

New York

2020.03.30~04.21

Doctors Around the World Donate Equipment to Workers in the Front Lines

When the coronavirus struck New York with full force, front line workers lacked the resources to care for patients while being protected from the virus itself. In response to this danger, Tzu Chi medical volunteers from all over the world lent a hand, and Tzu Chi volunteers in New York sorted the masks that came from all corners of the world. Dr. Richard Yang, a member of the Tzu Chi International Medical Association (TIMA), along with his daughter and volunteer Johnson Liu, swiftly packaged two hundred KN95 masks and two thousand medical masks and rushed to Flushing Hospital Medical Center and the BronxCare Health System to distribute them to front line workers.

Flushing Hospital Medical Center, the oldest hospital in the vicinity, is located in the Queens area. After the onset of the pandemic, the hospital witnessed a large influx of people in need of COVID-19 testing, resulting in severe shortage of masks and other personal protective equipment (PPE). Tzu Chi donated one thousand medical masks and a hundred KN95 masks to the hospital, and the Coalition of Asian-American IPA donated two hundred protective gowns and an

assortment of five thousand masks. Emergency physician Liu Qing and her coworkers received the masks on behalf of the hospital.

The next stop was the BronxCare Health System. Upon arrival, the volunteers saw a tent outside the ER for testing. Dr. Sridhar Chilimuri, Chairman of the Department of Medicine, received one thousand medical masks and one hundred KN95 masks on behalf of the hospital. According to Chilimuri, Bronx has the most poverty rate in New York City. The hospital hosted three hundred COVID-19 patients, 110 of which were on ventilators. Each front line worker was working nonstop, especially when a portion of the staff had to quarantine at home because they were tested positive. Chilimuri was overcome with gratitude at Tzu Chi's assistance in the hospital's



TIMA member Dr. Richard Yang (right) and Tzu Chi Volunteer Johnson Liu (left) escorted PPE to BronxCare Health System, and Dr. Sridhar Chilimuri, Chairman of the Department of Medicine, received the materials with gratitude.

most difficult time. “Every donation of PPE, no matter how small or big, is a huge help to all of us, and we cannot thank you enough,” Chilimuri said.

Doctors Saving Doctors The Never Ending Relay of Love

In the afternoon of April 17th, volunteers at the Taiwan TIMA Wu Qiming, Guo Zhichen, Huang Liwei and Lin Yiming rushed to China Airlines’ warehouse at the Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport to organize PPE designated for New York, including 9600 face shields, 2500 goggles, and 1600 protective gowns. Working on behalf of Tzu Chi volunteers all around the world, the four volunteers worked arduously, and at last, they finished packing and counting all the PPE at 8 pm.

Dentist Hsieh Chin-Lung from TIMA Taiwan had been collecting PPE donations through group chats since the beginning of April for New York and Los Angeles. “Dr. Kenneth Liao from the US is a close friend of mine, and we had bonded through disaster relief trips over the past years. Now that New York is in danger, medical group chats across the world immediately began to call for face shields, and we were able to send our first shipment of 400 face shields on April 11th.” With everyone’s love, the doctors were able to gather PPE in no time, and even Los Angeles dentist Dr. Shirley

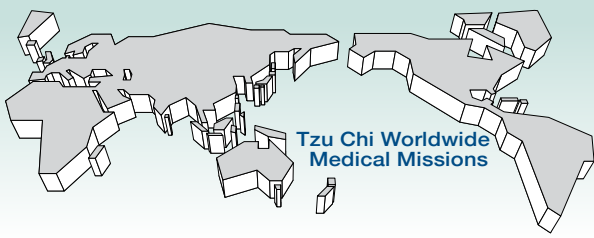


TIMA volunteers Lin Yiming (left), Wu Qiming (second one to the left), Huang Liwei (second one to the right), and Guo Zhicheng (right) arrived at the China Airlines cargo center to do labelling and counting of the packages.

Chen and Dr. Lai Chun Cheung from the Philippines joined in the effort. “It was so touching to see doctors spreading love from all over the world, and I could see how strong our bond was through years of disaster relief,” Hsieh Chin-Lung said, his voice breaking.

Unfortunately, while the PPE was being packed, the reserved space on the airplane was booked last minute for the country’s use, so shipping was delayed for three days. At last, in the early morning of April 21st, the plane carrying the love from doctors all around the world finally set off for New York.

During the early morning of April 21st in the United States, Dr. Kenneth Liao was having an online meeting with other doctors discussing the pandemic when he suddenly received a call from Tzu Chi volunteer Wang Huangquan saying that the one hundred and fifteen boxes of PPE arrived. Wang spoke excitedly, “Thanks to the customs broker who dropped what



he was doing and came to the warehouse itself under the risk of contracting the virus to clear the packages with customs. We can pick up the packages within the next four hours.” With the pandemic, every minute counts, and perhaps one extra life can be saved. Clearing customs within four hours is a record. This truly shows how love triumphs in great difficulties.

Life-saving Resources Delivered with Absolute Speed

With love and kindness, anything can happen. Since it was already around nighttime when the packages were cleared, trucks would be sent the next morning to pick up the packages under normal circumstances. However,

Wang Huangquan thought, “If we pick up tomorrow, wouldn’t the effort of all of those before us be wasted?” Therefore, Wang contacted the director of Tzu Chi’s New York Branch, Su Yusheng, to gather a group of male volunteers to act. Within an hour, a delivery team was formed, composed of software engineer Chen Bonian, accountant Tang Yanhua, physical therapist Zhang Jiaxin, and the youngest Gao Zhekai.

Tzu Chi volunteers set off from their homes to complete the holy task of picking up the packages. Su Yusheng drove a truck from Tzu Chi’s New York headquarters and met with the other volunteers at the airport. When they arrived at the China Airlines cargo center at 6 pm, seven others were already in line,



115 boxes of PPE arrived on April 22nd. Director of Tzu Chi’s New York Headquarters Su Yusheng (second to the right) led the delivery team to pick up the packages.

and the volunteers feared that it would be well into the night before our turn. At this time, a senior manager in China Airlines recognized Su Yusheng due to his relations with Tzu Chi, and after being informed that the packages contained crucial PPE, he directed the volunteers into another express pickup area. With two large trucks and two small trucks, the packages were delivered to Tzu Chi's New York Headquarters in five trips. Volunteers worked in sync to load and unload, and to store the packages. At 8 pm, volunteers completed the tasks in exhaustion but joyful.

The love from Tzu Chi volunteers all across the world was capable of overcoming obstacles. With the help of many people, their love and kindness can reach the darkest corners of the world.

Overwhelmed in excitement, dentist Liao sped to Tzu Chi's New York Headquarters the next morning, and volunteers Gao Zhekai and Li Wenhua also arrived to organize the materials. Seeing the hundred boxes of protective gowns and face shields, Liao was so touched that he could not speak for a long time. At last, he channeled his emotions into words of gratitude. "These packages were all from my fellow disaster relief teammates. They pitched in money and manpower from thousands of miles away to help us fight this pandemic. I do not dare delay these packages in any way and will send these packages to those who need them



China Airlines Cargo Services opened another express cargo pickup area for Tzu Chi volunteers to avoid the delay.



Dr. Kenneth Liao (right), grateful for the support of Tzu Chi volunteers all around the world, delivered the medical supplies to front line workers with the help of volunteers.

today."

The teamwork of volunteers in the TIMA from Taiwan, Los Angeles, and the Philippines, along with the hard work of volunteers in Kaohsiung who made the masks, truly shows the power of unity from Tzu Chi, allowing the Tzu Chi volunteers of New York to receive the help they needed.

To combat an unprecedented pandemic, Tzu Chi volunteers from all over the world are connected in a relay of love.