

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

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March 2016 Newsletter - Volume 13 Issue 3

Your donations have consequences, and they're all good!

The 2nd quarter electronic fund transfer (\$19,500) was received and the kids are celebrating the replenishment of their food supply. Diapers and epileptic medicines have also been purchased.

Everyone at Vinh Son and Sao Mai **THANKS YOU!**



Sometimes an image comes along that captures the joyful spirit of life itself. That's how we feel about little Y Minh Van sitting on a bed of diapers. She has a twin sister as well. Her mother died when she was only 11 days old; the father died a short time later. Thanks to Sister Kham for sharing these photographs!



Getting our story out

Board Members are often asked to share the FVSO story with individuals and groups who are interested in adding FVSO to their list of charitable organizations. When asked, each of us is readily available to tell our story and solicit support. In fact, we enjoy meeting potential donors, a chance to express our passion and commitment to be the voice of 850 children who depend on us every day.

Below is a fact sheet that highlights what FVSO is all about. It's often used as a leave-behind reference piece for folks who need something to help pass along our story. Current donors understand how FVSO operates and we invite them to share the message whenever and wherever possible. If you need our help, just ask!

What Is FVSO & What Does It Do

Our mission:

Raise resources (cash and in-kind gifts) to directly benefit the children. The orphanages are administered by **The Sisters of the Miraculous Medal & the Sisters St. Paul Chartres** who, with our help, provide:

- Primary and secondary education
- Life skills to ensure the children become self sufficient
- A safe environment
- Food, clothing, shelter, dental and medical care
- Religious instruction

We value:

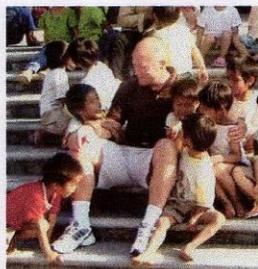
- A safe, positive environment where the children have the opportunity to experience their unique cultural heritage

- An education that allows the children to live full and productive lives
- The caregivers who interact with the children
- The benefactors who make this effort possible

Guiding Principles:

- Our sole purpose is to help the children of the Vinh Son & Sao Mai Orphanages
- Successfully integrate the orphans into the Vietnamese society while being mindful of the political and cultural realities
- Our focus will be from a humanitarian perspective
- Funds and in-kind gifts will only benefit the orphans and their caregivers

- Executive Board Members, Board of Directors Members, and Members at Large will endeavor to expand membership and increase funding
- Distribution of funds will be at the direction of the Executive Board and Board of Directors
- Officers and Board Members will pay 100% of administrative expenses



Officers & Board Members

President: Patrick Leary
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Secretary: Dennis Coyne
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Treasurer: Colleen Sands
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Senior VP: Pat McKee
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1st VP: Sr. Marie Dominique
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Vinh Son Facts

- Population - more than 850 Montagnard children in 7 facilities

- Administered by the Sisters of the Miraculous Medal & Sisters of St. Paul Chartres

- Location – Kontum & Pleiku, Vietnam (The Central Highlands)

- About \$12 feeds, shelters, and educates one child for a month

Background - Montagnards, Vets & Friends

Vietnam Veterans are returning for visits (similar to WW II vets to Europe). Those who served in the Central Highlands have good memories of the tribal people called Montagnards— a French word meaning mountain people.

Of the 54 tribal minorities in Vietnam, about 30-35 are in the Central Highlands. Many served with the U.S. Special Forces and other military units. Most vets have fond memories of their service with the Montagnards. When the war ended, many of them,

along with the South Vietnamese, came to this country.

Those who remained have continued to struggle to survive for a variety of reasons. Their life expectancy is around 35 years. This has created the need for the care of many children. **The Sisters of the Miraculous Medal the & Sisters of St. Paul Chartres** provide this to all children regardless of their religion. Vets & friends who visit the Vinh Son Orphanage are moved by the many needs for the children.

FVSO was formed to help meet this need. We started informally in 2001 with support from family & friends; we received our non-profit status July 2005.

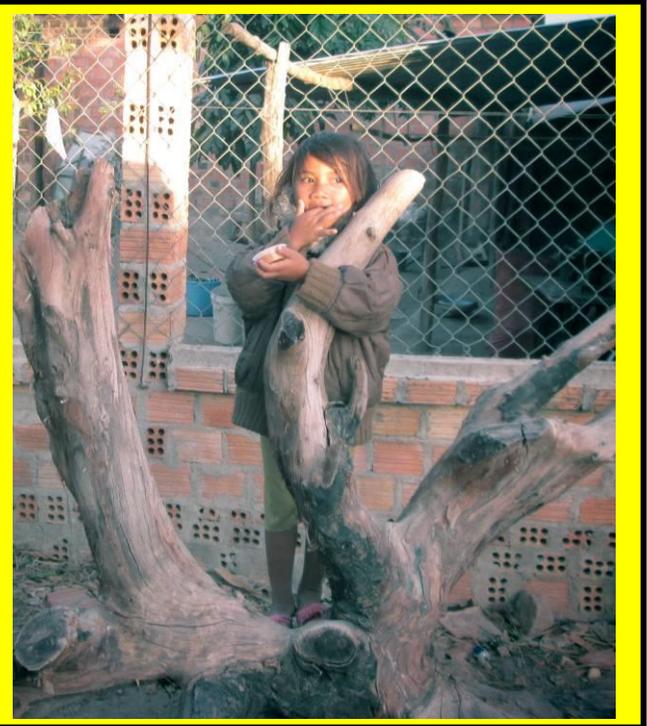


More images from Dave's Vinh Son visit

As promised, here's a few more images from the "Dave Chaix expedition." It's so easy to make new friends at Vinh Son and Sao Mai...just open your heart, and a little one appears.

You're invited to experience the visit with Dave's new 9 minute video (**Vinh Son Orphanage 2016**) that can be viewed at the following site:

<https://vimeo.com/157039427>



On a serious note

FVSO BOARD OF DIRECTORS PLEDGE TO OUR DONORS

In view of the unfortunate news about the alleged financial practices of the Wounded Warrior Program, we feel that it is important to review our own financial practices with our loyal donors.

Since we accepted the first donation as a Friends and Family organization, it has been, and still is our policy to see that every penny of that donation is for the direct benefit of the orphans and caregivers.

ALL overhead and administrative expenses are paid for in full by the Board of Directors. All travel and incidental expenses incurred by Board members while conducting FVSO business are paid for by the Board member incurring the expense.

This policy was set as one of our guiding principles when we formed the 501 © 3 organization in 2005 and remains in effect today.

FVSO Board member donations are tracked separately by our Treasurer. Any reimbursements for postage, printing or any miscellaneous expense, for pre approved work by the Board, are paid for with Board donations. No Board member has ever been paid or drawn a salary, in any form, since we started this effort more than 15 years ago.

While we do coordinate our work at the Orphanages with other organizations to achieve maximum benefit of every dollar, we do not have and do not seek any formal affiliation or partnership with other charitable organizations.

We don't intend to make judgments about how other charities handle their donations. But it is very important to us that you know how we handle yours.

It is our sole intent to affirm with you, our donors, that we deeply value our relationship with each and every one of you. We appreciate the faith and trust you place in us and will continue to work hard to earn and keep it.

If you have any comments, questions or concerns please contact us immediately.

Long-term supporting organizations

- 189th Assault Helicopter Company
- Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 535, Nevada Cnty, CA
- Counterparts Association
- 14th Combat Engineer Btn. Assoc.
- 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

What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead.

— Nelson Mandela

It is the heart that does the giving; the fingers only let go.

— Nigerian saying

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