**Volunteer ASIA PROJECT FAQ’S: VIETNAM:**

Tell me more about Vietnam?
With its beautiful natural setting, rich culture and tragic recent history, Vietnam is a fascinating destination. Da Nang is Vietnam’s third largest city, located on Vietnam’s east coast. For extra information, we suggest that you purchase a travel guide, such as the Lonely Planet’s Guide to Vietnam. Tell me more about the partner organization. Our partner in Vietnam has been building cross-cultural education and understanding between local Vietnamese people and foreigners. They first started placing volunteers in July 2004. They are registered with local governments and with PACCICOM to do this. They do not receive any funding from the government, and rely on the in-country fee to run the program.

What type of volunteer work is available?
Volunteers will be teaching English to the children at the orphanages, as well as to local members of the community. In some cases you will also help care for the children. There are 3 placement locations where volunteers teach, these are Da Nang, Tam Ky, and Tuy Hoa. You will also do basic physiotherapy work with disabled kids and teach arts & crafts.

What age do I have to be to volunteer in this program?
Volunteers need to be at least 18 years of age.

When will I know specific details on the placement?
Approximately one month before your placement is due to start our partner in Vietnam will let you know the specific details and location of your placement. If you have any preferences of where you want to work you can let us know in advance and we will do our best to accommodate your choices.

What language do I need to know to participate in the program?
You need to speak English. You must be a confident English speaker because most of the work involves teaching this language. It is preferred for the Vietnam University Program that volunteers are citizens of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Singapore, UK, or US. However if a volunteer has lived or studied in one of these countries for many years then they will also be considered on a case by case basis. You will be taken through some brief language training during your orientation since it would be courteous to learn some Vietnamese phrases. If you want to learn more Vietnamese during your training our partner may be able to arrange this for you.

When do I need to arrive in Vietnam?
Volunteers need to arrive in Da Nang by the last day of the month before they are volunteering; so that they are ready to start the orientation and training program on the 1st (please note orientation for January 2009 may be delayed a few days for the New Year holiday). While Da Nang Airport (DAD) has some international flights, volunteers will probably need to fly via Saigon or Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) (SGN).

What are the living arrangements while volunteering?
All volunteers stay in rented houses with a group of other volunteers. You should expect to have power and running water, although hot water may not always be available. Mosquito nets, bed linen and fans are provided.

Where will I be located?
Our programs are located in the central and coastal regions of Vietnam. Volunteers teach English at orphanages and at language and community centers in the central and coastal regions of Vietnam. The projects are located in Da Nang, Tam Ky, and Tuy Hoa.

How do I get to the project?
You will be met at Da Nang airport by our partner organization and you will be taken to the accommodation. In most cases you will be transported by car to the work sites. In cases where this is not possible you will be expected to walk or bike to work. This would be a maximum of 2km per day.

How many volunteers are there on site at the same time?
This varies depending on how many volunteers we have at the time, but you should be placed with at least one other volunteer in the orphanage or language center, and typically you’ll be in a group of 3-6 volunteers in the orphanage placements.

Are we able to do any sightseeing?
Yes. Volunteers are able to arrange their own sightseeing during their time off in the weekends. Famous landmarks in Da Nang include China Beach, the Marble Mountains and the museum of Cham Sculpture.

What hours am I expected to take part in the program?
You will be expected to work five days per week in most placements. The hours will vary from placement to placement but a typical day would include approximately five hours of work per day.

What resources are available for the program?
As placements are not well resourced, you may like to bring items with you to help you with the activities you will be taking part in. You can discuss specific needs with the volunteer coordinator and the partner organization, so that we can give you an extra up to date idea of what is required.

What is the course content of training/orientation session?
The training will consist of an introduction to GVN Vietnam, along with an introduction to basic Vietnamese, placement site visits and sightseeing around surrounding areas of placements. You will also make final preparations for voluntary work.

How do I pay my fees?
Your application fee is non-refundable and should be sent with your application. CCUSA accepts money orders, checks and most major credit cards. Your acceptance fee is payable to CCUSA as soon as you are accepted by CCUSA & GVN as well as the Volunteer Project. If you cancel after your CCUSA interview and prior to your acceptance to the program, you will be refunded any program fees less the application fee. The acceptance fee will not be refunded if you cancel from the CCUSA program after acceptance, except in the case of serious illness or serious illness or death of a parent or sibling (doctor’s verification required). If the Volunteer Placement is not offered to you two weeks before your proposed start date, then you can cancel from the program and be eligible to receive a refund of your total fees paid. See the program agreement for further details.

What clothing is appropriate for the program?
Light, cotton clothing that covers most of the body is not only more acceptable in Vietnamese culture but also helps to protect against sun and getting bitten by mosquitoes. Volunteers can wear old clothing while working as it’s likely that clothing will get quite dirty. Women should not wear short shorts or tops which leave the shoulders uncovered when teaching. 3/4 trousers and skirts below the knee are acceptable.

Are there any more expenses once I arrive?
You will need to budget for around US$30 a week to pay for snacks, entertainment and for some extra bottled water. If needed, you may also need to pay for your...
tourist visa to be extended to cover your entire volunteering time. Any weekend travel excursions are also at your own cost. If interested you can budget up to $35 to go toward the fruit and milk program at your location.

**Do I need an entry visa?**
Yes do. Your visa must be issued prior to travelling to Vietnam and needs to specify the exact dates that you will be in Vietnam, so you will need to bear this in mind when applying. You need a Vietnamese tourist visa for this program.

**Do I need travel insurance?**
Travel insurance is mandatory for this program and will be provided by CCUSA for an additional fee. We offer international travel insurance that includes medical, luggage in transit, liability, medical evacuation, repatriation, etc. A copy of the insurance policy will be provided to you once you are accepted.

**Is there any time of the year when I can’t volunteer?**
In general, the program is not affected by school holidays and the classes at the orphanage and language centers run throughout the year. There is one exception to this, the Tet holiday, or the Lunar New Year. In 2009 this holiday falls at the end of January/first part of February. This will affect placements around that time, particularly short term placements. Longer placements are still available and volunteers will get a chance to participate in the festivities. Due to Christmas and New Year festivities, the orientation for January 2009 may begin a few days later than the 1st.

**What is the climate like in Da Nang?**
Da Nang is located in the north of Vietnam’s tropical zone, with a temperate and pleasant climate. There are two seasons: the wet season runs from October to December and the dry season runs from January to July. The average temperature is about 26°C, reaching up to 30-35°C from May to August and 18-23°C from December to February. The average humidity is 84%. Rainfall is highest in October and November and lowest in the first four months of the year.

**What immunizations/vaccinations will I need?**
We advise that you consult your doctor about this, as soon as possible before you leave, as some injections need to be done with a certain amount of time prior to leaving home. The more common ones are Diphtheria and Tetanus, Hepatitis A and B and Typhoid.

**Can I bring my family/children to this program with me?**
There may be a few possible placements where you can bring your children and this will be looked at on a case by case basis.

**How safe is it to volunteer in Vietnam?**
Vietnam is a relatively safe country to live in, however, as with all travel, you need to take precautions such as carrying cash in a money belt and being aware of your possessions and surroundings at all times (be extra vigilant at night time). You will need to be extra careful if you spend time in Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) or Hanoi.

**What is the criteria for volunteers to be accepted into the program?**
Each applicant is considered by the information they provide on the application. We look at skills and experience specifically related to the program you have applied to, as well as volunteer experiences, travel experience and also your particular interest in the program to make our decision.

**Can vegetarians be catered for in this program?**
The diet in Da Nang is very seafood oriented, so it is not difficult to avoid red meat. Vegetarian food is available in the placements. There are also vegetarian restaurants available in the city.

**Can I mail packages or supplies TO Vietnam?**
It is NOT recommended to mail to Vietnam as it can take 6 weeks for packages and letters to arrive. Often packages are opened upon arrival and can be taxed based on their contents. If you want to send something, we try to coordinate having an incoming volunteer bring the items. You mail items OUT of Vietnam rather easily.