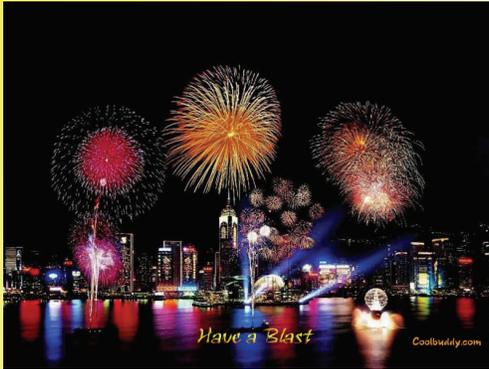


## Newsletter 12/2008

### SJ Vietnam News

2nd issue, 12/2008

# Happy New Year



Hope this year brings you happiness,  
love, peace, joy, brightness and beauty in  
your life.

**With Good Luck & Good Health**

**Thank you so much for your great help,  
friendship and partnership!!!**

**Your SJ Vietnam team**

#### Please note:

The SJ Vietnam office will be closed from the 20th of January to the 2nd of February due to the celebration of the Lunar New Year (Tet Holiday).

In the case you need to contact SJ Vietnam urgently,  
please call to the following number:  
**0084-972468668**

#### LTV - who is here?

International Volunteers total: 13

Nationalities: German (5), French(1), Finnish (3),  
Netherlands (1), Danish (3)



#### Activities:

- Weekly cultural evenings at LTV accommodation in Tay Ho street, lane 28, No. 10D, Hanoi  
**Next: 06/01/2009**
- LTV meeting every Thursday
- Vietnamese classes for LTV's every Thursday evening

For information about SJV's long-term projects, please download our [infosheet!](#)

#### STV - upcoming and participants

**07.01.-20.01.2009: Lunar New Year Camp (s. page 2)**

Number of local volunteers: 10

Number of international volunteers: 9

Vacancies: 0

**07.01.-20.01.2009: Fisher Village**

Number of local volunteers: 10

Number of international volunteers: 5

Vacancies: 0

**09.02.-20.02.2009: Youth House School**

Number of local volunteers: 5

Number of international volunteers: 3

Vacancies: 5 local and international volunteers

Application Deadline: **02/02/2009**



For further information about these workcamps,  
please download our [infosheet!](#)

If you want to take part in any workcamp, please contact  
[workcamp@sjvietnam.org](mailto:workcamp@sjvietnam.org)

## SJ Vietnam News

2nd issue, 12/2008

### For a very special Tet holiday - Lunar New Year Workcamp (07/01-20/01/2009) -

*Tet* is for the people in Vietnam what's Christmas for most people in the western world: a very special time to share with the family, a great family celebration. It is the *Lunar New Year* which is considered to be the most important and the most popular holiday in Vietnam. According to the lunar calendar it takes place from the first until at least the third day of the lunar year, which is around late January or early February. *Tet* is the time of sharing, forgiveness, reconciliation and worshipping.

The preparations for this outstanding holiday already start several weeks before the actual celebration. Everything has to be organized carefully. So the markets and the shops will be full during these weeks. Buying food, cleaning and decorating the houses are main activities. People also try to pay back their debts to start debt-free into the new year. To have a peaceful *Tet* holiday they will try to settle disputes, too. New offerings are placed at the family altar, including a tray of five fruits which all have different meanings: grapefruits promise luck, bananas and lemons mean protection and kumquats and oranges symbolize success and prosperity.

The traditional *Tet* decoration is an artificial New Year Tree made up of a 5 to 6 m long bamboo pole whose end is decorated with different objects, for example fish shaped origami or cactus branches. But also peach flower and the kumquat tree are popular decorations. One of the most important components of the celebration is the traditional *Tet* food, for example the very famous rice cake *banh chung*. It consists of sticky rice, meat and green beans and is wrapped in banana leaves. Its preparation is quite extensive and can take up to 12 hours. Vietnamese families often give *banh chung* to other families as a nice present.



The actual days of *Tet* people spend with their families, relatives and friends. The first day everyone stays at home. All the shops will be closed and all the streets will be quite empty then. During the following days people visit their relatives and friends. Games and musical performances accompany the celebrations.

But not everyone has the same chance to welcome the new year like this. Especially poor families struggle with the fact that they cannot / can hardly afford to celebrate this very special holiday in a proper traditional way. For that reason *SJ Vietnam* would like to invite national and international volunteers to join the yearly *Lunar New Year workcamp* which intends to make *Tet* a very special and happy holiday for disadvantaged people and children, too. Together with a group of local people the volunteers will prepare the traditional *banh chung* cakes which will be given to the people of the *Fisher Village* as well as to the kids of the *Phuc Tue Center*, a school for disabled children who became victims of Agent Orange usage during the Vietnam War. Special programs and parties organized by the volunteers will accompany the ceremony. The *Lunar New Year workcamp* not only gives volunteers from all over the world the chance to support people in need but is also a fantastic occasion for them to get to know one of the basic elements of Vietnamese culture: *Tet* holiday. It takes place from 07. February to 19. February in 2009.

For further information about this workcamp. Please download our [infosheet!](#)

If you want to take part in this workcamp, please contact [workcamp@sjvietnam.org](mailto:workcamp@sjvietnam.org)

## SJ Vietnam News

2nd issue, 12/2008

### **New long-term volunteer projects!**

SJ Vietnam, together with various partners and institutions, will carry out 12 long-term volunteer projects next year. Besides already established projects, such as Fisher Village and Youth House School, three new projects will start in 2009: Vocational Center, Bo De Pagoda and KIDSFUN.

We kindly ask our partner to promote these projects among their members. Taking part in a new project is challenging, but will be a great experience for our volunteers!

**Important note: As of the beginning of 2009, all long-term volunteers joining SJ Vietnam will have to pay the fee through their sending organization before arriving in Vietnam! More information about this regulation can be found in the [infosheet](#).**

### **Vocational Center**

The Vocational Center was established more than 10 years ago with the purpose of helping disabled and disadvantaged people to find a job so that they can earn a living by themselves. This way they make the experience of being an important and useful part of society.

At the Vocational Center people don't have to pay for taking part in vocational training and for the accommodation in the center. If they are very poor, they don't even have to pay for food.

The center offers vocational training in embroidery, sewing, making raincoats from plastic cloths, making bags, decoration of wedding dresses, making clothes according to fashion shop's orders and so on. In doing so, the center succeeded in helping a lot of disabled and disadvantaged people to have a better life.

Volunteers who participate in this project will take part in some stages of producing to help the people at the center successfully complete their work. The center has only one cook and it is difficult for him alone to cook for so many people, so there is also some help from the volunteers needed with this task.

Volunteers will also be responsible for creating a friendly environment to communicate in English. The center sometimes welcomes foreign delegations and the center, so the people there want to be able to communicate in English.

### **Bo De Pagoda**

Bo De Pagoda is a place where many orphans live. The Pagoda was not established to bring up these children, but according to Buddhist's belief you don't turn away anybody who is in trouble. So those orphan's parents left their children at the Pagoda for different reasons with the hope that their children can have the chance to be brought up well.

The Pagoda receives more and more children, so it taking care of them becomes a greater challenge every day. The age range of the children living in the Pagoda reaches from infancy to high school students, so the Pagoda needs help with many different tasks relating to their daily care.

Volunteers joining this project will be responsible for making a plan to teach English for the children living at the Pagoda. They need to be creative in order to make it easy for the children to memorize lessons. Each day, the volunteers will review the old lessons and teach new ones.

The children at the Pagoda do not often have the chance to communicate with foreigners, so you are supposed to create a comfortable communication environment for them.

Volunteers will also help to take care of the small children at Bo De Pagoda, because at the moment, there are only a few women who can take care of them. It is a very hard task, because they have to care for many children at once and the number of children increases.

Besides these tasks, volunteers will help to clean the pagoda, because it is a large area and the pagoda does not have enough people to do it. Included in this task is to teach the children about the importance of clean living surroundings. In this way, they, on the one hand, will help the children there to have a clean environment for living and playing and on the other hand raise awareness in them about this issue.

### **KIDSFUN**

Kidsfun Hanoi is a private school and a member of KIM international. It was established in May 2007.

The school enrolls children from 4-12 years and provides extra-curricular courses for them, such as classes in English, French, Japanese, Art, Piano, Musical discovery, Ballet and Hip-Hop dancing. The school recognizes that each child is a unique individual, possessing talents, abilities, that has goals and dreams. This is why they provide a diverse program based on student's needs.

To create such a diverse learning environment, teachers in the center are from all over the world, for example from Australia, the US, Singapore, France, Canada, Belorussia, Belgium. The education design and the teaching are shared between Vietnamese and foreign teachers.

The duration of this special project is 6 months. The volunteer participating will be responsible for teaching English in the center for children from 4-12 years and to organize the following joint workshop of Kidsfun and SJ Vietnam:

Creative Workshop for the children from Fisher Village (see [infosheet](#)) which aims to create an artistic performance in conjunction with a charity event. During the workshop, through a combination of drama, dance, songs and story-telling, the children will learn English in an immersive and original way.

At the end of the 6 months, the total amount generated from the volunteer's activity will be donated to a specific fund, dedicated to the children of the Fisher Village.

For the full project descriptions, please download our [infosheet](#)!

## Volunteer Stories

2nd issue, 12/2008

### Our all volunteer's day

Around December 5th, everywhere in the world volunteers celebrated the International Volunteers Day with activities to raise awareness about volunteerism and its impact on society. Of course SJ Vietnam and other volunteer organizations in Hanoi couldn't miss out. Nearly 100 people took part in the Eco-Tour that took place in Hanoi on December 4th and even more joined the International Volunteer Fair on the 7th. One of them was Annegret, a long-term volunteer for SJ Vietnam and a weltwaerts scholar, who wrote about her impressions of these special days.



At half past seven Hang, SJ coordinator for long term volunteers, picked me up from / at the LTV house. On her motorbike we started out for an adventurous trip through the streets of Hanoi weaving along with seemingly thousands of other motorbikes, cars, bicycles and pedestrians, who make the daily picture of Hanoi's streets. What a trip! Someone told me some time ago that there are actual traffic rules. But as a European non-traffic-participant I'm just wondering sometimes: 1. What are the rules? 2. If yes, is there anybody sticking to them? To me it sometimes seems like everybody is just driving his own way following his own rules. But in the end it works somehow. Amazing! Anyway. Our destination : Bach Khoa Stadion, where the International Volunteer Day (IVD) should be celebrated on this 7<sup>th</sup> of December. Officially the IVD is dated on the 5<sup>th</sup> of December; the United Nations invented this day already 23 years ago in 1985 to appreciate voluntary work all over the world, its contribution to social, cultural and ecological development at local, national and international levels, and especially its contribution to intercultural understanding. The global celebrations then take place on the days around the 5<sup>th</sup> of the December.

In Hanoi this year's volunteer day was commemorated in two stages: with an Eco-Bicycle-Tour through Hanoi on the 4<sup>th</sup> of December and an International Volunteer-Fair on the 7<sup>th</sup> of December. The idea: "Volunteering! Connect to share", experiences, ideas, thoughts. "Cycling for environment", that was the motto of the Eco-Tour. And SJ joined it, too. Together with local environmental organizations like the "Cycling for environment club" or the "Go green club" we first went on a one hour cycling trip through Hanoi starting at Dhuyen Quang lake. Because there hadn't been enough bicycles for everyone two people had to share one bicycle. So it was my pleasure to sit on the carrier, which didn't really feel comfortable for my...well you know. But I put up a good fight for one hour, yeah! Our tour ended at the Botanical Garden where funny games should follow. For this reason the crowd was divided into four teams: yellow, green, pink and red. From now on it was all about making points. We played everything: scavenger hunt, tug of war, sack race, Who is the slowest bicycle rider? and so on. It was such a great fun! Well, my green team finally reached the second worst position...

Finally on the 7<sup>th</sup> of December the International Volunteer Fair which had been initiated by UN-Volunteers, Ho Chi Minh Youth Union and Hanoi University of Technology took place at Bach Khoa stadion. Many different international Volunteer organizations introduced themselves and their project work. So did SJ Vietnam. And the reason why we came so early this morning was the fact that we had to make our booth nice and attractive adding pictures and information sheets. And it worked out: There was a lively general interest. I also got the chance to tell people about SJ's strong commitment revealing in their numerous workcamps and long term projects. And I felt: Yes, this is my organization! Besides the exchange of information about the organizations and their projects there was also a cultural program accompanying the event. UN representatives praised the exemplary global commitment of the thousands of volunteers every year, Vietnamese pop stars trolled dedicated love songs, and the jolly students and volunteers played, sang and danced for all one's worth. What a delightful /lovely day...

### A special experience at Christmas

Hello, my name is My Do. I am a local volunteer of Christmas and New Year workcamp, which lasted for 2 weeks, from December 22<sup>th</sup>, 2008 to January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009. In this workcamp, I had a chance to work with 16 international volunteers and 14 other local volunteers. This workcamp was held in Hanoi and Vinh Phuc Province.

Before the workcamp, I took part in the translation group. My duty was to translate the documents such as the schedule of workcamp and the play. I also joined the gift group which consisted of approximately 5 local volunteers. We went to the high schools and universities to collect clothes, books, magazines, cakes and candies. We also encouraged our friends and relatives to join us. As a result, we collected a large amount of clothes, especially clothes for the cold winter as well as many books and magazines for the children.

When the international volunteers came, the workcamp officially started. On December 22<sup>th</sup> morning, the first day of workcamp, we had an orientation. We talked about SJ Vietnam, its activities, short and long term projects, history and development as well as the Christmas and New Year workcamp. That night, a special performance was organized by SJ Vietnam and Hanoi classical guitar club to raise fund for our workcamp. It was extremely successful. There were a lot of people coming and advocating our work. On the following days, all of us had to divide into 2 groups: performance and decoration. I myself took part in the decoration group. We were busy preparing all the necessary material and feature for the whole workcamp. On the second day night, we held a culture night at LTV house. All the local volunteers cooked some traditional Vietnamese foods and then talked about them to the international volunteers. It was really interesting.

**Continue on page 5...**

## SJ Vietnam Friendship

2nd issue, 12/2008

—>On December 24<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup> and January 1<sup>st</sup> of 2009, we celebrated Christmas and New Year at Fisher Village (Long Bien District, Hanoi), Peaceful Village (Hai Ba Trung District, Hanoi) and Vinh Phuc Welfare Centre (Vinh Phuc Province) for the children and the elders there. We gave them the beautiful presents that we had prepared before. Then we played some folk games of Vietnam such as bamboo pole dance, tug of war and rope-jumping. Although it seemed to be difficult for all the international volunteers, they found it very funny. The poor children were happy because they were received new warm clothes, candies and books. After that, we sat together singing popular songs and eating fruits, cakes and candies. We all felt tired at the end of the parties but we all had enjoyable feelings. During the workcamp, we took lots of photos together and kept them as good memories of our activities.

Thanks to this workcamp, I myself stand a golden chance to deeply understand the difficult situation as well as the poor living condition of many people around, bring them a happy and cozy holiday as many others. I also have a chance to communicate with international volunteers, know more about their countries, their customs and people as well as introduce the beauty of Vietnam to all of them. Furthermore, my English is considerably improved through this workcamp, which is sure to be useful for me when I study abroad. Indeed, the Christmas and New Year workcamp organized by SJ Vietnam is a special occasion worth remembering. It not only makes us feel very happy but also brings about numerous significant benefits for all of us.

### New Partnership with Sweden



This month we had the pleasure of a visit from Emma Arnesson and Markus Hellmann, both members of the newly founded volunteer organization “Share for Life” located in Froesoen, Sweden.

Both are at the moment on a journey through Asia to visit potential partners and establishing connections.

While staying in Hanoi they read an article about SJ Vietnam’s Youth House project in the local paper and, feeling very enthusiastic about it, visited the SJ Office.

The meeting turned out very positive for both sides. As a result, Share for Life donated 1000USD to the Christmas Workcamp (22/12/08-03/01/09) which was carried out under the slogan “Warm heart, warm Christmas”. Talks were also held about supporting the Youth House project.

Markus and Emma will continue travelling through Asia till May. Afterwards, we hope to establish a new partnership that will be very rewarding for both sides.

We wish you luck on your journey and success where ever you go next!

If you want to know more about Markus’ and Emma’s journey, please visit [www.resdagboken.se](http://www.resdagboken.se) (alias: shareforlife)



### EVS—exchange of volunteers between Solidarités Jeunesses in France and SJ Vietnam



As you could read in our last issue, SJ Vietnam is the first Vietnamese volunteer organization to host European Voluntary Service volunteers in their program.

For EVS we are very happy to welcome Marie-Gloria Fernandes and Cédric Ihadadene from SJ in France on the 1st of February for their 1-year stay with SJ Vietnam. They will be living in local host families and joining our Youth House project as coordinators. Their responsibilities will run to organizing the daily life in our Youth House School, being contact person to the children coming to the school, ...

In exchange Dang Thi Lam, a volunteer with SJ Vietnam since 2006 and leader of two workcamps in the past, will travel to France to join the Solidarités Jeunesses’ projects and activities. Some of his responsibilities will include renovation work, organization of cultural and

artistic activities, organization of reception of groups, the participation in international workcamps and many more.

We wish Lam all the best in France and await with excitement the arrival of Marie-Gloria and Cédric!

~Mr. Dang Thi Lam, volunteer and workcamp



### Opportunities here and beyond

For SJ Vietnam is a relatively organization employing many young staff, we constantly try to improve our working performance. One way to do this is constant evaluation together with the staff and our local as well as international volunteers.

Another way to improve ourselves is to send our volunteers and staff to trainings in Vietnam and abroad so they can exchange and expand their knowledge.

For this purpose we are very happy to inform you that three of our SJ officers, namely Miss Thi Hong Xoan Nguyen, Miss Quang Thi Thu Hang and Miss Roxane Capodagli, have been accepted to go to trainings in Germany and Japan next year.

One is the “Mentor Training—Training for Trainers” organised by “Internationale Jugendgemeinschaftsdienste” and the other one is the “Asia-Europe Training for Trainers” organized by NICE Japan. Thanks to our partner’s efforts, our staff members have the opportunity to learn about the impact of voluntary work on social development, evaluation methods and many more useful things for their present and future work. In this sense we wish them the best of luck!



Miss Hang



Miss Xoan



Miss Roxane