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Message from Counsellor, Education, Science and Training For Kookaburra Chatter 2007

VGAC HCMC GALA 2007

The Kookaburra Chatter 2007 marks another exciting year of activities for the VGAC. Since its establishment in 2000, the number of Australian alumni and VGAC members has grown significantly. The VGAC continues to be an important strategic partner of Australian Education International in advocating the quality of the Australian education experience. Looking at the significant steps that the VGAC has taken toward today's status, I am so happy at having a third chance to welcome all VGAC members to this year's Kookaburra chatter.

I would like to congratulate all of you on the past year of interesting activities and wish you an even more successful year ahead. It's great to see that an Australian qualification is a concrete milestone of a promising career path and lifelong personal development for every alumnus.

I am confident that the education and training relationship between the two countries will just keep getting stronger and stronger with the continuous growth of the Australian alumni network being an important part of the strengthening relationship.

The upcoming year promises to be an even busier year in terms of activities for AEI Vietnam, and the VGAC will continue to be on our agenda. Australian Education International pledges to continue being the major sponsor of VGAC and I look forward to welcoming more members of VGAC and sharing exciting stories of your studies and future success.



Message from National Chairman

Dear Alumni Fellows,

At the role of VGAC National Chairman handed over from Dr. Ly Qui Trung, I am honoured to update our club's activities during last year and the first half of 2007.

All VGAC's activities are aimed to support members to have potential career opportunities and great business relationships with others. We have organised successful galas in HCMC, Hanoi and Danang; charities for disable and disadvantage children in Hanoi, Cantho and HCMC; sport tournament; stock exchange workshops; year-end and Christmas get-together parties.

Website www.VGAC.net has been upgraded with various new features. It will help you interact, share experience, join groups with others more easily. Members, who have their own businesses can be partners of VGAC in various forms in order to bring benefits for VGAC, members, and alumni businesses. Please contact Ms. Van VGAC National Coordinator at VGAC@vnn.vn for further information.

In next few months, VGAC will collaborate with other professional organisations to run an alumni survey, Australian Alumni Awards, workshops, and seminars in order to better understand your expectations and promote Australian education and our members, please participate with us to get your benefits, and VGAC's activities cannot be successful without your support.

There was a rapid change for our club in 2006, VGAC was not only bigger because more and more fresh graduates join our club, but also stronger due to many senior alumni have succeeded in their businesses such: Pho24, Gloria Jeans, VinaGame, FTA, etc.... This becomes a challenge for VGAC's activities to meet expectations of both fresh and senior members. VGAC's committee teams are big but still do not enough resources to meet all those expectations. Therefore, we are very pleased if you can join in the standing committee to build a stronger and bigger VGAC in the near future,

Taking this opportunity, I would like to thank Dr. Ly Qui Trung for his great contributions in the past, I also appreciate supports from Australian Education International, sponsors and committee members for their contributions to the development of VGAC.

I wish you all a happy year and a successful career ahead.

Nguyen Phi Dung
National Chairman - VGAC

A wonderful time in Melbourne, Australia

My memory of Australia reflects the diversity of its people, languages and cultures. It is the mirror of its society and cultural heritage. I have been thinking about Australia and memorizing them in my mind. From the smell of take away coffee shops in Swanston Street, oily Chinese foods in the heart of the city, Botanic Gardens and Fitzroy park, wonderful St. Kilda road with beautiful trees along, decorated by colorful lights at night to a taste of Italy in Lygon Street where my place is nearby, all of them are mixing up the multicultural environment of the Aussie Garden State with Melbourne style city. I was particularly interested in walking along St. Kilda road at night, and enjoying seeing the peace and silence of the city, I left a piece of heart there... the people, the friends, the city itself; I enjoyed the time in Australia, learnt a lot from coping with unexpected difficulties to simple things in the life, from academic skills to independence. After a couple of months departing Australia, I had enough time to realize how much I changed and I learnt during these years. I loved walking across the Fitzroy park, watching kids in uniform, running and playing games with each others, and laying my back on the side of fresh green grass along the South Bank river after work or during study break. It made me relaxed and smelled the life. I also had chances to travel to other states but Melbourne is the place I like most with moment of peace and elegance.

Time being in Vietnam, I am currently working for ACORN Marketing & Research Consultants and explore the many diversified industries which acquire the research involved. I try to apply what I have learnt from the University and experience my work. The work is quite exciting and fit what I learnt luckily, and sometimes, I have chances to work with Australian Clients. My current job helps me build up my experience in the career path as well as sharpen my mind.

VGAC brings me many friends, connections and widen my relationship. I would like to take this opportunity to thank VGAC and hope you enjoy the Gala night coming soon in July, 2007. Why do not you join VGAC and come to see ME. I wish you ALL the BEST in the future.

Tran Anh Quang



Group meeting strategic marketing



Mel-State library



Can tho Charity

Charity trip, Can tho

Last Febuary, members and committee members of VGAC had a chance to visit Can Tho and donated some food, books, clothes and money for disable children. At 5am, almost people were present at AEI's office and after loading all stuffs, we departed. We sang and played

game in order to know each other well during the time on bus. It took nearly 5 hours to come to school where all disable children were staying. We had a good time with these children. At first, we gave them all our gifts. After that, we played game together. These children could not speak and hear, so we used chalk to write down and then they taught us how to use our hands to explain or answer the questions. Besides, they studied English as well and some VGAC members asked them how they call "cái bãng", "áo thun", etc in English. Some questions they could answer but some they could not. I thought they were very happy and learned some new English words on that day. On the other hand, we also felt happy because our small distribution can help some unlucky people or families to prepare their Tet's holiday and we really enjoyed this meaningful trip.



Career workshop in Ho Chi Minh City

Prestigious Australian Alumni Award celebrates the 35th Year of Vietnam Australia Diplomatic Relation

Every year approximately 2,500 or more Vietnamese students arrive in Australia for further education at different levels: school, college or university. They have built a popular community amongst international and local Australian students. Vietnamese are regarded hard working, high achieving, sensible and very friendly. Coming back to Vietnam, they are playing a significant role in integrating the country to the world economy, and undoubtedly consolidate the long term relation between Australia and Vietnam. Nearly 4,000 of them are now members of the Vietnamese Graduates from Australia Club (VGAC).

Launched in November 2008, supported by the Australian Embassy, the Australian Consulate and the Vietnam Australia Friendship Association, the Vietnamese Graduates from Australia Club will initiate the prestigious Australian Alumni Award to honour Vietnamese graduates who delivered outstanding achievements in:

- University studies and research in Australia
- Developing an innovative and successful business in Vietnam
- Pioneering a community development program in Vietnam, and
- Science research and development in Vietnam.

Vietnamese graduates, whether living overseas or in Vietnam, are all eligible to register to become a VGAC member (website www.vgac.net) and to email a self-nomination file to vgac@vnn.vn that includes:

- A letter of self nomination
- A resume with picture
- Australian university transcript and parchment
- University references
- Other education qualifications and certificates (if any)
- Employment certifications and references
- Published articles or books (if any)

The Award, to be announced in March 2008, will showcase how exceptional Vietnamese students are and will be an invaluable asset to winners' personal profile, as well as the Australian universities they graduate from.

For detailed information, please look up www.vgac.net

Open up Career Opportunities for Vietnamese Graduates from Australia

In January 2008, the first Career Day, jointly organized by the Vietnamese Graduates from Australia Club, SHD Recruitment Consultancy Company, the Ho Chi Minh City Overseas Vietnamese Student Club and other English speaking alumni clubs, will be an important event of VGAC in this 35-year celebration of Vietnam Australia Diplomatic Relations.

Participated by over 30 giant multinational and reputable Vietnamese corporations including Unilever, Intel, East Asia Bank, Samsung ..., the event will match-make fresh and 'old' graduates with attractive employment vacancies, identified as remuneration competitive and providing excellent staff training and development. It is expected that approximately 200 graduates will take part in this event.

Even if students are still in Australia or overseas, so long as they are coming back home before Tet, they are all welcome to bring transcripts, references and certificates, together with a concise resume to see prospective employers at this Career Day.

For updates on time and location of the Career Day, Please look up www.vgac.net

For registration, kindly contact Ms Cam Van at Vgac@vnn.vn, telephone (84-8) 825 6561.

Vietnamese Graduates from Australia Club

www.vgac.net



Memory with VGAC



Ho Chi Minh Gala 2006



Ha Noi 2007



Da Nang Gala 2007



Ho Chi Minh Gala 2007

Memory with VGAC



Charity Can Tho

Charity Can Gio



Charity Da Nang

Clean up the world



CPA Event



Seminar 2006 in HCMC



Mid-Autumn Charity



Grand opening ceremony university of Da Nang and University of Queensland



The Ambassador - Friendly

I have got four opportunities of meeting him within over a year. I firstly met him at Vietnamese Graduates from Australia Club (VGAC) - Hanoi Gala hold in March, 2006 at Dawoo Hotel where he emphasized in his speech that we ourselves, alumni are the ambassadors. And the second time we met each other was in March 2007 at VGAC-Hanoi Gala. It was that forum he confirmed the significant contribution of the Australian alumni to the friendship between the two nations: Vietnam and Australia. However, it is not what we want to describe him here. What have really made a strong impression on us is that his presence during at the Galas. At the two Hanoi Gala 2006 and 2007, he had been staying with us almost until the last minutes. His simple diplomatic etiquette makes us more and more admire, respect and be closer to him. As a result, he has, to us, achieved his role as an ambassador thanks to his simplicity - the simplicity of fully experienced and courteous diplomat.

But most impressive is his visit to the University of Danang in April, 2007. In such a short visit, he devoted his time to welcome me as the chairman of VGAC-Danang Chapter as being promised when he could not be present at previously organized VGAC- Danang Gala. In this meeting, we had a really informal talk with each other. And in his recent visit and participation in the Grand Opening Ceremony of University of Danang - University of Queensland - English Language Institute hold on June 16th 2007 in Danang City, Vietnam, where I was invited as the current president of UQ Alumni of Central Vietnam, even though it was just "hello meeting", for us, good impressions on him - Mr. Bill Tweddell, the Australian ambassadors to Vietnam are increasingly reinforced.

Dr. LE TANTHI,
VGAC-Danang Chapter

Two Typical Faces From Vgac-danang Chapter

One is Ms. Giao Chi, currently vice-dean, English Department, College of Foreign Languages, the University of Danang (UD). Like most other colleagues, Chi has got an MA in Applied Linguistics before getting another MA in TESOL at the University of Queensland (UQ). Since coming back from UQ, she has been nominated as Secretary then Vice President to the UQ Alumni Association of Central Vietnam and lately as Vice Chairwoman of VGAC-Danang chapter. She has been one of the major contributors to the successful Galas for VGAC-Danang chapters since 2003 and she was awarded a certificate of merit for this effort by the Central Committee of VGAC. Even though she was trained as a college teacher, she has been well-known as an interpreter, as well. She has recently become one of the most hunted interpreters for conferences, workshops in Danang. As a qualified, experienced and responsible teacher, her interesting lectures have much interested students at universities over the country. And she has been now recommended by the UQ Alumni Association of Central Vietnam to compete for the international alumni award of the year 2007 offered by the UQ.



Meeting with general consulate

Another alumnus of remarkable achievements from VGAC-Danang chapter is Ms Nguyen Thi Minh Phuong. Right after graduating from the College of Foreign Languages, the University of Danang in 2004, she was sent to be trained at the University of Queensland, Australia. Her scores in TESOL studies at UQ were so excellent that she was announced as the winner of Vietnam Club Unilever Awards 2006 - An annual award to talented students given by Vietnam Club whose alumni from universities in Queensland and sponsored by Unilever Vietnam. It is this effort that she has been elected as the member of the Steering Committee of VGAC-Danang Chapter, term of 2007-2009. And it must have been an honor for her because her MA thesis, titled "Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: Refusals Of Requests By Australian Native Speakers Of English And Vietnamese Learners Of English" was published in Asian EFL Journal whose website or electronic version is "http://www.asian-efl-journal.com/thesis.php", "http://www.asian-efl-journal.com/Thesis_Phuong.pdf", respectively. Still young though she is, she has been recognised as a promising college teacher. Last but by no means least, Phuong has just won UIPA (University International Postgraduate Awards), a doctoral scholarship to the University of New South Wales, Australia only at the age of 25.

GOLDEN HEARTS

On 20 January 2007, a delegation of about 15 volunteers from a wide range of organisations (AEI, Unilever Vietnam, HSBC Ho Chi Minh City Branch, Studylink International, etc.) headed by Mr. Nguyen Phi Dung, VGAC National Chairman, came to Can Tho City to offer presents to 120 handicapped children from the School for Handicapped Children in Can Tho City. VGAC Office in Ho Chi Minh City had cooperated with VGAC members of Can Tho Chapter for weeks to arrange this charitable visit and made it a success. Although it was a Saturday, more than two thirds of the 120 children were in line waiting on the schoolyard of the School when we arrived. One group of these children are blind and the other groups are deaf and dumb. Quickly, we put all the presents, including notebooks, pens, milk cartons, bottles of shampoo and lucky money, into 120 bags. Then the children were called to step to the front in groups to receive the presents. To our surprise, they did not move when we called their names. However, we soon figured out the problem and asked their teachers for help. What the teachers did was giving each child a signal while we were calling his or her name.

The present offering ceremony took an hour, and the children were so happy with what they received; the smiles were on their bright faces when they received the signals from their teachers to move to the front. After that, some ran quickly to their rooms in the dormitory at the back of the School to place the presents on the shelves or on their beds. But some others still hung around and tried to talk to us (in their own language). Thanks to that, we had a very happy time together. The deaf and dumb children taught us how to "speak" and write their language. After a while, we could communicate basically with each other and laughed together. At about 4:30 pm, Mr. Dung and his delegation had to say goodbye to the children and also Can Tho Chapter members to head back to Ho Chi Minh City. The children looked at his bus and us with regret and sadness. However, we know for sure that both they and we were very happy on that day. We do hope that more "golden hearts" will come to Can Tho City in the coming years.

DANG THI NGOC LAN
VGAC - Can Tho Chapter
Dept. of International Relations, Can Tho University
3-2 St., Ninh Kieu District, Can Tho City



Consultative group meeting



Ausaid Tesol conference

ADS Alumni Activities update and the way forward

ADS Alumni Activities update and the way forward

Australian Development Scholarships (ADS) aim to contribute to long-term development needs of Australia's partner countries to promote good governance, economic growth and human development. The Vietnam ADS Program currently provides up to 150 full scholarships for postgraduate study, at the Masters or Doctorate level in Australia each year.

An important element of the ADS Program is the alumni support activities, focusing on professional development seminars, conferences and networking function, professional networking and online support such as alumni forum, job opportunities and further studies opportunities.

ADS Alumni Database

In 2006-2007, ADS Support has collected and updated the latest information of **1,102** Vietnamese ADS alumni since 1998. To date, ADS Support has established current contact details for **1,740** of these graduates (approximately 78%).

ADS Graduate Survey

In 2005, a major ADS Graduate Survey was completed and results of the survey were reported through the ADS Post Award Monitoring Report 2005 (published in April 2006) and the ADS Post Award Monitoring Workshop held in September 2006. ADS Graduate Surveys need to be conducted once every three years. Preparation for the survey will be in the first half year 2008 and the survey will be undertaken in the second half of 2008.

Professional Networking Events

ADS focus graduate support activities focus on the development of networking events such as the Professional Development Seminar Series and Alumni Consultative Group Meetings.

Two Alumni Consultative Group meetings (ACG) are conducted to obtain input into the graduate support program from highly motivated ADS alumni and to provide ADS Support and AusAID with an interactive forum to identify new ideas and receive feedback on proposed initiatives introduced into the ADS support program.

In an attempt to promote the ADS scheme to a wider, provincially based audience, ADS Support will also look at the feasibility of establishing small ACGs in some provincial areas such as Hue. ADS Support plans to host one ACG meetings in HCMC in the field of business.

As well as conducting the TESOL Conference, in 2006-2007, **five other Professional Development Seminars** have been successfully conducted in Hanoi. These seminars provide a very good opportunity for the alumni to meet together and to both formally and informally discuss professional issues they face in their work in Vietnam. During 2006, all Professional Development Seminars were held in Hanoi.

This year is also the 10th Anniversary of the first ADS cohort and ADS Support will arrange a television "talk show" appearance on Vietnam television, such as 'Talk Vietnam' on VTV1.

ADS Support will continue to develop linkages with various employer organizations such as the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI), Australian Chamber of Commerce in Vietnam (AusCham), and other relevant Vietnamese interest groups and encourage their involvement in ADS graduate support and networking activities.

For further information on ADS Alumni, please visit ADS Website at www.ads.edu.vn or ADS Forum at www.ads.edu.vn/forum.

HANOI ARTICLE

It was on a cool evening of March in Hanoi, we gathered, for fun, for food (yum yum), for reuniting, for having the memories revived. The night was called Gathering Australian Spirit, an annual Alumni Gala event for Vietnamese Graduates from Australia.

This year the event saw about 300 people attended, including those who graduated from Australia several decades ago (!), those who have just graduated few months ago, as well as a number of prospective students who have yet to visit the country. Notably, we had special guests: the Australian Ambassador and other representatives from the Australian Embassy; Mr. Tran Van Nhung, Deputy Minister of Education and Training, and a group of young talented students of Tran Phu High school with their special gift to the event.

The place was filled with laughters, cheerful conversations, and many surprises to see old friends. We enjoyed the real Ozzie BBQ while hanging around, hitting long lost friends and acquaintances in great joys and surprises.



When all the excitements were chilled out a little bit, everyone was drawn to the stage with a special series of slideshows. There were eight slideshows dedicated for six states and two territories of Australia, made by the alumni from their own memories and experience. The images brought back precious moments of our time in Australia. Words were needless, the images said it all. That was the quiet moment of the night, yet one of the most touching moments to everyone. The same touching moment was when we all joined hands and sang Waltzing Matilda: the music went on and on and the song seemed ever ending.



Another surprise was brought to the night by the talented kids from Tran Phu High school, with their drama about Vietnamese students befriending with the Australian Aborigines. Although they hardly had a chance to visit Australia before, their performance showed wonderful knowledge and interesting imaginations about the Down Under country.

The night closed with a super lucky guy bringing home a TV as the first prize of the Lucky Draw. What a memorable night with fellow friends!!!
(Tran Thi To Thanh, University of New South Wales)

