VSO Friends of Vinh Son Montagnard Orphanage

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

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Closing out 2011

December Newsletter - Volume 8 Issue 8

Our annual fundraiser enters its final stage



Annual Fundraiser Update

GREAT NEWS! The \$30,000 matching challenge has been reached. In fact, other generous benefactors have come forward with an additional \$9,244 in matching funds. All December donations will be doubled up to the total match fund of \$39,244.

On behalf of the kids...THANK YOU!!

Below is an intimate story, written by our newest FVSO Board member, about his discovery of and commitment to the children in Kontum & Pleiku. He currently conducts business in Vietnam and will bring valuable insights in the health and medical field.



"Matching Donation" Benefactors

* Clyde & Connie Lewandowski (St. Cloud, MN) * Dennis & Pat Coyne (Erlanger, KY) * St. Cloud Truck Sales * Bart Ruud (Auburn, CA) * Pat Leary (189th AHC, Pleasanton, CA) * Al & Chris Brooks (Auburn, CA)

"Things happen for a reason" My November 2011 trip to Vietnam confirmed this belief, by RJG

I've always believed that as one door closes, another always opens. Conducting business in Vietnam can be quite challenging, and over the years, my efforts to help people with their medical problems have become more and more difficult. The frustration of dealing with the bureaucratic red tape of Ho Chi Minh City's medical establishment nearly closed the door on Vietnam for me; however, I would soon discover opportunities elsewhere, where my expertise in health nutrition and pharmaceuticals could be maximized.

Back home, and quite by accident, I discovered FVSO in January, 2011. What a blessing! The door I'd been searching for, but not able to find, was placed right before my eyes. In fact, my hand was placed firmly on the door knob and all I had to do was turn it! I was introduced to Dave Chaix and other FVSO members at a gathering in Auburn, and quickly realized the direction I wanted to take. I expressed my desire to explore the possibility of joining their team. They encouraged me to "go to Kontum and see for yourself." They wanted me to witness, firsthand, not only what FVSO had accomplished, but the opportunities that lay ahead.

Returning to Vietnam, I was excited to visit an area that I hadn't seen before. My experience in Kontum exceeded expectations. I was so taken by the Sisters I met, the children with smiles to die for, and their incredible, affectionate eye contact. I also had the pleasure of meeting volunteers from Italy and Holland, all good hearted souls helping with their labor and money. It was a very comforting encounter for me, and I immediately saw the potential for my involvement with FVSO. My plan was to become a "hands on" contributor, someone who could spend a lot of time in-country, spending face-to-face time with the children of Vinh Son and Sao Mai. I'd like to contribute my comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the Vietnamese health system to administer medical advice and promote nutrition (a key to good health!).

"Things happen for a reason" (continued)

The chance to help came unexpectedly soon. While chatting with a caregiver at Sao Mai orphanage, a nearby little girl fell to the ground and went into convulsions. I was quite shaken and a little disappointed that no one even knew to place a rag or some hard object in her mouth to prevent biting her tongue. Turns out, there is also a second child who suffers from epilepsy. Because their physical condition was so poor, it was obvious to me the girls weren't getting proper care, medically speaking. I was in the right place at the right time.

With the backing of FVSO, the girls will be brought to a specialized hospital in HCMC for evaluation. Besides determining the correct drugs and dosage, a schedule and procedure will be developed so the Sisters can deliver the appropriate care. I'll do whatever possible to ensure a successful outcome for the kids. Besides remaining in close contact with the Sao Mai caregivers, I'll return to Vietnam in January. Please say a prayer for the girls. **R.J.G.**

For the last 3 years at the orphanage, this 10year old has suffered from seizures twice a week, preventing her from attending school.



The girls can't live a normal life without the proper medication and care.

December Board Meeting

Our annual Board meeting will take place on December 29, 2011. Please feel free to email your comments or suggestions to: info@FriendsofVSO.org

You are cordially invited to attend

Funds have recently been delivered to the Orphanages for these Projects

- ❖ Sao Mai: Dental work 500
- ❖ VS-1: roofing project (funded by Hanson McClain & Color4Kids) 5,800
- ❖ VS-3: Corrugated roofing 1,540
- ❖ VS-3: Electric fans 40
- ❖ VS-3: Domestic supplies 585
- ❖ VS-4: BAFA funds for 2 trainees 195
- ❖ VS-5: Laundry drying structure 1,600
- ❖ VS-2 and 6: Cement slab, slab shelter, retaining wall around the wells – 500
- All sites: Medicine replacement 695
- Sao Mai: Special projects (diapers for two handicapped kids, & epilepsy medicine) – 735

Grand Total \$12,190

FVSO Meeting Agenda

- 1. Update Vinh Son I, II, III, IV, V & VI
- 2. Sao Mai Orphanage Update
- 3. Project Status Reports
- 4. Recent Electronic Fund Transfers
- 5. Meet the Children effort
- 6. Website Update and Statistics
- 7. Website Update EMMA
- 8. Financial Review
- 9. Fund Raiser February 11, 2012
- 10. Educational Opportunities
- 11. Other non-profits working at Vinh Son
- 12. Vinh Son VII discussion
- 13. Newsletter Critique
- 14. Future Advertising
- 15. Addition of new Board member

Vinh Son & Sao Mai Orphanage Facts Officers Board • Population – approximately 730 Montagnard children in seven orphanage facilities President - Dave Chaix Secretary - Dennis Coyne Hank Gonzales Rich Lahey Clyde Lewandowski

2nd VP - Michael Little

- Administered by the Sisters of the Miraculous Medal & St. Paul
 Chartres
 Treasurer - Colleen Sands
 Senior VP - Pat McKee
- Location Kontum/Pleiku, Vietnam
 1st VP Sr. Marie Dominique
- \$12 feeds, shelters, and educates one child for one month

Bart Ruud
Patrick Leary
Pat Keegan
Alan Brooks
Janette Maring
Richard Grame

Please make checks payable to FVSO or Friends of Vinh Son

Donation

Information

Donations are gratefully accepted year round

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