

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

P.O. Box 9322 Auburn, California 95604-9322 - Email: info@FriendsofVSO.org -Web: www.FriendsofVSO.org

June/July 2017 Newsletter - Volume 14 Issue 5



Letter from the heart written by a Vinh Son alumni



Clyde & Pat impressed by the kid's teamwork in the kitchen



The 2017 Dental Program is off and running

The Letter

A Xok is one of our scholarship students and attends college in Hue. He recently wrote this letter and we thought everyone would not only enjoy it, but also get some insight into what Vinh Son means to him. Our thanks to Sisters Byal and Duong who helped with the translation.

My name is A Xok and I was born in May, 1995. My home is Hamlet 5, Dien Binh Commune, Dak To District, Kon Tum City.

My family is 2 sisters and me. When I was 2 ½ years old, my parents passed away. I was the youngest and my two older sisters were too young to work. My uncle took us to Vinh Son 1 Orphanage where we were raised by Sisters and attended school as other friends did.

When I graduated from high school, I was able to continue my education. This allowed me to expand my knowledge and improve my life in the future. When I lived at the orphanage, I was shy, but now that I have been going to school in Hue where I met many people from other parts of the country. I am more confident now.

Currently, I am studying at the Industrial College of Economics, and my major is Information Technology.

After graduation, I would like to return to the orphanage where I grew up and work with the children. I believe it is best to do what you can to help others, so that later you have a stable job as well as life better.

I myself felt happy to be growing up in the orphanage. The sisters have done their best to help me with my studies. Thanks also to the benefactors who are always there to help the children. It is difficult, and we need your help to continue the learning path so that the lives of those children can be saved in the future, and maybe of some benefit to society later on.

In closing, I do not know what to say but to thank the dedicated benefactors who have continued to help me and many of my friends so that we children can learn well.

God bless the benefactors and wish good health to all people.

Hue 30/May/2017

A Xok



An orphan's road is long and challenging, but your help has paved the way for boys like Xok

It takes a community to run the orphanages, just ask Vinh Son & Sao Mai



Pat and Clyde's April Trip Report (continued)

During our assessment trip, we visited each of the seven orphanages. It's an experience that truly refreshes us and strengthens our commitment to the mission of FVSO. The six orphanages located in Kontum are named after the local villages, but over time, everyone has adopted a much easier way to identify them VS-1, VS-2 etc. Even the local cab drivers know where to go when you say "VS-3"! Vinh Son 1 and 2 are the largest of the orphanages, each the home for 200 children. VS-1 is also the location of the nursery, the care center for newborns through ages three or four. All of the Vinh Son locations send the newborns there. Currently, there are 25 "little ones" in the nursery.

At each of the locations, the older kids are the backbone of the kitchen help. It's quite impressive to observe just how well organized and trained the kitchen "staff" is. These kids are learning life skills they will not, and could not, learn back in the village. When they eventually leave the orphanage, they will have skills in kitchen operations, cooking, hygiene (the nuns place great emphasis on this), nutrition, teamwork and organizational skills. A few of the kids will go to work in the restaurant business, but more importantly, the skills they take back to the village will "lift all boats."

The kids are also responsible for the cleanliness of the dorms and the common areas. Again, another skill set that will help carry them through life and "lift all boats"

Throughout the years I've been visiting, I have been most impressed by the development of agriculture, livestock and bakeries. Because the orphanages are far from being self-sufficient, they must continue to rely on charities like FVSO to give them a basic nutritional foundation. As in the kitchen and the dorms, the nuns, caregivers and kids supply all the labor for the farms, the livestock and the bakeries. This, of course, limits production, so they will never really be truly self-sufficient. My personal favorite, however, is the bakery. The bread (bahn mi), these kids make, is fantastic. It's a derivative the French baguette....have tried but been unable to find its equal in the US.

In addition to all the kitchen work, cleaning of rooms and common areas, supporting the "farms," these kids attend a Vietnamese school. They have homework just like the other students. As you can imagine, between work and school, their days are pretty busy. To help burn off their endless energy, all of the locations have basic play sets...and believe me, these kids are active! Lets just say that Clyde and I both needed a rest at the end of each day!



What do new-born babies, kitchen workers, bread bakers, and vegetable gardeners all have in common...?
And what do bees, chickens, pigs and livestock all depend on...? Answer: **Kid Power!**

It's that time of year again, when smiles open wider!

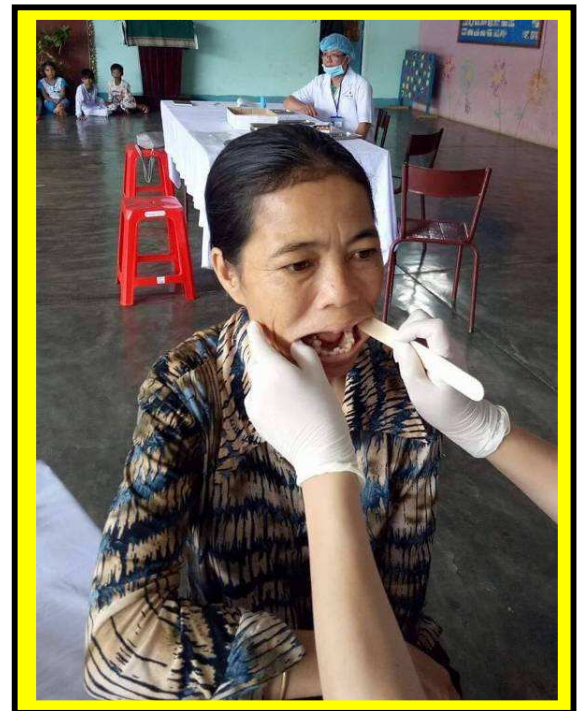
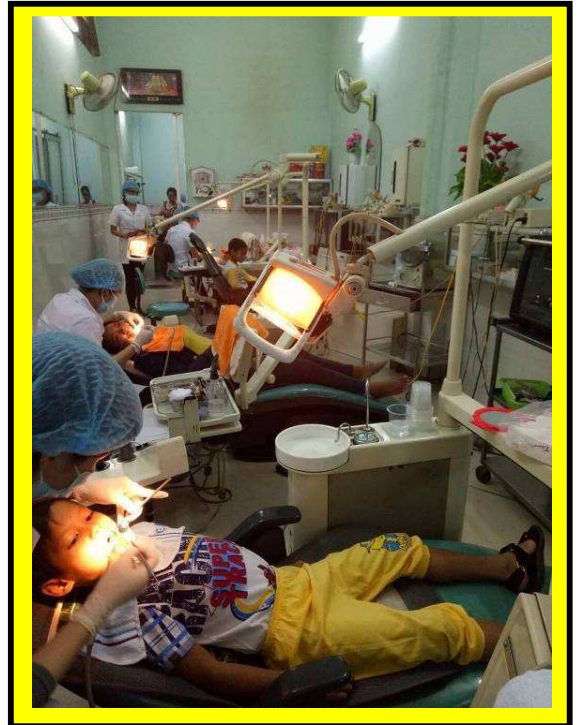
Dental Program, 2017 edition

The Dental program is starting today with Vinh Son 1 from May 20-May 22, 2017. Here are the pictures of the children having their teeth cleaned and checked. Thank you very much for your support.

Sincerely, Sr. Josie

In May, the Sisters began the annual dental program, co-sponsored and funded by FVSO and our partner, Children of Vinh Son. A local dental clinic in Kontum will again provide the dental services for the kids and caregivers. Total cost of the program is \$14,400, but it's well worth the expenditure. Because FVSO has been a long term supporter of dental hygiene and clean water systems, we have seen medical bills decline significantly. A win-win all around!

But seriously, just imagine the task of getting 686 very active children to the dentist...and back! Sister Basille is in charge of the logistics and has been doing a fantastic job. The Nuns and all the children are grateful for your support...even if it hurts a little bit sitting in that chair. Ms. Thien also coordinated the dental program at Sao Mai orphanage, 41 children at a cost of \$362.



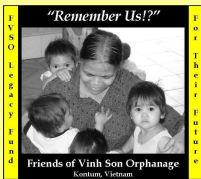
Food and Care. You make it all possible.



An urgent email from Sister Kham

May 25. Today, all of us are very sad because there are two children who have big medical problems. A young man, whose name is A Muong, was injured badly because of a motorbike accident. There is also a little girl named Y Hao, who needs surgery for a heart condition. Neither one could be treated at the Kontum hospital so they must go to HCMC for treatment. I have come to HCMC to see them. As of June 16th, both are still hospitalized. Thank you very much for your love and your help to the orphans here.

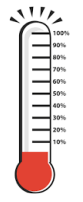
Please keep these two children in your prayers.



Legacy Fund Update
Target is \$2.0m in 10 years

Total contributions to date
\$385,837

% achieved = 19.3%



Another Fundraising Success

**A BENEFIT
CONCERT
FOR FVSO
AND ARTS &
KIDS**

FVSO has realized **\$4,550** from the concert this year, as have our Arts & Kids partners. Because of this success, we anticipate an 8th fundraiser in 2018.



Arts & Kids was created in 2011, and since that time, FVSO has received a total **\$58,250**

Legacy Contributors

- Jim & Jane Gardner
- Henry Huddleston
- Glen Smith
- William Higbee
- Corps Detachment 711

Legacy Contributors

Long-term supporting organizations

- 189th & 155th Assault Helicopter Companies
- 227th Assault Helicopter Battalion (A and D Companies)
- VN Veterans of America, Chapter 535, Nevada Cnty, CA
- Marine Corps League Detachment 711, Salinas, CA
- Counterparts Association
- 14th Combat Engineer Btn. Association
- MilSpec Tours (800-953-5812)
- Fr. Luke Tran (VN-SHEP) Social Health Education Projects
- Fr. Relihan, Sacred Heart Church, Lone, CA
- Rotary Club of San Juan Capistrano, CA

amazonsmile

Support FVSO by starting your shopping at smile.amazon.com

Words Of Wisdom

Some people come into our lives and quickly go. Some stay for a while and leave footprints on our heart and we are never, ever the same.

-- 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

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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