

Tzu Chi Medical Volunteers as Helpers to New Moms

By Huang Hui-Ju, RN, Baby Room, Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital
Translated by Helen Chiao

Entering Tzu Chi Hospital's main lobby, one is greeted not only by the warm colors and soft music, but also the ubiquitous and thoughtful volunteers. They wear Tzu Chi vests, always smile and constantly shuttle between different corners of the hospital. They serve tea, measure blood pressure, give directions, help registrations, and essentially make one feel welcome. After working in the baby nursing room, I started noticing a group of volunteers. They show up on time no matter rain or shine. They are the baby room nursing volunteers.

The nursing volunteers for us are different from the other volunteers. They wear one more piece of isolation clothing. No matter feeding babies, changing diapers, comforting babies, and wrapping babies, nothing stops them because it is too difficult. Surprising me even more, I also see them in the breast feeding classes. These over sixty year-old sisters really marveled me.



I often lost my patience and became uneasy when I was busy at work. Our nursing volunteer grandma's always observed my temper and took over the crying baby from my hands, to release me to do other work or go to the bathroom.

I remembered one year I was on duty during the New Year holidays. On the first day, there was a sudden surge of the number of expecting moms waiting for deliveries. It made our shift anxious. Not for long, doorbell rang and volunteer grandmas' face shown up on the screen. We shouted joyfully like we found the dew from heaven. Here they were! We opened the door and asked them, "Don't you need to run errands for the New Year?" They replied with a smile, "We



worry it can be too busy to handle!" Their words warmed our hearts. It was such a simple caring, babies in the baby room constantly need extra helping hands with love, and care with quality.

I have worked for Taipei Tzu Chi hospital for more than 10 years. Our volunteer grandmas have also served the baby ward for more than 10 years. They have watched us grow. And we also can feel the aging on them as time goes by. Gradually, the number of nursing volunteers visiting baby room has decreased. After inquiring, we realized one volunteer had a surgery on her degenerative knee, and some had been taking chemo for their illness. But even not feeling well, they found time to visit us in the baby room. Some even came back to volunteer after recovery from surgeries. It touched us deeply. I remembered one volunteer grandma said, "We were born in the world with nothing, we will go like a ray of smoke. We can neither take nor keep things. Life is up to us to decide." And this is the reason she chose to become a volunteer.

Working with Tzu Chi medical volunteers, not only we get much needed help, our souls are also being nurtured. We really appreciate the nursing volunteers in the baby room.

Thanks to the Monday's shift grandmas who seem like our mothers, always taking care of us, bringing us fruits. Thanks to the Tuesday's shift volunteers who bring beautiful pictures and share beautiful things with us. Thanks to the Wednesday's shift volunteers who praise us generously and share Dharma Master Chang Yen teachings with us. Thanks to the Thursday's shift grandmas who worry that we are too tired and rush to share our load. Thanks to the Friday's shift volunteers who sacrifice their break time to ensure we have rest. We are thankful to all the Tzu Chi volunteers! It is so nice to have you in the baby room.