

The Vietnamese New-Year Reception in Ottawa, February 13, 2010

The Vietnamese Canadian Federation (VCF) and its affiliate, the Vietnamese Canadian Centre (VCC), last week held a reception in Ottawa to celebrate the arrival of the Year of the Tiger and also to thank its volunteers, sponsors, funding agencies, friend organizations, and dignitaries at all 3 levels of government for their support over the years.

Organized at the Sala San Marco Banquet Hall on Preston Street, this event was attended by about 150 people, including a number of special guests:

- Paul Dewar, Member of Parliament for Ottawa Centre
- Jim Watson, former Minister of Municipal Affairs and former Mayor of Ottawa
- Cécile Horley (Cécile Latour), former Canadian Ambassador to Vietnam
- Barbara McInnes, CEO, Community Foundation of Ottawa
- David Smith, an philanthropist in Ottawa who has been able to raise \$145 million for many causes and non-profit organizations in Ottawa over the last 20 years
- Former volunteers of Project 4000: Barbara and Dan Gamble, Norma McCord, Professor and Mrs. Brian Buckley
- Mary Lee, Ottawa-Carleton District School Board
- Michael Harrison, former Site Administrator of the International Language School at Glebe Collagiate
- Robert Yip, Ottawa Asian Heritage Month Society
- Jeff & Lita Cameron, Bahaí Community
- Pastor Cuong T. Do, Vietnamese Alliance Church of Ottawa
- Professor Tam D. Do, Vietnamese Canadian Seniors Association of Ottawa
- Tri Q. Le, Vietnamese Canadian Buddhist Association of Ottawa (Tu An Temple)
- Uy Q. Le, Hieu Giang Buddhist Temple
- Danh Lam Forsythe, President, Vietnamese Canadian Community of Ottawa
- An S. Hoang, Vietnamese Veterans Association of Ottawa
- Katherine Van Nguyen, Vietnamese Literary Centre, Ontario
- Judge Hai T. Ngo, Citizenship Court of Canada
- Thu P. Tran, Ottawa Vietnamese Canadian Cultural Organization
- Mong Q. Nguyen, Nguyen Du Vietnamese Language School
- Lawyer Nhung Hoang, VCF's & VCC's Legal Counsel
- Thuy T. Chu and Hong Nhung Nguyen, Tay Son Vietnamese Language School

After the salutations to the Canadian and Vietnamese heritage and freedom flags accompanied by the Canadian and free Vietnamese national anthems performed by the students of the Tay Son Vietnamese Language School, Danh T. Nguyen, VCF's Vice-President, welcomed the guests and thanked all those who have helped the VCF and the VCC, the funding agencies, and the volunteers who helped organize this event.



*Tay Son students preparing to sing national anthems
Photo: HQ, Ottawa*

“This is an occasion for us to express our thanks to the volunteers, the funding agencies, different levels of government, as well as all those who have assisted us over the years. Without this invaluable support we would not have been able to carry out many activities throughout the last thirty years.

We would like to particularly thank the government for allowing us to bring to Canada – under humanitarian and compassionate considerations – close to 300 refugees who were stranded in the Philippines for almost 20 years. Since the time the Honourable Diane Finley, former Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, announced this decision in May 2007, 89 families including 275 persons have been admitted to Canada under the sponsorship of the Vietnamese community and only one individual remains to be processed by the Canadian Embassy in Manila. We hope that within the next couple of months this person will also be admitted to Canada, thus bringing to a successful conclusion the *Freedom at Last Project* that we established in 2007 to help these unfortunate people resettle in Canada”, he said.

Paul Dewar followed with his remarks, in which he praised the VCF for taking the initiative to organize the *Freedom at Last Project* to bring to Canada close the Vietnamese refugees from the Philippines, for establishing a project to build the Vietnamese Boat People Museum in Ottawa, and for raising fund to help the victims of the recent earthquake in Haiti.

Yasir, Member of the Ontario Legislature, was unable to attend because he was out of town. His greetings were read by the reception’s MC Dung Nong. He said: “I am honoured to extend my best wishes as you celebrate Tết Nguyên Đán. I hope that you take this chance to be thankful for your good fortunes, and to share your gratitude with those you love. As you look forward to the coming year, may you take the lessons you learned with you on your new journey, and share them with those around you. I wish you health, peace and prosperity in the Year of the Tiger”.



*Danh Nguyen, Ha Quyen Nguyen, and Ngoc Vo presenting a cheque to Sandra Gillis of the Canadian Red Cross
Photo: HQ, Ottawa*

Next, Can D. Le, VCF's Commissioner for External Affairs, gave a slide presentation on the recent activities of both the VCF and the VCC, as well as their upcoming projects.

Danh T. Nguyen then presented to Sandra Gillis, representative of the Canadian Red Cross, a cheque of \$13, 082.12, representing the amount which the VCF/VCC have been able to raise in support of the victims of the recent earthquake in Haiti. "With this modest contribution, we'd like to show our solidarity with the people of Haiti in this challenging time. We share their losses and sorrows, and we wish them all the best in their efforts to rebuild the country", said Mr. Nguyen.

Altogether the VCF and its member associations in Montreal, Toronto, Sherbrooke, Edmonton, Saskatoon, and other cities were able to raise \$37,250.76 for this cause. With a one-to-one matching by the Canadian government, the VCF's contribution adds \$74,501.52 to Canada's total financial assistance to Haiti.

To continue the reception's program, Tri Q. Le presented a cheque of \$1,000 collected by the Vietnamese Canadian Centre, and \$300 in cash collected by the Vietnamese Alliance Church of Ottawa, to Kim Toai whose family lost everything in a fire that took place in Gatineau on February 1st, just one day after they moved there from Toronto.

The guests at the reception were then treated to a banquet lunch accompanied by an entertainment program featuring performances by Dominic d'Arcy (the Singing Policeman), the Vietnamese Music Band of Ottawa, the sister-and-brother team Kim Tien and Van Hoang, and the Tay Son students.

The reception concluded with the presentation of “lucky money” to the children by Loc Tran, a senior in the community.



*Dominic d'Arcy performing “My Canada”
Photo: HQ, Ottawa*



*MC Dung Nong and the New-Year setting
Photo: HQ, Ottawa*



*Phuong Le, Can Le, Ha Quyen Nguyen, Jim Watson, Tien Dao
and Danh Nguyen
Photo: HQ, Ottawa*



*Senior Loc H. Tran giving “lucky money” to the Tay Son students
Photo: HQ, Ottawa*



*The Organizing Committee, the Vietnamese Music Band of Ottawa, and friends
Photo: HQ, Ottawa*

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