Newsletter

News from the Course Coordinator

Marie Atherton, Program Coordinator

A warm welcome from HCMC, even though it is wet underfoot and the humidity a little overwhelming! We are well and truly in the wet season here, which although making it more difficult to get around, offers a refreshing ride home on the back of motorbike!

It feels a little surreal to be reporting that the Post Graduate Speech Therapy Training Program is now in Term 8, it’s FINAL Term, with students in their workplaces implementing what they have learned and being supervised by visiting clinicians from Australia. In fact, in less than 8 weeks time the students will be graduating as the first cohort of Vietnamese speech therapists to have completed their training in Vietnam. A truly amazing achievement!

Recent months have passed in a flurry of activity with lecturers from Australia coming and going, student exams, and supervising clinicians arriving. Sincere thanks are extended to Dr Sally Hewat, Ms Simone Griffin and Dr Gail Woodyatt for providing wonderful teaching and learning opportunities in the areas of Adult Stuttering, Autism and Complex Disability. It is exciting to see the students incorporating what they have learned into their clinical work - offering maintenance sessions to 3 adults who completed the ‘intensive’ stuttering program whilst Sally was here; incorporating resources so generously provided by Simone Martinez, Janella Christie, Dr Nhan, Ms Thanh Nguyen and the students on the last day of formal classes

and her colleagues into clinical sessions with children with autism, and embracing opportunities to introduce AAC into treatment sessions as encouraged by Gail. Absolutely wonderful. Thanks are also extended to Ms Leah Labrador, speech pathologist and re/habilitation specialist with Cochlear Limited, Singapore, who so generously gave of her time to provide lectures in aural re/habilitation via teleconference and in person. Such generosity and expertise is what has and continues to make this program possible.

Congratulations are extended to Mr. Tran Khanh Dien and Ms. Le Thi Thanh Xuan, 2 members of the speech therapy class who were successful in their applications for Hoc Mai Scholarships through Sydney University. Mr. Dien and Ms Xuan left for Australia in early July and are to spend the next 3 months developing their knowledge and skills in speech therapy.

Arrangements for the Speech Therapy Graduation Ceremony, scheduled for Friday 21st September, 2012 at PNTU have been finalised and invitations are to be extended to all who have assisted with the program since its commencement. Invitees are also encouraged to attend the Professional Project Day, scheduled for Thursday 20 September, 2012. On this day, students will present projects they have completed which aim to enhance the delivery of speech therapy services to clients and their families. This promises to be a very interesting and exciting day, bringing together many aspects of the speech therapy program and showcasing the skills of the students.

As the countdown begins, I look forward to seeing many of you in September.
Hoc Mai AusAID Leadership Award Fellowships

Lindy McAllister, TFA Director

Hoc Mai AusAID Australian Leadership Award Fellowships have been awarded to two of the top students in the Speech Therapy Course at Pham Ngoc Thach University of Medicine in Ho Chi Minh City. Mr Dien and Mrs Xuan arrived in Sydney on July 6th to begin a three month program of study and clinical observations. They were welcomed on the Saturday night by Lindy McAllister (TFA Director) and Christine Sheard (former volunteer lecturer on the course at PNTU in 2011) with a traditional Aussie dinner of roast lamb and veggies, and pavlova.

They will do two days a week of classes about health care systems, health care communication, health care decision-making, evaluation and research skills. As part of this, they will each develop a project of benefit to their future work in Ho Chi Minh City.

Mr Dien and Mrs Xuan will also spend three days a week observing in clinics to further develop their knowledge and skills in assessment, planning, intervention, evaluation, and communication with clients and their families and carers. This has been made possible by the generosity of the following clinics and speech pathologists in making placements available, often on top of their existing commitments to Australian students’ placements. We are very grateful for their willingness to support these two Fellows and thereby the development of speech therapy in Viet Nam.

War Memorial Hospital (Cathy Taylor and her staff)
Communication Disorders Treatment & Research Clinic at the Lidcombe campus of the University of Sydney (Alison Purcell and other CDTRC staff)
St Joseph’s Hospital Auburn (Mimi Naylor)
Educational Speech Pathology & Therapy Services (Sue Wilks and her staff)
Koorana Child & Family Services (Maree Doble and her staff)
Royal Rehabilitation Centre, Sydney (Kate Makin and her staff, and Christine Sheard)
Fairfield Hospital (Maigen Harradine and Annemarie Tripolone)

The support of the Hoc Mai Foundation and particularly Ms Rhondda Glasson, Executive Officer, in enabling these Fellowships in gratefully acknowledged. Trinh Foundation Australia looks forward to a productive relationship with Hoc Mai towards the development of speech therapy in Vietnam.

New Knowledge Changes Lives

As the current students now approach the final days of their two year post graduate training program they are appreciating the benefits of knowing how to better manage their patients with communication and swallowing disorders. Here are just a few of their comments.

Le Thi Tannah Xuan working at the Hospital for orthopaedic and Rehabilitation talked about assisting Cuong an 8 year old boy with cerebral palsy. “Every meal he used to lie down and was always fed with smooth soup. He could understand what others said, but he could not express his needs and people could not understand him. Following application of the new strategies I have learnt about changing position and the use of Augmentative and Alternative communication aids (AAC) Cuong is now happy when feeding and he can communicate so others can understand him.”

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Le Thi Bich Thuan works at Children’s Hospital No. 1. She spoke of her work with 4 year old Bao, who following encephalitis, experienced severe difficulty eating and drinking. “His mother struggled when feeding him as he did not know how to close his mouth to swallow and he grabbed spoons, bowls and food spilling them everywhere.” Following instructing the mother about appropriate feeding techniques “his mother was very happy, her face radiant because she did not have to “wrestle” with him anymore and feeding was easier because he could drink closing his lips.”
Thuy Hang (Na) works at the Office of Genetic Counselling and Disabled Children at the University of Hue Medicine and Pharmacy. She discussed her work with 5 year old Xuan Huy who was diagnosed with Autism. He could not speak and only made a few vowel sounds. Na applied her new knowledge about PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) and key word signing. “Although now he just uses three signs ‘help’, ‘more’ and ‘bye bye’, these results make me and especially his mother very happy. PECS is very useful for Xuan Huy. I hope I can get more experience in helping children like Xuan Huy”

Bui Thi Duyen has worked at the ENT hospital for 12 years. She says “there are many patients that tell me that when they have voice problems they are very distressed because they might lose their job, or can’t tell the bus driver they want to get off or express their feelings.” (these problems can arise from accidents, head and neck cancer, voice abuse etc). Ms Duyen commented how her new knowledge has enabled her to give them exercises and advice which has resulted in her being able to treat all these patients more effectively.

Le Khanh Dien works at An Binh General Hospital. He spoke of his effective intervention with an adult patient Van, who had suffered a stroke in November 2010. He noted that he now could assist her to make eating and drinking easier, with now no coughing during or after swallowing.
Ongoing support in the form of funds, expertise and resources is vital to our program and is greatly appreciated.

How can you help us?
For all donations please see our website www.trinhfoundation.org

Trinh Foundation Australia is proud to be a partner of Global Development Group (Vietnam Speech-Language Program Project J594). GDG is an Australian Non Government Organisation (NGO) carrying out humanitarian projects with approved partners and providing aid to relieve poverty and provide long term solutions through the provision of quality aid and development projects.
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