



Trinh Foundation

AUSTRALIA

Newsletter



Professor Sharynne McLeod and Marie meet with Dr Nguyen The Dung, Vice Rector of Pham Ngoc Thach University of Medicine

News from Course Coordinator Ms Marie Atherton

Xin chao! from HCMC where Term 3 of the Speech Therapy Training Program draws to a close and the wet season is slowly but surely making its presence felt in HCMC. For the last 3 months, the 18 speech therapy students have been at PNTU undertaking subjects provided by both local lecturers and visiting Australian lecturers. One of the most important aims of the Speech Therapy Program is to assist PNTU to develop its capacity to independently train future speech therapy students. To this end, it has been exciting that a number of subjects taught this Term have been taught by lecturers from institutions in HCMC, including PNTU, the National College of Education and the HCMC University of Education.

It has been a wonderful learning experience for me to collaborate with teachers who are so obviously interested in the profession of speech therapy and committed to facilitating their own and the students' learning in whatever way possible. One

The Directors of TFA would like to thank all volunteer lecturers and clinical educators for their vital contribution to the Speech Therapy Training Course.

very exciting outcome from this collaboration has been the development of a speech screening test by Dr Ly Kha, who lectured to the students in Linguistics. Dr Ly Kha has indicated that through gaining an understanding of the profession of speech therapy, and the need for tools that are specific to the Vietnamese context, she has developed a speech screening tool for children aged under 6. A further very important aim of Dr Ly Kha's work is to ascertain speech and language acquisition norms for Vietnamese children, which to date have been lacking.

Term 3 also saw the very successful running of the Medical Speech Pathology Lecture series, funded through the Australian Consulate's Direct Aid Program (DAP). Louise Brown from James Cook University, QLD, Felicity Megee from Melbourne Health and Katie Walker-Smith from The Royal Children's Hospital in Brisbane travelled to HCMC to provide lectures in topics such as 'Communication and Swallowing Management of Adults/Children in Acute Care Settings'; 'Management of patients with Head and Neck Cancer'; 'Paediatric Feeding'; 'Tracheostomy'. Clinical education opportunities for the students also formed part of this training. Further, funding from this program and from AusCham enabled the purchase of textbooks, DVDs, anatomical models and interpreting and translating services.

Since completing these lectures, Katie has again returned to HCMC to provide further clinical education opportunities in Paediatric Feeding and it is anticipated Felicity will return in September. Together with TFA, I would like to extend sincere thanks to Louise, Felicity and Katie for their



The Speech Therapy Class with Louise and Marie and some of the resources purchased through funding provided by Blue Tree Publishing and The Australian Consulate General's 'Direct Aid Program'

mammoth effort in meeting the very tight deadlines for the DAP project and the wonderful teaching and learning experiences they provided for the students.

I would also like to thank Professor Sharynne McLeod who was welcomed to HCMC in May to lecture to the students on 'Speech Sound Disorders in Children'. Whilst there is not the space here to describe all the outcomes from Sharynne's visit, it would be accurate to say that a number of extremely exciting developments are in the pipeline, that if successful, have the potential to significantly develop the knowledge base regarding normal and abnormal speech development in Vietnam.

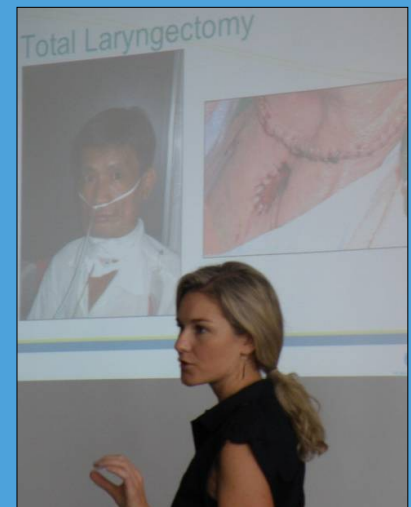
I would like to especially thank Sarah Verdon who arrived at PNTU as a volunteer in April for 3 months to provide assistance and support with all things related to the course. It would be fair to say that Sarah's assistance has been invaluable, not only from the perspective of developing and completing a number of outstanding and new projects, but also as a colleague and a great support "on the ground".

The students have just completed their written and oral exams and have returned to their workplaces awaiting the arrival of volunteer speech pathology clinicians who will provide clinical education and supervision.

It is with great anticipation that I await the arrival of Janella Christie, who is to commence at PNTU soon for 12 months to assist with the ongoing development and running of the Speech Therapy Program. Janella's appointment is the result of TFA's collaborative partnership with Australian Volunteers International, and her main role will be as Coordinator of the Clinical Education component of the Program. Janella has travelled and worked in Vietnam for many years and I am very much looking forward to sharing this experience with her. I also look forward to the support and collaboration that comes with working as part of a team, and am excited by what this may bring to the Speech Therapy Training Program over the next 12 months.



Louise Brown demonstrating swallowing therapy with a client who has dysphagia following a brainstem stroke



Felicity Megee lecturing to the students on topics in head and neck cancer



At the conclusion of Professor Sharynne McLeod's lectures - Sarah Verdon, Sharynne McLeod, Dr Ly Kha (lecturer in Linguistics) and Ms Hai Chau (interpreter)

Reflections of a Volunteer *by Katie Walker-Smith*

This year I've been fortunate enough to spend nearly six weeks in the bustling metropolis that is still known to many as Saigon.

April saw me delivering lectures on Paediatric Medical Speech Pathology to a very enthusiastic audience of students and invited medical professionals. Coming from a clinical and management background, this taste of academia had me on my toes. After a few days in the classroom, it was time to get back into my comfort zone at one of the local hospitals. At the ENT hospital, we saw four young children with communication and swallowing difficulties of various origins. This was an opportunity for me to learn more about the local management practices and options. For the students it was a chance to observe some of the assessment and management techniques discussed in their course work.

After a brief interlude in Brisbane it was time to head back to Ho Chi Minh City again at the end of May. This time around it was exam season. I'm not sure who was more nervous – me or the students.

Clinical practice this month took us to Children's Number 1 Hospital where we saw some of the more fragile patients – graduates from the neonatal nursery. For many of the students it was their first exposure to such young patients and we were very grateful to the families that allowed us to be involved in their care. The highlight was the opportunity we had to facilitate a young baby's first suck feed after a month of tube feeding.

My experiences with the Speech Therapy training program have been overwhelmingly rewarding. The opportunity to participate in this fantastic venture initiated and supported by TFA and to work alongside Marie and the staff at PNTU has been very exciting and I'm looking forward to seeing our first graduates soon.



*Katie with students
at the conclusion of her lecture series*



*Some of the
students
working with
a patient
at Children's
Hospital
Number 1*



*Katie conducting Clinical education session
at ENT Hospital*

Spotlight on a Course Participant **Mr Le Khanh Dien**

My name is Le Khanh Dien. I have been working as a physical therapist at An Binh Hospital – a general hospital with approximately 500 in-patient beds – in Ho Chi Minh City. I have frequently confronted a big problem for years. It is that I have the patients with communication and/or swallowing disorders usually due to stroke, head trauma injury, Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or lower motor neuron diseases. The common types of disorders I have faced are dysphasia, dysarthria, dyspraxia of speech, and dysphagia. We have 30 to 40 such cases each week at my hospital.

I have trained in this field by myself through reading and with nice help from some experts coming from other countries since 1998. Like many physiotherapists in Viet Nam, I do some roles of an Occupational Therapist and Speech Pathologist to try to help my patients. Really, we need specialisation by official training courses. Therefore, the establishment of the post graduate course on Speech Pathology at Pham Ngoc Thach University with the great support from Trinh Foundation

Australia has had a positive meaning on meeting the real needs in the rehabilitation field in Viet Nam. I have learned and applied the useful knowledge and skills in voice and speech disorders, dysphagia, disorders related in speech pathology in head and neck cancer, communication lifespan, Vietnamese linguistics etc to my patients. Moreover, I hope I will have the ability to share and instruct my attainments to all those who are interested in this field to help more patients.



Le Khanh Dien working with a patient

Rotarians Support TFA

Friday the 13th turned out to be a lucky day for TFA, following a very successful trivia night organised by The Rotary Club of Gosford City. Our sincere thanks go to these indefatigable Rotarians who engendered support from across the central coast community, in order to hold such a great fundraiser to benefit the Foundation. TFA would like to acknowledge in particular Dr John Walton and Wendy Harris for their hard work and special thanks to David Bacon, the MC and quiz master for the evening. Funds on the night came from a combination of tickets sales, lucky balloons and the raffling of a magnificent painting titled 'Leaves' by Wynn Prize winner, Gloria Petyarre, generously donated by Gundooee Aboriginal Art.



Quizmaster and MC David Bacon selling lucky balloons during the Trivia Night.

Founding Executive of TFA Receive Award

At a recent awards ceremony at the University of Sydney, founding Executive members Dr Aziz Sahu-Khan, Associate Professor Lindy McAllister, Dr Peter Woodward and Mrs Sue Woodward were honoured to receive the 2011 Faculty of Health Sciences Sydney University Alumni Award for International Achievement in recognition of their work to assist in the establishment of Speech Therapy as a profession in Vietnam.



L to R: Dr Peter Woodward, Assoc. Prof. Lindy McAllister, Dr Aziz Sahu-Khan and Mrs Sue Woodward with the prestigious International Achievement Award

Thank you to all those who continue to provide support in the form of funds, expertise and resources. This on-going support is vital to our program. For further information about how you can help us please see our website

www.trinhfoundation.org

How can you help us?

For all donations please see our website

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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. For more information about Global Development Group, (ABN 57 102 400 993), visit www.globaldevelopment.org.au