

A Humanitarian Non-profit Organization Approved by IRS Code 501(c) 3 & California Section 23701D

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October 2015 Newsletter - Volume 12 Issue 8

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Matching Donation Program, Part 2

Beginning in August, every dollar donated to FVSO will be **MATCHED** up to \$44,650!

Matching Fund Update

The matching funds have been increased to **\$44,650**, due to the generosity of FVSO benefactors listed here.

The August/September donations totaled \$30,188, which exceeded our original Part 1 matching fund of \$24,500. However, all of these donations were matched because of the addition of Challenge Part 2.

There is still \$14,462 left in the total matching fund program. Remember, every dollar counts twice!!



Thank you for the food, shelter, and education that you bring to us with your gift!

Love from the....

Vinh Son Children



Thanks to these benefactors we offer Challenge Part 2...\$20,150

Bart Ruud
Fr. Thomas Relihan
Clyde & Connie Lewandowski
Dennis & Pat Coyne
Dave & Elaine Chaix
Michael & Tina Burke
Mike & Sharon Bauerly
Mark & Ann Thelen
Colleen & Tim Sands
Patrick & Melinda Leary
Steve Fisher & Joanne Glah

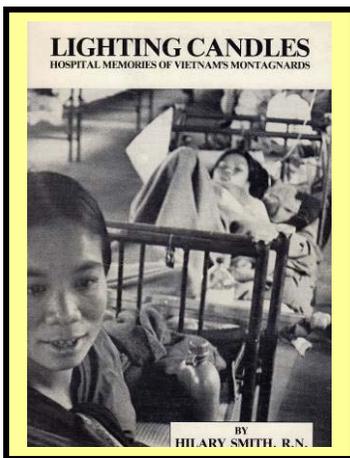
The children and the nuns are most grateful for your support.

Caring for the less fortunate in the Kontum area has a long history

Everyday Saints

For those of you interested in a little known chapter of the Vietnam War, one of great courage and sacrifice, you might want to find a copy of **Lighting Candles, Hospital Memories of Vietnam's Montagnards**, by Hilary Smith, R.N. Printed in 1988 by Northlight Studio Press, Inc., Barre VT, this memoir chronicles daily life at the only medical facility dedicated to the "sick poor of Kontum." The Montagnards.

The legendary Dr. Pat Smith, from Seattle, started her medical mission in Vietnam in 1959. By the mid 60's, she had established a hospital in Kontum called Minh-Quy that specifically served the Montagnard community, a task made deadly serious because of the War that raged around it. The hospital, located near the air strip, moved in the late 60's for safety reasons, to a temporary home across the street from the wooden cathedral and to what is now Vinh Son 1. The hospital was back to its original home before the War ended.



If fighting disease and injury wasn't enough, a war raged around them

Lighting Candles focuses on 1971, the year that Hilary worked as a nurse at Minh-Quy. It tells the story of an incredibly dedicated group of volunteers, both Westerners and Montagnards, who risked their lives every day to care for anyone who walked or limped through the door. The story starts and ends with Dr. Pat Smith, who became a "hero" to the Montagnard people during the 15 or so years the hospital operated. Doctors and nurses from all over the world descended upon Minh-Quy to join Dr. Pat for a "tour of duty," an experience they would ever forget.

Hilary relates many personal stories in her account. One particularly moving incident reflected the love for Dr. Pat, when the Montagnard staff and patients made a human blanket to hide her when the VC over-ran the hospital in 1968. She was also very impressed by the dedication and resourcefulness of the staff in procuring not only medicine and equipment in a hostile environment, but also the skills to utilize them.

The Montagnard nurses were quick learners and were also counted on to help navigate the Montagnard cultural world. Finally, Hilary describes the emotional trials of the Western staff when they had to temporarily abandon the hospital because of the deadly battles in '68, '72, and then for good in 1975.

Minh-Quy records show it served over 45,000 individual patients and had a 120 bed facility that was always full. It was staffed by 1-15 westerners, 18-25 in-house trained Montagnards and 5-6 Nuns.

Some of the sisters we know today played significant roles in the growth of the orphanages from the '60's to where they are today. Sr. Gabrielle (VS-3) was on the staff of Minh-Quy. Sr. Lieng (VS-4) was an orphan being raised by the Sisters of the Miraculous Medal. FVSO vice President, Sister Marie Dominique, was one of the Sisters of Charity working with the orphans in Kontum during the War years. Although she now lives in retirement in the USA, we are quite fortunate that she stays active by lending her experience to the FVSO Board, as well as mentoring the current Vinh Son leadership.



Each orphanage is managed by strong women who are quiet leaders

We on the Board all have stories of love and respect for the sisters. Examples include Sr Gabrielle's extraordinary devotion to her medical clinic she operates for the local village; the security wall she had built; advising the local priest he could not just come borrow her tractor without asking; building a chicken coop for her beloved and tasty Bahnar chickens, which she proudly serves for lunch.

Sr Lieng is a heroine for the tireless time she devotes to the children, from teaching them farming and carpentry skills, small motor mechanics, and baking...to the daily life skills they will surely need.

Sr Dominique for her tireless mentoring of the sisters in Kontum, as well as the FVSO Board members, to help everyone understand the cultural differences we need to balance for success.

The sisters are unsung heroes of selfless dedication to the underprivileged of Kontum. Witnesses of history, they continue to embody the Minh Quy and Vinh Son legacy of service, and the children of Vinh Son are fortunate to have them in their lives.

One day they will most certainly be Saints. For us, they already are. We are privileged to call them our friends, and to work beside them on behalf of the orphaned children. Like Hilary's book attests, these women brought light into darkened rooms.



Sister Lieng has 178 children in her care. She has devoted her life to their well-being and a more promising future.



Sister Gabrielle recently broke her leg in a motorbike accident, but by all reports, she's healing just fine.

How Vinh Son got its name



Many of the nuns belong to a religious order named the "Sisters of the Miraculous Medal." They are an offshoot of the French order the "Daughters of Charity" established by St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac, more than 400 years ago in Paris to serve the sick and the poor. Our Sisters continue with the same mission today. The Vinh Son orphanages are named after Saint Vincent.

About AmazonSmile - For you Amazon shoppers, check this out

What is AmazonSmile?

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to your favorite charitable organization. You can choose from nearly one million organizations to support. Just type in **Vinh Son Orphanage** to make your choice.

How do I shop at AmazonSmile?

To shop at AmazonSmile simply go to smile.amazon.com from the web browser on your computer or mobile device. You may also want to add a bookmark to smile.amazon.com to make it even easier to return and start your shopping at AmazonSmile. The AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price from your eligible AmazonSmile purchases.

Greeting cards without borders

The Cards That Give

Offered for the first time last year, these custom Christmas cards are again for sale, with all profits supporting the children of Vinh Son. Board Members Joanne Glah and Steve Fisher sponsor this project and cover all printing costs. These are truly unique works of art, available no where else.

The cards, conceived and drawn by the Vinh Son children themselves, are beautiful depictions of cultural Christmas scenes. A pack of 12 cards, containing four designs, sells for only \$12. Because the cost of printing has been donated, all funds will directly benefit the children, where a purchase of one pack supports a child for one month.

Looking for a gift idea? We all purchase token gifts for acquaintances and coworkers, struggling over not wanting to spend too much money but wanting to get something "nice". Here is an idea for a gift that both you and the recipient will feel great about. You can purchase, for \$12, a card that reads, "I have made a donation in your name to the **Vinh Son Orphanage** that will care for one child for one month." You can proudly sign your name to this card, knowing that this year your token gift to a friend has made a real difference in the life of a child. **"In your name"** cards are offered in groups of 3, 5, or 10 and can also be purchased through the link below.

This year, your Christmas cards can make a difference in the lives of these children. Please make your purchases through:

www.etsy.com/shop/LoveWithoutBorders

Cards will be available to order on

November 1st



*Joy to the world!
Celebrate the season
with love
that has no borders.*

Long-term supporting organizations

- 189th Assault Helicopter Company
- Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 535, Nevada County, CA
- Counterparts Association
- 14th Combat Engineer Btn. Assoc.
- MilSpec Tours
- Fr. Luke Tran (VN-SHEP) Social Health Education Projects

"What we spend, we lose. What we keep will be left for others. What we give away will be ours forever."

— David McGee

"You only get one shot in this life. So let me do all the good I can for my fellow man. For I will not pass this way again."

— Anonymous

Vinh Son & Sao Mai Orphanage Facts

- Population – approximately 830 Montagnard children in seven orphanage facilities
- Administered by the Sisters of the Miraculous Medal & St. Paul Chartres
- Location – Kontum/Pleiku, Vietnam
- \$12 feeds, shelters, and educates one child for one month

Officers

President – Pat Leary
Secretary - Dennis Coyne
Treasurer - Colleen Sands
Senior VP - Pat McKee
1st VP - Sr. Marie Dominique
2nd VP - Michael Little

Board of Directors

Hank Gonzales
 Rich Lahey
 Clyde Lewandowski
 Bart Ruud
 Dave Chaix
 Steve Fisher/J. Glah

Advisory Board

John Scott
 Bruce Herron

Donation Information

Please make checks payable to FVSO or Friends of Vinh Son

Donations are gratefully accepted year round

100% of administrative costs are paid by the Board and Officers