



SWEET NOVEMBER

Dear friends,

It's great to meet you again each month with our Newsletter, especially in November. Let me just say, this is best month of the year in Hanoi, and of course in some countries it will be late Autumn.

We are covered mixing layer leaves between yellow and red along streets, rivers and lakes offers wonderful spots. Like a real Hanoian, just stay in a street-shop, drinking a tasty iced coffee with milk (cà phê sữa đá), seeing the

blue sky, letting the sun hit your skin. Moments like this make it easy to forget everything, except your feelings. Then you "smell" the upcoming holidays in the air. It is exciting, isn't it?

In Vietnam, we truly don't have "Thanksgiving day", which makes me wonder why they chose November out of all 12 months for this holiday. Forget its history, I personally think that autumn of November is best season to say thank you to our friends.

In this issue, we would like to give you some stories about our volunteering work as a big thank for our volunteers, our local partner and last but not least, you, our international friends who always collaborate and support us.

From SJ Vietnam with love,

Yes, my life adventure has just begun!

After nearly 20 hours of flights continuously from Vietnam, I finally arrived here in Lorca, Murcia, Spain for 9 months volunteer service with Cazalla Intercultural. My first impression was a bit shock as I have never been in Europe before. Still I remember I was amazed by many differences compared to Vietnam; the architecture, the landscape, the people, and of course the food. But it didn't take me so long to adapt and turn all these things into pleasure. I found myself interested in changes and amazing opportunities that lie ahead.

Spain treats me well, I must say. My first week in Lorca was full-filled with travels here and there. From the beautiful beach city Aguilas to the spectacular view at the high point in Castilla de Lorca, plus the city walking and bike riding every day to workplace; all seemed to be an unreal story for me.

Getting here in Lorca to contribute my efforts to local people and the community, I am overjoyed when I recall my first memory of knowing kids at the Nuns (One of my project is working with children at education center). The kids are amazingly cute; despite of the language barrier as these kids only speak Spanish, we still got along well together with playing around and drawing pictures. Another project that I am working on is Intercambio de Idiomas (Language Exchange). This event happens on every Thursday is an absolutely great chance for both of organizers and participants. I meet new friends every week, we all have decent conversation with different topics. For now, I am working on my own projects and hopefully it will be launched by next month.

I met friendly neighborhood who suggested me coming to their University and Secondary school to talk about Vietnam and volunteer. I am invited

for lunch every Monday by an amazing Spanish family. I took a picture with the Mayor of Lorca at bike ride festival. I went for bike riding to every corner of the city I could reach. And the list is getting longer unexpectedly. All of these pieces together build a life milestone of a twenty years old guy. At the moment, I am truly living my life in way I have always wanted it to be.

As I have said above, things seem to be unreal for me, as it was too good to be true. Therefore I am thankful for every single day I live here. The only expectation I have had before coming here: this should be a life changing to me. And then I came here, the beginning was amazing to me, my good feelings for a real life changing has been growing bigger and bigger every day.

My sincere thanks to SJ Vietnam and Cazalla Intercultural for choosing me among others to be here in Lorca, from the bottom of my heart; this is a real life changing! Yes, my life adventure has just begun!



A heart-warming family I met during my bike trip to Castilla de Lorca.

Information

Vu is one of the best SJ Vietnam's volunteer. He successfully defeated the 200 other candidates to be part of EVS project in Spain for 9 months.

Where the smile never disappears

The place where the smile never disappears, this was my first impression when I went to the hospital with a group of volunteers. In this hospital, children receive acupuncture everyday and the parents have to live in the hospital with their children for months, Sometimes years. It is incredible to see how these people can smile and laugh despite their difficult situation. They can give us a lot of joy.

The first day is always hard for the volunteers because they don't know what is waiting for them; if they would be able to do the work or if they would be appreciated by the younger patients. There is also the fear of not-being able to manage the emotional impact of seeing the sick children. After a few days, though, the volunteers start to feel more comfortable and are able to communicate with the children and their parents.

Sometimes, the children's mothers speak to the volunteers in Vietnamese, hoping they would understand, which is always funny to see. The children eventually warm up to the volunteers and begin to look forward to their daily visits. Verbal communication is not necessary with the children, sometimes a simple smile or some songs are enough for them to answer with their eyes full of love.



At first, the volunteers wonder if their work makes a difference. They wonder if giving massages and playing with young patients reduces their pain but the volunteers soon realize that those simple acts of kindness bring something different to their daily routine. The children see new faces and gain friends and at the same time, the parents are also given a break from taking care of their children.

The people in each room of the hospital treat one another like family; a team where everyone wants to help each other during difficult times. A child of a couple becomes the child of everyone. The parents find the strength and courage to face each day in this hospital through this amazing bond and the support of the volunteers. I come from Italy and when I saw the atmosphere in these rooms, I thought about the south of Italy where family links are so strong, almost sacred and they become a real source of positive energy in bad moments.

When we talk about volunteering, people think that the volunteers bring joy to other people but in reality it is reciprocated. When you enter the hospital and see the children run to you, you can't help but take them into your arms with a big smile on your face. They bring happiness to us and it is priceless.

SJV SOUTH CLUB

After a pause for a while, the SJ South Club impressively comes back with a newly established team of core members. This important change in human resources will definitely be a fresh air into SJ South Club's spirit, so there are many incoming projects and work-camps waiting for your support by the end of this year.

On 27th October 2013, SJV South Club has restructured its organization with a dynamic team of 11 core members in Ho Chi Minh City. These enthusiastic members will take in charge of different responsibility or positions within SJ South Club to create, design and develop ideas in terms of its operation and activities.

Side by side, they are willing to support to build a bigger family of SJV South Club and you are welcomed. The first easiest way to get closer with SJV South Club is to enter its Fan Page: SJV-South-Club. There are two running projects in Ho Chi Minh City this month:

- Global Souls: Supporting villages, opened houses or children shelters which are in need of help.
- English class: Opening an English class for poor children with measurable assessment and effective teaching results.

SJV South Club is constantly looking for volunteers, thus do not miss our appointment with you. These are some useful contacts for further information:

sjvietnam.south.club@gmail.com (for local volunteers)

info2@sjvietnam.org (for international volunteers)



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UPCOMING WINTER CAMP

1. 17 - 28/12/2013

SJV 1327 : Warm Xmas for disadvantage children

2. 14-25/01/2014

SJV 1328: Traditional new year for poor children

3. 13-27/01/2014

Group camp: Traditional new year for poor children in
Phu Yen (3 available positions)

SJV is an international youth NGO that promotes values of solidarity, peace and tolerance and improves society through voluntary activities.

Mission

1. Work for justice, peace and solidarity.
2. Break cultural gap between people and nations.
3. Improve local and global environment, reduce poverty and strengthen human rights
4. Encourage young people to participate in social activities.

Description

SJV South Club is a South Branch of SJ Vietnam. We support and send Vietnamese volunteers to other countries and organize projects for international volunteers to Vietnam in order to work to expand the volunteering network.

SJ Vietnam is managed by and for young volunteers with the support of UNDP Vietnam at the beginning. SJ Vietnam is an independent Vietnamese branch of SJ France, a full member of CCVIS (UNESCO) and NVDA
