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# Solar Serve News

## Dear friends,

Thousands of visitors and local people gathered in Da Nang on December 31<sup>st</sup> for a New Year's Eve countdown celebration. They were treated to a spectacular fireworks display and a wonderful show of many artists. Although our staff joined some other parties, it was for us also the end of a special year and the beginning of many challenges for 2013. We don't know how you experienced this change of year, but we'd like to say happy new year to all of you and that all your dreams may come true.



## The first clean stoves being used

We finally finished the 150 clean stoves (see previous letter). Our staff (Bich, Thang and Tuan) left at four o'clock in the morning to two villages near the ancient city of Hue. The truck was fully loaded and people were already waiting for them. In the first village (Vinh Hai) after explaining the benefits and usage of the stoves to the people and farmers, the local authorities were able to hand out 80 clean stoves. They were sponsored by NAV/NCA, an organization involved in health, gender and climate programs. It was sometimes hard to organize the people well because of their excitement. After that we moved to the other village (Phuong Binh) and handed over another 90 clean stoves to the local leaders. They were able to calm down the people, so that we first could explain and demonstrate the stoves. People were so thankful. Not long after we received another order and felt that the clean stoves are really suitable for the local people. The weight is 4 kg and the cost is reasonable (around 25 US dollars). This is a great way for organizations to help poor people in cooking clean, protecting their health and the environment, and also save money in fuel costs. Watch our video on YouTube and see it yourself: [Click here](#)



150 clean stoves ready for transport. Many people were waiting for the truck to arrive.



After a cooking demonstration the people were ready to take them home on their bicycles.

## Support for leprosy-affected families

For almost forty years 127 families lived in a leper colony somewhere north of Danang. It was a beautiful place along the sea and good for growing vegetables and catching free fish daily. Sadly, the place was sold to a resort, but the government offered them a new area in Danang. It was hard for them to adjust to this new environment and they were also a little bit discriminated against by the locals. In December we as Solar Serve, together with a business club, were able to help them with food parcels and rice. They were so thankful and it helped them to understand that there are still people caring for them



### A practical donation

We have been thinking about protecting our truck against the weather (sun, wind and rain). For years we parked the truck in the open air. A few months ago we had to repair it for major rust damage and other treatments. One of our support groups organized a special sale of Dutch stroopwafels (syrup waffles) in support of our charity programs. It was very successful and the profit was immediately donated to us. After some consideration we asked them if we could use this donation for making a cover for our truck. Sometimes we have to use donations like this for maintaining our property in order to serve better. The support group agreed spontaneously. Before Christmas one of our workers came up with a design and the cover was built within one week. Now we are able to serve the people longer and better with this truck, like moving rice and food parcels for the lepers or transporting clean stoves and solar cookers to remote areas. Here are some pictures of the construction:



### Solar Serve party

We held a small party at our center for our staff and relatives just before Christmas. It was good to finish this special year. Sadly we had to say goodbye to two of our deaf workers (An and Kha). Their families wanted them to return home. We released them although they still wanted to work with us, but we did not want to interfere. Gladly they came to our party and we gave all workers a gift of an envelope with money to be spent in a nearby mall. After the party we all went to the newly opened shopping center and bought clothes, food or other things with our money gift. It was great and a lot of fun in doing this together. During this special season we closed our doors a few days and welcomed a fresh new year.



Well, that's all for now! We hope to tell you more in our next letter.

Greetings,

Solar Serve team

### Called to Serve

More information: [www.vietnamsolarserve.org/](http://www.vietnamsolarserve.org/) or write to: [solarserve@yahoo.com](mailto:solarserve@yahoo.com)