

LiA Blog Post – Week 1

Hospital Volunteer in Taiwan

NGO: The Buddhist Tzu Chi Charity Foundation

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IMPERIAL

Since it was my first time travelling to the Taipei Tzu-chi hospital, it took me more than an hour and a half (the estimated travelling time) to arrive at the hospital. Because I had never taken public transport (train, MRT, and buses) in the morning in Taiwan, I was shocked by how crowded it was, and I did not know that buses would take longer than the MRT due to the traffic. Even though I departed early, I was still a few minutes late.

Meeting new people



Even though I was late, people in the Taipei Tzu-chi hospital were still very welcoming. I was surprised to meet the wives of the superintendent and the vice superintendent, who usually would not show up in the hospital at all, not even to mention showing up in the office mostly used by volunteers. The ladies were very kind to me and even helped me with putting on the volunteer vest.

First visit to the elderly care centre



After greeting my colleagues in the Department of Humanities and the wives of the superintendent and the vice superintendent, my supervisor took me to the elderly centre, where I would work every morning if there were no special events in the Department of Humanities. I was introduced to the lead and other volunteers (which is different for each weekday), and was instructed to help collect lunchboxes and send them to the kitchen using a trolley.

When I returned from the kitchen, I was then asked to help distribute snacks. The volunteers told me that it is important to make sure that everyone (elderly person and accompanies if any) receives one of each of the two snacks, otherwise they would get mad. After distributing snacks, the elderly then started exercising, and I was encouraged to join while looking after the elderly.

Monthly head nurse meeting



The Nursing Director asked the Department of Humanities to run fun activities as an icebreaker because head nurses usually work in different units and therefore don't know each other well. On Tuesday afternoon, I helped make lucky draws for group sorting. On Wednesday, my colleagues and I went to the meeting room to help with the group sorting and seating. By having people who didn't know each other in the same group, we then started the Bingo games. Even though the head nurses were quiet in the beginning, they became very excited as if they were high school students on a field trip. While I was helping take photos during the activities, I observed the head nurses breaking age barriers and interacting with each other.

Preparing for Hualien trip



Because Tzu-chi is a Buddhist foundation, staff in the Taipei Tzu-chi hospital make regular visit to the Hualien headquarter for religious purposes. Although I am not a Buddhist and I

did not attend the trip, I helped preparing the breakfast, tickets, and raincoats for about 200 people attending the trip.