

FVSO President's Letter



When I look back on 2008, I am filled with a sense of pride for what FVSO accomplished on behalf of the 487 orphans and their 54 caregivers in the four Vinh Son orphanages. However, what strikes me most is the outpouring of good will from each and every one of you, our faithful donors. Your continued support and unfailing generosity, in the face of a slumping economy, has been nothing short of inspirational. On behalf of everyone in Kontum, the FVSO Board and its Officers, **Thank You!**

In terms of actual accomplishments, 2008 was truly an outstanding year, continuing to build our knowledge base in order to spend your dollars as efficiently and wisely as possible. A vital component to our success was an actual on-the-ground visit, which was conducted at the beginning of the year. Besides delivering much needed aid, FVSO Board members made assessments that would prove invaluable as the year progressed. With their recommendations, combined with requests from the orphanages themselves, we addressed both short and long term needs, as evidenced by these achievements:

Immediate

- Daily food (rice, bread flour, powdered milk) – always **PRIORITY #1**
- Diet supplements (fish, meat and vegetables)
- Winter coats
- Bicycle repair
- Toothpaste

Long Term

- Education (school fees, desks, uniforms, teachers, computers)
- Medical (dental care, de-worming medication)
- Training (sewing machines, tractor operation)
- Machinery (new tractor, plow, trailer, diesel fuel)
- Physical plant (tool shed, kitchen, roof repair, dining room, building permits)
- Capital projects (pig farm and barn, feed)





Along the way, we strengthened our partnerships with other non-profit organizations (**Friends of the Central Highlands, East Meets West Foundation, and Colour-4-Kids**), combining our resources in the areas of dental hygiene and field operations. These efforts will have lasting benefits, and FVSO is committed to working again with these fine groups in the years ahead.

As we do each year, we came to you in the Fall, asking for the help needed to continue our mission. This time, our annual fundraising appeal was anchored by two "challenges," where your donations were matched by generous benefactors. Both the **Children's Challenge** and the **Veteran's Challenge** were tremendous successes, bringing in a total of \$37,633 (greater than double our goal). And then there was Rev. Bill Sladek (Vietnam Vet). His "memorial ride" to raise money for orphans and his compelling story was an added bonus (\$1,275). This **Combined with the donations we receive year round (with many monthly and quarterly contributors)**, FVSO reached its 2008 financial target, and was able to fulfill every commitment made to the children of Vinh Son.

2009 is already here, and we've begun to develop our priorities for the year, but we can't achieve our goals without your help. Board members will again travel to Kontum to spend time with the children and to finalize spending plans and objectives with their caregivers. In this global economy, Vietnam is also suffering the effects of current downtrends; as such, prices have risen sharply and we will have to stretch every dollar. The children's needs, however, remain constant. Whether it's drilling a well for fresh water or constructing a boy's dormitory, FVSO pledges to address every opportunity to improve lives, but our # 1 focus will always be "basic needs." No one will go hungry on our watch. (See table on pages 3 & 4 for detailed information)

Again, on behalf of FVSO and the Vinh Son family, I am grateful for your support in 2008, and hope that you can maintain this special relationship in 2009. Importantly, 100% of all donations go directly to the kids; all administrative and travel expenses are the personal responsibility of Board members and Officers of FVSO.

Dave Chaix
President

Click here to Donate on-line: <http://friendsofvso.org/sitepages/donate.html>
or mail to: Friends of VSO, P.O. Box 9322, Auburn, CA 95602-9322

Best wishes for a healthy and prosperous 2009!

The image below is from Christmas pageant at the Old Wooden Church



2008 Project Summary

Item	Action
February Discretionary Funds Distributed (Sewing classes @ VS 1,2 - \$1,352; Computer related needs \$800; Coats \$100; Basic Needs \$2,363; Fuel & Field needs \$600; Building repairs \$1,000; Education \$2,135) Total = \$8,350.	On-site distribution of funds to support sewing and computer classes as well as basic needs, winter coats, fuel and field needs, teacher pay, other site-specific needs defined by the Sisters-in-Charge
Funding for rice, bread ingredients, milk powder and supplemental meat, fish and vegetables (\$15,216)	Provision of basic foods needed for sustenance and for enhancement of protein components to offset findings of anemia among the VSO population
School uniforms and school fee disbursements (\$2,660)	Children of VSO permitted to attend local government schools
Tool Shed (\$950) and Kitchen (\$1,715)	Initiation of process to obtain building permits from local government officials so that construction of these facilities could proceed at VS-4
School Desks (\$625)	Provision of 20 school desks to facilitate learning opportunities at VS-4
Farming equipment and diesel fuel: Tractor, plow, trailer VS-3 (\$7,437.50); plow VS-4 (\$812.50); fuel (\$1,125)	Purchase of a Mitsubishi tractor as well as a plow and utility trailer for VS-3; purchase of a plow for VS-4; funding for an allotment of diesel fuel for the tractors at VS-1, 2, 3 and 4
Piggery, piglets and commercial pig food (\$2,850)	Construction of a piggery at VS-4 and purchase of 20 piglets plus a starter supply of commercially produced pig food
Dining structure roofing (\$200)	Funding to complete the roof over a temporary dining structure at VS-4
Dental clinic care (\$2,300)	Collaboration with East Meets West Foundation and Friends of Central Highlands for dental care of children at all orphanage sites
Bicycle repairs (\$200)	Repair of VS-3 bicycles which are used for transportation to the government school
Toilet plumbing repair (\$200)	Repair non-functioning toilet at VS-3
De-Worming medication (\$500)	Provision of de-worming medication at all VSO sites to rid the children of intestinal parasites

2009 Project Considerations

Item	Action
Bread ingredients for VS-2 (\$6,615)	Funding to purchase supplies necessary to make bread for the orphanage for 12 months
Milk powder for VS-2 (\$2,150)	Funds to purchase milk powder in order to supply a year-long ration of milk to VSO children
Supplemental fish, meat and vegetables for VS-2 (\$7,200)	Funding to purchase protein and nutrient based foods for one year to enhance the diets of the VSO children as means to improve the level of anemia
Supplemental fish, meat, vegetables and breakfast noodles for VS-3 (\$5,700)	Funding to purchase protein and nutrient base foods for one year to enhance the diets of the VSO children
Supplemental fish, meat, vegetables and breakfast noodles for VS-4 (\$9,000)	Funding to purchase protein and nutrient based foods for one year to enhance the diets of the VSO children
Trenching and Piping at VS-1 (\$625)	Funding to install a drain pipe to carry laundry waste water away from a well head site
Classroom doors at VS-1 (\$200)	Install doors on classrooms as means to insulate the classrooms from outside distractions and noise
Girls' Dorm Flooring at VS-1 (\$1,063)	Installation of wooden flooring in the girls' dorm as means to create a more hospitable environment
School fees and uniforms for VS-2 children (\$2,617); for VS-3 children (\$672) and for VS-4 children (\$1,175) Total = \$4,464	Funding to pay fees so the children can attend local government schools while wearing mandated uniforms
VS-1 Teacher's pay (\$3,150); VS-2 Teacher's pay (\$1,125); VS-3 Teacher's pay (\$1,181); VS-4 Teacher's pay (\$563) Total = \$6,019	Funding to pay teachers for their work in assisting students to assimilate knowledge in Vietnamese language, math and other subjects
Discretionary funds for disbursement in Kontum in February 2009 (\$8,900)	Funding for Basic Needs, sewing classes, computer classes, field expenses, and discretionary expenses as determine on the ground and in concert with Sisters-in-Charge at each orphanage site
East Meets West Foundation Dental Clinic (\$2,500)	Funds joint project with FoCH for dental care for children from all orphanage sites
Dental care, Pleiku Clinic (\$1,250)	Funds year-long provision of emergency dental care for children from all orphanage sites
Parasite Medication (\$500)	Funds purchase of de-worming medication
VS-4 Dining Room & Boys' Dorm (\$11,376) (Not yet in Project Form or approved; waiting for completion of the kitchen and permits.)	Funds construction of facilities which enhance the welfare of the children
VS-2 well and plumbing (Cost unknown)	Funding to install a mechanically drilled deep well in order to provide water not contaminated by surface pollutants
Total value of all projects to be considered for approval or rejection in the funding cycle of 2009-2010: \$67,562	