

## Stay put, help out

Written by Taipei Times Editorial  
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As the Dragon Boat Festival long weekend nears, there is a sense of uneasiness that there might be a travel frenzy that would exacerbate Taiwan's COVID-19 outbreak.

From President Tsai Ing-wen's (蔡英文) plea: "If you love your hometown and your family, please stay put," to the popular Internet post: "If you go home to worship your ancestors this year, you'll be the one worshiped next year," public figures and other Internet users have expended a great deal of effort persuading people not to travel during the holiday.

The Tainan City Government is offering cash incentives to people who return their tickets, while others have floated ideas such as combining this holiday with the Mid-Autumn Festival holiday.

It is encouraging that most are following suit: The Taiwan Railways Administration on Monday said that there has been a 70 to 80 percent return rate on tickets for this weekend, with only about 5 percent of the seats reserved. Many fewer tickets have been sold for the Taiwan High-Speed Rail as well.

Hopefully, all of the nation's residents will rally and weather this crisis together. Of course, there are exceptions and those who need to go home should not be stigmatized.

With the extra time and money saved from staying put, those who can might want to support those who are seriously affected by the outbreak, and the people and organizations who are trying to help them. For many disadvantaged people nationwide, the outbreak is much worse than having their holiday plans dashed — and those who are doing their best to help them should receive more recognition.

For example, the Eden Social Welfare Foundation (伊甸社會福利基金會) yesterday said that its bakeries, run by people with disabilities, are struggling to sell their Dragon Boat Festival gift packs — sales are down more than 70 percent — as many businesses have canceled orders.

A similar challenge is facing the Down Syndrome Foundation, which continues to provide

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services despite a sharp drop in sales at its Abrazo bakery workshop.

Charities in general have been hit hard since the pandemic began — and who does not like to receive cookies?

With school canceled for the rest of the academic year, it is easy to forget that not every household has access to the Internet or possesses the electronic devices needed to keep their child current with their studies.

World Vision Taiwan said that 83 percent of the households it serves lack Internet access and 43 percent do not have an electronic device for personal use, while 22 percent do not have either. Civic groups and businesses are working together to help alleviate the need — and this is also a worthy venture to consider supporting.

Mental health is an issue that might be overlooked in times of crisis, but it is even more critical during the outbreak, as emotions and stress levels run high. Many are sure to lose access to therapy or feel uncomfortable going to a clinic, and psychologists are calling for the relaxation of requirements for online therapy.

Meanwhile, the Taiwan Counseling Psychologist Union is offering one-time free online sessions until the end of the month.

This covers just a fraction of those who truly need help, and those who are staying indoors this weekend should try to see what they can do.

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