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CHSM Vietnam Families Group

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Tết Festival Celebration to be held February 20th, 1999 in St. Paul, Minnesota!

Turnout expected to be high – don't forget to mark your calendars!

The first annual Children's Home Society of Minnesota Vietnam Families Tết Celebration will be held on February 20th at CHSM in St. Paul.

So far, 23 families have expressed interest in attending. The Chinese calendar marks this as the year of the Rabbit but it's the year of the Cat for the Vietnamese. Rabbit or Cat, let's party! Can you imagine the fun we'll have with 23 plus children running between our knees?

We're planning all sorts of things to make the festival memorable for your family. Specifics will be provided a little closer to the actual date.

The celebration will be held from 2:00 to 6:30 p.m. on February 20, 1999 in the Hitchcock Room at CHSM (2230 Como Avenue, St. Paul). If your attendance plans have either changed since the last mailing or if you're new to the group, please contact Janet Watchman. She can be reached by phone: 507/645-9112, email: jwatchma@thuban.physics.carleton.edu or regular mail: 105 Winona Street, Northfield, MN 55057

Playgroup Update

The playgroups continue to meet several times a month on a rotating

schedule. They're held from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. at a volunteer's home on either a Wednesday, Thursday or Saturday morning. These get-togethers are very casual and provide a great opportunity for you and your children to spend time with families that are a bit like yours. If you would like to attend, contact the play date host and they will provide directions. The upcoming dates and locations are as follows:

SATURDAY, JANUARY 23, 1999 – Connie & Guy Stanton's home at 7523 43rd St North, Oakdale, MN. Phone: 612/773-7556.

NOTE: The address and phone number is different than provided earlier.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 1999 – Wendell Arneson and Beth Christensen's home at 12 Fareway Drive, Northfield, MN 55057. Phone: 507/645-7946

THURSDAY, MARCH 4, 1999 – Jeff & Denise Swinbank's home at RR1, Box 72, Zumbro Falls, MN 55112. Denise will bring maps to the next couple of playgroups, otherwise, call for directions: 507/753-2420.

SATURDAY, MARCH 20, 1999 – TBD

If you're interested in hosting a playgroup, please contact Julie Schulz, our playgroup initiator and master coordinator. She can be reached at 675 Prior Ave South, St. Paul, MN 55116. Phone: 615/690-4034

CHSM Vietnam Families Directory

Several people have expressed interest in a directory of the families participating in the CHSM Vietnam Families Group.

Since our goal is to provide an opportunity to share our experiences with one another, this seems to make a lot of sense. If you would NOT like to be a part of this directory, please let me know by February 11th. Otherwise I will bring directories to the February 20th Tết celebration. I will include the parent's names, phone numbers and addresses for anyone who would like to be listed. I think it would be nice to include our children's names and birth dates as well, so if you would like to add this information to your listing, please let me know by February 11th. You can reach me by phone: 612/401-9411, email: nrinn@decisionworks.com or mail: 6503 Shadow Lane, Chanhassen, MN 55317

FCV Colorado Vietnam Culture Camp

The Colorado chapter of the national organization, Families with Vietnamese Children (FCV) has arranged with the Heritage Camp organization to host a Vietnamese culture camp for adopted children and their families, **Aug. 14-15, 1999, in Denver.** Although the first year it will only be a day and a half long; by the second year, they hope to have a full weekend camp. It is open to anyone who wants to come, regardless of where you live.

If you are interested, contact Pam Sweetser, director of Colorado Heritage Camps Inc. The email address is hcamps@juno.com. The regular mailing address is 2052 Elm St., Denver, CO 80207. Phone: (303) 388-3930

By the way, if you're curious about FCV, you can check out its web site at fcvn.org/

APV on-line Mailing List

If you have access to the Internet, you can join an on-line community of families who have already or will soon adopt from Vietnam. The postings range from questions about completing paperwork to sharing your child's culture with their classmates at school. Perhaps you already know about this list and have found it to be as valuable a resource for your family as I have for ours.

If you're interested, you can subscribe to it at the following web site: www.comeunity.com/apv/index.html

Happy surfing!

Vietnam Sponsorship Program Idea

At the last playgroup, Caroline Ticarro-Parker mentioned something I would like to share with everyone. She and Scott have asked their families to make a

donation to the CHSM Vietnam Sponsorship Program for the twins first birthday rather than buy them presents. They feel their daughters have more than they need, so it would be nice to help children who have so little. What a beautiful idea! When little Cassidie & Natalie turn one year old, they will already have made a significant difference in someone else's life (other than their mom, dad, aunts, uncles, grandmas, grandpas – of course!).

Resources for Vietnamese Products

I'm always interested in hearing about resources for Vietnamese or Asian items like dolls, books, handicrafts, etc., so in case you're equally interested, I'll share a few discoveries. If you have suggestions, let me know and I'll include them in future mailings:

Asia Kids - Books, Videos, CD-ROM, Dolls, Posters, Crafts, Language Textbooks, T-shirts and more. www.afk.com or 1-800-765-5885

Celebrate the Child – Founded by an adoptive parent. Books, Music, Dolls, Cultural Items. www.celebratechild.com or 1-800-237-8400 ext. 34

Cultural Keepsakes – Founded by adoptive parents. Includes a wide variety of items from many cultures, including Vietnam. Phone 1-516-588-1424 or email culturek@erols.com to request a catalog.

Vietnamese Treasures – Run by Wendy Barron, founder of the FCV organization as a means to fund her 2nd adoption. Offers artwork and embroidery. www.tcbs.com/vietreasure/

Amerasian Network – All proceeds contribute to the Amerasian Network's charitable efforts. Includes dolls, doll clothes, musical instruments, embroidery, note cards and more. www.amerasian.org/s/

Apple Tree Dolls and Bears – Asian dolls, as well as other dolls and bears. The owner raised 18 adopted children and 3 birth children! www.dollsbears.com/products/ or 1-888-452-3021

Things Asian – Associated with Destination Vietnam, an on-line travel magazine. Offers books, videos, gift items, art, and more. www.thingsasian.com/store/ or 1-415-333-3800

Gallery Cyclo – Also associated with Destination Vietnam. A collection of contemporary Vietnamese art including the work of over 50 Vietnamese artists, as well as many Vietnamese Americans. View available artwork online via their digital gallery. www.destinationvietnam.com/cyclo/cyclo.htm

American Girl Catalogue – Dolls, clothes, books, etc. They offer a “just like me” doll that you can custom order, and an Asian “Bitty Baby” 1-800-845-0005.

Closing Thoughts

I hope you found the newsletter interesting and informative. If you would like to contribute an article or make a suggestion, please let me know. Even if you would just like to recommend a restaurant, book or share a favorite Vietnamese recipe!

By the way, how do you like being called the CHSM Vietnam Families Group? It's a mouthful! If you have a suggestion for a new name, bring your idea to the Têt party. Maybe we can re-name ourselves as well as ring in the year of the Cat!



Hope to see you soon!