

Hi everyone,

Thanks so much for coming. Today MIT VSA is again very proud to be the host of the Lunar New Year celebration for the Vietnamese students from the Boston area. We're welcoming students from all the universities in Boston to gather here today in one of the most cherished traditions of our Vietnamese community here. You know when I was back at Caltech, where I did my undergrad, our New year celebration would be a small group gathering of about 10-15 people and I would never have imagined celebrating Tet with over 200 other Vietnamese students in such a warm and festive atmosphere, the spirit is just so so different. For that reason, I think Boston is truly an exceptional city with so many Vietnamese students; we have such a strong sense of community here and I hope we can build upon this and strengthen this special bond in the upcoming years.

Today is also a special day – it's the first time we're opening our doors to the wider MIT community to welcome our friends to the celebration. Welcome to Lunar New Year celebration, the biggest holiday in the Vietnamese culture. We don't usually celebrate New Year in such a big group but you're experiencing almost exactly how it feels like should you be in VN right now – you're tasting the food, listening to the music, seeing how nicely people dress up today, seeing the decorations the calligraphy. I think this is pretty exciting and that's pretty cool!

I think one of the important spirits of the Lunar New Year is that of friendship – it's a chance for old friends to catch up, share stories, connect and just have fun. And I think it's a fantastic way to be spending the first day of new year with among your friends and the people who you love and cherish. With that spirit of friendship I'd like you turn to your friends, to your left and to your right, to reflect on what a great year it has been and appreciate their presence and support.

Before the start of the program I'd like to thank a few people. First of all, I want to thank our main organizers, the Association of Vietnamese students in greater Boston for organizing this event, thank you to all the helpers who came early today and performers who have been practicing very hard to make this event possible. Most of all thank you all for coming and hope you have a lovely evening. Happy New Year everybody!