

BREAKING
NEWS

* AASuccess *

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GALA EDITION

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KEEP GOING
DON'T YOU EVER STOP
KEEP GOING

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS:
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COURAGE



GRIT



GROWTH

Embracing the Unknown

A LESSON IN TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP

In the journey of transformative leadership, we often find ourselves at crossroads where personal growth intersects with community impact. Reem Awad's story, shared at the August 3, 2024 AASuccess Gala, offers profound insights into how embracing the unknown can lead to remarkable personal and societal transformations.

Reem's journey began with a tragedy – the loss of a fellow police officer to suicide. Instead of succumbing to grief, she chose to channel her emotions into a quest for understanding and impact. This decision led her on a path that traversed Morocco, Uganda, Vietnam, and back to Uganda multiple times. Each step into the unknown was driven by a desire to heal through service, embodying the core AASuccess value of **compassionate empathy**.



In Uganda, Reem encountered two 12-year-old boys living on the streets. This experience challenged her to move beyond her comfort zone, applying the **3H principle**:

- **Head:** She analyzed the situation logically, understanding the systemic issues leading to child homelessness.
- **Heart:** Emotionally connecting with the boys' struggles, she felt compelled to act.
- **Hands:** Taking practical steps, she worked to reunite the boys with their relatives.

This experience exemplifies the **3S principle**:

- **See:** Reem recognized the opportunity to make a difference in these boys' lives.
- **Seek:** She actively pursued solutions, collaborating with local community members.
- **Seize:** Ultimately, she took action, successfully reuniting the boys with their families.

The impact of this experience rippled through Reem's life, influencing her decision to become a foster parent years later. This showcases the power of continued learning and expanding one's circle of influence, key components of the AASuccess philosophy.

Reem's story also highlights the importance of grit and courage. When faced with the challenge of fostering a 7-year-old child instead of the teenager she had prepared for, Reem drew upon her past experiences and adaptability. She recognized that her time in Uganda and Vietnam had equipped her with skills she hadn't consciously cultivated but were invaluable in this new role. The best way to reflect Reem's journey of her work in Uganda and Vietnam is through her following quote:



"EACH OF US HAS A SKILL, A GIFT - SOMETHING TO GIVE BACK, SOMETHING TO SHARE WITH THE WORLD." AS EVERYONE OF US STEP INTO THE UNKNOWN, TRUST IN YOUR ABILITY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE, ONE COURAGEOUS ACTION AT A TIME.

aasuccess students: **PAVING THE WAY FOR GROWTH & LEADERSHIP IN RURAL VIETNAM**



In the heart of Vietnam's Mekong Delta, a transformative project is taking shape, not just in the form of a newly constructed road but in the lives it's changing. The \$170,000 road building project in Hau Giang province is more than an infrastructure development based on our "perfecting the act of giving"; it's a testament to the courage, leadership, and growth of AASuccess students.



The project began with a vision to improve community safety and has since evolved into a platform for young leaders to emerge. Students from diverse backgrounds, including high schoolers and professionals from Vietnam and the United States, have come together to bridge generational and cultural gaps, applying their skills to foster growth in a region that has long been overlooked.

Our focus is on the rural areas of Hau Giang, where the need for attention is most acute. The 2.6 km road building project in Hau Giang, Vietnam, began due to a moped accident. It turned a safety issue into a chance for community improvement. It's here, amidst the broken roads and untold stories, that our students are making a difference.

ngoc's view:

I, an AASuccess student, once struggling with gaming addiction, found purpose and transformation through the road-building project, learning to lead and overcome communication barriers. We've documented the entire road before construction, highlighting the sections with broken cement blocks and the challenges they present. One of our joint accomplishments is not about the completion of road building within 4 months but also a video work produced by the team, captured by drones, which showcases the extent of the road and the collective effort to rebuild it. The climax of our story is not just the completion of the road but the joy and hope our students' work as a team brings to ourselves.

As the video producer and a participant in this project, I've witnessed firsthand the transformation of our team. From overcoming language barriers to adapting to unexpected setbacks (one of our key members had to step back for medical reasons), we've grown individually and collectively. Our journey is one of continuous learning, where even the adults among us discover that growth and education have no age limit.

Please visit our website or the next e-news letter to see our students' video product - a story that reflects hope and anticipation for what's next.

Beyond Expectations:

THE TRANSFORMATIVE JOURNEY OF EMERGING LEVEL 3 STUDENTS

As members of the AASuccess Reviewing Team, we've witnessed the extraordinary growth and impact of our Level 3 Empowered To Lead students, Liem Nguyen and Angela Le. Their journey through the operations team's assignment exemplifies the core values of all-around success, demonstrating the power of embracing challenges with courage, compassionate empathy, and innovation.

The recent August 3, 2024 gala event, attended by over 150 guests, stands as a testament to the exceptional leadership and teamwork displayed by our students. Organized primarily by 15 AASuccess students from Levels 1 and 2, with support from a handful of professional volunteers, the event was a 6-month real-world project in applying the principles of 3H (Head, Heart, Hands) and emotional intelligence in a practical setting.

What truly set this 2024 AASuccess student team apart was their ability to go beyond the expected. The Operations Team demonstrated remarkable resilience and adaptability during the one-month period immediately prior to the Gala event date. When one team member faced a medical issue and had to step back, the team showcased the essence of grit. They didn't just maintain the status quo; they excelled, proving that setbacks can indeed be stepping stones to greater achievements.



Their **accomplishments** speak volumes:

1. Applying internal processes of documentation and resource tracking to address shortcomings and setbacks
2. Seamlessly connecting with volunteer professionals and integrating leadership opportunities for all involved to manage both the weekly runs of life skills teaching and the gala preparation work's final sprint
3. Successfully executing high-stakes events like YouthCon and the Ebenstein scholarship programs during the final sprint
4. Leveraging what has been done well within the internal organization of AAS to keep things moving forward, irrespective of the unknown and fear

But numbers and achievements only tell part of the story. What truly impressed us was how these young leaders embodied AASuccess grit and showed genuine joy at the event. The operations team initiated crucial conversations, pushing their peers out of comfort zones while resolving internal conflicts and arising issues, even during the day of the gala event. Their approach to teamwork was exemplary, with responsibilities shared fluidly based on needs rather than rigid assignments. This flexibility allowed them to navigate challenges smoothly, ensuring a continuation of our students' growth.

Their journey serves as an inspiring example for future participants, showing that with dedication, teamwork, and a commitment to growth, remarkable achievements are within reach.

The AASuccess Reviewing Team