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## **WSV August 2014 NEWSLETTER**

Welcome to our WSV Newsletter. We've held off writing this newsletter as we have had such a busy past 12 weeks where the school holidays in Vietnam afforded us the chance to run many swim programs and to train teachers.

### **It has truly been a team effort:**

We sincerely thank our amazing volunteer swim teachers who work under extremely difficult conditions in some instances. They are just so prepared to do anything they possibly can to enhance the WSV name and reputation in Vietnam.

We began in March with a Train the Trainer program at **Hong Bang University International** in HCMC. Tim Kemp and Megan Raine trained 43 PE students and swim coaches to the internationally recognized AUSTSWIM *Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety* certificate.

Tim and Megan then went on to conduct a two week swim program for children at **St Josephs, Bien Hoa**, a small charity school in Dong Nai Province. (This Province has the fifth highest drowning rate in Vietnam). There they trained 4 teachers and 58 children. By the end of the second week, the local teachers had taken responsibility for the program. Ms Lan the Principal reported "I was so proud of my teachers. Seeing them run the program is what we dreamt of."

In May, Pam O'Reilly met with our ongoing clients, **Hong Bang University International, Ho Tram Water Safety Consortium and St Josephs School in Bien Hoa** to ensure that they were happy with our programs. She also set up contacts and wrote proposals and then programs for **five new venues**.

Extra volunteer swim teachers were engaged and the team swung into action:

- 1. Blue Dragon Children's Foundation in Hanoi.** Gail Mortimer and Jan Williams trained staff and taught kids to swim including some hearing impaired kids and one hearing impaired staff member.
- 2. Hoa Hoi in Xuyen Moc District.** Pam, Gail and Jan met with 5 Principals who pledged their support for teachers and kids to attend a 14 day program. 80-100 kids and 13 staff members trained. Riaha Wilson was brought in to help and Leah Green and Dan Norman travelled 20 km by motorbike each day for the first week to help out.
- 3. Tra Tan in Binh Thuan District.** A priest had been down to observe Tim and Megan conduct the program at Bien Hoa in March. He obviously liked what he saw as he then requested a program for his village's kids. Dan and James Graham headed off into the unknown, 140 km north east of HCMC and ended up with 80 kids in the water and 6 staff members wanting to be formally trained next time.
- 4. Zenna Resort.** (between Vung Tau and Ho Tram, on the coast) This resort allows children to use their pools in school holidays and asked if we could conduct training for staff. Jan, Riaha and Shea Bilton-Gough worked hard with 80 kids and 8 staff members. Next time our focus will be on training school teachers from the surrounding district.
- 5. Than Thach in Ben Tre.** (Mekong) From the association with Heartreach, an Australian NGO, this school was recommended. (two more schools to follow) The swimming pool is in Ben Tre 10 km away so buses also had to be arranged. No English is spoken here so an interpreter has also been engaged. 11 primary school teachers have been trained and 50 kids engaged in the program.

## Ho Tram Community Pool

In the meantime, back at **Ho Tram**, over a 10 week period Dan, Ben Collins, Leah, Shea and Riahana were all hard at work assisting Mr Loi to run the school holiday children's program. This had already started before we arrived and Mr Loi has consistently had 60 children in the water in 4 week programs running end on end throughout the holidays starting in May.

All our volunteer teachers were blown away regarding the standard of teaching of the local teachers assisting Mr Loi and his pool management skills. Remembering that these teachers have only been teaching for two years and that they were all WSV trainees, we were justifiably proud.

## Other Achievements in 2014

As well as the fantastic programs mentioned above there are other milestones we are very happy to report on:

A highlight of our visit to Ho Tram was the **school swimming sports** which were organised completely by the Local Peoples Committee. WSV volunteers were the invited guests and it was a measure of success for our objective of sustainability in Ho Tram that this program is now almost self sufficient. It was also amazing to see the high standard of swimming of children who couldn't swim 2 years ago. We were all very proud!

**Eight Vietnamese assessors** have now been trained in various localities. This means that when we leave, teachers who have not been able to quite make the requirements, will be able to continue to work on their skills and then be assessed when ready. Again, this assists the sustainability of programs in Vietnam.

Dan introduced **infant's classes** to the community and soon there was a demand for **adult's classes** as well! Everyone is keen to get in on the action.

**An AYAD (Australian Youth Ambassador for Development) position** has been confirmed for 6 months. This funding is from AUSAID. Molly Ferrier will start in September as a Water Safety Officer in Ho Tram. The 'host organisation' is Ho Tram Water Safety Consortium and WSV proudly supports this position.



*Proud winners on sports day with WSV volunteers*



*Introducing infant's classes for the first time*



*Mr Loi and local Ho Tram teachers*

## Donations:

Loyal supporters continue to make donations and we sincerely thank you all.



Thanks also to all the wonderful donations of kickboards, bathers and caps we were able to fit out all children, boys and girls, with swim gear.

**Funkita** kindly donated new children's swimwear and the children of Bien Hoa were very excited to receive them.

**Kings** swim schools donated caps, kickboards and swimsuits. The children of Tra Tan are very grateful to receive these.

## Our fundraising continues

The WSV Directors and Committee members have all worked extremely hard during 2014 to raise funds so that this work can continue in Vietnam.

Graham Gregson was able to arrange for us to sell raffle tickets at the **Tyabb Airshow** in March and thanks to donations from Hoskings Jewellers in Frankston and Modelflight in SA, we raised \$2615 for an afternoon's work (albeit in the blazing sun!).

Our major fundraiser to date this year has been a luncheon organized by Robyn Lain at the Prince Of Wales hotel in St Kilda. Thank you to our sponsors on the day and to Vistaprint for their support.

This event was very successful in raising awareness of the drowning problem in Vietnam and the work WSV does. Pledges of support are still filtering in.

Claire McCormack is organizing a **Trivia Night** on October 25<sup>th</sup> at the Metropolitan Hotel in the city. Please see our Website or Facebook for details.

Committee members have been guests at **Rotary and Probuss Clubs** throughout Victoria who have been most generous with their donations. Please contact us if your club would like to hear more of what we do in Vietnam.

## The future of WSV in Vietnam:

The future looks bright! We have now established strong links and partnerships with wonderful people in Vietnam.

We have received many more requests for assistance and hopefully will be able to return and deliver programs to existing and **new clients**.

We will continue to work with the **Education Department for Xuyen Moc District** and hope to be able to train teachers to provide swimming lessons for all primary schools in the District during the school term.

We will continue to work with the **Ho Tram Water Safety Consortium** at the community pool and the teachers we have trained and the Manager, Mr Loi.

We will continue to work with the **Vung Tau Water Safety Project**, training more teachers and pool lifeguards.

We will continue to work with PE graduates and swim coaches from **Hong Bang University International**, our loyal partners from the inception of our programs in Vietnam.

**The teachers we train are the future of swim programs in Vietnam.**

## In summary, since 2012 we have:

- Sent 37 teachers to Vietnam
- Recruited 8 from within
- Taught 981 kids to swim
- Trained 341 local adults
- Trained 8 assessors
- Trained 264 adults in CPR.

**We are very proud of this achievement.**



*Dan and James and kids in Tra Tan with kickboards kindly donated by Kings swim schools.*

**Our Australian volunteers** are passionate about what we do. We also get so much help from our enthusiastic Vietnamese volunteers who assist in many ways, including translating, interpreting and making us welcome into their homes.

At the end of the day, the smiles on the children's faces and the warm handshakes of the parents, makes it all worthwhile.

**BUT** we are always looking for more volunteers, not just qualified swim teachers but if anyone thinks that working on our Committee sounds like a good idea, please phone Robyn Laine on 0413 493 893

Of course donations are always welcome. Please go to the ***Donate Now*** button on our web page

[www.watersafetyvietnam.com](http://www.watersafetyvietnam.com) or

mail your cheque to Robyn Laine, Administrative Manager, WSV 151 Melbourne Rd. Rye. Include your name and mailing address and all donations will be acknowledged.

For large amounts, tax deductibility is possible if the donation is made through Rotary International. Please phone Robyn for details 0413 493 893

**More information on WSV can be found on our website**

[www.watersafetyvietnam.com](http://www.watersafetyvietnam.com) or on Facebook.



**Thank you, from the little kids in Vietnam.**

**And please remember to 'like' us on Facebook!**