

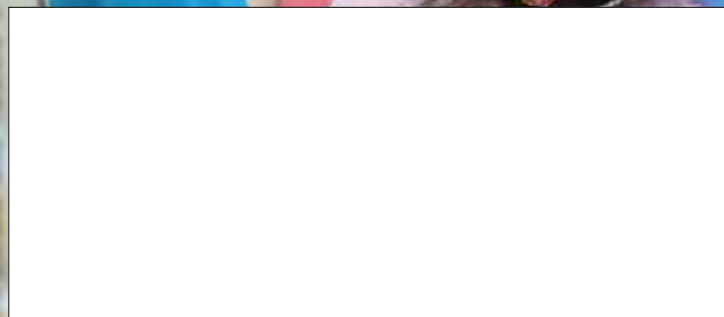
# VOICES

V O L T A

September/October 2013

## Exploring Diversity and Expanding Our Reach

VOLUME 20, ISSUE 5



[LISTENINGANDSPOKENLANGUAGE.ORG](http://LISTENINGANDSPOKENLANGUAGE.ORG)

WINNER OF THE 2013 COMMUNICATOR  
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# VOLTA VOICES



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*Alexander Graham Bell*  
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Advocating Independence  
through Listening and Talking

— Adopted by the Alexander Graham Bell Association  
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*Volta Voices* welcomes submissions from both AG Bell members and nonmembers. The magazine is published six times annually. Its audience consists of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing and professionals in fields related to hearing loss (audiology, speech-language pathology, psychology, otology, social services, education).

Visit the *Volta Voices* page at [ListeningandSpokenLanguage.org](http://ListeningandSpokenLanguage.org) for submission guidelines and to submit content.

**Subjects of Interest**

- Technology – related to hearing loss, new technology, improvements to or problems with existing technology, or how people are using existing technology, accommodations.
- Education – related to public or private schools through post-secondary education, new approaches and teaching methods, legal implications and issues, etc.
- Advocacy – information on legislation, hearing health, special or mainstream education, and accessibility.
- Health – audiology issues relating to children or adults with hearing loss and/or their families and friends.
- Action – stories about people with hearing loss who use spoken language as their primary mode of communication; deafness need not be the focal point of the article.

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**Letters to the Editor**

Let us know how we are doing. Write a Letter to the Editor, and you could see your comment in the next issue.

**Media Kit**

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On the cover: Ann Baumann, M.Sc., CCC-SLP, LSLS Cert. AVEEd, coaches a Vietnamese teacher about circle time activities during an Auditory-Verbal Classroom training session of the Global Foundation For Children With Hearing Loss Vietnam Summer Training Program. Credit: Paige Stringer/Global Foundation For Children With Hearing Loss.



# Building Capacity to Support Children with Hearing Loss in Vietnam

By Paige Stringer, M.A.

“**W**hat can I do to help my daughter?” The Vietnamese father asked the question with a concern that transcended cultural divides. “She has hearing aids like yours. When will she talk like you?” This Vietnamese father, Phuc, and his family were seeking answers for their 2-year-old daughter newly identified with hearing loss. His questions fueled my sense of purpose.

I was born with a profound hearing loss but benefited from early identification, hearing aids and early intervention to develop listening and spoken language. I started the Global Foundation

For Children With Hearing Loss in 2009 to help children with hearing loss in developing countries have access to similar professional support, hearing technology and educational resources so they too can participate in the mainstream in their communities.

The Global Foundation For Children With Hearing Loss has been collaborating with the Thuan An Center for Hearing-Impaired Children in Vietnam since 2010 on a multifaceted program to address gaps in the system of support across health care and education for children with hearing loss in this country. The goal is to help these children develop listening and spoken language skills.

I met Phuc a few weeks prior to the launch of our first Summer Training Program for professionals and families in 2010. The Thuan An Center hosted a meeting for local families to invite them to take part in the Parent Program component of this initiative. Phuc approached me after the meeting with questions about his daughter’s future. His urgency remained with me as a driving force for our program as it has grown and our impact has deepened in Vietnam.

The Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training has identified 180,000 children under 18 who are deaf and hard of hearing in the country. The government’s inclusive education policy encourages



Paige Stringer/Global Foundation For Children With Hearing Loss

assimilation of children with disabilities into the mainstream setting.

However, the results of this policy for children with hearing loss have been mixed due to late identification of hearing loss in children, a shortage of early intervention services and appropriate hearing technology, and limited professional knowledge to address pediatric hearing loss. Vietnamese health care and education professionals are committed to improving the system of support for children who are deaf and hard of hearing and have sought the expertise of the Global Foundation For Children With Hearing Loss to help address some of their challenges.

The Global Foundation's Vietnam team is comprised of 27 volunteer professionals from the United States, Canada and Hong Kong who are respected leaders in audiology, speech-language pathology, early intervention and auditory-verbal practice. They work with the Global Foundation and our Vietnamese partners throughout the year to develop the curriculum, engage in video analysis, and travel to Vietnam to teach the material. Most of our volunteer professionals have been involved with the program for at least two years.

The cornerstone of the Global Foundation's work is the Deaf Education Program which involves 38 schools and three hospitals across 20 provinces in Vietnam. It is a collaboration between the Global Foundation and Thuan An Center, featuring a curriculum designed to increase expertise in the areas of audiology, speech-language pathology, early intervention and auditory-verbal practice among Vietnamese

teachers, therapists, medical teams and audiology technicians.

Each year, we lead a Summer Training Program during which the Vietnamese professionals travel to Thuan An Center to board and study during the month-long immersion. The Vietnamese participants engage in tracks specific to their fields.

They progress through their respective curricula and advance to the next level each year. The Global Foundation promotes a train-the-trainer approach in which the more advanced participants help support the training of those newer to the curriculum and also provide guidance to other professionals and families in their home communities.

The Auditory-Verbal Classroom, Therapy, and Early Intervention tracks utilize the Global Foundation's developmental charts which are customized to Vietnamese language development. The Vietnamese professionals learn to use the charts to identify goals, develop strategies and implement activities to achieve



Paige Stringer/Global Foundation For Children With Hearing Loss

Family Clinics provide an opportunity for Vietnamese Audiology training program participants to practice audiology skills.



A young boy with hearing loss talks to Amy Northern Hardie, M.Ed., CED, and a Vietnamese teacher about the play-doh animals he created during an Auditory-Verbal Classroom training session.

those developmental goals in live therapy sessions and classroom activities with children under 6 years of age.

Our Audiology track features lecture, practicum and family clinics. During the family clinics, the Vietnamese participants practice pediatric audiology standards of care including hearing testing, hearing aid fitting and family counseling.

The Summer Training Program also includes short courses for mainstream teachers who have children with hearing loss in their classrooms, and an evening program for families to learn how they can help their children develop listening and spoken language skills at home.

In addition to the Summer Training Program, we conduct Mobile Missions in which small teams of Global Foundation professionals travel to some of the participating schools, clinics and hospitals in our program throughout the year in Vietnam. The purpose of the Mobile Mission is to reinforce the Summer Training Program in the participants' own work environments and with the families they serve.

We also offer a Video Analysis Program in which the Vietnamese par-

ticipants submit video of themselves in their classroom and therapy sessions to the Global Foundation team for feedback and coaching support.

What makes our Vietnam Deaf Education Program unique is its integration of education and health care services. Because we work with the same group of professionals, families and children over time, we are able to monitor progress, receive feedback and adjust our program to fit their needs.

Since 2010, we have successfully executed four Summer Training Programs and three Mobile Missions. We have trained over 220 teachers, 300 families, and 125 medical and other professionals who collectively support over 1,000 children with hearing loss. The participants in our program share what they have learned with others, making the benefits of our work exponential and sustainable.

In just three years since its inception, we are seeing the impact of our program on the outcomes of the children. The audiology and education professionals in the program are collaborating to address the needs of children with hearing loss. Our most advanced participants are sharing knowledge with other professionals and families. There are growing numbers of early intervention programs available to families.



Vietnamese participants in the Audiology training program test hearing aids with the support of Martha Harney, M.Sc., CCC-A.



The Vietnam Deaf Education Program is training in-country professionals to support the needs of children with hearing loss and their families.



Vietnamese participants practice new skills and receive feedback from the Global Foundation's professional team during Auditory-Verbal Therapy training sessions.

In the coming school year, five children with hearing loss who have received early intervention services from Thuan An Center teachers enrolled in our program will enter mainstream kindergarten. This is the highest number of children transitioning to the mainstream out of Thuan An Center in a single year.

Phuc, the father who posed those impassioned questions before our program's inception, took part in our program for two years. He set up a therapy room in his home to complement the services that his daughter, Tam, received from teachers enrolled in our program. In 2012, Tam was admitted to the mainstream school in her neighborhood and she just completed a successful school year.

One of the Global Foundation's newest projects is in collaboration with Vietnamese school principals to establish regional audiology centers at some of the 38 schools enrolled in our program. Currently, families living outside of the city centers often take unpaid leave from work to travel great distances to get audiology care for their children.

Regional audiology centers would provide an alternative for families. The teachers and therapists at the schools that would host the centers are already

receiving training through our program. By providing audiology resources, we can ensure the children have both the audiology and educational support they need to be successful with their listening and spoken language abilities.

We are also developing a program with the hospitals in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi to address the unique training needs of medical teams working with



A Vietnamese therapist engages a young child during an Auditory-Verbal Therapy training session.

children with hearing loss. The Global Foundation has also been invited to expand its model to Guatemala to benefit the listening and spoken language development of children with hearing loss in that country.

It has been personally rewarding to lead this team effort of empowering people in other parts of the world who are asking for training and new ideas in their approach to support children with hearing loss. The Global Foundation For Children With Hearing Loss is helping young children with hearing loss set on a course for a better life—no matter where in the world they live. ♯



Becky Clem, M.A., CCC-SLP, LSLC Cert. AVT, demonstrates an activity with a young boy with hearing loss during an Auditory-Verbal Therapy training session.