ADN Junior Champion Magazine

Children and Youths Stories from Taiwan





Volume 4



ADN Junior Champion Magazine, Volume 4 *Children and Youths Stories from Taiwan*

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The **Avoidable Deaths Network** (ADN) is a diverse, dynamic, inclusive, and innovative global-local membership network uniting experts, practitioners, and researchers.

Our primary focus is on avoiding human deaths and injuries resulting from natural hazards, naturally-triggered technological hazards, and human-made hazards in low-and middle-income countries.

ADN exists to empower policymakers, researchers, practitioners, and citizens to make better decisions to save lives and achieve sustainable development.

Our purpose directly aligns with the first two global targets of the United Nations Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and we are a member of the Sendai Framework's Voluntary Commitment Platform.

On March 12, 2023, ADN launched a major global campaign: the International Awareness Day for Avoidable Deaths (IAD4AD).

For more details on the global campaign, please visit: https://iad4ad.avoidable-deaths.net/; https://iad4ad.avoidable-deaths.net/

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Message from the Presidents

The ADN *Junior Champion Magazine* is a landmark initiative championed by three exceptional young leaders: Master Arkoneil Ghosh, Miss Prarthona Datta, and Miss Anushka Konar. Our three youth editors have truly become powerful agents of change.

We are excited to launch Volume 4 on October 13, 2025, marking the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction's International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction (IDRR).

The ADN Junior Champion Magazine was first launched in 2023 under the Future Leader Scheme, providing a vital platform for children and youths to share their stories from the frontlines of climate change and extreme weather. Guided by subject-specific experts, each issue explores a timely theme. For this volume, we were honoured to have Dr. Yitzu Lin from National Chi Nan University, Taiwan, serve as our Guest Editor.

This edition directly aligns with the IDDRR theme, "Fund Resilience, Not Disasters," by focusing on earthquakes and typhoons in Taiwan. As a highly disaster-prone region, Taiwan offers a powerful case study in resilience. The Magazine highlights the lived experiences of young people who have faced these risks and clearly demonstrates how local schools are absolutely vital in building community resilience.

The featured articles, written in collaboration with teachers from Chungpu Junior High and Shuang Xi Elementary School, show that proactive measures save lives and significantly reduce the human and economic costs of disasters. Teachers and mentors affirm that amplifying children's reflections is not only vital for today's preparedness, but also for nurturing tomorrow's culture of resilience.

Our sincerest thanks to our Guest Editor, Dr. Yitzu Lin, for expertly collecting these insightful stories for Volume 4. We hope you enjoy reading the articles as much as we did bringing them to you.

Professor Nibedita Ray-Bennett and Dr. Hideyuki Shiroshita

Foreword from the Guest Editor

Located in southwestern Taiwan, Chiayi County is distinguished by its diverse geographic features, ranging from coastal lowlands and plains to hills and soaring mountains exceeding 2,500 meters in elevation. While this topographical richness enhances the region's natural beauty and ecological diversity, it also contributes to a heightened vulnerability to a wide spectrum of natural hazards. Multiple active faults—including the Jioucyongken, Meishan, Dajianshan, and Chukou Faults—intersect the county, making seismic activity a frequent and pressing concern.

Moreover, Chiayi lies directly along the typhoon corridor of the Western Pacific. As such, it is routinely subjected to severe meteorological events, including typhoons, tropical depressions, and intense short-duration rainfall driven by southwest monsoons. These conditions often trigger extensive flooding, landslides, and debris flows, particularly in mountainous areas. Over the decades, Chiayi County has endured numerous major natural disasters, resulting in significant loss of life, widespread infrastructure damage, and long-term economic disruptions. In 2024 alone, the county experienced multiple magnitude 5 earthquakes; in 2025, it was severely affected by flooding caused by torrential rain from a typhoon's outer circulation.

Amidst these persistent threats, Chiayi County faces additional social challenges, including an aging population and a declining birth rate. These demographic shifts underscore the urgency of implementing disaster education programs that address the specific vulnerabilities of school-aged children and the elderly. Strengthening their capacity to respond effectively within the critical 72-hour window following a disaster has become a key strategic priority.

In response, schools across the county, under the guidance of the Chiayi Disaster Education Support Team, have actively engaged in advancing disaster preparedness education. This year, one junior high school and one elementary school were selected to participate in intensive, experiential learning programs focused on disaster risk reduction. Through collaborative partnerships with universities,

intergenerational and cross-grade learning, and international exchanges, students have acquired deeper, more personally meaningful insights into preparedness and community resilience.

We present, with sincere respect and delight, the reflections and learning outcomes of students from Chiayi County who participated in the Big Hands Hold Little Hands initiative. This intergenerational educational program connects elementary and junior high school students with university mentors. Through in-depth dialogue and collaboration, students not only acquired practical disaster preparedness skills but also developed a sense of social responsibility and community solidarity.

Furthermore, this year's initiative extended to Nantou, inviting members of volunteer groups who had served during the 1999 Chi-Chi Earthquake, together with their younger generations, to join this collective writing project. Through intergenerational dialogue and the sharing of family stories, we were able to observe how lived experiences of disaster continue to shape people's understanding of life, safety, and community resilience over time. These writings are not only an extension of disaster education but also a profound journey of memory, healing, and connection—representing a living cultural memory shared by the people of Taiwan.

Dr Yi-Tzu Lin

Assistant Professor, National Chi Nan University

Foreword by the Chiayi County Disaster Education Support Team

Chiayi County, located in southwestern Taiwan, is defined by its dramatic geographical diversity—from coastal lowlands and fertile plains to mountains rising over 2,500 meters. This rich landscape brings substantial exposure to natural hazards. Several active fault lines, including the Jioucyongken, Meishan, Dajianshan, and Chukou Faults, traverse the county, making seismic activity a persistent risk.

Furthermore, Chiayi lies directly in the path of typhoons. Regularly battered by tropical depressions and monsoon rains, our communities—especially those in mountainous regions—are frequently threatened by flooding, landslides, and debris flows. As educators, we recognize that these pervasive environmental risks demand a proactive, localized approach to disaster preparedness.

Beyond geography, Chiayi County faces a critical demographic shift. With over 22.5% of the population aged 65 or older, Chiayi is among the most aged regions in Taiwan. This is compounded by a declining birth rate and the outmigration of younger adults. These trends severely impact disaster response and recovery. Elderly residents, particularly those living alone, struggle with evacuation, communication, and mobility during emergencies. This increases their personal risk and strains rescue personnel. Therefore, disaster education must extend beyond the classroom to engage families and elders, creating an inclusive, age-aware culture of resilience.

Chiayi County's experience with disasters is lived history. Seismic events, from the 1906 Meishan Earthquake to the 1999 Chi-Chi Earthquake, and meteorological disasters like Typhoon Morakot (2009) and the 2018 August 23 Flood, have repeatedly destroyed infrastructure, damaged schools, and claimed lives. The struggle of our most vulnerable populations—seniors—in the aftermath reinforces the urgent need for community-based, intergenerational preparedness strategies.

The combined pressures of declining student enrolment and aging communities have reshaped the role of schools. We are no longer just places of learning—we are

community anchors. Within this expanded role, schools must fundamentally reimagine disaster education. We advocate for the following localized strategies to build resilience from the ground up:

- Preserving Community Memory: Guide students to conduct fieldwork, interview elders, and document past disaster experiences, preserving local knowledge and instilling place-based responsibility.
- Hands-On Learning: Integrate science and social studies with practical activities (simulations, scenario mapping) to help students internalize risks and respond with confidence.
- Intergenerational Outreach: Promote preparedness among older residents through student-led initiatives and aging simulations, leading to more inclusive evacuation planning.
- Practical Risk Reduction on Campus: Regularly maintain drainage, secure equipment, and stock emergency supplies to prevent disruption and loss during events.
- Context-Based Drills: Design drills based on actual local risks and historical incidents, engaging the wider community for shared readiness.
- Modeling Correct Behavior: Adults (teachers, staff, parents) must consistently model correct actions and leadership during drills and actual emergencies.

Disaster preparedness must become a collective way of life. In an era of climate uncertainty and rapid demographic aging, the principles of self-help, mutual aid, and community solidarity are vital. Schools play a central role, not just as institutions, but as catalysts for resilient, connected communities. By embedding awareness into our curricula, routines, and relationships, we equip all generations to respond effectively. Our ultimate goal is simple yet powerful: zero casualties.

Ying-Chieh Hsu

Principal, Shuang Xi Elementary School Chih-Cheng Cheng, Chiayi County Disaster Education Advisory Team

Message from the Editors

Welcome to the fourth issue of the *Junior Champion Magazine*. In this edition, we turn our attention to a challenge that has long shaped life in Taiwan: the everpresent risk of earthquakes.

As editors of this magazine, we feel a deep responsibility to highlight not only the dangers of natural hazards, but also the stories of resilience that emerge from schools and communities. Taiwan's mountainous landscape and position on the Pacific Ring of Fire make it one of the most earthquake-prone regions in the world. Yet, from these risks arises a powerful lesson: resilience is something we must nurture early, especially among children.

This year's United Nations International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction (IDDRR) theme, "Fund Resilience, Not Disasters," echoes throughout this Volume. The voices you will read belong to schoolchildren who reflect on their experiences of earthquake drills, preparedness activities, and lessons learned at home and in their classrooms. Their stories remind us that resilience is not built in the aftermath of disaster but in the everyday habits of learning, adapting, and preparing.

You will encounter narratives of fear transformed into courage, of knowledge shared between students and teachers, and of a new generation determined to shape a safer tomorrow. Their reflections demonstrate that children are not passive recipients of risk, they are active participants in creating solutions, raising awareness, and protecting their communities.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Hideyuki Shiroshita and Prof. Nibedita Ray-Bennett, Presidents of the Avoidable Deaths Network, for giving us the opportunity to learn more about earthquakes in Taiwan and for ensuring that the voices of children can be heard across the world. We are equally grateful to our guest editor, Dr. Yitzu Lin, for generously sharing her expertise and guiding us with insightful articles. Her support has been invaluable in shaping this Volume and strengthening its message of resilience.

We hope that as you read these accounts, you will reflect on your own role in supporting resilience, whether through education, investment, or community action. Every proactive step taken today reduces the losses of tomorrow. To fund resilience is to protect futures.

We are proud to bring you these stories in Volume 4 of the *Junior Champion Magazine*, and we invite you to listen closely to the voices of Taiwan's children, voices that call on us all to prepare, adapt, and build a world where disasters do not define our destiny.

Arkoneil Ghosh, Anushka Konar, and Prarthona Datta

Typhoon Danas

Hou Ai-Yun (候艾妘)

Typhoon Danas affected Taiwan on 4 July 2025. Budai Town in Chiayi County had serious damages. All of Chiayi lost power, and the blackout lasted about four or five days. Luckily, my dad borrowed a generator from his company.

On the first day of the blackout, we went to Budai to see my dad's boats. Many of them were blown away. After that, we went to 7-Eleven to buy instant noodles and water.

On the second day, we went to Puzi City to see where the power poles had fallen. But we had already finished all the noodles, so we went to the supermarket to buy more. It rained when we came out.

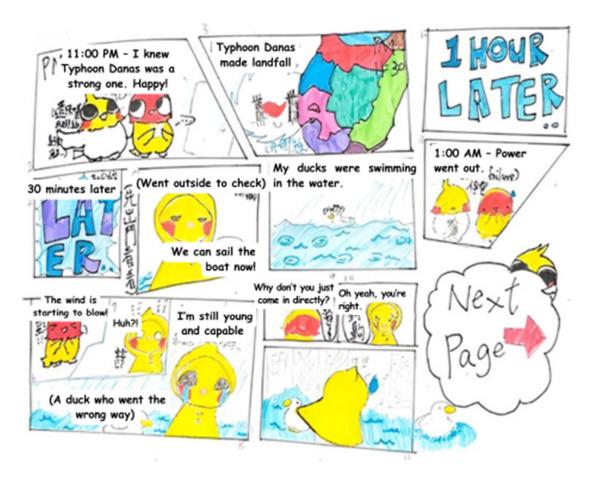
On the fourth day, the power finally came back! Our family was so happy. The first thing we did was check the food in the fridge to see if it went bad. Luckily, it was still okay.

We also went to Lu Cao to get some dry ice for the fridge. But right after we brought it home, the electricity came back. My grandpa said if you put dry ice in water, it makes bubbles. So we put it in water and played with the smoke on the table. It was so much fun!

Typhoon Danas caused a lot of damage in Chiayi and Tainan. Roofs flew away and houses were broken. It was also the first typhoon in 120 years to land in Chiayi. In Kouhu, Yunlin, the wind speed was level 17, the strongest in history.

In the past, people in the southwest coast were mostly worried about floods. But this time, strong winds blew away roofs, broke power lines, and caused big blackouts. These are problems we should pay more attention to. I hope next time these problems can be solved faster. **Go Taiwan!**

Age 11 5th Grade, Shuangxi Elementary School, Chiayi



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The Strength After Disaster

Hsiao Wan-Hsin (蕭宛芯)

In recent years, many natural hazard disasters have happened around the world, like earthquakes, floods, and tsunamis. Each one is unforgettable for people.

In 2009, Typhoon Morakot hit Taiwan. It brought shocking rainfall and strong winds, causing terrible floods and landslides in southern Taiwan. Jiasian in Kaohsiung was badly damaged, and people's lives were greatly affected.

Actually, this wasn't something I paid attention to before. I didn't really know what Jiasian went through. Even if I knew, I might have just looked at it and forgotten. But then, by coincidence, when my school was recruiting for the tug-of-war team, the teacher told us the story of the "Jiasian Elementary School Tug-of-War Team." It surprised me, because it reminded me of what my grandma had just said—"韌命 (tenacious life)" in Taiwanese.

Jiasian Elementary was seriously damaged by Typhoon Morakot. After the school buildings were rebuilt, they formed a tug-of-war team, hoping to help the students walk out of the shadow of disaster. And they really did! In 2012, they won the second place in the national competition. This was achieved even though they didn't have enough equipment or money, and their homes and school were still being rebuilt. The students trained hard together, with one heart, and proved their resilience.

A few days ago, "Mantou Uncle" from our community gave us a disasterpreparedness lesson. He said that when disasters come, the most important thing is to show true feelings in times of hardship—help each other, overcome difficulties together, and face a new life.

Yesterday, I went for a walk with my grandma. She kept talking about her memories of escaping during the 921 Earthquake. I felt so lucky that "I didn't experience it." But Grandma knocked me on the head and reminded me: we must always learn to

protect ourselves. No matter what happens, the most important thing is—staying alive!

Age 11

5th Grade, Nang Guang Elementary School, Nantou County

If Doraemon* Were My Friend

Wang Chen-An (王晨安)

I was thinking, how great it would be if Doraemon were my friend!

A few days ago, "Mantou Uncle" came to our community class. He said that if a disaster happens and we need to evacuate, we must have an emergency bag with things that keep us alive. Just put everything in the bag and carry it when we escape.

That same evening, my younger sister was watching the Doraemon cartoon. Dad kept scolding her: "You don't do homework, you don't eat dinner, you just watch TV!" My sister answered back, "If you were Doraemon, that would be great! Then I could have whatever I wanted!"

Suddenly I thought—oh yeah! If Doraemon were my friend, everything would be fine! Even if I had to evacuate, I could bring Doraemon with me. Then I could get anything I wanted—like a flashlight, cookies, or bottled water. That would be amazing!

I don't know when Doraemon will become my friend. But in real life, in a few days, "Mantou Uncle" is going to check our emergency bags. So I still need to find my real-life Doraemon—my dad—to teach me how to prepare the things for the bag. Otherwise, that super strict "Mantou Uncle" will definitely scold me again!

*Doraemon is an extremely popular Japanese manga and anime franchise that has become a beloved cultural icon in Taiwan.

Age11

5th Grade, Nang Guang Elementary School, Nantou County

Taiwan hit by Typhoon Danas and Torrential Rainfall

CHENG WEI JIE (鄭維杰)

This summer, Typhoon Danas and heavy rainfall caused serious damage in southern Taiwan. I live in Chiayi, so I could truly feel the inconvenience and fear brought by these disasters. From these experiences, I understood that disaster prevention should not only be considered when the disaster comes, but must start in daily life and from the actions of everyone.

When Typhoon Danas hit, I was in Linkou attending the Marie Curie Science Camp. The four-day, three-night camp was suddenly cut short due to the approaching storm. My original plan for the fourth day was to have dinner with my family in Taipei before heading to Kaohsiung. However, the sudden announcement about the typhoon forced me to frantically refresh the high-speed rail system's website, terrified that all southbound trains would be cancelled.

Luckily, I got a ticket and went home safely. However, when the train arrived in Kaohsiung, there was heavy rain, very different from the sunny weather in the north. As soon as I walked out of the station, I was wet like a drowned rat. On the way home, I found that vegetables and instant noodles in the supermarket were already sold out. At that moment, I truly felt how important "disaster supplies" are.

During the days when the typhoon moved north, I was in Tainan attending another camp. Because of the rain, almost every day I went to class with wet pants. When the typhoon landed in Chiayi, I was very nervous, because my parents were not at home, and the flower pots on the balcony were not collected or fixed. Fortunately, only a few pots fell down, but no damage was caused to the neighbors. However, my friends and relatives in Chiayi suffered from power cuts, water cuts, leaking roofs, and broken covers of their houses. These things reminded me that even if the typhoon is not in front of us, we should not be careless.

The 728 heavy rain made me realize that "disasters often happen when we don't expect them." At that time, it was the first day of the Disaster Prevention Youth Ambassador training. According to my plan, I needed to take the high-speed rail, but at midnight, thunder and lightning caused a power cut in my area, so the rolling door of our garage could not open. I almost could not go out. Thanks to my neighbor's help, I caught the train. Because of this small event, my family and I started to think seriously: should we change the rolling door, or prepare a home generator, so that we will not be trapped at an important time?

These experiences made me realize that disaster prevention must start from daily life, not only when the disaster already comes. Typhoons or heavy rain cannot be avoided, but if we keep more awareness and do more preparation in daily life, we can protect ourselves and our family at the key moment, and also reduce the effect on our community and neighbors.

Age 16

11th Grade, Taiwan Fu Jen Private High School, Chiayi

A Taiwanese Student's Disaster Preparedness Exchange in Japan

TU CHIH-WEI (涂智崴)

I'm a ninth-grade student from Chungpu Junior High School in Chiayi County, Taiwan. While practicing sports at school, our head teacher mentioned an opportunity to go to Japan for a disaster preparedness exchange. We would get to learn about their disaster drills and share our earthquake experiences from Taiwan with Japanese students. This is why I was so excited to join this exchange. I wanted to understand the differences between disaster prevention in Japan and Taiwan and share what we've learned from major earthquakes in Taiwan.

When we arrived in Japan, the first school we visited was Susaki Junior High. The first thing we did there was learn how to use their special evacuation helmets and about the disaster drill we were about to do. The drill started with the sound of a tsunami warning. Once the sound stopped, we had to run to a high point more than 100 meters above sea level, which was a 2-kilometer run. We had to complete it in under 10 minutes.

After the drill, we went to the school auditorium to share our disaster drills with the Japanese students. We talked about how we hoped others would help us during a natural disaster.

The next day, we went to Taiheiyo Gakuen for various disaster preparedness classes and learned together with Japanese students. First, the teacher showed us where their evacuation shelters and equipment were. Then, back in the classroom, they showed us the items in a disaster kit and what each item is for.

After that, the teacher showed us a video of a tsunami hitting. It was so realistic it felt like we were experiencing it ourselves. We then split into three groups: English, Vegetarian, and Art. We talked with the Japanese students and learned how to share food equally during a disaster to reduce waste.

In the afternoon, we did a flood disaster simulation. We walked on things like marbles, paper balls, and small plastic balls, which simulated the dangerous objects we might encounter under our feet during a flood. This helped me understand the various dangers we might face when a tsunami hits.

Disaster drills are very important, no matter if you're in Taiwan or Japan, because no one can predict when a major earthquake or tsunami will happen. My teacher once said that big earthquakes and tsunamis often strike when people have forgotten about them, so we must always be prepared. I'm very thankful to my teachers for arranging this exchange. It gave me the chance to learn so much valuable knowledge.

Age 15

9th grader student, Chungpu Junior High School, Chiayi County





Source: 9th grade students of Chungpu Junior High School in Chiayi County

A Grand Tour of Resilience: The Taiwan-Japan Disaster Preparedness Exchange

Yea-Wen Liu (劉雅雯)

The Taiwanese writer Yang Mu once said, "A young person's trip shouldn't be purely for leisure. They must travel with a serious mindset of seeking and trying something new—an exploratory, even adventurous, spirit... they should humbly absorb every bit of knowledge. This knowledge, in turn, should nurture their compassion and imagination, helping them grasp the rich material of life as they grow. A grand tour is an adventure into the unknown..." This philosophy of exploration launched our Taiwan-Japan exchange, focused on disaster preparedness.

Our teachers, acting as mentors, ensured student preparation went beyond basic lectures. Students researched Japanese culture, the schools we'd visit, and their disaster prevention classes. This approach mirrors the risk assessment we teach: preparing for the unknown enhances safety. This is not merely an attitude; it is concrete action.

For us in Chungpu Township, Chiayi County, typhoons and earthquakes are common hazards. While students learn about the 921 Earthquake from books, all the teachers experienced that terrifying event firsthand. This deep, personal caution drives our commitment to preparedness. Taiwan's earthquake safety has continuously evolved, moving to the "drop, cover, and hold on" method and promoting home emergency kits. The goal is to continuously raise public awareness. I am grateful to be in Taiwan, knowing our country prioritizes safety during a disaster.

Before the exchange, we held an orientation for parents and students to build confidence. We shared the itinerary, but more importantly, we detailed the school's preparations, potential scenarios, and the necessity of mutual aid. Trust and confidence are the essential foundation for any successful journey.

During the exchange, students analyzed the differences in preparedness between Taiwan and Japan. They searched, observed, integrated, and reflected—applying core competencies. Our students were particularly impacted by the fact that Japan's Shikoku region also faces tsunamis. The in-depth courses and drills at Susaki Junior High School and Pacific Gakuen were an unforgettable lesson for both students and teachers.

The saying, "It is better to travel ten thousand miles than to read ten thousand books," perfectly captures the value of this exchange. It was a rich, once-in-a-lifetime learning experience. We are incredibly grateful to our principal, the teachers, the guiding professors, and the Japanese schools for their hospitality.

This Taiwan-Japan exchange lasted 8 days and 7 nights, but by embracing a "grand tour" mindset, the lessons in resilience and global citizenship we gained will last a lifetime.

Teacher, Chung Pu Junior High School, Chiayi County

Reflection on Promoting Disaster Education in School

Chou Yi-Chung (周宛緹)

As a teacher in Taiwan, a region frequently affected by natural hazard disasters such as earthquakes, typhoons, and floods, I deeply understand the importance of disaster education. In our school, we believe that building awareness and preparedness in our students is not only a part of our curriculum, but a crucial responsibility we carry to protect lives.

Over the years, we have actively promoted disaster education through various programmes. Regular emergency drills, disaster awareness lessons, and the preparation of emergency backpacks are now integrated into our school routine. Students not only learn about different types of disasters, but they also understand the appropriate actions to take before, during, and after such events. These practices help build confidence and a sense of responsibility in our students.

What makes our approach more meaningful is the emphasis on experiential learning. We bring students to disaster education centres across Taiwan, where they can see real-life simulations and practise survival skills in interactive environments. These visits help transform theoretical knowledge into practical ability. One of the most impactful experiences was our visit to Japan's Ikebukuro Life Safety Learning Center and Tokyo Disaster Prevention Park. These facilities offer hands-on training, such as earthquake simulations and fire escape practices, which deeply impressed our students and broadened their global understanding of disaster resilience.

What's most heartwarming is that the students do not just learn for themselves—they bring this knowledge home. Many have shared their experiences with their families and even helped their parents prepare emergency kits and rehearse evacuation plans. In this way, disaster education extends beyond the classroom and into the community.

I believe that disaster education should not be a one-time lesson but a continuous process rooted in daily life. It is about cultivating a mindset of readiness, encouraging problem-solving under pressure, and nurturing empathy during crises. By instilling these values early, we empower the next generation to face uncertainty with calmness and courage.

Promoting disaster education has become one of the most meaningful parts of my teaching journey. Seeing students take ownership of their safety and influence their families fills me with hope. In a world where climate change and unpredictable disasters are increasingly common, our duty as educators is to prepare children not only academically but also for the realities of life. Disaster education saves lives, strengthens communities, and reminds us all of the importance of caring for one another. It is a lesson that every child deserves.

5th Grade Homeroom Teacher, Shuang Xi Elementary School, Puzi City



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