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## **MISS VIETNAM URGES FAMILIES: PUT HELMETS ON YOUR CHILDREN!**

*Ho Chi Minh City, 18<sup>th</sup> December, 2011*

This Sunday, Miss Vietnam 2008 hosted a Family Day event in Ho Chi Minh City that was full of fun activities centered around child motorcycle helmets. Family Day aimed to educate parents and encourage children to wear helmets every time they ride on a motorcycle. Organized by Asia Injury Prevention (AIP) Foundation, in collaboration with Ho Chi Minh City's Traffic Safety Committee (TSC) and Department of Education and Training (DoET), the event was attended by over a thousand parents and children at the Children's House in District 3.

The attendance of Tran Thi Thuy Dung, Miss Vietnam 2008, was a huge sensation. All morning, Thuy Dung interacted with children as they participated in road safety games, including helmet painting and bicycle racing. Throughout the day, free helmets were awarded to the children who performed well in the quizzes, games, and competitions. "We all know somebody who has been in a motorcycle crash," said Ms. Thuy Dung. "Looking at all your bright, young faces, I feel excited for what life has in store for you. I want you all to live your lives to the fullest, but to do this, you will need protection."

Later, Thuy Dung joined the children for a viewing of the play "Lion and Friend" by the "Ngày xưa ngày xưa" Theater Group. Their interactive performance was customized to compare the dangers of the jungle to the threats of the road, as the animals discover the importance of helmets.

"I want to be just like the lion," said 7 year old Tra My. "Be the king of the jungle, and always wear my helmet. And I managed to get an autograph from Miss Vietnam! I think that was the best part of the day."

The issue of child helmet use is a particularly timely threat in Vietnam, where only 30% of children wear helmets, yet 90% of motorized vehicles are motorcycles. As a result, thousands of children are permanently injured by brain trauma or dying far too early.

"While the law requires all children over 6 to wear helmets, Vietnamese parents often believe that they are unnecessary or harmful to young children," says AIP Foundation Executive Director Mirjam Sidik. "In reality, helmets have been proven to reduce the likelihood of death or injury, and quality child-sized helmets are available in stores. Family Day gives us the chance to get parents directly involved: As they understand the facts about child helmets, their attitude will surely change."



“Today’s Family Day gave children and parents a chance to understand why wearing helmets is important at any age. Now it’s time for action at the family level, and we hope today’s activities will encourage parents to realize how crucial child helmet wearing is.” says Pham Lan Anh of National Traffic Safety Committee (NTSC). “Bringing the community together at an event like this provides an excellent platform for us to communicate with those who are most at risk. Rather than a formal, didactic forum, we chose to approach road safety education the fun way. We hope children will be excited to wear their helmets from now on.”

Family Day was organized as part of the national campaign entitled “Children **also** need a helmet”, which aims to improve this dire situation by 2014. The campaign is being run by National Traffic Safety Committee (NTSC), the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET), the National Traffic Police (C67), and AIP Foundation. Over the past months, informational flyers have been distributed, workshops held for major road safety agents, and a social marketing campaign launched including television, radio, and print ads. In addition, strengthened police enforcement is being supported by the World Health Organization (WHO).

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### **About AIP Foundation**

The Asia Injury Prevention Foundation (AIP Foundation) is a U.S. registered 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization that uses public-private partnerships, public awareness education, and school-based programs to reduce the rate of traffic injuries and fatalities in developing countries. AIP Foundation has offices in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, and Bangkok, Thailand. In 2001, AIP Foundation built its non-profit helmet assembly plant, V-SPEC, which manufactures Protec brand tropical helmets. These helmets offer an environmentally appropriate, safe and affordable option for motorbike and bicycle users.

In 2009, AIP Foundation, in collaboration with the FIA Foundation and the World Bank Global Road Safety Facility, launched the Global Helmet Vaccine Initiative (GHVI), an international



coalition with the objective of “putting a helmet on every head in the ‘Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020).”

For more information about the AIP Foundation, please visit [www.asiainjury.org](http://www.asiainjury.org).