Current Service Learning Organizations

Studying at the Vietnam Center provides students with an excellent opportunity to engage the local Vietnamese community through our service-learning program. Paired with the required sociology course, students commit 4-6 hours a week to working with various non-profit or humanitarian organizations throughout Ho Chi Minh City. Depending on their interests, students can design and teach English curriculum for disabled Vietnamese; work in a local Vietnamese orphanage and participate in fun activities with the children; or volunteer with a local clinic and gain valuable experience as a medical assistant. Students then reflect on these experiences through the sociology course, where they can explore and build their understanding of Vietnamese society and culture. Overall, the service-learning program is a unique chance for students to deepen their educational experiences while living abroad.

DRD

DRD (Disabilities Resource and Development) is a non-profit center for disabled Vietnamese to expand their English skills, take various educational or technical courses, and cultivate new friendships. In the past, Loyola students have gone to DRD to serve as English tutors, often playing games or participating in fun, seasonal activities that help the members solidify their English. Now, students have the option to help design English curriculum or introduce new language activities to better fit the needs of members with varying fluency levels.

Mai Tam

Established in Ho Chi Minh City in July 2005, Mai Tam was set up to facilitate taking care of and feeding street children, abandoned children, orphans and especially babies who were infected with HIV. From the original two mothers and two babies, the shelter now grew to 60 children, only eight of whom were not HIV+. Initially the shelter functioned only to house abandoned children, but thanks to good-hearted benefactors the children now enjoy learning tools, educational resources, and toys, which enhance their living conditions. In the past, Loyola students have gone to Mai Tam to play games with the young residents, giving them love and affection. Now students can continue to interact with the children, as well as helping with meal distribution or other small chores.
Health Clinic

The Order of St. Camillus runs a health clinic through a local Catholic church located about 5 minutes away from Vietnam Center students’ dormitory in D.10. The clinic is funded by parishioners and organized by priests; doctors and medical students provide services such as routine check-ups, acupuncture, physical therapy, dental services, and free pharmaceutical care to poor or unemployed Vietnamese. In the past, students have served as medical assistants to particular doctors, performing specific tasks such as taking heart rates and blood pressure, removing acupuncture needles, assisting in physical therapy, or monitoring patients’ vitals. Students have also organized donation drives in which they collect toiletries, vitamins, or old clothing to provide to the clinic. This is an excellent service learning opportunity for a student interested in a career in the medical field.