

Tzu Chi Free Clinic Serves 100 Patients in Lo Prado, Chile

Written by
Tue, 05 Apr 2011



On March 26, the volunteers held a free clinic for more than 100 people in the city of Lo Prado, in central Chile. The team included 10 doctors and four nurses and the participants made a collection for the victims of the earthquake and tsunami in Japan.

Lo Prado is a city of 100,000 people in Santiago province. Its mayor is a pediatrician and a friend of a fellow pediatrician, Dr Lopez, who told him about a Tzu Chi free clinic she attended last year in the city of Penalolen. The mayor then contacted volunteer Yang Chuanglong, a doctor, to ask him if they could co-operate in holding a free clinic in the city.

For the location, they chose a government primary school; it prepared four classrooms for the medical examinations, complete with curtains for privacy, and a fifth as a pharmacy. The volunteers arrived at 11 a.m. and were warmly received by the school principal, who showed them the facilities and did everything to help. After two hours of preparation, the volunteers had a healthy appetite and enjoyed a delicious lunch prepared by volunteer Hsiu-chuen, with pineapple shortcrust pastry and sponge cakes provided for dessert.

The patients had started to arrive for the clinic, which began at 2 p.m. The city government had sent shuttle buses to bring disabled patients to the school. The event began with an introduction to Tzu Chi by volunteer Hsieh Cheng-hsiang. He invited everyone to pray together for the people of Japan and held a collection for them. Although the patients were not wealthy and included care recipients, they were eager to donate and the collection box was filled with love.



The medical team included four nurses, who were delighted to take part and take blood pressure despite having to work the night shift that evening. There were 10 doctors, including two pediatricians, one cardiologist, two ophthalmologists and an assistant, one surgeon, two generalists and one pharmacist. The ophthalmologists prepared their own equipment and brought their spouses with them to help. Among the other volunteers was Carlos, who used to volunteer with the foundation in the U.S. and asked to serve again in Chile. A total of 102 patients received medical care. One said that she was delighted to receive a free prescription, to enable her to see clearly for the first time in a long while. One child came on his own, because his father was at work and his mother was in labor. The volunteers take special care of him and explained carefully how to use his medication.

The free clinic was a success and volunteers and patients alike delighted to take part.