

Iowa Tai Dam Newsletter, December 19, 1975

Iowa Tai Dam Newsletter

Governor's Task Force for Indochinese Resettlement
1000 East Grand Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

Hello! Sahm-by-dee! We promised you a newsletter so here's the first issue. This one is being written in a hurry because we have just returned from Fort Chaffee, Ark., and we haven't yet been able to turn our actions to matters beyond the initial resettling efforts of bringing the Tai Dam people to Iowa to their new homes.

We know, however, that you all want to know who is involved and where they are, so the list included at the end of this newsletter will provide you with the names, addresses and phone numbers of sponsors and refugees.

We've all been involved in the most heartwarming, human endeavor of our lives — and yet I know there are many difficulties. Please call us on the toll-free phone (1-800-362-2780) to seek help, to pass on information, or just to talk. If any emergencies arise at night or on weekends and holidays, feel free to contact the Task Force members at their homes. Our numbers are as follows:

Colleen Shearer - 515/989-0313

Jill Quam - 515/282-3581

Dick Freeman - 515/265-8485

Jack Spear - 515/225-1838

Somsak Saythongphet - 515/288-1144

Cam Uynh - 515/280-7521

(To the Tai Dam people: Remember that long-distance phone calls cost money. Always try to call us during the day at 1-800-362-2780 because that will cost nothing to you or to your sponsor.)

I'm sure you know of our fervent wish that all the plans to provide you with help were already accomplished. We are working many hours of our own time each week to bring this about — and we will continue to do so. But, try to remember that there are few of us and many of you and that we may not be able to attend all of your needs as quickly as we all would like. We rely on you to let us know!

Regarding education: Unfortunately, the wheels turn slowly in a democratic form of government. Government responds slowly to events that happen quickly. Misinformation tends to perpetuate itself

and confusion reigns while rules and regulations are being created. This has been the case in the area of education. Even at the federal level confusion still exists. Sometimes I have the feeling at our local and state levels that it's "every man for himself." The most important information you should know, however, is that, contrary to what you may have heard, the Tai Dam people do qualify for all the educational assistance programs. Tell your school administrators that the school districts do qualify for the \$300 per pupil aid. To avoid any problems, tell them to use the designation "Indochinese" instead of "Tai Dam" on all forms they submit to obtain aid. This is on the advice of a HEW official at Fort Chaffee who just returned from Washington, D.C. with the information.

Regarding medical assistance: Sponsors, if you haven't already done so, please register your refugee family for Medicaid at your local Department of Social Services country office. Please do not register them for welfare payments and food stamps. As you know, the Task Force plans to stand back of you should emergencies arise until our funds expire. With planning and with efforts to place all employable people in jobs as quickly as possible we are hopefully that not one single Tai Dam family will be on the Iowa welfare rolls. The Tai Dam people do not want this any more than we do and our whole approach has been to bring them to self-sufficiency as quickly as possible — and this means jobs.

Regarding employment: If the employables in your refugee family are not yet employees, and if our local Employment Service office has not yet contacted you — call them! Let us know what is happening in this vital area so we can respond to your needs.

Regarding follow-up personal visits: In order to get to you all as quickly as possible, we are seeking the aid of the Social Services office nearest each of you. This doesn't mean it's a welfare situation. It only means that these people can get to you quickly because they are all located geographically close to you,