

Checks payable to: VSO or VinhSon Orphanage

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

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President's Message - Dave Chaix

The year 2008 began with a February trip to the Vinh Son Orphanages by FVSO Treasurer Pat Keegan and me. We delivered funds for basic needs, sewing classes, computer classes, field operations and education. We toured the facilities at all 4 orphanages, along with representatives of Friends of the Central Highlands (FoCH), meeting with the Sisters and caregivers, and of course, interacting with the children. Like always, they really enjoyed spending time with visitors, practicing their English, and simply experiencing the love and attention they so richly deserve. They are truly wonderful!

With inflation in Vietnam ex-



tremely high and the cost of food skyrocketing, our focus this year is on basic needs (mostly food) along with education and dental care. However, should adequate funds become available, we will address other, less life threatening needs.

In June, we sent funds for education, rice, flour for bread and powdered milk. Educational costs for the government schools have been met for the school year 2008 - 2009, and we are waiting for the orphanages to develop a proposal for on-site tutoring that will help the children transition into the government school system. High on the list will be the teaching of Vietnamese, as most of the children only speak their native, tribal languages when entering the orphanages.

FVSO is working with East Meets West and Friends of the Central Highlands to bring a dental van to Kontum in Octo-

ber to treat ALL the children. In the meantime, we are working with FoCH to treat 20 of the most needy children each month, utilizing a local dentist.

When Doctor Berdy visited Vinh Son last year, he administered medicine for parasites. Following his advice, we will continue this program in August. He also mentioned in his report the lack of protein in the children's diets. During the FVSO Board Meeting in June, funds were approved to supplement the diets of the children during the next 4 month period, providing more meat, fish and vegetables. This program will be evaluated in October.

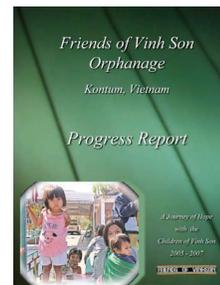
Many good things have been accomplished so far this year, thanks to you, our generous and caring donors. For sure, there is much left to be done, but with your continued support, together we will make a positive difference in the lives of these wonderful children. Thank You!

Annual Report (Progress Report)

FVSO's first formal report has been published and can be downloaded from our VSO web site: www.FriendsofVSO.org. This initial report is referred to as a **Progress Report** because it covers work-to-date from July 26, 2005 through December 31, 2007. Future reports will be annual in scope. If you do not have the ability to "download" the report due to file size, feel free to contact us and one will be pro-

vided to you, either by CD-ROM or a printed report upon request. Please use our P.O. Box or email address. We are using this method to save postage, printing, etc. to keep our administrative costs to a minimum. We hope you take the time to read it and see what your donations have accomplished in the last 2 1/2 years. We are very grateful to Marion Little, who authored and

published this document for FVSO. You can learn more about Marion, and her love for the children in our new "Meet a Child" section on the web site.



July 2008

Volume 4, Issue 2

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Dave Chaix

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Dennis Coyne

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VinhSon Facts

- Population - more than 500 Montagnard children in four facilities
- Administered by the Sisters of the Miraculous Medal
- Location - Kontum, Vietnam in the Central Highlands
- About \$12 feeds, shelters, and educates one child for a month

Clean Water is Essential for Good Health by Pat McKee

Since the **human body is 70% water, it stands to reason that clean water is essential to good health and well-being.** Sadly, almost one half of the World's poor suffer from water borne diseases, of which children are the main victims. Of the 2.2 million people who die from water borne diseases each year, most are children and 1.7 million of them are under age 5. It is estimated that 80% of all illness in Third World countries are caused by poor water.

Clean water improves overall health and reduces child mortality considerably. It reduces poverty by allowing more time for work, and improves education by allowing children more time in school.

These are just some of the compelling reasons why FVSO is working so hard to provide purified water to each of the Orphanages. We are partnering with

another non-profit organization, Friends of the Central Highlands (FoCH), to research, design and build a suitable water purification system at Vinh Son I. Once completed, it will become the model for systems at the other three sites.

Currently, four FVSO Board members are working on the project: Clyde Lewandowski, Dennis Coyne, Bart Ruud and Pat McKee (lead). We are teaming with Joe Hauser, President of FoCH and Board member Gene Flynn to come up with a prototype design that will meet not only the current needs, but be of adequate size to handle all future demands as well. Costs of the project will be shared equally between FVSO and FoCH.

FVSO is excited about the purified water project, since we believe it's an essen-

tial building block towards improving the overall good health and well being of the children. Proper hygiene has proven to be a major factor in reducing stunted growth and improving overall development as the children mature. There is work to be done!



Water-Sand-Gravel Purifier

Vinh Son mourns the death of an Angel by Mike Little & Dennis Coyne

Sr. Catarina Siena **Angela Y Bluih** - the Director of Vinh Son 1 *"was called by the Lord on June 2 at 4:45 pm at the Convent of the Miraculous Medal, Kontum, Vietnam."* Sister Angela was born 1950 in the Central Highlands of Vietnam.

In late September 2007, Sister Angela felt sick and extremely tired. Immediately, she was sent to Ho Chi Minh City for tests, but her health continued to deteriorate. After Christmas 2007, she returned to HCMC, once again for additional medical treatment. Unfortunately, nothing could be done to cure her. Sister Angela



Sr. Angela with Dave Chaix

then went back to Kontum, determined to spend her last days with those she loved...her fellow nuns, the caregivers, and especially "her" children.

Her visitation was June 3, and the funeral Mass was held at the old "Wooden Church" the next day. Sister Angela was buried in the Kontum City cemetery, where a well-deserved memorial tombstone now honors her life.

From September 2005 until her death, Sister was the Director for Vinh Son 1. She worked tirelessly and devoted herself to the care and well-being of the children *"especially when she heard their cries."* She loved the children and did everything in her power to make their lives more fulfilling and hopeful.

Those of us who have visited Vinh Son Orphanage and been lucky enough to spend time with Sister Angela will remember her most fondly for her gentleness and dedication to the children.

She will be greatly missed and long remembered by everyone in the Vinh Son family and beyond. Rest in Peace dear Sister.

Pictures from Sr. Angela's funeral

