (WHO). Our hospital has been promoting health for several years and had participated in the international annual conferences for five years. I have been assisting the execution of the program over the years. However, I have never been effectively documenting my efforts. Year after year I watched my elite colleagues go abroad to present their papers. This year, with Chief Ming-Nan Lin’s strong encouragement and “urging”, I grabbed the opportunity to attend the conference.

I have gone to China for a relief effort before. I expected that this trip would be similar. In England I would present my paper, take part in some group activities of Tzu Chi, and be back in Taiwan in no time.



Vice Director Hui-Yen Liao in front of “A Piece of Cake” vender stand.

I packed light. Who would have expected that we had become the victim of an utterly unusual weather pattern that caused us to stay in London for 5 extra days? The



Left: Ms. Hui-Yen Liao shares the accomplishment of Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital Day Care Center for geriatric elders with international members.

Top: Tzu Chi set a booth in the convention center to show all visitors the products from recycling works and the importance of earth protection.



unexpected delay provided an opportunity for me to learn the local culture at a deeper level. It was an unforgettable trip.

Jet Leg

Our flight was early in the morning on the 13th of April. We were excited about the trip and at the same time nervous about the presentation.

An organized group always draws attention. We met members from other

hospitals and Da Ai TV station at the airport. There were twenty of us together heading to London, England to present our research on health promoting efforts in Taiwan. It was a fourteen-hour flight from Taiwan to London. The time difference between London and Taiwan was 7 hours. Unable to sleep on the airplane, we worked on our presentations with our computers. Or, I should say that we “reviewed” our presentations.

After clearing customs at the London airport, we were warmly greeted by the sisters and brothers of Tzu Chi, England. They had lovingly prepared lunch boxes for us so we wouldn't be hungry on the way from London to Manchester. The coach ride from London to Manchester was more

than 4 hours and it was after 11 pm when we arrived in Manchester.

It was a really long trip. By the time we checked in the hotel, jet leg was not a problem at the beginning but we were starting to feel the effects of jet lag. We were so tired that we fell asleep on our beds right away. The next day we took tours with the Tzu Chi sisters from Manchester. There were only three of them, however, as the others had been working diligently in local Tzu Chi relief efforts. The sisters enthusiastically guided us around town to learn its history. We also visited an art museum and the soccer field. My walking ability was seriously tested.

Health Promoting Expertise, Taiwan Contributed One Fourth of the Papers

The Annual Conference of “Health Promoting Hospital” started that evening. The conference was opened by a performance of the local chorus group of children. The angelic voices wiped away my anxiety of my presentation temporarily. The opening speech was to explain the main theme and the direction of this conference - “Tackling Causes and Consequences of Inequalities in Health: Contributions of Health Services and the HPH Network.” There were countries that reported what they have done, the results and the direction in the future. The participants came from 23 countries all over the world.

Taiwan was the third place in contributing the most participants to the conference.

Among the 277 papers accepted by this conference, 68, or 25% were from Taiwan. There were 28 papers from Tzu Chi hospitals - including 8 oral reports, 6 mini-oral reports and 14 poster papers. Among them, Dalin Hospital contributed the most papers.

The Result of Dalin Elder Day Care Center

April 15 was a very nervous day for me. Though public speaking is not new to me, it had been a while since I had spoken to a group of foreigners. Diligently, I prepared for the challenge. I was the first speaker of the first session. After a mindless lunch I quickly arrived at the meeting room to make sure all the materials were correctly set up. Then I did the last review. I hoped that there would not be mistakes/errors on the delivery of my speech. My topic was –“Day Care Center in Health Promoting Hospital for Healthy and Unhealthy Geriatric Elders in Rural Area.” The main purpose was to share the level of satisfaction of the elders and the volunteers and the effectiveness of the program of our 9C Ward(geriatric day care center).

I was rather calm during the presentation and the talk went smoothly all the way to the end. However, when someone asked a question, my mind went blank. I knew what he was asking, but



More than 20 Tzu Chi hospital members from Hualien, Dalin, Taipei and Taichung attended the International Health Promoting Hospital Convention in UK.

the answer would not come out easily. Fortunately, Director Ming-Nan Lin rescued me in time. Even now, I still feel ashamed, but this is a valuable lesson. The next time, I will do better.

The most stressful moment was over after my talk. After that, I was free to help others and enjoy the convention. On the 16th, my main job was to help the presentation of other colleagues, and help out at the booth of Da Ai Technology Co. I wore cloth made of recycled bottles as

a live model. An official from Thailand was impressed by our success in recycling, but asked: "Don't Buddhists stay in the temple and meditate?"

I said: "No, Master Cheng Yen taught us to apply Buddhism to our daily life. To protect the environment is also a way of practicing Buddhism." He nodded in admiration.

During the two days at the conference, both oral and poster presentations by our team went smoothly. Among us,

Chief Executive Officer Chin-Lon Lin's poster received a top award and our Dalin Superintendent Dr. Sou-Hsin Chien's oral presentation received the most applause. Thus, the name Tzu Chi impressed all conference attendees. The second day was a fruitful day; I learned a great deal both in knowledge and in human interactions skills.

The Largest Volcano Eruption in 100 Years

On the way to London on a coach, Director Lin received a phone call from China Airline about the cancellation of the flight to Taiwan due a volcano eruption. They didn't know when the flight would be resumed. Hearing the news, I had a complex feeling and didn't know whether to worry or to be grateful. When we arrived at London, many Tzu Chi volunteers came to greet us and took us to the Great Britain Museum, Buckingham Palace, Westminster Abby, House of Parliament, London Eye, London Big Ben, and London Tower, etc. Everything was so beautiful. On the next day, we went to the Windsor Castle and I was impressed by the picturesque and beautiful hourly procession. In the afternoon, we had a meeting at an activity center. The speech of our CEO and Hospital Administrator, and that of the hospital administrator of Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital Chao You-Chen received excellent remarks.

England is a country with abundant art

work. While we visited the attractions of the city, our CEO and Hospital Administrator had to worry about our lodgings. All hotels were filled with the travelers who could not leave the city because of flight cancellations. Finally, with our superior efforts, we found a place to stay. Although the place was inadequate, we were grateful for the outcome.

For the next 3 days eight of us went to stay with a Taiwanese couple while waiting for our flight. When we found out that we had to extend our stay one more day, I asked the couple to let us pay. However, they declined the offer and said: "Don't worry about it. We are all from the same place." We were so grateful. In the mean time, we took the chance to go sightseeing by purchasing off-hour subway tickets, with a map and a tour guidebook in hand.

When I heard that the return flight was booked, I was both happy and reluctant to leave. I would like to thank the Hospital for letting me go abroad to broaden my knowledge, and to thank my supervisors who assisted me during the trip. I also had the opportunity to meet members from other Tzu Chi branches. Because of my work to promote hospital health, I had the opportunity to go to England to present the work. Because of the sudden eruption of the volcano we had to stay longer in London, in turn we had the opportunity to explore London's attractions. To me, this was an unexpected trip, and I gained a great deal of experience.