

Student project will help improve computer education and job placement skills in Vietnam

St. Paul, Minn. – Macalester student Ngan "Jasmine" Nguyen has received a grant to undertake a project for peace by providing 60 high-school-age youth in Vinh Phuc Village in rural Vietnam computer education through the establishment of a sustainable "Interactive Learning Center" and basic computer-skills training programs.

Nguyen's grant is from the Davis Projects for Peace initiative funded by the late philanthropist Kathryn Wasserman Davis who launched Projects for Peace on the occasion of her 100th birthday in 2007. Until her death at 106 in 2013, Mrs. Davis was intent on advancing the cause of peace and sought to motivate tomorrow's promising leaders by challenging them to find ways to "prepare for peace".

Since high school, Nguyen has aspired to provide social service and leadership to improve public educational systems in Vietnam. "The Davis Projects for Peace is the milestone to achieve that ambition," said Nguyen.

"This project enables me to make a deep and long-lasting impact on the society which was my second home for the last three years," she said. Nguyen has been a longtime volunteer in Vinh Phuc Village which is near her hometown in Vietnam.

"I hope through the establishment of "Interactive Learning Center" with computers and Internet, the students in Vinh Phuc will recognize technology as the vital key to success in this era, influencing their lives in a meaningful way," she said. "If the project can attract more attention to education in rural area in Vietnam, there could be a better financial source invested to the facilities for the children."

Nguyen's project is titled: "Cultivating Peace: Virtual Learning Buddy." She will be partnering with Solidarités Jeunesses Vietnam, a youth NGO managed by and for young volunteers with the support of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Vietnam. Its work focuses on sustainable community-development projects emphasizing education and peace building at the grassroots level in Vietnam. In addition, she will host workshops to prepare the students for job placement. The students in Vinh Phuc Village will have access to improved studying conditions and excellent educational resources to encourage their work towards their dreams of a brighter future.

Nguyen, who just completed her first year at Macalester, wants to be an agent for change. "I am very excited to get involved and be the change I want in the community I deeply care about," she said.

The Davis family has chosen to honor Kathryn Wasserman Davis's legacy by continuing to fund Projects for Peace and is heartened by the quality and inventiveness of the projects to be undertaken in 2014. Projects that address conflict resolution and reconciliation, foster understanding, provide opportunity, and community



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building are among the many winning proposals submitted by motivated students this year. Mrs. Davis was the mother of Shelby M.C. Davis who funds the Davis UWC Scholars Program.

A total of 127 winning projects were selected, and each is being awarded \$10,000 for implementation during the summer of 2014. Students themselves will implement their projects throughout the world.

After she graduates in 2017, Nguyen hopes to go back to Vietnam. “After graduation, I want to bring the knowledge gained from college to Vietnam and continue to provide primary education and technology to the youth of my country.”

Projects for Peace invites all undergraduates at the 91 American campuses, including Macalester, which are partners in the Davis United World College Scholars Program (see www.davisuwcscholars.org (<http://www.davisuwcscholars.org/>)) to compete for these grants. Other participating institutions include International Houses Worldwide, the Graduate Institute in Geneva, Future Generations Graduate School, and the University of Maine. For more information on Projects for Peace, see www.davisprojectsforpeace.org. (<http://www.davisprojectsforpeace.org/>)

Macalester College, founded in 1874, is a national liberal arts college with a full-time enrollment of 2,011 students. Macalester is nationally recognized for its long-standing commitment to academic excellence, internationalism, multiculturalism, and civic engagement. Learn more at [macalester.edu](http://www.macalester.edu) (<http://www.macalester.edu/>).

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