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PUBLIC RELATIONS PLAN FOR NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION:

TZU CHI FOUNDATION

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A Project  
Presented to the  
Faculty of  
California State University,  
San Bernardino

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts  
in  
Interdisciplinary Studies

---

by  
I-Ling Chou  
September 2003

PUBLIC RELATIONS PLAN FOR NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION:

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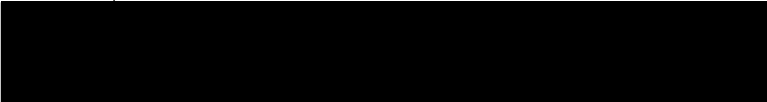
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by  
I-Ling Chou  
September 2003

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## ABSTRACT

This project is a public relations plan for Tzu Chi Foundation, a non-profit organization that is based in Taiwan. The problem with the public relations in Tzu Chi in the United States is that although they have a strong relation with the Chinese speaking public and media, their relations with the English speaking public and media is not as strong. The public relations plan is based on *Public Relations Cases, Third Edition* by Jerry A. Hendrix. Research was done on Tzu Chi Foundation to find out the public relations problem and an interview was done with the Director of Communications in Tzu Chi's Southern California office in Monrovia to find out more about the public relations in the organization. The plan uses Tzu Chi's strengths to improve and overcome their weaknesses. The plan also provides evaluation and analysis methods.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my parents for giving me the chance to study here in the United States. I would also like to thank my chair of committee Dr. Kevin Lamude for giving me ideas on what topic to do my project. I would like to thank Tzu Chi Foundation and Helen Hsu for giving me a lot of information to work with so I can complete my project. I would like to thank Helen again for giving her time for me to do an interview.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

This project was created due to a personal interest in public relations in non-profit organizations.

Organizations that are for profit already have enough funds to create a public relations staff with effective public relations. Although public relations for an organization that is profit oriented is important, it is very important for non-profit organizations to have effective public relations. It is very important for non-profit organizations because their sole survival depends on the support of the public through their donations of money and time as volunteers. Without the public's support, they would not exist. The project is significant for the Tzu Chi Foundation, a charity non-profit organization based in Taiwan, in Southern California. The public relations of Tzu Chi in Southern California is insufficient although public relation efforts are very important for the success of Tzu Chi. Although Tzu Chi is a well known non-profit organization in Asia, it is not as widely known here in the United States.

The project will be a public relations plan found in the book Public Relations Cases by Jerry A. Hendrix. It is a plan that was formulated by research which includes review of literature, and an interview with the public relations coordinator in the Southern California office of Tzu Chi. The audience for this plan are public relations practitioners in non-profit organizations. It is to be used as a guideline for any non-profit organizations that want to promote their organization to the public through public relations.

## CHAPTER TWO

### BACKGROUND

#### Non-Profit Organizations

What is a non-profit organization? They exist in society to improve the human condition. They are not profit-oriented like business corporations are. They must serve some public service, not self-interest and private gain.

There are a variety of different types of non-profit organizations. To organize and identify the different varieties of non-profit organizations, they can be grouped into seven different categories. The first category is social service agency. A social service agency involves serving in many ways, the needs of individuals and families. Examples of well-known social service agencies are the American Red Cross and the YMCA. The second category is health agency. Health agencies focus on how to fight a specific disease or illness. They do it through education of the public, research, and treatment. Other types of health agencies just focus on a general type of health care in communities. Some examples of health agencies are the American Heart Association and the American Lung Association. The third category of

non-profits is hospitals. Hospitals care for the sick and the injured in communities but also they provide education about preventive care with programs focused on it. There are also other health related services that hospitals provide to the public. Although there are hospitals that do not seek to make a profit some do seek to make a profit, so not all hospitals are non-profits. The fourth category is religious organizations. In addition to holding weekly services of worship, religious organizations provide charity, personal guidance programs, leadership in communities on moral and ethical issues, and social centers where groups of people from diverse backgrounds gather. There are some religious organizations that provide social services to the community such as retirement and nursing homes for the elderly. Some operate food lines and shelters for the poor and the homeless. The Salvation Army would fit into the category of religious organizations since they are a Christian organization. The fifth category is welfare agencies. Governmental agencies make most of the welfare payments to individuals through funds that are generated through tax. These agencies make sure that anyone who is need of welfare will know about it and learn how to obtain these benefits. The sixth category is cultural organizations. The purpose of cultural

organizations is to develop an interest and cultivate participation in the cultural aspects of life. Examples of cultural organizations are libraries, museums of art, history, and natural science. They also include musical organizations such as the Philharmonic. These organizations receive at least part of their funding from government sources and other funding through the private sector. The seventh category is foundations. There are hundreds of foundations in the United States and they constitute about six percent of the total charitable giving. Foundations are usually started by money that is given by a wealthy individual or family, a group of contributors, an organization, or a corporation. The money from foundations is usually invested and the earnings are in the form of grants, which are given to organizations in the field, which the foundation was established for. Examples of foundations are the Rockefeller Foundation and the Ford Foundation. The funds from foundations go to many things such as research, education, public performances, and displays.

The number of non-profit organizations is growing in the United States. There are more workers in non-profits than the federal government and all fifty states combined. That translates into 8.6 million workers in non-profits

and 6.8 million workers in federal governments. The number of non-profit organizations in the United States is growing. There were 1,123,000 non-profits in 1977. That number grew to 1,530,000 in 1996. In 1997, there were more 692,000 charities that were registered with the Internal Revenue Service as a tax-exempt organization. In the same year, approximately 93 million United States adults contributed 20.3 billion hours of volunteer time with a value of \$201 billion. Also in the same year, Americans supported these non-profit organizations financially with an estimated \$143.6 billion, which is 1.8 percent of the gross domestic product of the United States (Kinzey, 1999).

The reason for growth in the number of non-profit organizations is due to the fact that there is a declining public confidence in the government's ability to solve social ills. In 1988, a survey founded that eight out of ten respondents agreed that it was the government's responsibilities for caring for those in society who cannot take care of themselves. In 1996, only six out of ten agreed which shows a 25 percent drop in the public's agreement with the statement regarding the government's responsibility.

It is this reason that there is a greater demand for non-profits to take the place of government to address social problems in society, which has resulted in a growth of them in the United States.

Also, demands placed on non-profits are a result of the social and economic realities with which the United States face, but it is also worldwide. Non-profits are getting larger and can even compete with businesses with regard to size. The John Hopkins Comparative Non-Profit Sector did a project that collected and analyzed data from 12 different countries, which included the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Hungary, Japan, Brazil, Ghana, and Thailand. The study found that the non-profit sector was a major economic force, employing 11.8 million workers in seven countries. This is one of every twenty jobs and one out eight service positions (Kinzey, 1999).

#### Public Relations in Non-Profit Organizations

There are many definitions of public relations. One definition states that it is the deliberate, planned, and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organization and its publics. Another definition describe it as a communication function

of management through which organizations adapt to, alter, or maintain their environment for the purpose of achieving organizational goals. Whatever the definition it always involves communication between an organization and its public (Wilcox, Ault, & Agee, 1998).

There has been an increasing interest in non-profit organizations by the public and also increasing membership, which has caused many of these organizations to form public relation staffs and employ modern public relations techniques to communicate and allow the public to participate in the programs that they offer.

Non-profits survive through contributions made by the public and membership fees in which donors expect little tangible return. Also volunteers who are unpaid carry out a substantial amount of their work, which cause them to rely on volunteers. Public relations is very important to obtain new members, maintain interest in the organization among current members, recruit volunteers, and gaining the needed financial support (Canfield & Moore, 1973).

In public relations for non-profits, communication is the primary goal and mission. This includes communication with members of the organization, the government, and other groups. Concerns in regards to issues that organizations feel should be addressed through their



communication programs for a non-profit organization are different for a corporation that is seeking to make a profit. For-profit organizations are more concerned with inflation and compensation, government regulation, and equal opportunity. For non-profit organizations, their highest concerns were with maintaining a positive image with the public, fund-raising, recruiting volunteers, and cost containment.

Among the main purposes of public relations in non-profit organizations are maintaining an awareness and positive image with the public, fund-raising, and recruiting volunteers. It is important to maintain awareness among the public since most of these organization's survival depends on contributions made by the public through donations and volunteers. Without awareness, many people would just not know about the organization and therefore will not make an effort to contribute to that organization. Non-profit organizations have made an effort to maintain a positive image with the public due to past controversies that have tainted the image of non-profits. In 1992, the president of the United Way, William Aramony resigned after scandals were uncovered. He had an annual salary of \$463,000 and used United Way funds to support an extravagant lifestyle for

himself. He was later convicted of embezzlement. Even the Girls Scouts of America were scrutinized for the sales for their cookies. They were scrutinized for using too much of the money from the cookies for administrative costs in which little of the benefits was going directly to the girls. These controversies have pressured non-profit organizations to use public relations to maintain a positive image more than ever among the public since their sole survival depends on the public. Fund-raising and recruiting volunteers is an important and common concern that is shared by all non-profit organizations. Hospitals, charities, and educational institutions spend a great deal of their time in efforts to gain funds through donations and recruiting volunteers. In churches and other religious organizations, they have relatively few employees and must rely on volunteer labor. A majority of them rely only on public fundraising drives, contributions from members, and/or philanthropic gifts. Public relations is a very important to them but only the largest have the means to employ full time public relations staff. Volunteer groups such as the American Red Cross and the American Humane society depend on volunteers for survival but the number of volunteers is declining. Donations from corporation have been stable but the number of volunteers has been

decreasing. As more women move into the workforce and families moving all too frequently, volunteerism will decline in the United States. The future of volunteerism in the United States is not certain but volunteers are still a vital component in the survival of many non-profit organizations. Non-profit organizations rely on their public relations to recruit the necessary number of volunteers to carry out their programs and services.

CHAPTER THREE  
RESEARCH ON TZU CHI

Tzu Chi

The Tzu Chi Foundation is a charity non-profit organization based in Taiwan whose principles are based on Buddhist teachings. Master Cheng Yen, who was a Buddhist nun, founded Tzu Chi on April 14, 1966 in Hualien, Taiwan. Master Cheng was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize in 1996 for her work in charity with the Tzu Chi Foundation. She also was awarded the Eisenhower Medallion for her contributions to world peace.

Master Yen started her efforts in helping the poor over thirty years ago when she decided that fellow human beings should not have to suffer. She had the help of thirty housewives who each sets aside some of their grocery money each day to establish a charity fund that would help provide relief and assistance to the poor. It started off slowly but within the first five years, her efforts helped to assist fifteen families in her community in Taiwan with a total of 31 elderly and sick impoverished people. There was a word of mouth spreading around Taiwan about Master Yen's efforts in charity. The support around the community where she was started and in other parts of

Taiwan started to grow. The program of charity that she started began to gather strength in numbers and it eventually lead to the formation of the Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation.

Today, the Tzu Chi Foundation is one of the largest charity non-profit organizations to originate from Taiwan. It has offices in over twenty countries with over 4 million members and volunteers worldwide. In the United States, there are a total of six Tzu Chi Chapters with a total of 49 offices and twelve weekend schools across the country.

Tzu Chi's resolution is to help the poor and educate the rich by accepting the Buddha's teaching of "Great compassion to strangers and great mercy for all." Tzu Chi wants to eliminate suffering among people no matter what religion or race adhering to the teaching of great compassion to all fellow human beings.

Master Yen and her organization started off with simple charitable work in her community but today it has expanded to eight fields of charity work, which Tzu Chi focuses on. The eight fields are charity, medicine, education, culture, international relief, bone marrow donation, environmental protection, and community

volunteerism. Almost all the services provided by the organization are carried out by the member volunteers.

In its beginning, Tzu Chi only helped out in charity efforts in and around the community she lived in and then to all of Taiwan. Their works in charity eventually expanded to an international effort. Tzu Chi goes to scenes where there is a disaster, man made or natural. For example, Tzu Chi volunteers have helped in efforts to provide relief to misplaced Iraqis after the war in Iraq. The relief aid is administered directly to the victims in need. The relief supplies distributed to victims include emergency funds, long term and regular living subsidies, rice, medical allowances, home care products, school fee allowances, and funeral coverage. Services provided to victims include emergency medical assistance and home repair and renovation. In their efforts for medicine, Tzu Chi has built free clinics in their home country of Taiwan. Its free clinics and hospitals are run by hospital staff, which include doctors and nurses, and also by volunteers from overseas and from other parts of Taiwan. They have established some hospitals and a disabled children's rehabilitation center. In its efforts in education, they have schools to train doctors and nurses, and to solve problems with unemployment in the community.

They have established the Tzu Chi Junior College of Nursing and the Tzu Chi College of Medicine in Eastern Taiwan. The college of nursing opened on September 17, 1989 and the college of medicine opened on October 16, 1994. The Tzu Chi College of Medicine has the second largest campus in Taiwan. They also have plans to establish a university bearing the Tzu Chi name. Tzu Chi has tried to develop its own culture for the public through its publications, which include a monthly magazine, a semi-monthly newspaper, and a new book every month. They try to promote the concept of respecting life and affirming humanity to every corner of the world. Since 1991, Tzu Chi has expanded its operations to other countries such as Bangladesh, South Africa, Ethiopia, and Cambodia. Tzu Chi in its international relief efforts have done things such as distributing medicine, built schools, dig wells for communities, etc. In its bone marrow donation efforts, they have established a bone marrow registry in October 1994. By August 1996, Tzu Chi's registry collected data on over 127,000 donors of bone marrow to help aid patients with leukemia or other blood diseases. The Tzu Chi registry has become the largest one in Asia and the third largest in the world. There are currently over a thousand environmental protection

volunteers in Taiwan. They promote the concept of environmental protection since Tzu Chi believes that a decent environment should be preserved for the future generations to come. Tzu Chi has collected and sold recyclable materials worth over 6 million U.S. dollars since 1990.

Tzu Chi's reputation currently in Southern California is very strong but only in the Chinese community. The Chinese community here in Southern California is substantial and sees Tzu Chi as a benevolent organization bent on helping people. According to Helen Hsu, director of communications in Tzu Chi, the Chinese community is very aware of Tzu Chi and always keeps up on the organization in Chinese media such as newspapers. Its reputation is strong among Chinese since it is a Buddhist organization with strong Buddhist principles and it was founded in Taiwan. The founder, Master Cheng Yen who is a Buddhist nun, is very revered in her country of Taiwan since she has dedicated most of her life in charity. She has been nominated for a Nobel Peace prize and has met with the Dalai Lama, who has praised her on her charity work. But Tzu Chi is still very unknown to the mainstream non-Chinese American public. So its reputation among the American public is unknown since most of the public is



unaware of the organization. There is a potential for Tzu Chi's reputation to be positive among the American public if more Americans are more aware of them. Tzu Chi has helped in many instances in the United States. For example they have provided money and other aid to the victims after the attack on the Trade Center in New York on September 11<sup>th</sup>. They have also opened free clinics in places such as San Bernardino and New York. If the U.S. public knows of Tzu Chi's work in the United States, then there is a greater potential for their reputation to be positive among the American public.

According to Helen, director of communications in Tzu Chi, there were virtually no public relations efforts in the office in Southern California. About 13 years ago, some volunteers just decided on expanding Tzu Chi to the United States, but they knew nothing of public relations and therefore did not make any attempts on making any public relations plans. It was not until about just three to four years ago that they started to make some public relations efforts. The present public relations practices in uncontrolled media include news releases sent to various media outlets, special events, and news conferences. The controlled media that they use are brochures, newsletters, journals, magazines, their own

newspaper, their own music CDs and their own books. They also have their own satellite television station called Da Ai, which can be received here in the United States through a satellite dish for free. They also have their own official website which is in various languages.

Tzu Chi's strength is that their volunteers are committed in helping the organization and they have a good relationship with their volunteers. The volunteers receive publications to keep up with what the organization is doing and they are able to give their comments to the organization through mail or telephone. Volunteers can offer suggestions on the direction of the organization. According to Helen Hsu, Director of Communications, everyone has a say in the organization and everyone feels some ownership of the organization. According to Helen Hsu, Tzu Chi's strength in public relations is in the Chinese since the organization has a stronger following among the Chinese public.

Tzu Chi's weaknesses in regard to public relations are that they have an inadequate public relations department that is not a full time department in the Southern California office. They only have one full time staff in the department with some help from the volunteers. Also, the one full time staff member doesn't

spend all of her time on public relations. None of the volunteers who help in the public relations department are professional public relations practitioners. They don't have anyone in the public relations department who can be only focused on the English media and public. Instead they make a lot of their effort in the Chinese media and public with some of their attention on the English side. They are also weak in that when they have some of their events, it is all in Chinese and they do not make an effort at all in contacting the English media. So their main focuses currently are on the Chinese public but they are trying to expand to the mainstream American public and media. The Southern California office also does not have their own website. Although Tzu Chi has an official website, there are various chapters in the United States who have their own individual websites. For example, the Northern California chapter has their own website while the Southern California office does not have their own website.

#### Audience/Target Publics

The target publics include the media in Southern California, which would help with creating awareness with the public since they reach a mass audience. According to

Bivins (1999), the media can be a powerful force, which can do a lot for you. Media directories and lists will help in which media to be targeted by the plan. The target publics for donations are those who are over 35 years of age. In a survey in 1998 conducted by the Bureau of Census, it founded that those over the age of 35 gave at an average dollar amount of over a thousand dollars. That is compared to \$478 for those ages 18-24 and \$768 for those ages 25-34. To find where to target these publics, information from demographics will decide where to reach these audiences. Younger people between the ages of 14 and 21 and older senior citizens, in common sense, would have more free time available for volunteering. Younger people tend to still be in school and not have a full-time job while older senior citizens are more likely to have free time because a good number of them are retired. According to Wilcox, Ault, Agee (1998), retired men and women are increasing in number and retirees make excellent volunteers.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### OBJECTIVES

The objectives for this public relations plan include impact objectives and output objectives. Within impact objectives itself, it includes three kinds of objectives. These three objectives include informational objectives, attitudinal objectives, and behavioral objectives. Impact objectives represent specific intended effects of public relations programs on the intended audiences. Output objectives represent the work that is to be produced. These types of objectives are unrelated to the actual impact the intended program has on the intended audiences.

#### Impact Objectives

Within the impact objectives, the informational objective for this plan is to increase awareness of the Tzu Chi Foundation in Los Angeles County, Orange County, San Bernardino County, Riverside County, and San Diego County by 15 percent. The objective to increase awareness is important for Tzu Chi because the public needs to be aware of them in order for them to support them through donations and volunteering. There are not many people in the United States who know about Tzu Chi since it is based in a foreign country, Taiwan. Tzu Chi is not as well known

by the American public as other non-profit organizations such as the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army which were both founded in the United States. The attitudinal objective is to increase a favorable attitude among the public by 20 percent toward Tzu Chi by informing the public that although Tzu Chi is a Buddhist organization, it helps people of all races, ethnicities, religions, and beliefs. Tzu Chi shouldn't promote itself as only a Buddhist organization that only focuses on Buddhists, but one that encompasses a diverse population. The public should know that Tzu Chi's goal is to provide help and aid to needy people, not the conversion of those they help. The behavioral objective is to increase volunteerism among young people between the ages of 14-25 by 30 percent and older people age 55 and older by 15 percent. It is of course very important for Tzu Chi to recruit volunteers for their organization since volunteers carry out most of their services. It would be more reasonable to recruit younger people since they are more likely to have time to volunteer since they are more likely to still be in school and not have full-time jobs. Another reason is that younger people since they are going to school, are gaining knowledge and might provide fresh new skills to help the organization. They are also more

likely to have computer skills in design and web page making. Helen indicated that the Northern California chapter of Tzu Chi has a website because they have younger volunteers with more knowledge about computers. While the office in Southern California has more older volunteers with less computer skills, so there is currently no website for their office. It is also more reasonable to recruit older people older than 55 years of age since most of them would likely be retired and have a lot of free time on their hands. Senior citizens also make good volunteers because of the experience they have so they have knowledge from their experiences, which can help advance the organization. Older citizens have been shown to play a significant role in volunteerism in the United States since they are likely to be retired and look for an activity to participate in.

#### Output Objectives

There are several output objectives in the plan. Some of them include to send one new release to the newspapers, television stations, and radio stations in Southern California when he have special events or take an action. (See appendix) The other objectives are to hold a seminar on Buddhism in major Southern California cities such as

Los Angeles, Anaheim, San Diego, and San Bernardino once a month. The objectives also include to produce a PSA announcing the free clinic that will be held twice a month, which will be distributed to various Southern California radio stations twice a month. (See appendix) Other objectives in controlled media are to prepare brochures to be distributed to various school districts specifically targeting only high schools and 30 percent of colleges in Southern California. (See appendix) The brochures are also to be distributed to communities where there is an older population. Other output objectives are to develop at least four events a year. These events will be in English so it will include most of the American public not just for Chinese audiences.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### PROGRAMMING

#### Methodology

The methodology in which information was gathered includes primary research and secondary research. The primary research was done through an interview with Helen Hsu, the Director of Communications in Tzu Chi's main office for the United States, which is located in Monrovia, California. The secondary research includes literature about Tzu Chi, which is provided by the organization itself, and literature about public relations in non-profit organizations.

For the primary research, an interview was done with the director of communications. In the interview, information was gathered about any publications that Tzu Chi had in the United States. It was indicated by Helen Hsu that in the United States, they have a monthly newsletter that is in Chinese. Also in the United States, they have a journal that is called Tzu Chi U.S.A. Journal that is in English and comes out every two months. These publications are all distributed for free with some of them going to volunteers and members and others go out to the general public. Information about their public

relations department and practices were also gathered during the interview. Helen indicated that she was the only full time staff member in their public relations department. She does get help from the many volunteers they have and as she indicated, each has their own different talents. She also indicated that the organization doesn't hire any outside public relations firms to do their public relations. She explained the public relations practices that they have and also any strategies that she employed while doing work in public relations. She then elaborated about the goals of the organization in regards to their charity work and also about their goals that are related to public relations. The department does get a lot of feedback from their volunteers since the organization is very much volunteer-based. The public relations department does participate in fundraising but only as a supporting player to a special events committee. Information was also gathered on where they get their donations from and their methods of recruiting volunteers. There is information on their relationship with the media, especially focusing on Chinese media and English media.

Secondary research was gathered from literature about Tzu Chi, which was provided by the organization itself and

also literature about public relations in non-profit organizations. Most of the literature about Tzu Chi was gathered through their website. In their website they had an abundant amount of information which included information on the history of Tzu Chi and how it became the organization itself today. There is also information about the founder of Tzu Chi, Master Cheng Yen. The website provides information on the four missions they focus on when they do their work, which is charity, medicine, education, and culture. They detail examples of the types of services they provide, which include family services, free health care, and international relief. It is a pretty thorough website and most of the information about the organization was gathered through the contents of the Tzu Chi website.

Information about public relations in non-profit organizations was gathered through various public relations literature. Background on the history of non-profits was included in the research that was done. There was information on what areas of public relations was specifically important for non-profit organizations. It is indicated in the literature that the important public relations objectives for non-profit organizations include public awareness, recruiting and retaining

volunteers, and fundraising. There is also information on the different types of non-profit organizations that exist in society today. They include social service agencies, health agencies, hospitals, religious organizations, welfare agencies, cultural organizations, and foundations.

#### Theme and Message

The theme of the public relations campaign will be "Compassion for all fellow human beings." The message of this campaign and theme is that Tzu Chi will help people of all backgrounds and of all races, ethnicities, nationalities, religions, etc. The message is that everyone is the same, in that we are all human beings and everyone deserves compassion. Tzu Chi makes sure that no one will be left out when they help people.

#### Action or Special Events

For an action, Tzu Chi can help poorer people during Christmas such as a toy drive for low-income kids to bring smiles to their faces to their Christmas. Tzu Chi can provide a Christmas dinner for poorer people who are hungry during the holidays. This would be done in and around Southern California. This would be effective in promoting Tzu Chi as a tolerant organization willing to help people regardless of who they are only that they are

their fellow human beings. The interest of the local news media in this action is that a Buddhist organization is helping out people during a Christian holiday. Tzu Chi has done something like this before. For example, Tzu Chi helped the less fortunate celebrate Ramadan, a Muslim holiday, in Turkey. Though Tzu Chi has done something similar to this before, the effort indicated above in the plan will focus specifically on the United States since the majority of the population is pre-dominantly Christian.

Another action that Tzu Chi can take is that they can hold a free clinic in and around Southern California. The free clinics will focus on low-income areas in Southern California so it can benefit low-income families. The people who will use Tzu Chi's services will be a diverse population who can take advantage of it. To announce this free clinic, there will be radio PSAs if it is available for use. There will be news releases sent out to major Southern California newspapers (See Appendix 2) to announce the free clinic to try to get people out either to use the services of the free clinic, or come to support Tzu Chi in their efforts. Flyers will be posted throughout the communities where the free clinics will be held. Again this action would gain a favorable image for Tzu Chi in

that they are helping people from all different backgrounds and also it would generate awareness for the organization by the public. It is telling the public that Tzu Chi is alive and well and is active in the communities in Southern California.

For an event, there can be a free seminar about Buddhism to introduce the religion to those who are interested to learn about something new. It is not an effort to convert anybody only as a way for people to learn about a different culture. Buddhist monks in the United States but also from abroad will participate in the seminar to give presentations or lectures on Buddhism. Also during the seminar, Tzu Chi will be made known to the participants as a non-profit charity organization that is based on Buddhist principles. The participants will be able to donate to help Tzu Chi's cause or participate by volunteering. An effort to contact and get Richard Gere, a celebrity will be made to attend this event and promote it. According to Hendrix (1995), an event would be more effective if it included at least one celebrity. The reason for the choice of Richard Gere is that he is a Buddhist and he known to be actively involved in charity work. For example he helped open an AIDS home in India, the birthplace of Buddhism, in December 2002. In the

efforts to contact him, the point will be made that Tzu Chi is one of the largest Buddhist organizations out of Taiwan, and is a worldwide organization that has helped countless people in countless countries. There will be an appeal that Tzu Chi has over 49 offices in the United States and hopes to expand more in the country. Also Tzu Chi started out as a small organization with thirty members and now has over 4 million members and volunteers worldwide. Also it will be made known to Richard Gere that Tzu Chi's founder Master Cheng Yen has met with the Dalai Lama. Richard Gere has met the Dalai Lama many times and is sympathetic to the Dalai Lama's cause. To do that Tzu Chi needs more awareness among the general American public. Richard Gere as a celebrity would help bring news media to the seminar on Buddhism and in doing so it would bring more exposure to the organization. The seminar will attract many people to the event to learn more about Buddhism and in turn learn more about Tzu Chi. If Richard Gere cannot be contacted or declines to participate, then local public officials such as the mayor or council member will be contacted to attend the event.

## Uncontrolled Media

There are many forms of uncontrolled media that a public relations plan or campaign can use. News releases will be sent out to the major newspaper outlets in Southern California. (See appendix 2) This will include newspapers such as the Los Angeles Times, San Bernardino Sun, Orange County Register, The Press Enterprise, etc. The news releases will announce the toy drive and the dinner that Tzu Chi will provide on Christmas. It will be sent out one week before the two events. It is to inform the public that they are invited to help out and support the organization by contributing food and toys to Tzu Chi's office so they can help out with the two events. Another news release will be sent out the next day after the event to inform the public on what Tzu Chi has done. The news release is informational in that it creates awareness for Tzu Chi among the American public. News releases can also cover any important accomplishments for Tzu Chi. For example, they can cover Tzu Chi's efforts when they held a free clinic in San Bernardino or when they distributed thousands of books to a poor school district in San Diego. These would help create awareness for Tzu Chi but it will also help create a favorable image among the American public for them since they show that



they are active and alive in the United States. It shows that they are willing to cross international boundaries and are willing to help anyone who is their fellow human being. The news releases will be in the correct format with contact, date, headline, lead, etc. They will be sent out by the deadlines of each newspaper for news releases. The contacts for the newspapers will be compiled through media lists and media directories.

There can also be a feature story done on the founder, Master Cheng Yen. Master Cheng has had an interesting life and this feature story could coincide with a visit from her to the United States. The story would focus on her life on how she ran away from her family at a rather young age at the time after her father's death to become a Buddhist nun. In doing so she had run away from a rather comfortable life with her family. The story would also focus on how she founded the organization, which was through her enlistment of thirty housewives to help save some of their grocery money each day to help the less fortunate in Taiwan, and how her organization has expanded to a worldwide organization with over 4 million members and volunteers. It will also detail her accomplishments which includes a Nobel Peace Prize nomination in 1996 and her meeting with the Dalai Lama,

who is quite well known in the United States. This feature story would go out to all the major newspapers in the country since it would introduce her and her organization to the American public. The reason for national coverage is that is an interesting story for any area of the United States not just Southern California. The story would also be sent out to local television stations across the United States with video about Master Cheng's life. It is to create a favorable image for Tzu Chi by detailing the life and efforts in charity by Master Cheng Yen. The feature story itself would gain a favorable image because Master Cheng has had an extraordinary life, which included a Nobel Peace Prize nomination.

The plan will also take advantage of any Public Service Announcement (PSA) spots that local radio and television stations offer for non-profit organizations. The PSA would announce any coming events that Tzu Chi would be holding and informing the public with basic information such as when and where it will be held, what is the purpose of the event, and how the public can join it by attending.

## Controlled Media

There will be an informational brochure detailing the general information on Tzu Chi including its history, background on the founder, and ways the public can help. It will include contact information such as telephone, fax, and e-mail. It will be distributed to the target audience that has been identified. The purpose of this brochure is to give the audience an easy to read publication, which allows information about the organization to get out. It will create more awareness among the public and meet informational objectives.

There will be magazines and newsletters developed detailing any efforts in charity in Southern California or any other part of the United States. The objective for these publications is to create a favorable image in that Tzu Chi is active in the United States doing charity work. Since Tzu Chi is largely unknown to the general American public, an attitude can be created about the organization. These publications will be distributed to the target audiences that have been identified.

There will be publications on how volunteerism can be a benefit. For students in the high school to college age, the benefits can be just personal fulfillment, to help someone, or it can help them in their future careers by

including their volunteer work in their resumes. For older senior citizens volunteer work can lead to their personal fulfillment. It can also be extracurricular activities on the side for retirees who are looking for an activity to do on their newfound free time. According to Wilcox, Ault, and Agee (1998), the numbers of retirees are growing and senior citizens make excellent volunteers because they have much more experience than people of other age groups. They will be distributed to the targeted audiences as indicated. Some of them will go to various school districts and colleges across Southern California. (See Appendix 3) Others will go to communities where there is an older population, which will be determined by demographic information.

#### Effective Communication

To make sure that there is effective communication there will be source credibility in that the spokesman for the organization, who will speak to the public and media, will be a knowledgeable volunteer who has been with the organization for at least 5 years. The spokesman should be someone over the age of 50 so it will make him or her seem experienced. The spokesman will know most of the things

about the organization such as background, history, purpose, etc.

The salient information of the message will always be made known to the public and the intended audience. The important message that will always be made to the public is that Tzu Chi is a tolerant and compassionate organization for all people regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, etc. Tzu Chi's message will always be one of compassion to all fellow human beings. It will not focus on the differences in one's physical appearance or one's background but only that we are fellow human beings. Tzu Chi always serves with compassion since they stick with the principles that Master Cheng Yen has taught.

The Tzu Chi Logo should always be present in the events and actions that Tzu Chi takes place. It is the symbol of Tzu Chi so it should be familiar to the public and the logo should remind the public that anytime they see the logo, they will know it is Tzu Chi.

The language of Tzu Chi's message, which is in the news releases, brochures, events, etc. will be made accessible to all audiences. It will be made easier to understand, not too complicated but at the same time not too simplistic as to make light of the audiences. For any feedback from the public and audiences, a phone number,

fax number, and e-mail should always be available if there are any questions or suggestions for the organization. The volunteers and staff of Tzu Chi should be readily available on the phones or respond by e-mail to any questions or comments that the public has.

The message of Tzu Chi will always focus on the inclusion of everyone in regards to their charity work. Tzu Chi's work in charity is one of compassion. This message will always be consistent when communicating with the public or the media. Most people have a sense of altruism in them, so the message that will always be made that anything they do to help the organization, no matter how big or small, will help the less fortunate. The message will always be positive in that anything that the public can do to help the organization, they will in turn help others.

There will be opportunities for audience participation in the organization. For the toy drive in Christmas and the Christmas dinner, it will be made prior to the two events that anyone is welcome to participate in the events by donating money or supplies or volunteer by either helping to distribute the toys or help serve food to the homeless during the Christmas dinner. For the free seminar on Buddhism, the participants are free to ask

questions about anything and bring their own comments or questions to ask the monks about Buddhism.

CHAPTER SIX  
EVALUATION AND ANALYSIS

There will be an evaluation of the three types of impact objectives, which are informational, attitudinal, and behavioral. There will also be an evaluation of the output objectives.

Impact Objectives

The measurement of the informational objectives within the impact objectives will include message exposure, message comprehension, and message retention. In measuring message exposure for news releases, newspapers clippings will be collected and monitored to see if the releases were published. Media and monitoring services will also be used to track progress. The number of newspapers that the news releases are found to published in will determine the to what extent was the exposure to the message that the news releases tried to send to the public. The potential of the message's exposure depends on the number of newspapers it was published in. For message comprehension of the public relations programs indicated in programming, the readability will be determined by the Fog Index. For message retention, there will be sample surveys administered to the publics that were targeted by



the public relations program. The sample will be in the form of short telephone interviews. The questions asked will be related to the message retention of the audience. For example, a question can be asked such as "What has Tzu Chi done to help the poorer kids during Christmas?" This question would measure the news release about the toy drive during Christmas. Another question can be "What kind of services does Tzu Chi offer?" This would measure message retention in the informational brochures that were distributed to the targeted audiences. To determine if awareness will be increased by 15 percent, surveys will be taken to measure awareness before the campaign starts among the target publics. When the campaign starts, surveys will be given again to measure awareness among the target public to see if the number of people who are aware of the organization increases by 15 percent.

In evaluating the attitudinal objective of gaining a favorable image of Tzu Chi among the public, surveys using the Likert scale will be administered to targeted publics that were mentioned in Chapter 2 about the audiences and target publics. Surveys will be administered before the campaign and after the campaign to the target publics to see if it meets the number desired in the objectives. The purpose of this survey is to measure the attitudes of the

public toward the organization. It is to see if their existing attitudes toward the organization has been changed, unchanged, or reinforced. A professional who has knowledge and experience in quantitative research methods will do the measurement of the attitudes.

In evaluating the behavioral objectives, which is to increase volunteerism among younger people ages 14-25 and older people aged 55 or older, the number of new volunteers who join Tzu Chi within the age ranges mentioned above will be counted. Numbers of volunteers between these age ranges will counted prior to the campaign and after the campaign to see if the objectives have been met.

#### Output Objectives

To measure output objectives, the number of news releases will be kept track of to ensure that it meets the objectives. It will be ensured that a seminar will be held at least once a month and the free clinic will be held at least twice a month. The number of brochures and magazines distributed will be counted and will distributed to the right locations. To ensure it is going to the right locations, everything will be recorded to ensure it meets the objectives. The number of events that Tzu Chi has each

are to be recorded to ensure it meets the output objectives.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW

Interview With Helen Hsu, Director of Communications in Tzu Chi Office in Monrovia, California

The interview took place on July 2, 2003 in Monrovia, California.

H = Helen Hsu

I = Interviewer

I: ***Do you have a weekly, monthly, or quarterly publication?***

H: Out of Taiwan we have two major publications, one is a quarterly in English, so that comes out four times a year. And the other one is a monthly magazine that comes out of Taiwan that is in Chinese. Here in the U.S. we have a monthly Chinese newsletter that goes out. It is pretty thick, so it is actually a cross between a newsletter and an actual journal. And the other one comes out every two months is our Tzu Chi U.S.A. journal that is in English. Out of Taiwan, they actually have one other newsletter that goes out to all our members in Taiwan. So in other countries, they have their own publications. Canada has their own publication and Malaysia has their own publication, but the U.S one and the Taiwanese one are the ones that I am most familiar with and the ones we use here.

I: ***Do you distribute it for free?***

H: Yes, these are all free publications. We have an affiliated magazine called Jing Tien that is actually a paid subscription and that is more of a cross between a National Geographic and Time magazine. It is subscription based. That one is affiliated not directly, it is not directly out of the foundation (Tzu Chi). We have a lot of different ways in which we get information out.

I: ***What is the function of the publication?***

H: Basically the publication, first and foremost, is to inform and because our organization mainly runs on the donations of the public and individuals so it is important as far as just informing on what kinds of things we are doing and how we are helping people out there. And so the publications goes to our members, goes to our volunteers and then a lot of times it is placed, for example here we have a big Chinese population, so it might be placed in some places where people can pick up the publication. Ultimately it also serves other purposes, really if you take the philosophy of Tzu Chi, the idea that one more person out there who can care a little bit more of somebody else and the world would be

a better place. It is really letting people know that there are all these everyday people doing a little bit each and one person has the power to help others. So the publications is very important to the organization in that it not just about getting more volunteers and funding, which is all non-profits run on. But really goes to a deeper principle of the organization and which is going out there and encouraging others to give and give a little bit more of themselves and to reach out and help others.

I: ***Do you have anything else besides the organization that creates awareness for your organization?***

H: As far as awareness, a lot of times because we are mostly volunteer-based and we do have a big volunteer pool. A lot of times it is just a matter of word of mouth that gets people to know about our organization and we're very well known in the Chinese circles because there are just so many people who are a part of Tzu Chi. Also we do send out press releases and that sort of thing so that we try to keep the public informed as long the media is willing to pick up some the stories and the general media is a powerful tool in order to get some of that publicity out.

I: ***Is this office mainly focused on Southern California?***

H: This office, you're actually in our national headquarters, also national headquarter serves as the lead for what we call the Southwest regional office, so we really have Southern California, Arizona, New Mexico are kind of all under the service area for this particular office. We have seven different regions that we divide up in the United States. So each region has a regional office plus other various offices throughout. The idea is that wherever there are other people who want to be a part of this organization hopeful they have a contact, so if there is a family that needs help we maybe know somebody who can help those in a state that is less populated, so we can get somebody out there. That is how our offices are set up; it is based on where our volunteers are.

I: ***Do you think that your publications or newsletters achieve your public relation goals?***

H: Right now, as far as our Chinese side, I think that it is much stronger just because the organization's volunteers are Chinese. Right now we are trying to get more people involved in the English side. Tzu Chi is a unique place in that we don't wait until our public relations materials are ready before we go out and do things. Really this organization is about helping others, so while we are helping others at the same time we get

the materials ready to go out. We don't have a huge staff that is doing this. We really need to help these people, yes at the same time we are working on getting the newsletters and these other things out. It is a big volunteer effort and it is about getting a lot of people involved, so it is not just about creating this piece to affect others but in the process of creating these publications is to bring these volunteers in creating whatever this piece is and that piece goes out to others. We're very much volunteer-based here.

I: ***Do you have a slogan?***

H: Really because Tzu Chi, the two words are in Chinese. Tzu means "compassion" and chi means "assist or to relieve." So right now what we are doing with a lot of our English stuff when we're just pushing this out because it had to go through different people to get approval. But really if you translate and make it into a slogan it would be "serving with compassion." That is what really what "Tzu Chi" is about. Our full name right now for the U.S. because we are incorporated in the U.S. as a non-profit organization is Taiwan Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation, U.S.A.

I: ***How many people are in your public relations department?***

H: Right now we have one full time staff which is me and but not all my time is spent on PR. And my job is to, my staff so to speak, really our volunteers who all work and doing other things. The team is just made of different volunteers who have different talents. It is not a full time PR department. We also have to understand that the publications that you are talking about, we also have, our work is in four different areas, and our main area of course is our charitable services. All the services we have just to help other people. Second main focus is the medical services because we have a free clinic in Alhambra, we have a lot of medical doctors that we actually do outreach programs. And then in Taiwan of course we have our hospitals, what has happened traditionally with Tzu Chi, is that Tzu Chi started as a very small organization, it wasn't really even an organization. It really was, Dharma Master Cheng Yen, in 1966, basically her thought was that she needed to get other people to help her help people and it is very grass roots. She actually asked 30 housewives to join in with her to save a little a little bit each day from their grocery shopping money. And that is how the foundation got started and the idea is to care for people and what she realized in caring for others is that when people get sick, it just becomes a financial burden on any family and that why the medical area is such a big area for Tzu Chi. So that is why hospitals were built. In Taiwan at the time people couldn't get absolutely free medical

service, you had to pay. So when Tzu Chi built this hospital and said that even though you can't pay, we will help you. It was pretty revolutionary at the time, in far as Taiwan goes. So you got charitable services, medical services, education is big, and the other area is culture. Culture, not as culture as pulling out old stuff but creating a culture of helping others and that other culture that physical pieces of that culture are the publications, all the writings and our television station. I don't know if you're aware but we have a satellite television station that is 24 hours. It is actually based out of Taiwan, but as long as you have a satellite dish you can receive it for free. So really yes, there is PR specifically as far as dealing with the media is having somebody that can really go out and do the publicity but Tzu Chi's idea is going back to getting more people to help other people. So really the culture department that is what it is. And we have our own publishing company and the company publishes all of Dharma Master Cheng Yen's work and those things are all for sale but the proceeds of all that really goes back to the foundation. It is copyrighted, it is all to Master Cheng Yen but she pretty much puts everything back into the foundation. We also have a lot of CDs produced that has a lot of songs in it.

- I: ***What is the routine work for the people here in the public relations department?***
- H: Well as far, right now it is to support Southern California's various programs. A lot of it is in media relations, it is making sure that the public when we have events that are for the public, we get it out to newspapers so under events people can see that or the T.V. stations. It is also letting other people know the work that we are doing. For example on Friday we just our scholarship reception, and the reception is to congratulate 48 high school seniors who won our scholarships here in the Southwest region for this year. Right now is getting the word out and letting other people know and just a lot of it is not because we want to publicize Tzu Chi, it is really a matter of letting people know that Tzu Chi has all these programs so that when people are in need, they will remember that there is a group of people who are willing to help other people. You never know in this office when you get a phone call when someone refers someone to someone else. They can think of any other way to help and then they call this foundation.



I: ***Is the public relations handled only the public relations department or is it handled by the whole organization?***

H: It depends on what it is, it depends on whether it is one small program or if it is something that there needs to be consistency in the message that is sent out because a lot of times since we have so many volunteers and so many commissioners who are part of Tzu Chi. Everyone is really a spokesman for our organization because we have so many people who are just involved. The way we really care about people is one family at a time, it is not really based on some certain guidelines, we visit personally all the families and we decide on how to help them. When media calls, it comes directly into our PR department but as far as any of our volunteers can be asked about a lot of things then they can answer them based on their knowledge. Tzu Chi is governed by these big large principles and if our volunteers cannot answer any questions then they refer them back to the PR office.

I: ***So definitely you do not hire any public relations firms to do your public relations.***

H: No, it is not something we do.

I: ***Do you have any public relations strategies? If you do, can you give me one or two examples?***

H: Right now it is making sure that uniform language and uniform information get out to the media and right now because we have so many people working on all the different parts of the publications. And we're trying to consolidate the language and just the materials because on the Chinese side, we have it really developed and right now we are trying to develop the English materials. It is one big thing we are working on right now. As far as strategies, we are trying to create a good relationship with the Chinese media right now and that is pretty much established because the Chinese community knows what Tzu Chi is. We're at a point where we are serving so much the general population of the Southern California community regardless of race or background they are. So we are starting to look into the English speaking media, just the mainstream media and also Spanish speaking media. It takes time because this year our PR department, the goals are really to build up a structure so that because we don't have staff, we can still really function as a group so we can get the word out about Tzu Chi.

I: ***Do you have a method for getting feedback from the public and do you think it is necessary?***

H: I think it is really important. The nice thing about all of our publications at least is that especially our Chinese publications is that a lot of our volunteers read it, as far as the Chinese side is concerned we get a lot of feedback from people and you know that we also do get feedback because a lot of the word does get out to people who do use it, all of our phone numbers are listed so people do use the services. As far as the people we serve, all our programs for example are gift of books programs this year, we are working a lot with different elementary schools so the principals and teachers every single year in order to improve our programs worked really actively in putting feedback out there just trying to get feedback. We also get a lot feedback from a lot of our volunteers too because our organization just does have a lot of volunteers and not every volunteer can be involved in every all the different types of programs we have out there. But everyone has a say because they do feel ownership of the organization so we really working on two fronts. Those who are generous in giving to the foundation and also our own volunteers, there are a couple different people that we do make sure that we do get feedback from.

I: ***Have you had any special events recently?***

H: The ones for the book giving, we had about 100 or so principals and teachers here since we served with 72 schools this year in our Gift of Books program. We gave out, I think, over 64,000 books, brand new books, fun reading books. As far as the Chinese side, we had a lot of good press coverage on some of our bigger events and those are important because it is public confidence in the organization and we have some really large-scale projects going on right now. In El Salvador, we finished building two villages and put people into houses who have been living in shacks because of the loss of homes due to earthquakes. In Taiwan the fifty schools have been completely built because of the earthquakes two or three years ago. So we are constantly it is very important to let the public so PR interest in hey look at us but it is really about letting people know that Tzu Chi is trying to do a lot because it is important. A lot of people give a lot to the organization and that is how we have been able to have so many great programs and be able to really be there and give on the spot for September 11th for example we were one of the few, I think one the only organization who gave cash right away to families because Red Cross and others give vouchers to stay at motel a bit but cash is something is they don't give, if they're going to give you money it is

going to take a lot of time to figure out, there is a lot of paper work but the way our organization is based, it is founded on basic principles that you as a human being is somebody who I trust and that I will give to you when you are in need. It is something that is very important for us. For example back in February, we sent out, we had a big press conference, just to, let the press especially Chinese press, know that 50 schools had been built because when the earthquake happened, there was so much fundraising going on for disaster relief, for rebuilding of schools. So a lot of money came from the Chinese community here in the United States so it is really important as a thank you, as to let people know that their money went somewhere important.

I: ***Is the public relations department here related to fundraising?***

H: We actually have our special events committee. Once a year we have one big event that is coming up on September 27. It is a big fundraising event. It is usually a musical event; there is a nice banquet especially for the purposes of fundraising. We actually work together as a team. Special events coordinates but public relations help with some of the publicity and making sure press conferences are held so that the public knows about this particular event and a lot of our commissioners get very much involved because the event is really a culmination from our year long fundraising efforts. The fundraising campaign gets kicked out way earlier in the year and this year there is a special thing because of SARS. The campaign we have right now is really going back 37 years in ago in Taiwan when the thirty housewives saved a little each day. They saved their money in these little bamboo piggy banks so we are bringing that back this year and that is part of our fundraising this year is really trying to get people to actively adopt the piggy bank so they can give a dollar a day or three dollars a day. That has been happening the past couple of months. We are hoping to have our fundraising goals for the year and that by our special event in September we would have reached our goals. All the funds go to all the special programs.

I: ***Where do most of your donations come from?***

H: Private individuals, no government funding, no big corporations. We are looking right now at perhaps grant money for our more permanent ongoing programs for example our free clinic because that is a permanent site that has pretty much a set budget for the year. As far as donations, the idea is that the foundation is a place for individuals to give, to all give to help other people. The bulk of our donations will stay this way. But for a lot of our more permanent programs we will look for the grants that are out there to start supporting things. Because that will

leave our donations from individuals are much more flexible because they don't have all these stipulations that goes with grants so we're able to as a foundation or as a charitable organization, we are able to do so many more unique things and do it quickly because our funds are more flexible.

I: ***How do you make the public more aware of the organization in order for them to donate?***

H: Tzu Chi is really well known because of just the work we do, the people we help. It is well known because of the hospitals we built in Taiwan so it not so much as we go out of our way to publicize our organization to tell people but really it is that people just know it because of what has happened to our organization. Most people hear about us but not like they see us in a commercial on TV because we don't do commercials. If there is a commercial, that is because the television station donated some airtime for us. We generally don't put our money in that way.

I: ***Do you take advantage of any free airtime?***

H: Of course because we know how powerful the media is and it just another avenue in order to get people to help out.

I: ***So what type of services do you provide?***

H: Generally it is in four major categories. They are charitable services and under charitable services there are five to twenty programs depending on which office you're at. So places like here in Southern California where we just have a lot more volunteers we have a lot more programs that we are able to offer. But every single office has family services. That is really the cornerstone of the foundation, is helping families one at a time, so even if they don't have any other major programs that happen, they have to act. Most places get people together. In northern California, they work with the church actually. The service here, we go downtown on Tuesday and Friday nights, really late because all the shelters close at four so people who are in skid row, they will have food for a night. So we do that on an ongoing basis, our volunteers there work with the meals on wheels program. So what they do is deliver food directly to the homes to people who are ill or who are older. Tzu Chi is different because we do things on a broader level. What we do also is that we network with all the local organizations who have one very specific program and that way we can help meet the needs of a different family that a particular organization may not be able to do. Medical service is another huge one. So for example here we have a physical free clinic. A lot of our other offices will have, will

hold a smaller scale medical outreach. They might not have a physical facility but they will actually have enough doctors or nurses who can perform some sort of free service. Medical doctors, we have a huge network which is part of TIMA. And even if they don't do a lot of things locally what they do is they everyone has to say, if there is a disaster abroad or anything, let me know and maybe we can go and help. For example, in El Salvador when the earthquake happened, a lot of our medical volunteers from the U.S. flew down there to help out. So charitable services, medical services, education is big. In Taiwan, we have our elementary school, our middle school, our high school, nursing college. We have a university that has also our medical college. So when Tzu Chi talks about education, it is much more specific to people, not so much as giving grants to school, but more specifically to educating, like character educating, education using a lot of philosophy within Tzu Chi to teach. So that, here in the United States, we have Tzu Chi Academy. Tzu Chi Academy is usually on a Saturday or Sunday and we have 17 campuses throughout the U.S. So on Sundays here we actually use the middle across the street. They come on Saturdays, Chinese is taught, but also character education is taught. In Taiwan, they do it everyday in the classroom, here it is only once a week. So we have charitable services, medical services, and educational services. The other one is what we call culture or cultural awareness. A lot of our culture encompasses all of our literature, a lot of archiving a lot of different things. Tzu Chi culture is a lot about gathering information and everyone documenting what they done so they can share with other people. And that's organized in different ways, it's in our publications, in our TV stations, in different outlets. And of course our website is actually a great source of information, everything is on there, especially the Chinese site. The English site, we are still trying to get more things on there but the Chinese one is pretty complete as far as big projects or books coming out. Those are basically the four majors areas of work. Additionally we do under charitable services, there is international relief. It goes to a deeper Buddhist philosophy of respecting life and really if you think of recycling newspaper then you're not cutting down more trees. In Malaysia, they have such a big group of volunteers doing recycling, the money that comes from everything they are able to sell back goes to run the dialysis center.

I: ***The American public is largely unaware of Tzu Chi right now so are you trying to do more to be a part of American society?***

H: It takes time. Even in Taiwan it took a lot of time. When we started to build a lot of things was when we really got noticed. So in El Salvador, the president has been to Taiwan to visit our founder to say thank you,

and in Honduras and in all these places where we have actually been very visible doing the work that we do, we have been recognized. Here in the United States we got Red Cross and Salvation Army, they are usually there. We don't look at ourselves as duplicating others. If there is help there, there are plenty of other people there who need help. We don't create news, we were just trying to update the public as we are going along and do the things we do. It is nice to have more publicity for various reasons, but it is not one of their purposes for publicity. The more we do eventually we will be noticed. But we are not worried about it.

I: ***How do you recruit volunteers?***

H: We do actually a lot by word of mouth. Usually when there is something in which we need volunteers people will contact others and be able to do that. It is because we are trying to recruit more English speaking volunteers, we are looking at other avenues, those are just ideas right now. We are looking for high students and getting in touch specifically with senior clubs and bring them in. So people who actually have more time. We recruit volunteers all the time basically we are always looking for people because we are always so short on needing people to do different things. It is a constant thing and as we figure out a particular project we want to start, then we will start actively looking for people to get involved. It is a very active sort of idea we don't have these kind of set programs. We are constantly trying to get more volunteers involved. There are still other volunteers waiting for things to get involved in. We also have volunteer training. There are people who actually want to be a volunteer. We are in a matter of recruiting volunteers who can actually help us get programs off the ground.

I: ***Do you have any evaluations and do you get any feedback from people who donate money?***

H: We actually do all the time, the way we ask for gifts is very personal. We ask someone to be a member. All a member is someone who gives to the organization. They do a lot of follow up, it is through personal contact through phone calls. So there is always a lot of feedback that comes back to us. We do get a lot of ongoing feedback as far as special events and fundraising activities. Everything we hold a special event, there is always another meeting afterwards for everyone to bring something in.

I: ***How do you get feedback?***

H: There is no set surveys or questionnaires. There is a lot of discussion. Other events that we are doing, it depends on who is running the program and how much they're collecting particular feedback. It is also depends on how much volunteers do, sometimes volunteers get feedback but they have not been part of the process.

I: ***Do you notify anyone such as donors about upcoming events?***

H: Basically for the U.S., the Chinese publication is probably the biggest one that really lets people know what's coming up because there is an events section on the back. Specifically though every single office generates its own little calendar and newsletter so it is then localized. A lot of phone calls actually, because this organization is built on personally inviting donors. Not so much e-mails. Our Northern California (Chapter) uses a lot of e-mail because everyone up there, the volunteer base is just much younger and a lot of them are professionals. Here we have a lot of moms, a lot who are retired and older. Here the predominant vehicle is phone and fax. But we do a lot of mailings as well a little monthly newsletter that go out. We are trying to develop more of an e-mail system here because the younger professional people are more used to e-mail. And we're in the process of setting that up. Our college volunteers they're all electronic based, they do everything through e-mail. We are multi-generational from a Chinese perspective.

I: ***Do you sell any products rather than give away?***

H: A lot of our products are books. We also have what we call "Tzu Chi Three Treasures", and it's really a bowl, a pair of chopsticks and a cup. The idea is that if you use your own stuff all the time it is much healthier. There is so much throw away stuff that people use now that it is just another way so you won't create more trash.

I: ***The Northern Chapter has their own website, does the Southern California office have one?***

H: We're in the middle of changing a lot of our websites right now, the main website should be a global English web site. We are discussing how many local websites we are going to do. Because there wasn't really a main English website for a long time. We are re-looking at our website and we are hoping to launch the new one by October. All the different places who had talent to do it really did their own thing. In Taiwan it is really centralized. Here we are just so much physically

further apart so each place just did their own thing for a while. We are now regrouping for the U.S. as a whole. Northern California they just have more techie people, everything is electronic, their newsletters are electronic, their calendar is electronic, which is great. We just haven't had the talent down here to do it.

I: ***Do you have a good relationship with the American media, not just the Chinese media?***

H: The American media right now because we are so little known to them, it's just taking time to build up and we are just starting to approach them. There's been throughout the years, once in a blue moon, when we had something big, they'll come. But like I said we haven't had people who were able to keep that relationship up so it's been very choppy and it is something we are hoping to build, it is our goal, we are working the next year and a half, is to hopefully get to know more of the English speaking media. A lot of things are ongoing, in development.

I: ***What is the media you use the most here in the U.S. for your public relations?***

H: Right now as far as the Chinese media is concerned, a lot of T.V. and newspaper. Once in a while radio, radio it depends because they might announce our news items but they'll call us if they want to do a feature talk with somebody specific. We just did one on A.M. 1300. It is a Chinese radio station. We did it for Earth Day and wanted to talk about recycling. We do a lot of that. So they brought us on board for about an hour and 45 minutes. Television, in a lot of our big events they'll come, a lot of times it will be feature stories. A lot of times it is news, sometimes they'll contact us because they want to do a feature story about something so it kind of depends on what the need is. And we do for example our gift of books and our scholarship presentation.

I: ***For newspaper, it is mostly used to publicize events or feature stories?***

H: We do both. We do publicize events when we just have different events going on. We have a hepatitis B seminar coming up and we will send out a news release within the next week or two. The thing with newspapers is that they have to fill up the pages everyday with something. So a lot of times it is hit and miss, they'll put stuff in because they have the room. Sometimes stories gets cut so regardless when a news reporter comes and they are talking with you for a long time, you think they will get a nice big story, but you get into the newsroom and something big came up and you get squished to the



side. A lot of our things are ongoing. It is important for us to get our ongoing things into the news. Even it is in small bits, just to keep our name out there. Especially with the Chinese public because they know that there is this big organization and it will be weird for them not to see stuff. It becomes this expectation that they should see things once in a while. Sometimes people write e-mails, people actually look for it, because a lot of people do give to the organization.

I: ***What is the difference in the public relations in a non-profit and a for profit company?***

H: The biggest difference is that for profit, your bottom line is your sales so PR in a way is a big arm in conjunction with advertisement. A lot of times people tend to spend a lot of money in these departments. But for non-profits, we usually don't have the funds that are set aside to do PR, but a for profit does, so the goals are very different. For a non-profit, our goals are not about selling anything to anyone. We might be selling an idea if you want to put it that way but really a lot of times it is awareness. It is awareness, it might be some sort of education, and so those are the reasons why we do PR. And ultimately of course you are hoping with fundraising, but usually that is a lot less obvious than for example PR a company coming out with a new product. Their goal, their result will be very specific. Ours are not as specific, but it is still important just to keep a positive public image because you want people to, our goals really is about is that if people know we exist, hopefully if there are people who need help they'll have some place to contact. Our goals are very different and not very specific. You see less of a big bang theory, like with PR for a particular product, they might go all out and actually create the events to create the news. From our perspective, it's really not about that and we don't have the funds to do that either. We don't have the funds to really pull in that many people and create that drama. That's not the image we want to portray. Very different goals and different interests.

I: ***Are there any other non-profit organizations in Southern California that you compete with?***

H: I think in the non-profit world, there is no major competition so to speak and why I say that because for the amount of people in need, there still aren't enough non-profits to fill those shoes. And non-profits usually, you have so many limited resources, you are not going to do the same things for the same people that someone is already doing. So there is a mutual understanding between non-profits to work cooperatively because ultimately your goal is to help people. So what we do and

based on those it can of evens out. There is no major competition. It is less competitive and more cooperative among non-profits because your goals are more similar and that you are trying to help. So you will get calls about getting together, wanting to know what they can do for each other. There is really no competition.

I: ***What is the purpose of your organization?***

H: The purpose of Tzu Chi is to exist to help others and to have a place where people can help others. If you look at our mission statements, it is really based on Buddhist principles of compassion kindness, and joy of giving. It is to help ease the suffering on Earth and help with the pain. To do that we recruit volunteers.

I: ***What is the structure of your organization?***

H: We do. Our international headquarters is in Taiwan, in Hualien of course. Our founder and president is Dharma Master Cheng Yen. So really we are governed, Taiwan has their own foundations. If you also look us, we are international because we are physically in different locations so we have to go by whatever local laws exist. Here is the U.S. we are incorporated as a non-profit. We have our own name but we are affiliated with Taiwan because organization wise we need to operate as one organization in certain aspects. So you have Taiwan who actually heads our international projects but each local area can do its own services for people around based on just the general Tzu Chi direction, which is to help people and getting people to get involved. So structure wise as far as how we function, here we have different departments who handle different things. We have our commissioner systems and their really our volunteer arm of things who have people who are helping to organize and they help facilitate our communication between Taiwan and the U.S. and all the different offices within the U.S. Structurally we have a lot of people who are actually in leadership positions who are volunteers.

I: ***When did you start to establish your PR in the United States?***

H: It wasn't really this set direction. You have to understand that when Tzu Chi moved here in the U.S. there were a few volunteers who helped who wanted to do Tzu Chi here in the United States. PR wasn't really a big thing for them. PR here did not get formed until about 3 or 4 years ago and one of the big reasons it got formed was because the earthquake in Taiwan because the news media wanted to know what the organization was doing. A lot of the more formalized relationships did not get formed. The structure has just started the last few years.

APPENDIX B  
NEWSPAPER OUTLETS

## Newspaper Outlets to Be Targeted

- The Los Angeles Times
- The Los Angeles Daily News
- Pasadena Star News
- Orange County Register
- Orange County Tribune
- The Desert Sun
- The Press Enterprise, Riverside
- San Bernardino County Sun
- Inland Valley Daily Bulletin
- San Diego Union Tribune

APPENDIX C  
SCHOOL DISTRICTS

## **School Districts to Be Targeted by Counties**

### **Los Angeles County**

- Alhambra City High
- Arcadia Unified
- Azusa Unified
- Beverly Hills Unified
- El Monte Union High
- Hacienda La Puente Unified
- Long Beach Unified
- Rowland Unified
- Pomona Unified
- Walnut Unified
- Rosemead Unified

### **Orange County**

- Anaheim Union High
- Garden Unified
- Huntington Beach Unified
- Irvine Unified
- Santa Ana Unified

### **San Bernardino County**

- Barstow Unified
- Apple Valley Unified
- Fontana Unified
- Redlands Unified

- Rialto Unified
- San Bernardino City Unified
- Upland Unified

**Riverside County**

- Banning Unified
- Hemet Unified
- Lake Elsinore Unified
- Palm Springs Unified
- Riverside Unified

**Ventura County**

- Moorpark Unified
- Simi Valley Unified
- Ventura Unified

**San Diego County**

- Carlsbad Unified
- Escondido Union High
- Oceanside Unified
- Ramona City Unified
- San Diego Unified
- San Marcos Unified
- Vista Unified

## **Universities to Be Targeted**

- California State University Northridge
- California State University Pomona
- Cal Poly Pomona University
- California State University Los Angeles
- California State University San Bernardino
- California State University Dominguez Hills
- California State University Fullerton
- California State University Long Beach
- California State University San Marcos
- San Diego State University
- University of California Irvine
- University of California Los Angeles
- University of California Riverside
- University of California Santa Barbara
- University of California San Diego
- University of Southern California
- Redlands University



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