

Where there's Hope, there's a way

By Tammy Vu

Hope Initiative, Inc. ("HI") is a group of Asian students who seek to promote vibrant and prosperous Vietnamese communities in Vietnam and abroad through the reduction of poverty, child development, and community enrichment programs. HI's humanitarian platform focuses upon three primary objectives:

- 1) Reduce poverty and improve living conditions in Vietnam
- 2) Improve the lives of Vietnamese children through child development and advocacy
- 3) Foster Vietnamese community development through educational and cultural enrichment programs

As a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, HI sponsors several fundraising projects designed to raise donations for the orphans in Vietnam. The Hope Initiative Calendar displays college women in traditional cultural Vietnamese *ao dai* dresses. Other fundraising events include an annual concert dinner and annual athletic events, which include Dragon Boat Races, Slam for Charity Basketball Tournament, Spike for Charity Volleyball Tournament, and Putting Fore the Future Golf Tournament. The golf tournament is scheduled for Saturday, February 25, 2006, at Lake Windcrest Golf Club in Magnolia, Texas.

I had the opportunity to interview Hope Initiative incoming president, Ms. Teresa Mai about her goals and aspirations.



Tell us a little about your background.

I am a third year college student at the University of Saint Thomas, studying Biology and Theology. I will continue to pursue my medical education at the University of Texas Medical School in Houston in the fall of 2007. Besides volunteering with Hope Initiative, I am an active member of the Vietnamese Students Association & American Chemical Society at UST, Nhom Tre, Lend a Hand, CTDVDN Youth Ministry, and the Vietnamese Culture and Science Association.

How did you get involved with Hope Initiative?

I began in HI as a model for the 2006 calendar, but started to

take part in planning and actively participating in more than just the calendar - such as the Hope Benefit Charity Concert and the HI Charity Basketball Tournament. I really liked working behind the scenes planning, organizing, and looking for sponsors.

How was your modeling experience? What inspired you to seek a more active role with HI?

I savored modeling, because it was a once in a lifetime for me to be pampered with makeup and cameras. (She laughs) But honestly, I enjoy getting involved because it allows me to work to my greatest potential. Though it's great to feel pretty, the greater feeling is that you are helping someone less fortunate - the charity is for the orphans in Vietnam. In fact, that is why I decided to join the calendar committee this year.

What are your plans for HI to go beyond its boundaries? In other words, what are your goals/expectations/visions as the new president of HI?

To maximize our potential aid to the motherland [Vietnam], I plan to integrate more with other organizations with similar goals. We are also beginning to work with the media more frequently to update the community about our progress. I am in the process of working with the Vietnamese television network, SBTN, to expose their viewers to HI and its vital cause to "develop vibrant and prosperous Vietnamese communities in Vietnam and abroad through poverty reduction, child development, and community enrichment programs."

Do you have any other comments on HI and comments for prospective members/donors/sponsors?

To our generous sponsors and supporters: We greatly appreciate your kind hearts. Without your constant help and support, we could not have helped as many orphans as we have.

To our prospective members: We invite anyone who has a compassionate heart for those less fortunate to attend our next HI meeting to see how you can help give hope to those in need.

You can learn more about Hope Initiative at hionline.org.



Phi Nguyen, Father Hoa, Teresa Mai, the new HI President, and Tammy Vu



Tammy Vu with children in Vietnam



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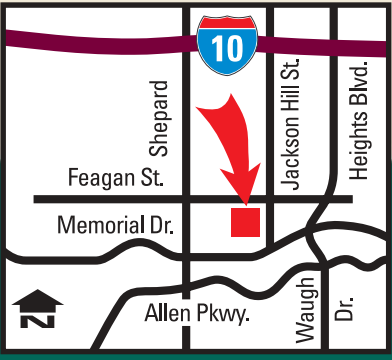


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Hope Initiative Fundraising Calendar Launch Party at Tropioca



Hope Initiative calendars are available at hionline.org



Terry Huynh, Christina Nguyen, Ngoc Tran, Teresa Mai, Tina Pham, Vy Le



James Tran, Linh-Bach Nguyen, Teresa Mai, Tammy Vu, David Vinh, Thanh-Kim Le



Phi Nguyen, Kevin Yu, Tammy Vu



Michael Dang



Isabelle Gonzales, Tammy Vu, Holland Nguyen