



University with no money at all.

ACCV agreed to sponsor all of her education and living expenses for the next six years. Thảo has now completed two years of study and is doing very well. She will make a wonderful doctor. ACCV also agreed to provide support for medical treatment for her mother's kidney disease.

Another of ACCV's happiest stories is Quân, a 17-year-old boy from a small town in Hòa Bình Province. Quân was born into a poor family and his father suffered from severe health problems. Quân began to lose his eyesight in late childhood but was neither diagnosed nor treated because his family was not aware of facilities for the blind or how to improve the family's overall conditions.

ACCV arranged for Quân to come to Hà Nội, where he joined nine other youngsters like himself in a six month residential program. Through the Association for the Blind in Hà Nội, he learned Braille in order to further his education, and he received vocational training as a massage therapist. But Quân didn't stop there. He took advantage of the IT training available at ACCV and is currently learning to be an IT trainer for blind students himself. He attends high school on weekends and hopes to graduate and attend university. He is thoroughly enjoying his new life.

As Quân's life shows, blind people can escape the trap of poverty by using education to broaden their horizons and follow their dreams. ACCV's long term goal is to open a center with classrooms offering not just massage therapy, but many other vocational training programs.

ACCV sees advanced vocational training in the fields of English and IT as the future of the blind. Thus, English

language instruction is a primary component of their project. ACCV recently opened its new office and educational center, complete with computers and other learning aids, at 40A Hang Bai Street. Their next goal is to implement their English language & IT program for the blind in as many blind association centers as possible throughout Hà Nội.

ACCV has developed good working relationships with the Hà Nội Association for the Blind and the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind, both of which they consider to be outstanding institutions, and both of which are managed and directed by blind people. ACCV is looking forward to getting to know the doctors and services at the Hà Nội Eye

Hospital in order to explore the possibility of working with them.

According to Alison Vidotto, "Our main philosophy is that it is only the eyes of these people that don't work. Their brains are healthy, individual and sometimes amazing, and like my own children I would like to see them reach their potential. If that potential happens to be massage or making broomsticks and it is what they want to do, then great, let's support and help them achieve that. But if there is a teacher, a lawyer a social worker or inside their minds, then let's support that dream too. Everyone should be given the opportunity to reach their potential. That is our goal."

JON ANDERHOLM



ACCV OPENS A NEW OFFICE