

Louis Choi's Story

After the devastating Sichuan earthquake in China, Cisco employee Louis Choi personally helped raise \$1.3 million for relief.

Louis Choi

Hi, I'm Louis Choi, Program Lead for the Connecting Sichuan Program, and I'm very fortunate to work for a company that allows me to follow my destiny. I spent much of my childhood working hard in factories and I wanted to find a way to make things better for other children.

In 2001, I discovered a great opportunity to make a difference. I had been working at Cisco for a few years with a group of employees to donate a day's salary to Hope School Project, to build schools for children living in poverty. They organize donations for five Hope schools and coordinate clothes donations so children in rural villages can stay warm during their long walks to school.

When China's most devastating earthquake struck the Sichuan Province last May, my passion for volunteering went into overdrive. I contacted friends and Cisco colleagues around the world and together we raised \$1.3 million in relief efforts.

I was one of the first volunteers from Cisco to arrive in Sichuan and I had nightmares for weeks about the destruction and death, but I believe helping the Sichuan people is my destiny, since my mother and grandparents came to Sichuan as World War II refugees and lived there for eight years.

Soon after arriving in Sichuan, I left my Cisco consulting job to support our Connecting Sichuan initiative and help the province rebuild after the earthquake. It was very hard to walk away from my career, but I'm so proud to say that in my first three months on the team, I lead the opening of two 21st Century schools. These schools include state-of-the-art networking technologies that connect the students with other children and teachers around the world.

In May, my mother joined me in Sichuan Province. It was the first time she had come back to Sichuan since she took shelter there from the war. She is very proud of the work we have accomplished and she is glad that this tragedy is being turned into hope.

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