

Vietnamese Canadian Federation - News Update (May – June 2011)

1/ Saskatoon – Fundraising Gala for the Vietnamese Boat People Museum Project

June 11, 2011

In support of the Vietnamese Boat People Museum Project in Ottawa, the Vietnamese community in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, held a fund-raising gala dinner on June 4, 2011 at the Smiley's Buffet Restaurant.

Following a presentation on the project by Dr. Can D. Le, Project Leader, participants were treated to a sumptuous dinner with a lively entertainment under the direction of Ho Bao (lead guitarist), featuring Tran Thanh Son (keyboard) and singers from Saskatoon and Regina such as: Ngoc Thuy, Dang Thy, Ho Phong, Anh Tuan, Ngoc Chau, Simon Truong, Van Chai, and Kim Van. In addition, three especially lovely folk dances were performed by the youths of the La Vang Catholic Congregation -- *Dat phuong nam (Southern Country)*, *Khuc hat an tinh (Song of Compassion)*, và *Thuong qua Viet Nam (Vietnam – my dearest country)*. As well, the program also included a magic show, thoroughly enjoyed by adults and children alike, by Ben Campbell, a well- known magician in Saskatoon.



The MCs and the Saskatoon Music Band performing the song “Vietnam Vietnam”

Photo: VCF

The gala dinner was put together by a group of volunteers including Nguyen Thai Trung, Tran Minh Van, Tran Van Dong, Do Ngoc Hung, Dinh Van Anh, and Tran Ky Son, with the collaboration by many Vietnamese organizations within the Vietnamese community including the Buddhist, Catholic, and United Churches, Vietnamese seniors' Association, as well as the

Vietnamese Language School. They were assisted by three gracious MCs, My Linh, Kim Thuy, and Lieu Thu Nhuan.



Kim Van with the song “Winter chill”

Photo: VCF



La Vang Church dancers performing the “Song of Compassion” dance

Photo: VCF

Over \$12,000 was raised at this event. Considering that the Vietnamese community in Saskatoon has only about 1,000 members, this result was quite remarkable. It's also interesting to note that the gala was sold out, with 230 guests from the city and 30 coming from Regina, about 260 kms away.

The Vietnamese Canadian Federation is very appreciative of the support given by the Vietnamese community in Saskatoon to the Museum Project. We hope that this support will continue until the project is completed.

Background of the Vietnamese Boat People Museum Project

In 2005, the Vietnamese Canadian Federation (VCF) launched the Vietnamese Boat People Museum Project with the following purposes:

- To present the historical facts of the quest for freedom of Vietnamese refugees, the majority of whom were the boat people, and their reception worldwide;
- To showcase the contribution of the Vietnamese community to the resettlement countries.

After its initial establishment, the Museum Project received much financial support from contributions made worldwide as well as through various fundraisers in Ottawa (2007, 2009, 2010), Winnipeg (2007), Tucson (2007) and San Jose (2007).

With this support, by 2009 the VCF was able to purchase a piece of land for the a museum. This site, at around 8000 sq ft, is worth \$600,000 and is located directly across the corner from the Vietnamese Commemorative Monument which it also helped build in 1995, as well as being right in the Centretown area. Currently, the mortgage for the land has been paid almost to completion and plans have been made to move onto the second phase of the project, the construction of the museum. The total estimated cost of this project is \$4,300,000.

Since its creation in 1980, the Vietnamese Canadian Federation has accomplished many other endeavours as well: the naming of a street in Ottawa after the City of Saigon (1984), the Vietnamese Canadian Centre (1987), the Van Lang Vietnamese Non-Profit Housing Centre for seniors and people with modest income (1992), and the Vietnamese Commemorative Monument (1995). These achievements are shown in the following photographs.

Some achievements in Ottawa of the Vietnamese Canadian community



In a continuing effort to support the Museum Project, VCF will work with Vietnamese Canadian communities across Canada and in the U.S. in organizing fund-raising galas to raise money and awareness of this project. Saskatoon hosted an event on June 11, 2011, to be followed by Calgary on July 23, and Washington, DC on November 26, 2011.

The Vietnamese Canadian Federation hopes to see more fund-raising events like these worldwide within the next 2 years with the ultimate goal of starting construction by 2013.

To contribute to the Museum Project, please send your donation to:

Vietnamese Canadian Centre - Museum Project
Suite 1 – 885 Somerset St. West
Ottawa, ON K1R 6R6
Canada

All donations over \$5 will be issued a tax receipt, which can be used in both Canada and the U.S.

2/ Japanese Earthquake and Tsunami Victims Relief Fund

In response to the Vietnamese Canadian Federation request, donations have come in from across Canada, totalling \$28, 932 in support of the victims of the recent earthquake and tsunami in Japan. Aside from the \$800 in cash donated directly by donors to the Red Cross and other charities, the remainder of the fund raised was presented to the Red Cross in the Free Vietnam Flag-Raising ceremony at the Ottawa Police Headquarters on May 25, 2011. The list of contributors is attached.

3/ Vietnamese Cultural Week in Ottawa (May 22 – 29, 2011)

In celebration of the Asian Heritage Month 2011, the Vietnamese Canadian Federation and the Vietnamese Canadian Centre, with the support of the Ottawa Asian Heritage Month Society (OAHMS) and in collaboration with the Vietnamese communities in Ottawa, Montreal, Toronto, and Kitchener-Waterloo, organized a series of events in May 2011, consisting of:

- Inauguration of the Vietnamese Cultural Week on May 22 at the Ottawa City Hall;
- Book reading by Kim Thuy, recipient of the 2010 Governor General’s Literary Award for her book *Ru*, at Library and Public Archives Canada, on May 24;
- Free Vietnam Flag Raising Ceremony at the Ottawa Police Headquarters on May 25; and
- Vietnamese Community Parade, May 29, 2011

4/ Protest against the Chinese invasion of Vietnamese Territory and against the Vietnamese government’s weak response

The Vietnamese Canadian Federation and its member associations held simultaneous demonstrations on Sunday, June 19, 2011, in Toronto, Calgary, and Ottawa with the following purposes:

1. To draw international attention to the Chinese actions aiming at taking over Vietnamese territory;
2. To condemn the Vietnamese Communist government’s attitude of being “**cruel to the people, cowardly to the enemy**”; and

3. To support the call – on the part of the Vietnamese people, including many youths -- for an uprising in Vietnam.

Over 200 people from Ottawa, Montreal, and Vancouver participated in this event, including former Brigadier General Le Minh Dao from Connecticut, NJ. General Dao was the commander of the 18th Division of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces which valiantly stopped for a while the march toward Saigon by the North Vietnamese Communists just before their takeover of South Vietnam in April 1975.

In support of this event, many people donated a total of \$357 for the purchase of an outdoor public addressing (PA) system to be used in future events. VCF sincerely appreciates this precious support.

5/ CAMSA Fund

After a recent trip to Southeast Asia by Dr. Le Duy Can, his bid for financial support for CAMSA activities to aide those in need was met with generous response. Over \$3,000.00 has been raised to purchase an air conditioning system as well as a TV for the CAMSA Service and Drop-In Centre in Shulin, Taiwan, and laptop computers for refugees in Thailand. The list of donors is attached.