

Dear VIA friends and family,

We just selected a fantastic new group of service fellows! Why did they choose VIA?

Their top reason was VIA's mission and values: humility...deeper understanding...enduring partnerships.

Alyssa Paylor, who has spent the last two years in Thailand teaching students who fled conflict in Myanmar, exemplifies the empathy that has always been at the heart of VIA:

"I have never been more humbled than when a student and former teacher shared with me her experiences of teaching students in a jungle surrounded by land mines, just trying to give her students a semblance of normalcy by continuing to have classes while their entire community became refugees. That's when I realized not having air conditioning in the classroom during rainy season and the occasional power outage was not 'roughing it.'"

Immersion in a local community leads to deeper understanding. We strive for an honorable exchange—teaching promising young people or helping nonprofit organizations communicate their impact—in exchange for the opportunity to live and learn in a very different culture. We are grateful to our Asian partners, some of whom we've supported for more than 30 years.

Thank you to all our donors who make possible a rich and meaningful experience for VIA service fellows. The global mindset they develop will inform a lifetime of social engagement.

We hope that you enjoy reading in this newsletter about the variety of ways that VIA is growing. **And, please consider a donation to help us raise the remaining \$53,000 we need for our fiscal year ending June 30**—thanks for your support of the next generation of dynamic, thoughtful and globally aware leaders!!

Warmly,

Cliff Chan



Executive Director
Taiwan '81, China '83

Summer Giving Challenge!

If you haven't donated to VIA recently - or maybe ever - we have a special challenge for you!

Thanks to a generous challenge grant from a VIA board member, we will receive an extra \$50 for:

- every gift from someone who has never donated before
- every gift from someone who hasn't given in the last 5 years
- every person who signs up to become a new recurring donor

Without the support of VIA's friends and alumni, we wouldn't be able to continue connecting the U.S. and Asia with innovative experiential programs. Now is the perfect time to show how much you valued your VIA experience by supporting the service fellows who are doing great work in the field today.

We still have a ways to go to meet our fundraising goal this year, so we're especially excited by the challenge our board is making to alumni to become active supporters of VIA.

To take advantage of this special grant, be sure to make your gift by June 30!

In this issue:

- New service fellows selected for our long-term posts, and reports from the field
- New Global Leadership program launched, and a chance to host visiting students
- Join VIA's alumni trip to Burma
- Help us build a basketball court in Vietnam

Asia Programs

New Fellows Heading to Thailand for Training

We've selected 15 new fellows for the 2014-15 program to join the 13 fellows who are staying for another year at their posts.

We will have nine fellows each in China and Burma, five in Vietnam, three in Indonesia and one each in Thailand and Cambodia.

Our incoming cohort includes a health social media expert who will work to spread awareness of preventative health resources in Burma, a graduate of a peace and conflict resolution masters program who will work on anti-trafficking programs in Vietnam, and a social worker who will take her knowledge of the Burmese refugee community in Chicago and apply it to developing education programs for Burmese migrants in northern Thailand.

The new cohort heads out to Thailand for orientation and training in August, before moving on to their posts. We wish them luck and look forward to hearing about their adventures!

Snapshots From the Field



From Emily Stromme, Inle Lake, Myanmar

This photo shows students and staff working in the kitchen to make a big pumpkin pie. The pie was being made for our Myanmar/American Thanksgiving that occurred later that evening. All the staff and students dressed up and shared what they were thankful for in English. The English teachers shared what they were thankful for in Myanmar. A variety of both Myanmar and American foods were served. Although locals eat pumpkin many different ways, this was their first time eating pumpkin pie!

Helping Students Find Their Voices in Myanmar



Students at the Pre-Collegiate Program and Kant Kaw Education Centre created a joint project last summer to learn more about marginalized communities in Yangon.

They presented their findings on transgendered adults, construction workers, documentary filmmakers, female sex workers, children who collect plastic to sell, and undertakers to more than 100 attendees at the Last Leaf Gallery. The students switched from Burmese to English and back easily as the queries kept on coming in. VIA teachers Karen Schousboe and Helen Waller organized the project, which helped their students develop empathy with the marginalized communities they explored and a conviction that effective solutions can be found to pressing social issues.

Stanford Programs



VIA Launches New Global Leadership Program

VIA's newest program is called Global Leadership and Engagement (GLE), which kicked off this February.

Participants joined from mainland China, Japan, and Taiwan to gain leadership skills through visits to organizations in San Francisco and Silicon Valley, hands-on workshops, and team building activities.

Invite Students to Dinner!

Meet visiting Asian students this summer!

If you are interested in hosting students joining VIA's Stanford Programs this August for lunch or dinner at your home or a company visit, please contact Senior Stanford Programs Director, Kazutoh Ishida at kazutoh@viaprograms.org.

Photo: VIA alumni David and Lynnae Evans shared their home and a backyard feast with visiting students last summer - a highlight for many!



A VIA Wedding!

VIA's matchmaking record continues.

Adam Toda, four-time Stanford Coordinator for VIA's American Language & Culture (ALC) Program, and Yukari Hara, a participant on the 2009 ALC program, got happily married at Stanford's Memorial Church on May 3, 2014.

Family and friends, including VIA staff and alumni, joined the celebration.

Photo credit: Lawrence Crandall.

Burma Tour 2014: Witness Democracy Emerging With VIA



photos by Gary Maes

VIA is organizing its fifth Burma Study Tour this fall, a unique opportunity to get a firsthand look at this vibrant and captivating country at an important crossroads in its history. Burma/Myanmar's next major elections, including the presidency, are scheduled for 2015 as this impoverished nation, rich in resources, seeks to take further steps on the path toward democracy.

Participants will visit some of Burma/Myanmar's most interesting, important and scenic highlights - but the true draw of this program is its emphasis on people. Traditionally, the government has discouraged close contact between foreigners and its citizens, but VIA's broad network of contacts allows participants

to meet a wide range of people who are pursuing innovative solutions to some of the most pressing problems facing the country today.

The group's guides in Yangon will be students at VIA's first post in Burma, the Pre-Collegiate Program, which helps promising high school graduates gain the critical thinking and English skills to attend U.S. universities.

The estimated cost is \$3,000, plus airfare and a \$1,000 donation to VIA. The trip is open to alumni and their friends. Apply by July 15 for the lower group airfare! For more information, contact trip leader Tim Clark at tclark@factpoint, or visit www.viaprograms.org for the itinerary and application.

VIA Donors Supporting Sports in Vietnam



Students practice their soccer skills during the 2013 Sports for Social Change program.

With your help, VIA is building the first basketball court at Tra Vinh University in Vietnam – a longtime partner that hosts VIA teachers and the new Sports for Social Change program.

During last summer's sports program – where VIA brings Stanford students to teach soccer skills to at-risk youth – the university and student families asked for help in funding a much-needed basketball court where the students can play year-round. As part of our annual spring fundraising drive, VIA will be donating \$1,000 of the money we raise for the court's construction.

That means that this year, in addition to supporting our service fellows and the good work

they do, part of your donation will go toward the basketball court. We hope you're as excited as we are to be supporting this valuable partner, bringing healthy sports and a little joy to the students we teach.

We'll keep you posted with photos as the court is built!