



*Monica Thi*

This past October a new team of youth group leaders was chosen, Vyvian Nguyen, Kieu-Nhi Le and I were lucky enough to have this job bestowed upon us. Being leader of Muoi Dat is both a responsibility and a privilege. Having the responsibility of being a leader of a youth group is not always easy; there are plans to be made, meetings to be arranged, ideas to be thought, and problems to be solved but that is only part of it. Being the leader of such an amazing youth group comes with more than just a few perks, each and every time we get together is a good time. I have friends that I plan on sticking with for the rest of my life and I have memories that just cannot be forgotten. This position, just like any other comes with ups and downs but I would not trade it in for anything in the world.

As a Catholic youth group we do a lot of things with our church and our community. We try to learn about and grow closer to God every day. An example is this past November we had a sleepover fall retreat that was just an amazing experience. Muoi Dat and another youth group from Bronx, NY met up at the

Don Bosco Retreat Center in Stony Point, NY for a weekend with God. Once we got there, we were split into small groups and started off on our journey. Cha Tung was the priest that led the retreat and he taught us so much. He helped open our eyes about the things surrounding us and who we are inside, he told us to always “let our light shine.” The retreat brought us closer together as a youth group, as well as make new friends. We all learned so much and will continue to hold all of it in our hearts to help lead us into our futures.

Muoi Dat also contributes a lot in the church's annual activities like the picnic, Tet Trung Thu, Christmas, Tet, Easter, Mother's day and Hanh Huong. We usually help the kids at these events by planning games and giving out prizes for all of the children that attend and we always try our best to make it a fun time for them (Muoi Dat members have a lot of fun playing with the kids too). Our youth group is also responsible for helping with serving dinner during Christmas and Easter. We may not be able to cook but we still do whatever we can to set up and to serve. We also have a Christmas party every year for all the youth group members to attend, it's a relaxing bonding time for us when we don't have to work or worry, just hang out and have fun. Then after the Christmas and the New Year, we prepare for Tet. Almost all Muoi Dat members actively participate in Tet by being a dancer. It is a great experience being in a dance with your friends; there is a lot of stress but there are so many more laughs when it is all over, we all just want to start over again. All of the events that we participate in we do with eager hearts and a strong willingness to help. Being apart of the St. James Church is extremely important to us and we feel inclined to do all that we can. Work is work, but when we are all striving for a common goal, there is a resounding laughter and warm aura that surrounds us. I could not be any more thankful to be apart of something so wonderful.



*Kieu-Nhi Le*

My name is Kieu-Nhi Le and I am the current secretary/treasurer of Muoi Dat. Muoi Dat has been such a big part of my life for the past couple of years. I cannot even begin to imagine going to church as a young adult and not being a member of youth group. Not only does being in Muoi Dat give you the opportunity to help others and actively participate in your community, but you form such strong bonds with the other members through God. Any young person in the community should join youth group because we are young and we understand you. We understand that it may be difficult truly understanding the readings and homilies that we hear in church. Our meetings focus on what a young person goes through and relates that back to God's message. Our activities and questions revolve around a young person's life. With the guidance of Bác Linh and Cô Oanh, we are able to step closer to God on our own terms. Our meetings help us reflect on ourselves and our lives as young people and as Catholics. Meetings also bring us closer together as friends and as a family. As youth group members, we don't just make friends, we make brothers and sisters as children of God. Youth group is fun and it's for the youth so there should be no reason keeping a young person from joining Muoi Dat. If any new member wants to join, please contact Monica, Vyvian, Bác Linh/Cô Oanh, or myself. We would be happy in welcoming any new members to our family.

*Vyvian Nguyen*

My name is Vyvian Nguyen and I am sixteen years old. I am a sophomore at South Plainfield High School. During the fall, I participate in Marching Band where I play the saxophone. And in the spring, I play Lacrosse. I have one sister, and a pet Guinea Pig named Piglet. I enjoy watching Disney Channel and using the computer. I am also the new Muoi Dat Youth Group Vice President alongside with Monica Thi (President) and Kieu-Nhi Le (Secretary/Treasurer).

This past November, the youth group went on a retreat up in New York at the Don Bosco Retreat Center. We stayed there for three days and two nights. Muoi Dat members collaborated with a Vietnamese youth group located in the Bronx. There, we SHINED with Jesus. With prayer, singing, and some group bonding time, we managed to get closer to God, and our families. It was a great experience, because with getting closer to our religion, we make new friends outside of our church.

Muoi Dat is a safe and fun community to join. We welcome anyone with our arms wide open. Honestly, without Muoi Dat, I wouldn't have the great friends that I have now. We have monthly meetings to reflect on certain topics that somehow relate to our religion, and our daily teenage problems. On Christmas, we are in charge of the games for children, and serve food for the families (well known as Pho Duty). On Easter, we do basically the same thing but with egg hunts. These events and activities is what bring our youth group together. Our age range is from 13 to 21. We are all outgoing, and will accept anyone who joins! So stop by at any event or meetings and see for yourself!

