

Nguyen Duong La San.

I have been a student here for longer than I can remember. The friends I have encountered and the memories I have collected are far too many to count. To the students here, La San isn't just a summer school. It's our sanctuary, our safe haven. When we're here, all of our other worries are forgotten and it's like we're living in a whole different world, a world that will always be there to catch us when we fall. Teachers and students come and go, but the environment, the feeling when we walk into the blue double doors stay the same. I'm not saying the school will always stay the same though. There have been so many changes that it hurts my head to try to think of how it was just a few years ago. With just a single thought of how things used to be, hazy memories come flooding back. There's always that feeling you get where you're disappointed in yourself and pound yourself about how you could forget such memories, and then there's the longing to turn back time and go back to when things seemed so simple, so beautiful.

I was like that for a long time, so I dreaded coming back year after year. I was afraid of all the changes that I knew were to come. I wanted to leave with just my beautiful memories of the past, so I tried not to see my world change with time. It was just a few weeks ago that I saw something that I hadn't even thought of before - the fact that it wasn't my time anymore. When I saw the little kids running around with smiles stretched across their face, I realized that the past doesn't mean anything to them. They don't know what La San used to be, nor do they care. The present is what matters; these moments will be THEIR beautiful memories that they will blame themselves forgetting in the future. The iron burned carpet, the Vietnamese movies, and old classes mean nothing to them. It's not up to us to try to turn back time, but to move forward, and to keep up with the generation change.

When change is necessary, we shouldn't run away from it, we should be the ones chasing it. If changing the whole school is what it means, then that's exactly what we'll do. One day, that new facility will be all the kids can remember. The friends they will encounter and the memories they will collect will be far too many to count. To the students there, La San won't just be a summer school, but a sanctuary, THEIR safe haven. Who knows?

-Tran Thuy Tram Lop 9