



A Tiny Screw Extremely Touched

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When Nursing Department Director Chang Shu-Chuan provided the opportunities of participation to the Mexico disaster relief, I didn't think twice before saying I wanted to go. Previously, I had only participated in a free clinic in eastern Hualien. At that moment, I did

not have a clear idea of what happened to Mexico or even where Mexico is; only I wanted to participate in an international disaster relief. Afterwards, I learned that there was a big earthquake and a disaster clinic was in process. Many friends tried to convince me that I should not go because

Mexico was an unsafe country. On top of that, the departure date was scheduled in November when I was busy with some unfinished business. Hearing that, I wavered and I wanted to yield to someone else.

Dir. Chang reminded me, “Just let go of everything, it is the right thing to do.” My mother especially showed me a short video to remind me that life achievement is far greater than a career. She let me truly feel that this is not only a good opportunity, but also my responsibility. If heaven granted me this opportunity,

then I must take it. Before leaving, the Superintendent gave me some words of encouragement: “Our responsibility in life is to do what benefits humanity.”

Mexico has poor public safety and a terrifying amount of homicides. I would be lying if I said I was not scared. While going to Taipei to apply for a visa, I spoke with Taipei TC Hospital Supt. Chao You-Chen who was also worried about safety. I couldn’t keep myself from asking him, “Why do you still want to go?” Calmly, Chao replied, “Because we have righteous energy!” I was reassured upon hearing



During four-day free clinic trip, Chen Yi-Ling measured so many patients’ blood pressure that blisters formed on her hands.



that, and from then on, I was no longer scared.

The lines for free clinics in Mexico were so long that one couldn't see the end of it. Civilians lined up daily under the hot sun just to see a doctor. You can imagine how desperate they were for free medical services. I am a nurse in the surgical unit. My job in the clinic was to check on patients' blood pressure and direct them to the right doctors. Occasionally, I assisted minor surgeries and unexpected situations, like helping someone who fainted.

Measuring a patient's blood pressure is a nurse's basic and simplest task. I wanted to do a little more for the patients. When people arrived, I smiled to let them feel respect and care. For four days in a row, I worked on so many patients that blisters formed on my hands.

Seeing the local who came to volunteer one after another was the thing that moved me the most. In a disaster area without the assistance of local Tzu Chi volunteers, Papa Stephen (Stephen Huang) led the Tzu Chi team and gradually recruited more local volunteers. In a country where people speak Spanish, we were able to overcome the language barrier because we and the local shared a common goal - to help the victims of a disaster. There weren't any big problems during those four days. A local high school teacher brought students to translate



Chen Yi-Ling made a good friend and sister, Ale, during Mexico free clinic trip.

for us. There was a twelve-year-old who asked to be excused from school to come volunteering. And there were patients who stayed to help after being seen by a doctor.

I also gained a young sister girlfriend from this trip. On the very first day, I met her, a 22-year-old girl named Ale who had just graduated from law school. She came to volunteer at the clinic with her father. She spoke English so she helped me as a translator. So, on the first morning, I asked her, "Are you coming tomorrow?" She replied that she was not sure. At the



Head Nurse Chen Yi-Ling assisted Dr. Lee Yi-Kung performing minor surgery and helped Taichung TC Hospital Supt. Chien Sou-Hsin taking care of a fainted patient.

end of the day, she came to me and said, "As long as you are here, I will come every day!" I was very touched and grateful. She showed me the kindness of Mexican people. When I expressed my gratitude towards their help in making the event successful, Ale told me, "It's your group who came to help our people." At that moment, I was very surprised. There was no obligation for either of us to volunteer, and so knowing this, we both were very appreciative and moved at the other's contribution. Because I was not sure





what to call her father, I followed Ale in calling him “Papa.” Ale said, “Since you also call my Papa ‘Papa’ then you are like my big sister and a part of my family. From now on we are sisters!” Like true sisters, these four days were going like a well-oiled machine; we cooperated and accomplished many things together. Though four days were not a long time, we became very close. My departure was very emotional and no small amount of tears were shed. But we agreed that we will never forget each other because we are family. This parting is not the end of our relationship; it is the beginning of our connection. It is the beginning of love within our hearts. We are at different places doing the same thing to contribute to the society!

“Hugs” were also something meaningful to me. While hugging, it is the closest two hearts can be. You can really feel their gratitude from their words, their expressions, and their eyes. In this event we treated over four thousand and five hundred people. You can imagine just how much positive energy I received!

“The Tzu Chi Family” is a phrase I know very well, but I only came to truly feel its significance during this Mexico trip. While working with my fellow Tzu Chi sisters I witnessed the practical

applications of Dharma teachings through their actions and conduct. I was not at all pressured, which made me want to follow their footsteps and gave it all I had. While we were transferring flights in Los Angeles, Tzu Chi volunteers in the United States came to make sure we were fed, which warmed our hearts. In Mexico, members from twelve countries all worked together to support each other wholeheartedly. They put aside their normal jobs to focus on other roles, each contributing to the success of the free clinic and supplies distribution. The devotion I saw cannot be described in words. I am very proud to have been a part of this experience, and I cherish the opportunity because right now in many countries I have people I call “family!” I must express my gratitude to the care and love I received. Every smile and every action deeply warm my heart.

There are so many people I want to thank during this trip. The first I want to mention is my family. I really appreciate my parents’ support for something that I wanted to do, even going to a dangerous place. They transformed worries to blessings and energy that enabled me to fulfill my small role like a tiny screw in a big machine. My heart is filled with content and love.