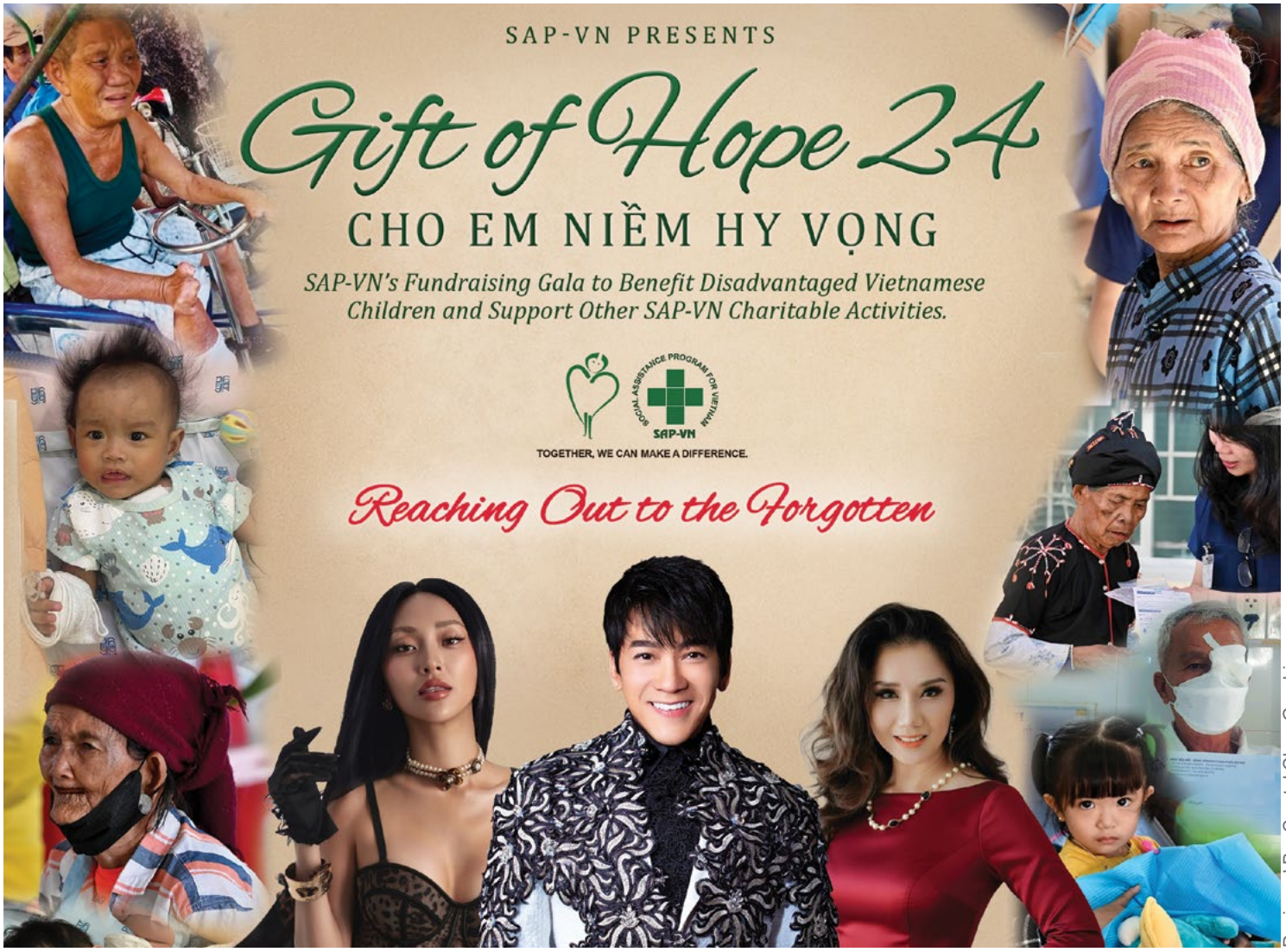
A HELPING HAND FOR NEEDY PEOPLE IN VIETNAM

GREEN CROSS

FALL 2026
#078
SAP-VN NEWSLETTER

SAP-VN's mission is to improve the quality of life for the poor and the disabled in Vietnam and locally with services in healthcare, education, and social welfare. Fundraising for SAP-VN programes comes from private donations and fundraising proceeds. All donations are tax deductible as permitted by law.

To receive a Green Cross newsletter, please email your name and address to SAP-VN at info@sap-vn.org.



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Founded in 1992
EIN: 33-0539755

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2025 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

(JANUARY 1 TO DECEMBER 31, 2025)

INCOME		
Direct Public Contributions	$189,322	30.77%
Fundraising Net Proceeds	$272,482	44.29%
Bank Interests	$13,379	2.17%
Mobile Care Registration & Hotel Deposit	$102,755	16.70%
Miscellaneous Income	$4,193	0.68%
Total Cash Income	**$582,131**	**94.61%**
Total Non-Cash Income (In-Kind Donations)	**$33,146**	**5.39%**
TOTAL INCOME	**$615,277**	**100.00%**
EXPENSES (USA)		
Bank Services Charges	$2,304	0.55%
Dues and Subscription	$200	0.05%
Insurance	$1,768	0.42%
Licenses and Permits	$198	0.05%
Office Supplies	$449	0.11%
Rent	$27,540	6.59%
Telephone	$860	0.21%
Miscellaneous Expenses	$3,768	0.90%
Subtotal (Management & General, USA)	**$37,087**	**8.87%**
PROJECT FUNDING		
Vietnam Operation Expenses	$8,634	2.07%
Bicycles for Students	$46,940	11.23%
Cataract Surgery Program	$64,252	15.37%
Education	$2,769	0.66%
Heart Surgery Program	$14,512	3.47%
Miscellaneous Programs in VN	$38,592	9.23%
Mobile Care Expenses in VN	$81,606	19.53%
Mobile Care Expenses in USA	$38,135	9.13%
Orthopedic Surgery Program	$41,773	10.00%
Scholarship	$11,646	2.79%
Wheelchairs	$11,602	2.78%
Transfer to VN Leftover (after expenses)	$7,361	1.76%
Local US Projects	$12,995	3.11%
Subtotal (Program Services, VN & USA)	**$380,816**	**91.13%**
TOTAL EXPENSES	**$417,903**	**100.00%**
REVENUE OVER (UNDER) EXPENSES	**$197,374**	
BEGINNING OF 2025 BALANCE	**$769,361**	
ENDING BALANCE	**$966,735**	

LETTER FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Since its founding in 1992, the Social Assistance Program for Vietnam (SAP-VN) has been dedicated to improving the lives of poor, disabled, and underserved people in Vietnam and in the United States. Our programs focus primarily on healthcare, education, and social welfare. Over the past 34 years, with the generosity of our donors and volunteers, SAP-VN has made a meaningful difference in the lives of thousands of people:

1. **14,320 disabled children in Vietnam** have received corrective orthopedic surgeries, at an average cost of only $500 per surgery.
2. We have provided funding for **151 pediatric heart surgeries**, at an average cost of $3,000 per child.
3. Through our Cataract Surgery Program, we have helped restore the gift of sight to **17,105 patients**.
4. We have donated **4,460 bicycles** to poor students, helping them travel to school more easily.
5. Through our scholarship and social assistance programs, we have supported **6,971 disabled students** attending vocational schools for the handicapped in Hóc Môn and Khánh Hoà. We have also provided tuition assistance to students facing extreme financial hardship and distributed thousands of care packages to needy families throughout the year.
6. Our Mobile Care medical missions have provided **90,552 patients** with free medical, dental, vision, and pharmaceutical services.
7. Here in the United States, since 2017, SAP-VN volunteers have served more than **14,500 meals to homeless individuals** and distributed over **14,000 hygiene kits**.

This year, we are also proud to announce that SAP-VN has received five additional permits to expand our work and reach more poor and underserved communities in the provinces of Lào Cai, Lai Châu, Quảng Trị, Huế and Quảng Ngãi. In addition, we have instituted 3 new programs, Oral Hygiene Instruction, year-round Mobile Dental Care, and A Bright Future for Orphans, which supports higher education for disadvantaged orphans in Viet Nam.

None of these accomplishments would have been possible without the generosity and support of people like you. On behalf of the disabled children, the poor, and the vulnerable people we serve in Vietnam and locally in the United States, we thank you for your generosity and support.

Together, we are making a difference!

SAP-VN

SAP-VN ACTIVITIES (OCT. 2025 - SEP. 2026)

HOẠT ĐỘNG CỦA SAP-VN (THÁNG 10 NĂM 2025 - THÁNG 9 NĂM 2026)

Program	Locations	Number of Recipients
Mobile Care Clinic	Xã Vân Canh & xã Canh Vinh, tỉnh Gia Lai	3,612 medical + 538 dental + 2,061 optometric + 10,306 prescriptions = 6,166 total number of services
Orthopedic Surgery, Prosthesis, Orthosis Equipment, & Wheelchair Donation	An Giang, Vĩnh Long, Cần Thơ, Gia Lai, Tuyên Quang, Quảng Ngãi, Quảng Nam (*)	152 patients (*)
Heart Surgery	Sài Gòn, Cần Thơ, Tây Ninh, Gia Lai, An Giang, Đắk Lắk, Đồng Tháp	25 patients
Cataract Surgery	Cần Thơ, Sài Gòn, Đồng Tháp, Quảng Nam	1055 patients
Bicycle Donation	Đà Nẵng, Gia Lai, Đồng Tháp, Cần Thơ, Khánh Hòa, Tuyên Quang, Vĩnh Long	750 bycicles
Education for the Disabled	Khánh Hòa	30 students
Scholarship	Gia Lai, Đắk Lắk, Đà Nẵng, Lai Châu	310 students
Local Projects in the US	Homeless shelters, soup kitchens, nursing homes in Orange and San Diego counties	3000+ hot meals & lunch, 70 duffle bags for foster kids & countless seniors entertained

(*) The Orthopedic Surgery program statistics are current as of August 2026. Final data for many other provinces will not be available until the end of the year.

THANK YOU SAP-VN MOBILE CARE (MC) 2026 VOLUNTEERS & SUPPORTERS!

MC 2026 TEAM LEADER

Congratulations on a remarkably successful mobile care mission!

Over four days of intense work in extreme heat and humidity, our dedicated team served more than 3,600 patients of the Van Canh and Canh Vinh districts in Gia Lai province, with several hundreds of children patients still being counted. This surpassed all previous records!

This year marked a successful launch of our first-ever cervical cancer screening program, providing hundreds of women with access to life-saving early cancer detection they otherwise could not reach.

Beyond medical care, we also provided families with essential food packages, gifted children with backpacks and school supplies, and distributed 100 scholarships alongside 100 bicycles to local students in the two districts.

This impactful medical mission was only possible because of the 200+ beautiful hearts making up our team. On behalf of the patients in Gia Lai, THANK YOU for your deep kindness and tireless dedication.

We are looking forward to seeing you all again on the next SAP-VN mobile care mission! Together we MADE a difference!



Special thanks to Ms. Le Thi Giau, Mr. Nguyen Le Phuoc Thang, and their organizations—Binh Tay Food Company (Simply Food) and NTD Healthcare—for their generous support of the SAP-VN Mobile Care 2026 mission. Their contributions included subsidizing patient gifts, providing daily team transportation and lunches, and delivering free cervical cancer screenings to nearly 180 female patients.

THANK YOU SAP-VN MOBILE CARE (MC) 2026 VOLUNTEERS & SUPPORTERS! (CONT.)

MC 2026 TEAM LEADER

Year	Local Partners	Province	Medical	Dental	Eye	Prescriptions	Total Services
To-date number of patients served			**51,828**	**14,027**	**22,253**	**173,893**	**90,552**
2026	Hội Chữ Thập Đỏ Tỉnh Gia Lai	Gia Lai	3,612	538	2,061	10,306	6,211
2025	Hội Chữ Thập Đỏ Tỉnh Đắk Lắk	Dak Lak	3,047	648	1,914	9,102	5,609
2024	Thanh Bình & Cao Lãnh District	Đồng Tháp	2,754	542	1,853	11,903	5,149
2023	Hoi Bao Tro BN Ngheo Tinh Quang Nam	Quang Nam	2,258	792	1,376	8,510	4,426
2019	Hoi Bao Tro BN Ngheo Tinh Quang Nam	Quang Nam	3,200	1200	1550	13,939	5,950
2018	Hoi Bao Tro BN Ngheo TP Can Tho	TP Can Tho				8,323	2,444
2017	Thach My Tay and Binh Chanh District	An Giang	2,530	420	2005	8,614	4,955
2016	Son Tay, Tay Tra	Quang Ngai	2,113	831	1203	7,018	4,147
2015	Soc Trang City, Vung Liem	Binh Minh	1,653	226	1558	4,934	3,437
2014	A Luoi & Quang Dien Clinics	Thua Thien Hue	1,721	622	1024	5,706	3,367
2013	An Phu Clinic & Children Charity	An Giang	1,982	514	1299	8,753	3,795
2012	Can Tho Eye & Oromaxillofacial Hospital	Vinh Long	2,380	868	1020	8,871	4,268
2011	Bac Binh Clinic & Red Cross	Binh Thuan	2,991	955	1147	10,957	5,093
2010	Bac Binh People & Health Committee	Binh Thuan	1,992	562	618	6,145	3,172
2009	Can Tho Eye & Oromaxillofacial Hospital	Vinh Long	2,732	736	1185	9,344	4,653
2008	The Sisters of St Paul's Free Clinic	Quang Nam	2,387	518	876	6,268	3,781
2007	The Sisters of St Paul's Free Clinic	Quang Nam	1,600	635	519	5,000	2,754
2006	Dong Thap Cmt. Family, Population & Children	Dong Thap	2,098	747	745	5,500	3,590
2005	An Giang Children's Assistance Fund	An Giang	1,972	663	300	5,200	2,935
2004	Hoi An Clinic	Quang Nam	1,400	432		4,000	1,832
2003	Hoi An Clinic	Quang Nam	1,038	558		3,500	1,596
2001	Dieu De Clinic	Thua Thien, Quang Nam	2,000	220		4,000	2,220
2000	Kim Long & Dieu De Clinics	Thua Thien	1,070				1,070
1999	Khanh Hoa Health Department	Khanh Hoa	668	100		2,000	768
1998	Ca Mau People Committee	Bac Lieu	830			2,000	830
1997	SEARAC's	Khanh Hoa	800	300		2,000	1,100
1994	La Nga Group	Binh Thuan	1,000	400		2,000	1,400

FINGERSTICK

ALLISON WANG

I was working the afternoon shift when, after three hours of walking under the sun, I was finally assigned to the blood sugar testing station. Before we began, a nurse quickly demonstrated how to measure blood sugar using a glucose monitor and lancets, instructing us to record each reading. We practiced on pieces of cardboard until my trembling hands gradually steadied.

Then the patients arrived.



With each person who stepped forward, my nervousness grew. What if I hurt someone? Would they trust a high schooler? I couldn't even speak Vietnamese. But once we began working, something shifted. My movements became more automatic: clean, prick, measure, record. Each successful test brought a quiet sense of accomplishment, and slowly, my earlier fears faded into the background.

A couple of hours later, a man approached my station. He looked to be in his early sixties, his skin tanned and weathered from years of working outdoors. I gestured for him to hold out his hand and pointed to my fingers, asking which one he preferred.

He extended his left hand.

That's when I noticed, only one finger remained. Where the others should have been were four scarred stumps.

For a moment, I froze. I wanted to call someone more experienced, to step away from a situation I didn't feel prepared for. But instead, something in me steadied. I focused.

As I cleaned his finger, I noticed how rough and calloused his skin was, marked by layers of healed scars. I carefully prepared the lancet, gently pressing it against his finger. A small drop of bright red blood formed. My stomach tightened, but I stayed composed, completing the test and recording his blood sugar level.



When I finished, I wrapped his finger and guided him to the next station. Only after he left did I feel my shoulders finally relax. This probably was my most fulfilling accomplishment of the trip. I was glad my stubbornness had taken control at this moment, and I was able to stay resilient and persistent to face my fears.

Throughout my time in Vietnam, I met many people living with far less than I had ever known disabled orphans, families struggling to afford basic necessities, children taking on responsibilities far beyond their age. Seeing their realities firsthand shifted my perspective in a way words never could.

I had often been told how privileged I was. But it wasn't until I stood beside people living entirely different lives that I began to truly understand what that meant.

When I returned to the United States, I carried that awareness with me not as guilt, but as motivation. I wanted to do more, to contribute in a way that mattered. It had opened my eyes to the world outside of my environment and when I returned to the US, I became even more inspired to make an impact on my community.

TEAM BUILDING

SƠN TÔN

Khi đoàn y tế thiện nguyện SAP-VN chúng tôi vừa bước xuống xe, tiến vào trạm y tế, nhiều người tươi cười hỏi: "Đoàn đi team building hả?"

Nghe cũng vui. Team thì đúng là có, building cũng đúng là có. Nhưng chúng tôi không đến đây để vui chơi hay nghỉ dưỡng. Chúng tôi đến để làm việc, để sẻ chia và phục vụ.

Chỉ trong bốn ngày, đoàn phải khám và điều trị cho gần bốn ngàn bệnh nhân. Gần hai trăm thiện nguyện viên cùng chung sức, gồm 15 bác sĩ, 23 nha sĩ, 13 dược sĩ, 2 bác sĩ nhãn khoa, hơn 80 sinh viên đại học và 65 thiện nguyện viên phục vụ. Chúng tôi có đủ từ phòng khám tổng quát, nha khoa, nhi khoa, phụ khoa, nhãn khoa và dược khoa. Mỗi bệnh nhân xoay tour khám 3 phòng cũng hết nửa ngày.





Có lẽ, đây cũng là một kiểu "team building" rất đặc biệt. Không xây dựng bằng những trò chơi hay tiếng hò reo, mà xây dựng bằng những giọt mồ hôi của chúng tôi, những nụ cười của bệnh nhân và tấm lòng của những con người cùng chung một mục đích: mang yêu thương đến với cộng đồng.





GROWING THROUGH SHARED ROOTS MY SAP-VN REFLECTION

SYDNEY PHAM

Green, untamed valleys, blooming rice fields, and spotted cows decorated our bus windows during the 45-minute ride from our hotel to our worksite, Trung Tâm Y Tế Huyện Vân Canh. During my first medical mission with SAP-VN, I, Sydney Pham, had the privilege of serving as one of three Youth Leaders and a volunteer on the Optometric team. As I reflect upon the trip and the enriching lessons of empathy, community, and human connection I gained, I also find myself continually drawn back to the magnificent landscape of Gia Lai and what it taught me. Just as Gia Lai's wild grasses flourish through their shared roots, and its cattle depend upon the health of the lands they inhabit, the kindness of the SAP-VN team and its commitment to Vietnam's underserved people showed me the importance of community and the enormity of our interactions.

The SAP-VN Team

I joined SAP-VN's mission hoping to reconnect with my heritage, give back to the Vietnamese community, and gain relevant experience as an aspiring optometrist. I was also grateful to receive the 2026 SAP-VN Mobile Care Scholarship and serve as a Youth Leader alongside Randy and Amy, where I helped facilitate training, communications, and bonding activities for the Youth volunteers. Though I was excited for the opportunity to contribute meaningfully and grow closer to my cohort, I was also admittedly anxious, feeling pressure to meet expectations and uncertain on what to expect from the SAP-VN environment.

Since the very first day of our mission, however, I was immediately surprised by the warmth and dedication of the people around me. From experienced doctors to young high school students, I witnessed people from remarkably different ages and backgrounds grow into a genuine team. Despite the oppressive heat and occasional chaos, morale was always high and it was an extremely pleasant environment to work in; people smiling, stepping up to fill vacant roles, asking questions, checking in on one another. Even the smallest gestures, such as a kind wave across the clinic or a quick thumbs-up in passing, made me feel like I belonged and reminded me that I was a part of something larger than myself. You could feel in it the air; our camaraderie was the fuel that kept our mission of service going, and in turn, offered reassurance to our patients. Witnessing each of our individual strengths intertwining like roots and nourishing our mission, was perhaps one of the most impactful memories I've made on the trip.



As a Youth Leader, I had the opportunity to not only participate but also lead within this dynamic community. I loved supporting the Youth volunteers and getting to know each person personally. Learning their stories—what brought them to Vietnam and where they hoped to go next—became a source of joy and inspiration. I drew fulfillment in sharing my own experiences as well, mentoring peers like Emma, May, and Catherine as they explored similar career paths and training them to safely operate various optometric equipment. From our first time meeting, where we made lucky knots to donate to the elderly, and across the week's nightly dinners, snorkeling trips, bowls of chè, and a karaoke contest where we screamed our lungs out, the Youth's energy and eagerness to contribute was a constant motivator. I felt reassured by their kindness and challenged to reciprocate their drive and enthusiasm. I want to thank them wholeheartedly, they have helped me realize the importance of not only caring about the mission, but also to care for the people that work alongside you.



The Mission

Throughout the week, I worked alongside the Optometric Group, assisting with preliminary testing such as tonometry, autorefraction, and visual acuity to help provide patients with free eye exams, prescription glasses, and medication. It offered those living with impaired vision, ocular disease, or without protective eyewear the opportunity to live safer, easier lives.

For much of the week, I manned the tonometer, measuring intraocular pressure to identify cases of glaucoma that would've otherwise gone untreated. Though my encounters with each patient were only a few minutes long, each was filled with so much purpose and meaning. I exchanged countless smiles, high-fived kids, and made an effort to talk to each patient about their day, their lives, and their dreams, despite my limited Vietnamese fluency. Sometimes I was complimented on my pronunciations, while other times our conversations would end abruptly in mutual laughter - unable to understand each other, but still appreciative of the thought and effort behind our words.

I fondly recall one patient, who arrived at the optometry line clutching her cheek in pain after visiting the Dental Group. I was quick to fetch a cold-water bottle and offered it to her and saw how her eyes lit up in surprise and relief; someone had noticed. In the accumulation of small moments like these, I realized that our differences in language or culture did not diminish our ability to connect to, or care for, one another. Through action, gestures, and intention, I felt that I had, in some small way, become part of their community, and communicated what words sometimes could not: I see you, I hear you, I care. I am grateful to the people of Xã Vân Canh and Xã Canh Vinh for reminding me of the power of our interactions, and that my upbringing and limited Vietnamese fluency did not weaken my connection to

GROWING THROUGH SHARED ROOTS MY SAP-VN REFLECTION (CONTINUED)

SYDNEY PHAM

the Vietnamese people or the strength of my ties to my cultural heritage.

On our final day of seeing patients, I had the privilege of assisting optometrists, Dr. Thi Bửu and Dr. Thảo Bửu, with dispensing prescription glasses. It was an extremely humbling and touching experience witnessing many patients' eyes well with tears as they experienced clear vision for the first time. Sharing these moments alongside mentors I looked up to as an aspiring optometrist made them even more meaningful, and as each patient left our clinic full of hope and gratitude, the significance of our work throughout the week became unmistakably clear. I left the trip reminded of why I am pursuing a career in healthcare, and I'm eager to continue making real differences in people's lives with SAP-VN next year, and one day as an optometrist.



Conclusion

I joined this trip during a hectic period of transition in my life. In the months leading up to it, I had graduated from college, begun working full-time, moved home from Santa Barbara, and devoted much of my energy to preparing my optometry school applications. I felt that this mission trip challenged me to slow down and ground my mindset to an overall worldview, breaking through the dissociation I'd felt being constantly focused on school, work, and other responsibilities. I find myself so much more appreciative of life, braver to connect deeper with those around me, and mindful of how I can use my privileges and experiences in service of others.

If nothing else, I hope we can all take away from this experience that, though often overlooked, each of us has an incredible influence on the people around us. Our attitudes, mindsets, actions, and intentions all matter, and have effects that are lasting and far-reaching. I want to continue showing others the same sincerity and compassion that the people of Vietnam and the SAP-VN team offered me, never taking the impact of our interactions for granted or losing sight of the individual.

I hope that we continue to nurture our bonds and grow together, just as vibrant and magnificent as the sprawling fields of Gia Lai.

Thank you Vietnam, Gia Lai, Xã Vân Canh, Xã Canh Vinh, and SAP-VN!

MỘT KỲ NGHỈ HÈ THẬT ĐẶC BIỆT & ĐẦY Ý NGHĨA CỦA GIA ĐÌNH LINH

TRÚC LINH

Năm nay gia đình Linh đã có cơ hội đồng hành cùng hội từ thiện SAP-VN trong chuyến khám chữa bệnh từ thiện tại tỉnh Gia Lai (Quy Nhơn - Bình Định cũ). Càng đi, Linh càng thấu hiểu và khâm phục sự hy sinh thầm lặng của các bác sĩ, các em sinh viên và tất cả các tình nguyện viên.

Mỗi ngày, mọi người bắt đầu làm việc từ 6:00 sáng đến 6:00 chiều, giữa cái nắng hơn 100°F, gần như chỉ kịp uống nước và có nhiều người bỏ bữa ăn để làm cho kịp. Thế nhưng điều khiến Linh xúc động nhất là trên gương mặt ai cũng luôn nở nụ cười. Mọi người làm việc không mệt mỏi chỉ với một mong muốn duy nhất: giúp đỡ những bà con còn nhiều khó khăn.

Linh thật may mắn khi được phân vào nhóm khám mắt (Optometry). Những ngày làm việc bên nhau sẽ mãi là một kỷ niệm đẹp. Dù mồ hôi ai cũng ướt đẫm vì thời tiết quá nóng, mọi người vẫn luôn vui vẻ, động viên nhau và mang đến năng lượng tích cực cho từng bệnh nhân.



Nhìn hàng ngàn bà con kiên nhẫn ngồi chờ từ rất sớm để được khám bệnh, Linh càng cảm nhận rõ hơn giá trị của sự sẻ chia và lòng nhân ái. Đây không chỉ là một chuyến thiện nguyện, mà còn là một bài học quý giá về tình người.



Linh cũng hy vọng những chuyến đi như thế này sẽ luôn là hành trang đẹp cho các em sinh viên. Những trải nghiệm thực tế sẽ giúp các em hiểu rằng, ngoài kiến thức chuyên môn, điều quý giá nhất của người làm nghề y chính là trái tim biết yêu thương và phục vụ cộng đồng.

Xin chân thành cảm ơn hội từ thiện SAP-VN (Social Assistance Program for Vietnam), tất cả các bác sĩ, các em sinh viên và những tình nguyện viên đã dành cả mùa hè của mình để mang ánh sáng, sức khỏe và hy vọng đến với những mảnh đời kém may mắn.

Kính chúc mọi người thật nhiều sức khỏe để những hành trình ý nghĩa như thế này sẽ còn tiếp tục, lan tỏa yêu thương đến thật nhiều nơi trên quê hương Việt Nam.

Home sweet home!

SMALL MOMENTS, LARGER LESSONS

ANNABELLE NGUYEN

I traveled to Vietnam for the first time in decades to support my mother's mission to serve the needy, joining SAP-VN's mobile care trip in Gia Lai with the idea that I would be helping others. Overall, I'd say I felt like I came out gaining more than what I gave!

Over the course of the trip, I spent many brief moments talking with patients from an angle of genuine curiosity (often in broken Vietnamese and hand gestures). What stuck with me the most from those fleeting interactions was how they managed to teach me the vernacular vocabulary, help guide other confused patients through the clinic, and crack jokes despite the long wait. While the situations of many of the patients from Vân Canh and Canh Vinh are deeply poignant due to the lack of accessible and affordable care, I've gained a lot of respect for their simultaneous sense of camaraderie. People do not simply survive hardship; they actively craft joy out of it, turning care into a shared, communal act.

These observations made me revisit the idea of what healthcare is really for. The underlying worry for a patient visiting usually isn't the ailment itself: it's how their ailment might steal time from the people they love and the passions they live for and dream of. The purpose of medicine is not to intervene at all costs; it is to give people the clearest, lightest path back to their best lives. The patients showed me, in their own quiet way, what actually mattered at the end of every clinic day.



I found myself learning just as much from the people I worked alongside, too. The 5 am breakfasts, 8 pm (or later) dinners, and shared work created friendships that pushed the limits of my physical and mental fortitude. But more notably, these moments also gave me a window into the unique drives of the people around me. In our conversations, I learned what they valued, what they were working toward, and what brought them the most fulfillment. Staying in touch after the trip felt natural, as their values have become a part of my own values that I continue to refine and shape every day.

Through both the patients and the friends, I made, I came away with more than I expected. The trip was genuinely fun, but also quietly eye-opening. I went to help my mom and came home with a deeper sense of empathy, a reinforced vision of why I want to practice medicine, and a handful of connections that will keep me laughing and self-reflecting. Looking back, what stayed with me from this short trip was not grand revelations but appreciation for the small, ordinary moments.





A PATIENT I STILL REMEMBER

KERWIN PHAN

Having the opportunity to volunteer with SAP-VN for a second time and serve underserved communities through a medical mission was an incredible privilege, during which I gained healthcare experiences and many meaningful interactions with patients throughout the trip. Our medical mission site this year was in Gia Lai, a large mountainous province in the northern part of Vietnam's Central Highlands. One experience in particular has stayed with me more than any other. It occurred on only my second day volunteering at the clinic site, but it became something I thought about continuously throughout the rest of the trip and still think about today.

The memory that still lingers with me is being assigned by one of the doctors to assist this specific patient everywhere and to stay until the very end. This patient arrived with significant physical disabilities that he had lived with since birth. Both hands and feet were deformed, and he had very limited mobility in his lower body. I helped transfer him from his motorized wheelchair into a manual wheelchair so that I could move him around the clinic. He depended on a motorized wheelchair to travel, and it took him several hours to get onto it because there was no one to help him. He lost his wife about a year ago, and she was the one taking care of him throughout the years, so it has been incredibly hard for him to do anything. I asked if he had any family nearby or any kids, and he replied, “No family, no kids, just me.” I proceeded to ask how he eats, showers, or moves around the house. The locals waiting in line who knew him answered, saying, “Because he can’t walk, he crawls around on the floor to get to places. It takes him hours to do simple tasks.” On top of taking hours to get into his vehicle, it took him another three to four hours to reach the clinic site. Hearing that immediately changed the way I looked at his visit. For many of us volunteers, arriving at the clinic meant getting on a bus and beginning another day of clinic work. For him, reaching the same place required hours of physical effort, and he had already overcome so much before even seeing a doctor.

When it was his turn to be evaluated, there was little the physician could do for the physical conditions he had lived with throughout his life. They could help manage some of his discomfort, but there was no treatment we could provide during the mission that would significantly change his condition. The patient wanted an annual eye examination next; however, the optometry station was upstairs, and the optometrists already had a long line of patients waiting to be seen; the line wrapped all the way downstairs, colliding with a separate line. Because he could not get upstairs on his own, we faced another problem. His inability to reach the second floor was not an inconvenience; it was a barrier created by an environment that was not fully accessible to him. Eventually, we had to help him return to his motorized wheelchair without receiving the eye examination he had traveled so far to receive.



We provided him with extra food and water for the road and saw him take off. I remember feeling extremely guilty as we helped him leave. I kept thinking that I could have fought harder for him. Maybe I could have asked several volunteers to help carry him upstairs. Maybe I could have explained his situation to the optometry team and asked them to make an exception. Maybe I could’ve done this or done that or just something to help. Knowing that he had spent so much time and effort reaching us made it extremely difficult to accept that he would leave without receiving everything he came for.



While these hypothetical questions were plaguing my mind, I began to realize how complicated that decision actually was. Countless other patients had also been waiting for hours. I knew this patient’s story because I had personally spoken with him, but I did not know what every other person in line had gone through before arriving. Some may also have traveled long distances, lived with serious health problems, missed work to get here, or overcome circumstances that were not immediately visible to me. It’s unfair to move one patient to the front of the line simply because I knew more about his struggle than I did about the others.

That experience taught me that caring for patients is not always as simple as wanting to help the person directly in front of you. Yes, compassion is important, but healthcare also requires difficult decisions about fairness, limited resources, and access. Similarly, fairness does not always mean treating every patient in the same exact way as each patient has different conditions and needs.

I remember him because there was so much that we could not do; his experience forced me to think about what it means to advocate for one patient while still being fair to everyone else waiting for care. Our mission was to help many people, but this patient reminded me that good intentions alone cannot solve every problem. The experience left me with questions rather than easy answers, and that is why it has stayed with me. I learned that healthcare requires not only compassion and fairness but also the willingness to recognize when the system itself creates barriers for patients. Most importantly, I learned that sometimes the patient we are unable to help fully can teach us just as much as the patients we can.

BIỂN VÀ NẮNG

THỊNH NGUYỄN

Nắng bắt đầu lên, những tia nắng đầu tiên trong ngày làm bừng sáng cả một dãy phố mà trước đó còn ẩn mình bên màn sương. Buổi sáng ở Việt nam hình như trời mau sáng hơn thì phải, mới 5h00 mà đã thấy rõ mặt người ...từ xa. Phong cảnh ở dây thật tuyệt, từ Khách sạn nơi chúng tôi cư trú nhìn ra vịnh có thể thấy những dãy núi xa xa, những con tàu đung đưa theo nhịp sóng và những con người đang nô đùa sóng biển ...Thân chào Việt Nam trong một ngày mới.



Sau khi ăn sáng xong, 6h30 chúng tôi bắt đầu hành trình đến với bà con tại hai xã Vân Canh & Canh Vinh - Gia Lai (Quy Nhơn - Bình Định cũ). Nơi đây nằm chếch về hướng Tây Nam so vời Tp Quy Nhơn, khoảng 1 giờ đi xe là chúng tôi đến điểm hẹn. Trời rất oi, mới 8h00 sáng mà đã nóng rồi.

Cũng như mọi năm, các trưởng nhóm đã tự sắp xếp công việc của nhóm mình để nhanh chóng bắt tay vào công việc sau khi đã thống nhất với trưởng và phó đoàn.



Lần thứ 2 tôi Tham gia đoàn, mỗi lần lại thấy cách vận hành của từng nhóm rất chuyên nghiệp, các anh trưởng nhóm và các cháu rất năng động, từ cách tiếp cận bà con, phát phiếu đến việc hướng dẫn đến khu khám riêng biệt luôn luôn vận hành một cách bài bản.

Bà con đến với nhóm khám mắt là vui nhất, có những cô bác khi đeo những đôi kiếng vào thì vô cùng thích thú: sao nó rõ thế này nhỉ? và những nụ cười lại toe toét trên những gương mặt sạm nắng.



Khu nhổ răng là một trong những tổ làm việc cực nhất, những bệnh nhân ở dây phần lớn không chăm sóc răng miệng đúng cách, nên nhóm vừa hướng dẫn, vừa phải nhổ những chiếc răng hư cho bà con... Rồi còn những khu khám cho chị em, khu phát thuốc!

Khu phát quà là nơi mà khi Bà con đã khám xong và ra về sẽ nhận được sự hỗ trợ thêm của SAP-VN, quà năm nay cũng đa dạng hơn năm ngoái. Mọi người thường nói vui " đây là nơi tìm thấy nụ cười nhiều nhất." Những cụ ông, cụ bà, những em nhỏ sau khi nhận những phần quà đã nói những câu thật xúc động "Cảm ơn Đoàn, đã khám bệnh, phát thuốc không lấy tiền mà còn gởi quà nữa... thật quí hóa... Cảm ơn".

Bốn ngày trôi qua thật nhanh, Ngày chia tay cũng lại đến, những cái bắt tay, những cái ôm thật nồng ấm của gần 200 tình nguyện viên, những người con Đất Việt xa quê hương trở về cùng nhau trong Hội thiện nguyện SAP-VN cùng gởi đến hơn 3 ngàn bệnh nhân sự hỗ trợ và thăm khám trong chuyến đi lần này đến với Vân Canh & Canh Vinh - Gia Lai.

Tạm biệt Vân Canh & Canh Vinh - Gia Lai! Hẹn gặp lại các tình nguyện viên mùa hè năm sau!

Ngoài kia, biển và nắng vẫn hát.

TREATED & TAUGHT

JAMES PHAM

I held the suction for a dentist as he was drilling a cavity. Dr. T explained the importance of relying on your hands as he felt the transition from decayed dentin to hard, healthy tooth under his handpiece. He put down his handpiece. This was my cue. I irrigated the tooth while he got his etch and bonding agents. I dried the tooth. He applied the etch and bonding agent. I cured with UV light. He applied the filling material. I cured again. He shaped and trimmed the filling. I handed him articulating paper and the handpiece with a polishing bit afterwards. We worked for hours like this, in concert with one another.

As I walked from one room to another, I heard from the pharmacist on my right, "Take this medication when you have pain," explaining to the patient how to make sense of the medication given to them. "Make sure to brush all surfaces of the tooth," I heard from the dental team on my left. "This is how you polish teeth," I heard from the dentist in front of me, explaining to a volunteer before passing her the handpiece to try under supervision.

Patients were not the only ones learning. While they learned how to care for their teeth and how to take the medication given to them, youth volunteers and I got an opportunity to learn and practice skills needed to care for the medically underserved populations of rural Vietnam. Over a course of four days in the middle of July, with temperatures in the 90s and 80% humidity, in a makeshift clinic, we were able to address the needs of over 3,500 patients.

This was my third mobile care clinic with SAP-VN, and on every mission I am reminded of the healthcare provider I want to become. What I noticed each year is not the number of patients, but what happens after the chair is empty. The care we give brings immediate relief. But a patient who knows why she takes a pill, or how to brush a molar she cannot see, carries that knowledge home long after we pack up the clinic.

TREATED & TAUGHT (CONTINUED)

JAMES PHAM

That kind of care is just as powerful. I return to SAP-VN year after year because their care model reaches beyond the chair: scholarships for children, bicycles and wheelchairs donated to meet individual transportation needs, partnerships with local health organizations that keep working after we leave. Each piece targets an individual barrier to health equity. Although different, all of them aim at the same goal: a patient better equipped to stay healthy once we are gone.

I will carry what SAP-VN taught me into my own practice. Dr. T took the extra minute to explain why his hands mattered more than his instruments. The pharmacist took the extra minute to explain why timing mattered as much as the pill itself. Neither had to, but both did. I think of this alongside the scholarships, the donated bicycles and wheelchairs, and the partnerships that keep working after we leave. Care that stops at the chair treats one problem. But care built at every level — the visit, the education, the transportation, the follow-up — treats the patient. Medicine treats the body in front of us. Education treats the years after we are gone. Until I can offer both as well as the providers of SAP-VN do, I will keep returning to Vietnam, and to the patients who go home not just treated but taught.



CONNECTIONS THROUGH REFLECTION

AMY HOANG

Một cây làm chẳng nên non ba cây chụm lại nên hòn núi cao is not only a Vietnamese proverb I carry with me throughout my personal and professional life, but also a representation of what SAP-VN has taught me.



My Story

Growing up Vietnamese American, my family instilled deep cultural values that have shaped who I am. Being able to speak Vietnamese has allowed me to connect culturally and personally with the Vietnamese community. Through my involvement in Vietnamese Scouting, Vietnamese Student Association, and Miss Vietnam Southern California, I have learned the importance of teamwork and leadership. As a returning volunteer and scholarship recipient, I came with high hopes and determination to encourage new and returning volunteers to find connections with the community we served.



The Trip

At orientation, I was excited to meet my youth group and meet so many new faces. I got to work alongside Sydney Pham and Randy Nguyen who were great youth leaders that I could rely on. We all prepared a small icebreaker activity that allowed the volunteers to loosen up and get to know each other.

As an incoming student pharmacist, my time during the mission trip is spent mostly in the pharmacy. My experience being a pharmacy technician allowed me to assist other volunteers on pill counting, delegating tasks, and proper tool handling. Working and observing the counting team, I was reminded about how “it takes a village to raise a child”. Each team worked together and communicated efficiently to provide the best health plan for the patients in Gia Lai. This year, I was able to shadow Dr. Dan Hoang to gain insight into my future role as a pharmacist. He gave me insight on how to counsel a patient in Vietnamese which allowed me to learn a bit of medical terminology that I can use in the future when serving my community.

No Success without Failure

There were some small bumps along the road during the week. One of the problems we ran into as youth group leaders was leading the Wednesday Youth Entertainment Show. Originally, we had drafted a plan to host a game show. We meticulously planned how the groups would be divided, what games would be played, and how it would efficiently run. However, with such little time to prepare our teams we had to shift gears and think of a new plan. After some quick thinking, we decided to do a big youth group team karaoke competition. Moments like this remind me about the importance of teamwork. Working with reliable youth leaders like Sydney and Randy allowed me to have a space where I can trust and express my opinions while also being open to theirs.



The Future

Having the opportunity to join SAP-VN again is truly an experience that I will always remember. Entering pharmacy school, I want to take the lessons learned and stories told to make sure I provide my community with the best care possible.

MEMORABLE CONNECTIONS

TESS TRAN

This summer, I turned 16 and was looking forward to discovering new places with friends and family. Instead, I discovered people my age doing everything they could to access healthcare that was not available to them.

Volunteering with SAP-VN, it was my first mission trip with this organization—or any mission trip for that matter—and I came in not knowing what to anticipate. Looking back, I am so glad I did. Without having any expectations, I had the opportunity to experience genuine love and appreciation not only from the patients, but also from the people I worked alongside.

Throughout my five days with SAP-VN, I was surrounded by a talented team that I quickly recognized I could learn so much from. Everyone dedicated their day to the patients, giving each one their full, undivided attention and inspiring me to do the same. I was lucky to be welcomed into the dental area, where it was clear that everybody shared the same intentions and mindset. This mutual purpose encouraged everyone to work their hardest. In a setting where people are willing to give up their time and energy to serve others, I recognized that the impact of our efforts went far beyond the work itself, extending to the guidance I received, the connections I formed, and the lessons I learned from those around me.

Stepping into the dental area, it was evident that people who were far more experienced than I was filled the space, but I never would've imagined how much they would be willing to teach me. Throughout my time assisting, I undeniably made many mistakes, but the patience of all the dentists I worked with made the learning process much less intimidating. Whether it was through explaining the reasoning behind a procedure, adjusting the way I assisted, or simply answering any questions I had, every moment gave me something new to learn. Even though I was only with the SAP-VN team for five days, I came to understand that being a mentor was much more than sharing knowledge; it also meant taking on the responsibility of guiding others with patience and composure.



Of all the connections I made during my time with SAP-VN, the ones that came from silly interactions with patients were the most memorable. Although these moments were quite brief, they still created a feeling of closeness between me and the patients that I will never forget. While the dentist I was assisting was busy preparing syringes for numbing, I would often see fear on the children patients' faces. To ease them, I'd always ask my go-to question: "Em có thích con chó không?" or "Do you like dogs?" No matter who the patient was, a smile came across their face, followed by their explanation of why they did or did not like dogs, reminding me of why these experiences mattered. Little exchanges like these showed me that despite us living our lives in completely different settings, something as simple as a shared smile could create a sense of closeness between us.



But there was one girl who stood out to me, in particular. She was tucked into the corner diagonally across from me, trying her best to sit still in the chair. Her body language couldn't hide the fact that she was extremely afraid of the cleaning she was about to receive. Hopeful that I could make her feel more relaxed; I decided to come over and ask my favorite question: "Em có thích con chó không?" However, her face stayed virtually the same. She answered with a soft "Không thích" or "No, I don't like them." Still determined to form a connection with her, I began asking her questions about food instead. I thought we could bond over it, but she continued to answer, "Không thích."

By the end of the procedure, one of the dentists gave her milk, chocolate, and a few other goodies. Earlier, when I asked her about food, she told me that she didn't like either milk or chocolate. Despite this, she was still genuinely thankful for what she received. Seeing her reaction reminded me of the importance of appreciating what I am given. Admittedly, I've always heard the saying, "Be grateful for what you have," but never truly considered it, letting myself become numb to those words over time. However, when I saw the young girl embody the meaning behind those words without anyone telling her to, it inspired me to become more appreciative of what I have.

When my five days with SAP-VN came to an end, I returned to Saigon. Although I was back in a much more comfortable environment, the sense of purpose and connection I experienced during my time in the clinic felt far more meaningful. The lesson I learned from the girl was one of many that stayed with me, and I often found myself missing my time in the clinic. I really wish I could turn back time and treat every patient I worked with once again. I don't mean this because I want to change anything I did; rather, I wish to experience the fulfillment I felt from connecting with each person once more. Whether it was through ushering, dental procedures, or gifting, everyone had so much gratitude to share, and it truly touched my heart. This trip could never compare to any other I've experienced, as its impact will stay with me long after those five days. In every life, I would choose to volunteer with SAP-VN again in a heartbeat.



SUMMER OF 2026 - MY SAP-VN REFLECTION

RANDY NGUYEN

This past summer's Mobile Care Mission was a week of constant motion, yet some of the moments that stayed with me most came from the simplest tasks. It was a week of learning not to put yourself first, and of realizing just how much more there is to the world beyond the life you know. Each morning, one of my main responsibilities was working near registration, packing bread and bottled water into plastic bags to give to patients as they entered our clinic. At first, it felt like a repetitive and small responsibility compared to everything else that was happening around me. I wasn't taking vitals, prescribing medication, or performing medical care. I was simply preparing bread and water and helping patients as



they began their day with us. As hundreds of patients passed through registration, I noticed that ordinary items to me carried greater meaning to someone else. Simple bread and water were received with genuine happiness and gratitude. It made me realize that we often overlook the everyday things in our lives.

Another responsibility I had during Mobile Care was managing the walking canes for patients who needed them the most. Similar to the bread and water I prepared at registration, a cane seemed like just another supply on our mission trip. However, I began to realize that a walking cane could continue helping a patient long after the mission ended. For an elderly patient or someone with limited mobility, it could mean walking



with greater stability and confidence. I recall one patient telling me how the cane gave them a greater sense of independence. What I saw as a simple walking cane had the ability to completely transform a part of everyday life for someone else. It was meaningful to see a patient walk in with nothing and leave with something that could continue improving their everyday life.

There were a few times when I assisted patients to their next stations because of their limited mobility. These moments were brief, but they made the mission much more personal to me. Since my main task involved handing out items to patients, it was meaningful to also show kindness and care not through formal activities, but through small moments. It



was easy to fall into the mindset of working quickly to finish the day, but the moments when I slowed down to help others became invaluable to me.

During this eventful week, some of the most meaningful parts of Mobile Care also happened away from the clinic. Being part of the youth team and serving as a youth leader gave me the opportunity to meet people, I would have never crossed paths with otherwise. Everyone I met came from different cities, backgrounds, age groups, and stages of life. Yet for that one special week in the summer, all those differences were put aside for the same reason, which is to provide care to the patients of Vân Canh and Canh Vinh. One of my most memorable experiences with the youth team was our Wednesday Youth Day, when the entire team went to Hòn Khô Beach to swim, kayak, and spend time together. Seeing everyone relax, laugh, and enjoy the clear blue water together made the day feel especially memorable. Whether it was sharing lunchtime during workdays or laughing while decompressing at the hotel pool, a group of unfamiliar faces quickly became a precious community.



THREE GENERATIONS, ONE CHARITY, TWICE SO FAR…

THUY VO, EMILY TRINH, JACOB TRINH & BENJAMIN TRINH

Social Assistance Program for Vietnam (SAP-VN) is called amicably in our family as "SAP". We were introduced to SAP-VN in 2005 by my sister-in-law, Ms. Tuyet Vo who has not missed any Mobile Care (MC) mission since 2006. My husband, Dave Trinh, and I joined our first MC mission in 2007 and when the yearly mission became too popular, Dave decided to give up his spot for other young volunteers after several missions. I continue as a "voluntold" Lead/co-Lead for the Pharmacy team starting in 2008.

There are many reasons for me to return to SAP-VN MC, but the main reason is the volunteers. These men and women are true humanitarians, they left their social status and egos behind and show up at the work sites with the same common



mission and that is "to improve the quality of life for the poor and the disabled in Vietnam…". As a refugee from Viet Nam in 1975, we feel lucky to reside in the US to be part of the biggest Vietnamese diaspora and feel thankful for SAP-VN to allow us to be part of this wonderful organization for the last 20+ years to grow new "roots" for our family.

For me, the last 20 years has seen many improvements in MC services to needy patients in rural villages in Viet Nam and for the volunteers. Back in 2007 and 2008, our mission occurred in November when we can only use the run-down local health clinics to serve the patients. I still remember when the Pharmacy team only had an old exam bamboo bed with a tattered straw mat as a dispensary station. In 2008, after experiencing the flooding in Hoi An the day after our mission completed and one of the pharmacists had to be evacuated from the hotel by basket boat, the MC mission was moved to summer time. We traded the more comfortable weather for us to gain several benefits for the patients: less chance of rain to allow more patients to come from far away to see us, more spaces in local schools compared to the clinics to accommodate more patients and volunteers. Summer time also allows more students, future leaders of the mission, to participate and we have seen these future leaders blooming in front of our eyes.

As the parents of 2 sons and grandparents of 5, we are thankful every day for our family. Our sons and daughters in law feel the same way we do about humanitarian works of SAP-VN. In 2006, our 2nd son, Andy Trinh, joined his first MC as a student and again as a dentist with his wife, Nancy in 2016.

In 2023, our 1st son, Jimmy Trinh and his wife, Dr. Mai-Trang Dang, a pharmacist, took their entire family of 5 to Viet Nam so their 1st daughter, Emily Trinh, can join her mom and bà nội for MC in Quang Nam. The mission in 2023 created so many long lasting 1st memories for me: the 1st time that the 3 generations of us worked side by side, the 1st time that the MC team had to commute over 3 hours each way, the 1st time that we only had 3 pharmacists on the team… Everyone had to grab their bag of breakfast and be on the bus by 4:30am and don't get back to our hotel in Tam Ky until 7:30-8pm. That year, Ms. Tuyet Vo also brought her 3 grandchildren: Ella, Jordan and Yen Vo. Emily and her cousins were able to commiserate about their bus rides, bathroom breaks, or the traumatic experience when Yen dropped her phone in the squat toilet! These young troopers were amazing, they completed the mission with the smile on their faces, and we love them to death for their resilience and tenacity.

This is what Emily shared with me about her experience with SAP-VN MC

"I had a good experience volunteering at SAP-VN with my family in 2023. I liked being involved in the ongoing mission of providing healthcare to underrepresented communities that my Bà Nội and many other volunteers have been dedicated to for years. I enjoyed meeting new people and making friends that I wouldn't have met elsewhere. I appreciate how people from many different backgrounds come together and collaborate for a shared cause every year. It was cool to watch my Bà Nội and my mom use their knowledge from their careers in pharmacy outside of the United States and help people in need. I am grateful that I could participate in SAP-VN with my Bà Nội and better understand her important life experiences and motivations."



This year, Jimmy and Mai-Trang went to Viet Nam again and took their 2 sons, Jacob and

THREE GENERATIONS, ONE CHARITY, TWICE SO FAR… (CONTINUED)

THUY VO, EMILY TRINH, JACOB TRINH & BENJAMIN TRINH

Ben, to Quy Nhon to participate in SAP-VN 2026 where our 3 generations worked side by side for the 2nd time. What a gift to this mom and bà nội and I am forever grateful for it.

Jacob, Ben and cousin Yen had a more "volunteer-friendly" mission than Emily's and their cousins' in 2023. They didn't have the long commute time and had a much better bathroom



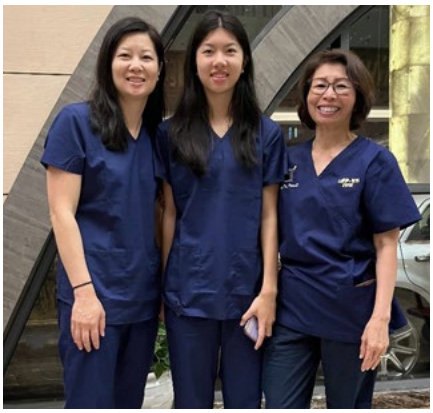
break experience. Once we are back home, Ben and Jacob both willingly shared their thoughts about their experience with MC mission below.

Ben's words

"I wanted to contribute to mobile health care because I was inspired by my Bà Nội's commitment over many years. I had a really great experience working with SAP-VN. I really enjoyed giving back to the community in Vietnam, my country of ancestry. I got to meet a lot of new people and spent time with my relatives, Ông Nội's sisters and brother-in-law, as well. Overall, I encourage people to join since you would gain a lot from helping people who don't have a lot."

Jacob wrote

"When someone asks me what the most fun part about SAP-VN was it doesn't take long for me to think. Some people might say the fun activities or some people may say that they loved the hotel. I think the best part of SAP-VN was getting to know and help the people on the medical mission. Over the course of the mission, I got to see some of the most wonderful and beautiful souls that I have ever seen. There's a very clear distinction between kindness and just plain niceness. Kindness is the act of being nice even when it doesn't directly help you, and I got to witness that firsthand. We were able to bring smiles to Vietnam, and I think everyone should be proud of that. Each person I talked to, was similar to I in ways I never expected and genuinely wanted to be there. The feeling of sonder was tremendous: whether being the one helped or the one helping, it made me realize that we all united despite our different backgrounds and stories and worked to make a whole week better for everyone."



Living and raising children in a multicultural country where you are a minority, can be challenging. When our two sons



were old enough to feel "different" in school, we decided that they need to know their "roots". We made an effort to take them to Viet Nam to visit my husband's parents and siblings every two years until their paternal grandparents passed. Eating together also a "roots-building" event. Nowadays, family dinner once a week for three generations at our house with Vietnamese home-cooked meals by chef-bà nội is traditional. Ben, the foodie, will complain if the weekly dinner doesn't happen for one reason or another. As a parent and grandparent, I believe that kids with strong "roots" are healthier and happier. Also, doing voluteering works have been shown to make people happy by releasing feel-good chemicals in the brain. After reading Emily's, Jacob's and Ben's writings, I can see that they do appreciate the act of giving back, and that's good enough for this proud and grateful bà nội!

2026 COMPASSION AWARD



The Social Assistance Program for Vietnam (SAP-VN) is honored to present Dr. Thuy Vo with the 2026 Compassion Award. This award recognizes nearly twenty years of her hands-on dedication, her leadership within our mobile care team, and the incredible family tradition of volunteering she has built.

Dr. Vo first connected with SAP-VN in 2007 when her sister-in-law, Ms. Tuyet Vo, invited her to the "Gift of Hope" fundraiser. Wanting to help, Dr. Vo signed up for her first mobile care mission that same year. Since then, she has committed herself fully to the cause, participating in almost every single annual mission over the past two decades and stepping up to become the pharmacy team leader.

Her volunteer work quickly became a family effort. Her husband joined the mission for a couple of years before choosing to step aside so younger volunteers could have a spot and gain valuable field experience. Dr. Vo also brought her son Andy, who has grown up to become a dentist, into the fold during his early college years.

As a pharmacist and team leader, Dr. Vo ensures a high level of care at the mobile care clinics. She doesn't just manage the pharmacy and hand out medication; she takes the time to sit with patients, double-check their allergies, and counsel them on drug safety. Knowing how much lifestyle impacts health, she also talks to them about nutrition to help them manage and prevent common problems like high blood pressure and diabetes. Her care extends to her teammates as well. Whenever fellow mission members fall sick during a trip, Dr. Vo is always there to take care of them.

Nearly twenty years later, Dr. Vo's personal commitment has grown into a three-generation family legacy. Today, her two sons, their wives, and her five grandchildren all travel with her to serve on the SAP-VN mobile care missions. For Dr. Vo, it is incredibly important for her family to experience this work firsthand and to develop real compassion for the needy in Vietnam, their motherland.

SAP-VN is incredibly grateful to Dr. Thuy Vo for her decades of hard work, her consistent leadership year after year, and the wonderful example she sets. We are proud to honor her with this year's Compassion Award.

COMPASSION AWARD

Since 2003, SAP-VN has awarded the Compassion Award to individuals and organizations honoring their exceptional contributions to our mission. We would like to send our warmest congratulations to all the recipients since its inception.

2003: Mrs.Trâm Anh Long

2004: Ms. Loan Nguyễn

2005: Mrs. Phượng Amelie Riviere

2006: Mr. Nguyễn Kim Hoàn

2007: Mr. & Mrs. Phùng Liên Đoàn

2008: Mrs. Oanh Ress

2009: Nhật Báo Viễn Đông

2010: Mr. & Mrs. Hồ Thành Đức & Bé Ký

2011: Ms. Tôn Nữ Mỹ Linh

2012: Dr. Tạ Tường Vi

2013: Dr. Huỳnh Phước Đương

2014: Dr. Hương Anh Long

2015: Dr. Nguyễn Tống Nhuận

2016: Mr. Võ Văn Đạt

2017: Mr. Nguyễn Ngọc Thành
Dr. Nguyễn Phượng Châu

2018: Mrs. Tuyết Võ

2019: Rock Revival

2020: Ms. Anh Nguyễn
Ms. Tâm Nguyễn

2021: Mr. Lê Duy Linh

2022: Three Generations of a Family
Mr. & Mrs. Michael & Anh Ly
Mr. & Mrs. Justin & Malinda Chau
Ms. Crystal Chau

2023: Dr Mimi Catherine Lê,
Mr. Triết Nguyễn and Family

2024: Edward Bao Vo & Kathleen Bao Anh Vo

2025: Hưng Vũ, Trinh Nguyễn, Bảo Thy & Bảo Lâm

2026: Dr. Thúy Võ & Her Three-Generation Family

MOBILE CARE 2026: SIDE ACTIVITIES

CENTER OF SOCIAL SERVICES AN NHƠN VISIT

It has become a tradition for our youth volunteers to visit an orphanage, a senior care facility, or a center for people with disabilities on Wednesday—the mid-week break during our mobile healthcare mission. This year, we visited the Center of Social Services *(Trung tâm Công tác xã hội và Bảo trợ xã hội)* in Quy Nhơn, which cares for over 80 residents, including the elderly, young children, and individuals with disabilities.

Led by youth team leaders Kathleen, Randy, Sydney, and Amy, the volunteers spent time interacting with the residents and distributing gifts they had purchased and brought themselves.

Additionally, SAP-VN donated medical equipment and supplies valued at approximately $2,000 USD, primarily specialized to assist individuals with physical disabilities.

Afterward, the youth team traveled to Hòn Khô Island to enjoy lunch, snorkeling, and relaxation at the beach.





QUY HÒA LEPROSY VILLAGE VISIT

On the Wednesday break, a group of adult volunteers led by Dr. Thuận Trần visited the Quy Hòa Leprosy Village *(Làng Phong Quy Hòa)*, a secluded community home to leprosy patients and their families in Quy Nhơn, Gia Lai province. Established in 1929 as a leprosarium during the French colonial era, it originally provided medical care and isolation for individuals facing severe social stigma.

Today, although the disease has been successfully cured and contained, social prejudice persists. The village continues to offer housing and support to multiple generations of these families. Because treated patients are non-contagious, they are fully capable of integrating into broader society. In fact, many residents work in the local economy, and their children attend nearby public schools.



Our visit offered profound insight into the conditions residents face and left us with deep admiration for their resilience. Thank you to Làng Phong Quy Hòa for an unforgettable and eye-opening experience.



MOBILE CARE 2026: SIDE ACTIVITIES (CONT.)

POST-SURGERY ASSESSMENTS

From August 4 to 7, following the mobile care mission, a team of SAP-VN volunteers led by Ms. Susan Hương Lê (Orthopedic Surgery Program Lead) visited the Mekong Delta region. The team conducted home visits to evaluate patients sponsored by SAP-VN for orthopedic and pediatric heart surgeries.

Each patient was given 500,000 VND, medicated oil (dầu xanh), and cookies. Families expressed deep gratitude for the visit, noting that few organizations conduct follow-up care in person. While SAP-VN fully funds orthopedic surgeries, heart surgery cases often require collaborative support from up to four partner organizations to cover total costs.

Many of the patients live in remote areas accessible only by motorbike, and several reside in government-assisted or under-resourced housing. In one instance, the team visited a 9-month-old infant living in a home with dirt floors and unfinished walls.

Below are some statistics from the visits.

Patients	Locations	Age	Type of Surgery	Surgery Date	Pre Surgery Conditions	Post Surgery Condition
Thien Phuc Alarcon	Binh Thanh	9	Heart	10/24/24	16 kg, small appetite, slow learning	22 kg, good appetite, learning better in school, follow up every 6 months with cardiologist
Nguyen Minh Hieu	Binh Thanh	8	Heart (L heart with open valve)	5/14/26	Had 3 previous surgeries, has a younger twin brother, limited mobility;	A happy child with very high pain tolerance, resumes activities like a normal child, raised by a young single mom because his father had left the twin at birth.
Nguyen Thai Kim Vang	An Giang	5	Club feet	12/25/25	Bright little girl who has club feet. She tip toed as she walked	Can walk normally with leg braces
Nguyen Bach An Nhien	An Giang	3	Amplatzer Duct Occluder	5/12/25	11 kg, ate well but did not gain weight	Gains 3 kg, eat well, recovers nicely
Thach Thi Ngoc Van	Can Tho	9 mo.	Heart		Small, irritable baby	Surgery scheduled for August 6, 2026
Huynh Thi Tam Doan	Can Tho	13	for R. Achilles tendon retraction	7/15/26	Patient tiptoed	Has received physical therapy for 1 week, she has recovered nicely and tried to walk normally with leg brace
Nguyen Ngoc Bich Tram	Vinh Long	3	lower legs tilted inward - orthopedic equipment ONLY	6/1/25	Patient tiptoed	can walk normally with leg braces. Patient will get new braces soon since her current ones are getting small
Ha Thi Cam Tu	Vinh Long	15	for L. Achilles tendon retraction	6/1/25	Patient with cerebral palsy and right achilles tendon retraction, tip toed as she walked	The patient's condition has improved with surgery and orthopedic equipment. She learned to walk normally with special shoes for 30 minutes per day. SAP-VN approves for patient to get her right arm and hand evaluated in September







THE THREE NEW PROGRAMS

SAP-VN IS EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE THREE NEW PROGRAMS LAUNCHING IN 2026

VIETNAM SMILES – ORAL HEALTH INSTRUCTIONS (OHI)

Vietnam Smiles is a project focused on improving oral health awareness and helping people understand the connection between oral health and overall health. Through education and prevention, we hope to reduce the high rates of tooth decay and oral diseases in underserved communities throughout Vietnam.

After years of providing dental care through our Mobile Care clinics, our dental team has seen firsthand how common poor oral health is in many rural areas. We also noticed that many patients have never been taught proper oral hygiene practices. While dental treatment can address existing problems, education helps prevent them from happening in the first place. By teaching patients how to care for their teeth and gums, we hope to create lasting changes that benefit not only the patients themselves, but also their families and communities.





Our goal is to provide one to two educational outreach programs each year while working with schools to encourage oral health education as part of students' learning experience. In addition to teaching children about oral health, we provide oral hygiene supplies such as toothbrushes and toothpaste and offer preventive treatments when available. We also collect data to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and make improvements as needed.

MOBILE DENTAL CARE

The Mobile Dental Care Program is a community-based pilot initiative designed to improve oral health outcomes in underserved communities in Vietnam. The program is founded on the understanding that oral health is an essential component of overall health. Research has shown strong associations between poor oral health and serious chronic conditions, including cardiovascular disease and certain cancers. Despite this, many people in Vietnam seek dental care only when they experience significant pain or dental emergencies, rather than through routine preventive care.

To address this challenge, the program partners with local dentists and dental professionals to bring basic, emergency, and preventive dental services, and oral health education directly into communities. Our mobile outreach teams conduct dental screenings, perform basic, emergency, and preventive treatments, provide educational resources, and referrals for follow-up care when needed. Community education sessions focus on the importance of regular dental checkups, proper oral hygiene practices, and early intervention to prevent more serious and costly dental conditions.

The teams collect dental statistics and return every 6 months to repeat the services above and evaluate the effectiveness of their intervention.

By encouraging preventive care instead of emergency treatment, the program aims to establish healthier long-term behaviors within local communities, reduce the incidence of preventable dental disease, and lessen the burden of dental emergencies on patients and local healthcare providers.

As a pilot initiative, the program launched in 2026 in three provinces:

- Đắk Lắk Province
- An Giang Province
- Đà Nẵng Province (formerly Quảng Nam province)

The pilot initiative will evaluate community participation, improvements in oral health awareness, and access to preventive dental services. Lessons learned will inform future expansion to additional provinces throughout Vietnam.

Through collaboration with local dental professionals and community partners, the Mobile Dental Care Program seeks to build a sustainable model of preventive oral healthcare that empowers individuals to take an active role in maintaining their dental health and, ultimately, their overall quality of life

THE THREE NEW PROGRAMS (CONT.)

SAP-VN IS EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE THREE NEW PROGRAMS LAUNCHING IN 2026

PROVIDING FOR A BRIGHT FUTURE

Providing for a Bright Future is an education-focused social impact initiative dedicated to supporting orphaned children in Vietnam. Through a comprehensive approach that combines academic support, skills training, and career guidance, the program equips youth with the tools they need to break cycles of poverty and build safe, stable, and self-sufficient futures.

Our objectives include

- Increase school retention and reduce dropout rates
- Support completion of primary, secondary, and post-secondary education
- Expand access to vocational and income-generating skills
- Improve employability, economic participation, and social inclusion



Program Offerings

- Our holistic model provides targeted support across multiple stages of a student's educational journey:
- Academic Support: Tutoring centers, computer labs, and after-school programs to strengthen foundational learning
- Education Scholarships: Financial assistance covering school fees, books, and essential supplies not provided by government programs
- Higher Education Support: Partial or full scholarships for students pursuing college or university
- Vocational Training Grants: Practical, job-ready skills training in areas such as sewing, electronics, trades, and wellness services
- Career Counseling: Guidance on career exploration, education pathways, skills assessment, and job-readiness preparation



Pilot Program: 2026–2027 School Year

As part of our pilot phase, we are partnering with three orphanages across Vietnam. This initial rollout allows us to assess program effectiveness and refine our approach before expanding to additional communities.

- Trung Tâm Hoa Mai (Đà Nẵng): 34 students (elementary through high school)
- Mái Ấm Tình Mẹ (An Giang): 29 students (elementary through high school)
- Trung Tâm Hy Vọng (Thanh Hóa): 21 students (elementary through high school)

HOPE AND HELP AFTER THE 2025 FLOOD DISASTER

In October and November 2025, devastating floods swept through several provinces in Central Vietnam, leaving families, schools, and entire communities struggling in their wake. In the days that followed, SAP-VN mobilized quickly, delivering food and emergency relief after the water retreated to help meet the most urgent needs.

But our commitment did not end there. As the community began the long journey toward recovery, we focused our efforts on the children whose daily routines and sense of stability had been shaken.

In Quảng Nam, we distributed notebooks, backpacks, and other school supplies to elementary and middle school students who lost their school materials in the floods in two of the communities hardest hit by the flooding xã Gò Nối, and xã Đại Lộc.

In Huế, our volunteers installed sports equipment and educational toys to Trung tâm Hỗ trợ và Chăm sóc Người Khuyết Tật xã Nam Đông. This center supports children with a wide range of mental and physical disabilities, many come from ethnic minority communities in the surrounding mountainous region. A group of SAP-VN friends in Huế also delivered school supplies, snack and milk to four schools located in remote mountain villages in Xã Long Quảng.

In Khánh Hòa, we distributed much needed food packages and 10,000 notebooks tin Diên Khánh. We also replaced the TV and ceiling fans damaged during the flood at Mái Ấm Hy Vọng in Cam Lâm.

In Gia Lai, we installed new water filtering systems and new computers in 4 elementary and middle schools. We also donated educational toys to local pre-schools as requested.

The hardest hit area is the Phú Yên region of Đắk Lắk province. After delivering food and emergency relief in December 2025, our volunteers traveled there, walked through the damaged schools, and sat with teachers and administrators from four kindergartens (An Cư, An Hòa Hài, Hòa Tân Tây, An Hiệp) to understand what they needed most to welcome their students back. Early in 2026, We delivered new playground equipment, classroom materials, and essential amenities to these schools. We hope that these resources bring comfort, joy, and a renewed sense of normalcy to the children and families of Phú Yên as they rebuild their lives.

One of these kindergartens, An Hiệp, holds a special place in our hearts: SAPVN built this school more than twenty years ago. When news of the flooding reached our community, Michelle Truong and the 2025 Miss Vietnam of Southern California (MVSC) royal court immediately stepped forward to help. Their successful Matcha pop-up raised over $600, which they used to purchase educational toys for the affected school.

Our volunteers hand-delivered these gifts and spent time playing with the children at An Hiệp. The joy on the students' faces, their laughter, excitement and the sense of normalcy returning, is a powerful reminder of how compassion can ripple across generations and continents.

During our assessment trip, we also received an urgent request to help strengthen the community's flood-rescue capacity. One of the greatest challenges rescuers faced during the disaster was the lack of boats, a heartbreaking obstacle that prevented them from reaching victims quickly when every minute mattered. Hearing their stories, and understanding how deeply this shortage affected both rescuers and families, moved us to act. SAP-VN donated 50 bamboo rescue boats to support the formation of a dedicated flood-rescue team in Tuy An Đông. Knowing that these boats may one day save lives gives profound meaning to this effort, and we are honored to stand with the community as they build greater safety and resilience for the future.















MÊ LINH – MỘT GIỌNG CA QUÝ CỦA CỘNG ĐỒNG VIỆT NAM

CHRIS DŨNG NGUYỄN

Tối thứ Hai (24 tháng 8) vừa rồi, mình có dịp tham dự chương trình "An Evening with the Stars – The Phantom of the Opera" do hội từ thiện SAP-VN tổ chức.

Một trong những điều đặc biệt của chương trình lần này là sự xuất hiện của một giọng ca nhạc kịch rất trẻ, người Mỹ gốc Việt, sinh ra và lớn lên ngay tại Quận Cam: Evelyn Mê Linh.

Với mình, Mê Linh không phải là một cái tên mới.

Mình biết cháu từ hơn 15 năm trước, khi Mê Linh vẫn còn là một cô bé mặc bộ đồng phục của Liên Đoàn Hướng Việt 105. Ngày ấy, mình đã có dịp hòa âm và đệm cho Mê Linh hát một số ca khúc Việt Nam kinh điển như Hương Xưa, Giấc Mơ Hồi Hương…

Thử tưởng tượng, một cô bé sinh ra và lớn lên ở Mỹ, mới khoảng 16 tuổi, lại chọn hát những ca khúc Việt Nam kinh điển, không hề dễ hát và cũng thuộc loại khá "kén" người nghe.

Điều đó chắc chắn không phải ngẫu nhiên.

Mê Linh may mắn có cha mẹ rất yêu âm nhạc Việt Nam, và chính gia đình đã gieo vào cháu tình yêu đối với tiếng Việt, với những ca khúc của quê hương, ngay từ khi còn rất nhỏ.

Nhiều năm sau, cô bé ngày nào đã trở thành một ca sĩ soprano và nghệ sĩ nhạc kịch chuyên nghiệp, hiện sống và hoạt động tại New York.

Mê Linh tốt nghiệp Cử nhân Âm nhạc chuyên ngành Thanh nhạc tại Chapman University, sau đó lấy Thạc sĩ Âm nhạc chuyên ngành Thanh nhạc, với trọng tâm về Musical Theatre, tại New York University – NYU.

Mê Linh đã có cơ hội biểu diễn tại những địa điểm nghệ thuật nổi tiếng như Kennedy Center và Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Trong opera, những vai diễn Mê Linh yêu thích gồm Juliette trong Roméo et Juliette, Manon trong Manon và Rosalba trong Florencia en el Amazonas.

Trong nhạc kịch, đó là Cinderella trong Into the Woods, Johanna trong Sweeney Todd và đặc biệt là Christine trong The Phantom of the Opera.

Có lẽ vai Christine cũng có một ý nghĩa rất riêng đối với Mê Linh, bởi chính The Phantom of the Opera đã đưa cháu đến với con đường nghệ thuật từ khi mới 13 tuổi.

Mê Linh từng kể về hành trình của mình:

"Hành trình trở thành diễn viên và nghệ sĩ biểu diễn của tôi bắt đầu tại Orange County, California, khi tôi lần đầu tiên xem The Phantom of the Opera vào năm 13 tuổi.

Tôi chưa bao giờ được nhìn thấy hay nghe thấy điều gì giống như vậy — những giọng hát phi thường, sân khấu công phu, trang phục tinh xảo và lối diễn xuất đầy cảm xúc.



Chứng kiến Christine Daaé từ một cô vũ công ballet nhút nhát trở thành nữ nghệ sĩ chính tại Palais Garnier, đồng thời đủ can đảm để đưa ra những quyết định cho cuộc đời mình, đã khiến tôi muốn bước ra khỏi chiếc vỏ rụt rè của tuổi thiếu niên. Tôi nài nỉ mẹ cho mình đi học thanh nhạc.

Và rồi tôi say mê ca hát.

Mẹ nhận ra năng khiếu của tôi và bắt đầu giới thiệu cho tôi những ca khúc của quê hương bà.

Tôi sinh ra tại Mỹ trong một gia đình có cha mẹ là những người rời Việt Nam sau chiến tranh. Từ nhỏ, tôi đã nghe những câu chuyện về việc họ phải bỏ lại tất cả những gì quen thuộc để tìm kiếm một cuộc đời mới trên miền đất của cơ hội.

Nhưng chỉ đến khi học và hát những ca khúc Việt Nam, tôi mới thật sự cảm nhận được phần nào nỗi đau, tình yêu và niềm vui của thế hệ cha mẹ mình.

Với tôi, có những lúc ca hát giống như được âm nhạc hoàn toàn chiếm lĩnh, khi giọng hát, lý trí và trái tim cùng hòa làm một để truyền cảm xúc đến người nghe.

Trong khi tiếp tục rèn luyện opera và musical theatre, tôi vẫn biểu diễn cho các cộng đồng người Việt trên khắp nước Mỹ.



Lần đầu đặt chân đến New York, đứng giữa những con phố nhộn nhịp, xung quanh là những nhà hát và những người nghệ sĩ giống như mình, tôi đã nghĩ:

Đây là nhà. Đây chính là nơi mình thuộc về.

Tôi biết mình sẽ quay trở lại.

Và rồi tôi đã trở lại, theo học chương trình cao học tại NYU.

Tôi vẫn tiếp tục trưởng thành, cả với tư cách một con người lẫn một nghệ sĩ, và phía trước còn rất nhiều điều đang chờ đón."

Mình rất thích câu chuyện ấy, bởi nó giải thích khá rõ vì sao, sau nhiều năm học opera và musical theatre trong môi trường âm nhạc Mỹ, Mê Linh vẫn dành một phần rất quan trọng trong đời sống nghệ thuật của mình cho âm nhạc Việt Nam.

Trong đêm An Evening with the Stars, Mê Linh đã trình diễn cả những ca khúc Mỹ lẫn Việt Nam.

Và đối với riêng mình, có một niềm vui rất đặc biệt: sau hơn 15 năm kể từ những lần đệm đàn cho cô bé Mê Linh ngày nào, tối hôm ấy mình lại được ngồi bên đàn, hòa âm và đệm cho Mê Linh trình bày một nhạc phẩm rất đẹp của nhạc sĩ Lê Văn Khoa – Ngày Mai Ta Chia Tay Nhau.

Có những khoảnh khắc trong âm nhạc làm người ta nhận ra thời gian đã đi qua rất nhanh.

Ngày trước là một cô bé 16 tuổi đứng hát bên cây đàn của mình.

Hôm nay là một nghệ sĩ được đào tạo bài bản từ những trường âm nhạc lớn của Hoa Kỳ, đang theo đuổi con đường opera và musical theatre chuyên nghiệp tại New York.

Nhưng có một điều dường như vẫn còn nguyên: tình yêu dành cho âm nhạc Việt Nam.

Và có lẽ cái tên Mê Linh cũng mang một ý nghĩa đẹp như vậy, dù đi đến đâu, vẫn có một sợi dây nối mình với nơi mình xuất phát.

Một giọng ca trẻ, được đào tạo bài bản, có tài năng, có con đường nghệ thuật riêng, nhưng vẫn không quên tiếng Việt và những bài hát của quê hương cha mẹ.

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