

# Future Specialized School



*Picture draw by Võ Phước Minh Nhật, student of Future Specialized*

Since 2001, the Office of Genetic Counselling & Disabled Children (OGCDC), the predecessor of Thua-Thien-Hue Province's Fund of Genetic Counseling & Disabled Children (FGCDC) has implemented a special education model for children with intellectual disabilities in partnership with the German Development Service (DED). With the support of experts, we are one of the pioneer organizations in establishing and developing educational programs for children with disabilities in Hue City.

In April 2001, the Future Specialized School was established and was one of the first schools to teach children with intellectual disabilities in Hue. From the beginning of incorporating this model, we have faced many difficulties and challenges such as: hiring and training dedicated teachers to teach children with disabilities in conditions where no teachers have been trained specially for this type of education in Hue; lack of parental awareness of the importance of education for children with disabilities and local negative stereotypes about people with disabilities, etc. In just over a year, we have developed this model from having only one class with six children and one teacher, to six classes, seven teachers and forty children. At the end of 2002 we decided to establish our first boarding school exclusively for children with disabilities called "Future Specialized School".

In September 2006, with financial support from Eurasia Association (Switzerland), Schmitz Stiftung Foundation (Germany) and Vietnam Bretagne Association (France), Future Specialist School was built on the campus of Youth Center of Thua-Thien-Hue province at 91B Truong Gia Mo Street with standards for people with disabilities. This includes classrooms for learning, special rooms with facilities for rehabilitation and

physical therapy. Currently, the school has five classes, fifty-five students, eight teachers, one support and one manager. This education system is intended for children with different types of disabilities such as Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, autism, multiple disabilities, etc. in a semi-board setting. The school starts at 7.30am and ends at 4.30pm. Students are served lunch and have a lunch break at school.

Our curriculum includes not only skills development activities such as: skills in everyday life; social skills; communication and language skills; cognitive skills; gross motor and sensory enhancement, but also focus on vocational education with the goal that children can participate in daily activities and live independently. Currently, Future School has one sewing class, one incense making class and one second-hand shop which students manage. For many years, the school has been a well-known place by many people in Hue and surrounding areas.

To achieve these achievements, since its establishment until now, Future School has always received the support of special education experts from many different organizations around the world. From 2001 to 2014, we received four special education and early intervention experts from the German Development Service Organization working directly to train the staff and teachers of OGCDC and Future School about educational programs for children with intellectual disabilities. In addition, the school also receives professional support from lecturers and students specializing in Speech Therapy, Physiotherapy and Therapeutic Activity in the educational and cultural exchange program of University of Queensland (Australia) from 2013 to present, specialized assistance from the Special Education Association (USA). In particular, from April 2019, we received the support of Ms. Sayuri Shimizu, a Special Education volunteer from JICA (Japan), to work at Future School for 2 years. Ms. Sayuri's main job is to assist in providing training methods for teachers to teach students in two classrooms of severely disabled children. She is also in charge of exercise and physical development for all students. Thanks to the enthusiastic support of the experts, they have not been afraid of geographical distance and cultural barriers to spend time and effort supporting the school. Without them, we would not have been able to develop a high quality special education model for children with disabilities in Hue as we could today.