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Solar Serve News

Dear friends,

At the end of September typhoon Ketsana hit Danang with severe winds. 163 people died, 14 were missing and 616 were injured. Three ships stranded on the seashore, lots of trees fell and floods destroyed houses and crops. The ones who stayed at our center had a frightening experience. The sound of the storm was horrifying. Although we boarded up the windows, the storm was so powerful that it pulled off the sheets. And when the wind found holes under the roof tiles, it pulled them in the air like flying feathers. Even the big parabol outside the center had to bow down, but amazingly the front door stayed intact. We were very thankful that nobody was hurt. This was our first huge storm since the center was opened.



Four new workers

One month ago two young men walked into our center. They had traveled a long way from the mountains to Danang and introduced themselves as members of the Katu minority. They had heard about our work. The Katu people have been misused for cutting trees in the forest. The economy forced many of them to accept this kind of illegal work. In search for new opportunities Nui and Loc came to Danang. We accepted them and now they are a wonderful asset to our work.

A few weeks later two deaf workers from North Vietnam came to our center also in search for work. One of them had been working in Danang before, but his work schedule did not allow him to help other deaf people.



Outing to Bana mountain

We organized an outing for all the workers. Some of them could not join but we ended up with a group of 14 adults and 5 children. We drove with a mini-bus to Bana, a mountain almost 40 km outside Danang. Bana is 1,487 m high. Earlier this year they opened a 5,042-meter-long cable car ride to the top. We all enjoyed the 15 minutes breathtaking ride. At the top of the mountain we had a wonderful view, took pictures and visited several places. During lunch it started to rain and the temperature dropped down. We decided to go down and drive home and were very thankful for an unforgettable day.

A great visit

A Dutch family came to visit us. They had been traveling through Vietnam. One of them wrote in a letter: "This was the moment we were waiting for, a visit to the Solar Serve center. We recognized the building from afar. Mr. Bich was waiting for us, ready to give us a tour and to explain the use of solar cookers. The center was peaceful and orderly with lots of space. Meeting the deaf was inspiring. First they were shy but slowly they opened themselves up. Language barriers were removed. Bich's wife took my hand and walked with me hand in hand. Words were not necessary. It was a great moment".



Training school for disadvantaged

Two months ago we were invited to a school in Quang Tri. A few years ago this school trained disadvantaged students to make wheelchairs. Nowadays they hold cooking classes. There were about 50 students together with several local and one foreign staff. We were given the opportunity to present our Solar Serve project and show the solar cookers. A sudden strong wind caused the cookers to move during cooking, but it was solved quickly and the demonstrations became a success.



An Introductory seminar

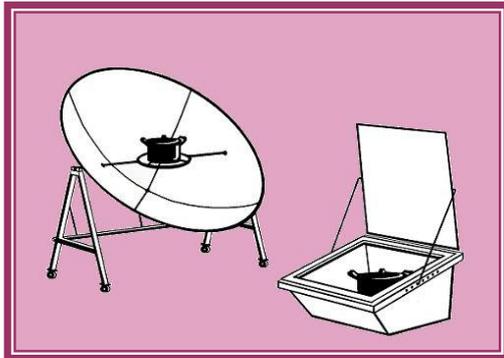
A Swiss business development organization organized an introductory seminar at our center for small entrepreneurs, learning how to do business based on good, right and clean principles. We as Solar Serve were very interested in it. If we want to expand our project and also the business side of our work, we really need to learn this. We found more than 20 other entrepreneurs and spent one day together. It was great to learn how we could change our thinking and have an impact on society. We will be more planned, goal-oriented and future-focused. It was a great initiative and all participants were very excited.

Commitment

During the International 4 Days of Marches in Holland, almost 37,106 of the 40,645 participants finished the four days of walking successfully. One of them was Fred. He is not only handicapped but he has also been sponsoring our project for years. This year he had to walk 160 km. With only one blister he finished the four days happily. An amazing person and what a commitment to sponsor our work in Vietnam!

A chicken story to end with

Thanh finished his school, mentioned in our last letter, and graduated in August. He told us that he had a wonderful time. They organized a small party at our center for the students. Three tables were served with delicious food and some of the plates were decorated with the heads and tails of the chickens. Maybe it sounds strange for foreigners but in Vietnam the chicken head is a delicacy. One of the leaders was blessed with one of the heads, but how great it was when they offered the other heads too. We had a good laugh!



Conclusion

We don't know if you still want to visit us. We promise you not to serve chicken heads. But you are more than welcome to sit with us at our tables and enjoy one of the meals cooked by Tho, the wife of Bich. She is doing a wonderful job in taking care of her children, cleaning the center, and also cooking every day for all the workers. It is great to be a part of the Solar Serve family.

Greetings,
Solar Serve team

Called to Serve

For more Solar Serve News:
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