

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

For Projects Abroad Vietnam 



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VOLUNTEER STORIES

Teaching experience at Nam Thanh Cong Primary School,
written by Anna Andersen, teaching volunteer, Australia

VOLUNTEER STORY

There are more than 3 400 reasons to love turning up to help with the teaching of conversational English at Nam Thanh Cong Primary School, Hanoi. At home in Brisbane, our daughter Jane and I had difficulty picturing a typical Projects Abroad day, she therefore went to the Salvation Centre Cambodia in Phnom Penh and I came to Hanoi and will meet again at the Singapore Airport on our return.

My placement is an absolute gem! One welcoming teacher assigned as my caretaker to 20 different classes with 40 to 60 enthusiastic students in each class, with a classroom teacher who is dedicated to making a difference, transforming each day into a refreshing pleasure. I love the 7:45 am all school exercise-to-music routines, the thunderous sound of lunchtime free play and the surreal silence at nap time. Seeing rows of primary school children sound asleep in the middle of the day reminds me that the Vietnamese day is culturally different and necessarily appropriate.



In the classroom, students work through *Family and Friends*, a leveled textbook and workbook covering reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. The current Year 5 students are the first group to have followed the program through and their confidence, ability and accuracy are soaring. From the conversational perspective, curriculum CD's, songs, role play, games, question and answer, and picture discussion are some of the ways the enjoyable 40 minute lessons progress. Our bi-lingual Noel assembly was an overwhelming success, giving testament to the importance of developing and implementing English as a second language. *Let It Go* from Disney's *Frozen* was a definite crowd pleaser.

Here is an example of dedication to education. New Year brings with it two holidays, Thursday the 1st of January and Friday the 2nd of January, added to the weekend with the Friday holiday needed to be earned. Saturday the 27th of December 2014, school was open for business!

Best wishes to all contemplating a Projects placement. For me, it has been a 'top of the mountain' experience.



By Anna Andersen, Teaching volunteer,
Australia

VOLUNTEER STORIES

One month experience at the Thuy An Rehabilitation Center

As the communication officer of Projects Abroad Vietnam, I have an amazing chance to meet volunteers coming from different parts of the world and get to hear their stories at our different placements. The passion and dedication of Morgane, a 26 year old French girl, a medical volunteer at Thuy An Rehabilitation Center has made a huge impression.

She studied medicine and her major is rehabilitation. "When I just arrived, I was really enthusiastic, as I can have different points of view on my specialization. The office explained to me everything I needed to know about the country and workplace, and only 2 days later I arrived at the Thuy An Rehabilitation Center", Morgane shares. The children at the Rehabilitation Centre are very friendly, and most of all they love foreign volunteers.



The assistance of Morgane and other medical volunteers not only reduces the work of the local doctors, but also provide a huge emotional support for the children at the centre.

Having the chance to visit Morgane at her work placement, I've noticed her eagerness not only to practice her knowledge, but also to learn the way people work here. "I worked a lot in physical therapy department. They are really nice and can speak Basic English. They didn't ask me many questions about my practice, but they observed a lot and in return I learnt a lot by observing them too", she explains.

The children at the Rehabilitation Centre are very friendly, and most of all they love foreign volunteers. The assistance of Morgane and other medical volunteers not only reduces the work of the local doctors, but also provide a huge emotional support for the children at the centre.

Most of the time Morgane works with children ages ranging from four to fifteen years old. At the beginning, she says it was a little bit difficult to identify their differences. That's why she and other medical volunteers decided to create files about each children, which helped staff and others volunteers to keep track on what has been done and set future goals. "I was worried at first as the children don't speak English, but with a few words of Vietnamese, they learned quickly, and keep making progress in doing the exercises!" Morgane recalls.

There's a translator available at the Thuy An Rehabilitation Centre to assist Morgane and other medical volunteers with complex exercises. "The staff and the translator helped me a lot with my work and daily life. I was engaged in the daily life of the children as well, for example helping children with disabilities to eat", Morgane adds. "I was able to make friends with others volunteers as well and together we've learnt a lot. I really enjoyed the work because it has brought me lots of practices. It also changes my practical knowledge in France", Morgane continues.

Morgane hopes she can come back to Thuy An one day to meet the children again as they grow up, and the staff to exchange about their practices. "Even though during my stay I only worked a few times with doctors, it has given me chance to practice a lot. I really enjoyed this place and learned a lot about work and life", Morgane states.



Social dinner: Cook Vietnamese springrolls for Vietnamese Lunar New Year holiday

One of Vietnamese customs is to eat a special inner before the Vietnamese Lunar New Year, Tet holiday. As the Tet holiday is approaching, volunteers from Projects Abroad had a fun night discovering how to cook Vietnamese spring rolls, a traditional dish commonly eaten on the Tet Holiday.

All the volunteers gathered at a volunteer house to prepare the special meal together. Vietnamese spring rolls are quite easy to make. The most important thing is to remember the main ingredients and the right proportion. In order to facilitate the cooking process, volunteers are split into two teams. One team sliced and mixed the ingredients. The other prepared the special sauce to eat along with the dish. After these two main steps are completed, all that is needed is to wrap the ingredients with the rice paper and then fry the spring rolls in a hot pan.

After a few hours of learning and practicing making the dish, everybody got hungry. Despite the different sizes, shapes and forms of the spring rolls, all the volunteers enjoyed their handmade products and had a great time celebrating the Lunar New Year early.



WHAT'S ON: MARCH CALENDAR

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--|--------------------|------------------|
| 1 David & Nancy arrive | 2 | 3 | 4 Elli & Toa arrive | 5 Olwen arrives | 6 | 7 Kyle arrives |
| 8 Happy Women's Day!!! | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 Visit Vietnamese Women 's Museum | 13 | 14 Aliaa arrives |
| 15 Veronika, Corina & Hilde arrive | 16 Celine arrives | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 Care workshop | 21 |
| 22 Kien-Minh arrives | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 Community Day- Deliver milk to NHTM | 27 Sahinde arrives | 28 |
| 29 Ben arrives | 30 Clare & Frederique arrive | 31 Medical Quiz!!!! | | | | |

March 12 – Social event: Visit Vietnamese Women's Museum and get to know more about Vietnam history

March 20 — Care Workshop on Occupational Therapy

March 26 — Deliver free milk to children in NHTM (National Hospital of Traditional Medicine)

March 31– Medical Quiz