

FULL TEXT REPORT

A Brief Introduction of the Project

The mission of the Taiwan Love and Hope International Charity is to be the light of love and hope to disadvantaged children and youth. Specifically, our Global Giving project is a startup small home-style orphanage for abandoned and neglected Taiwanese children with severe cerebral palsy. We call this the Love and Hope Children's Home, and it accommodates only ten children. Unfortunately, the children we aim to serve are survivors of physical abuse. The severity of the abuse has left many of them with an equally severe neuromuscular impairment often associated with a group of disorders called cerebral palsy.

In many cases, the abuser is one or both parents, and they have a history of substance abuse. Either one or both parents end up imprisoned or in a rehabilitation center. None of the relatives dare take care of the child with a severe disability. The Taiwan government has no choice but to institutionalize the children soon after they leave the hospital.

Traditional orphanages in Taiwan often turn down these children with severe disabilities since they are considered terminally ill. They are too costly to take care of, and orphanages do not want to risk having any child dying under their supervision. Culturally, since Taiwan is an aging society, it is assumed that there is more government and private sector financial support going to elderly nursing homes. Nursing homes are staffed with residential nurses and caregivers who attend to elderly Taiwanese suffering from various terminal illnesses. Infants and children who survived physical abuse but have severe cerebral palsy get placed in these crowded elderly nursing homes. There is a seeming misconception that cerebral palsy is a degenerative terminal illness. It is important to emphasize that medical literature on cerebral palsy does not consider this neuromuscular disorder a death sentence. Sadly, the children get neglected and forgotten at the nursing homes since family members seldom inquire about their condition. There are instances the children silently suffer a lifetime of repeated physical or sexual abuse from the residents of the elderly nursing home.

Our Global Giving project is a Startup Children's Home for ten special needs children who were previously placed in an elderly nursing home. Without the proper care and love, the children's health condition will worsen as their special developmental needs are not adequately met. We want to provide them a home wherein they can be nurtured as children and not as sick patients.

What Have We So Far Done With Your Generous Support?

In order to get from the Taiwan Ministry of Health and Welfare and other local and national government agencies the necessary licenses to operate, formal applications had to be prepared. In addition, renovations had to be carried out to the space rented by the organization in accordance with the building code, safety code, and other rules and regulations set by the government. The application was a very bureaucratic process. We received help from the enlisted personnel and officers of the Taiwan Naval 124 Fleet. They used their free time to clean the rental space, paint the walls, and do various structural renovations. Different furniture such as beds, cabinets, and tables had to be purchased and set up. The flooring was put into place. Specialized rooms such as a counseling room, play area, kitchen area, and dining area were set up. Specialized equipment for the baby washing area, shower area that was friendly for both caregivers and the special needs children, elevator for the wheelchair, and an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) had to be purchased and placed according to the Taiwan government's specifications. Volunteers helped renovate, buy, assemble, move, and arrange different furniture and equipment to create a comfortable home-style environment for the children.

As all of these were happening, the core leadership team organized various fundraising activities to increase public awareness of the organization's mission and vision. At the same time, the different renovations and equipment required by the government cost much money.

After a series of inspections by representatives of different government agencies, the Taiwan Ministry of Health and Welfare released the license to operate on May 7th. The next steps were to screen and hire the initial caregiving team composed of licensed nannies and social workers. Unfortunately, two weeks after the release of the license to operate, Taiwan saw a surge in COVID-19 cases throughout the country.

The disbursements from the project have so far been primarily used and budgeted for: Children's Home Preparation and Caregiving Team's Initial Salaries.

What Are the Challenges We Are Facing?

Due to the outbreak of COVID-19 cases in Taiwan around mid-May, all of the fundraising activities we initially planned were forcibly canceled. The national government implemented a lockdown. It has really been a difficult struggle. The organization has been surviving through donations from Taiwanese friends and supporters who understand the many struggles we have been putting up with. We also resorted to selling on Facebook cooked meals and factory overruns to cover various expenses, especially staff salaries.

The biggest challenge we currently face is a government policy that requires the Taiwan Love and Hope International Charity to produce a NT\$ 30,000,000.00 (approximately US\$ 1,074,360 @ NT\$ 1 = 0.0358) bond by the end of seven months to keep its license to operate. It is the legally required amount for a charity organization that aims to serve children with disabilities and other special needs. Unfortunately, the Taiwanese government has been complicated and uncompromising regarding this matter despite the COVID-19 pandemic and the smallness of our organization.

Since our capital in this startup project is relatively small and the Taiwanese public is more sympathetic towards the plight of the elderly and adorable orphans, it has been an uphill battle getting supporters and donors who share the same mission and vision in serving the disadvantaged population of children we are trying to reach. Many Taiwanese consider the children with severe neuromuscular impairments a lost cause, and keeping them hidden in elderly nursing homes is justifiable.

The founders and staff members constantly find themselves confronted by cultural stumbling blocks. They are taking on multiple roles, various job responsibilities, and work very long hours. Many of us were already burned out before the lockdown, and it has gotten worse in light of the predicaments we face.

Sincerest Gratitude for Your Generous Support

Despite the insurmountable challenges we face, we remain hopeful. We are committed to loving the children that many in Taiwanese society have failed to love. Every little help can make a huge difference. We are eternally grateful for your support of our Global Giving project. With your generous help, we have so far been able to create a safe and loving environment. We just patiently wait for the government to allow us to rescue the children from elderly nursing homes as soon as the pandemic eases. Together we can make the world a better place for children. We hope you can continuously be part of this journey. Share this project with your friends and family. Together, let us make both love and hope visible to the children. Thank you again for your generous support!