

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

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July Newsletter, 2013 - Volume 10 Issue 4

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Medically Speaking, by Board Member Bart Ruud

Since our inception, FVSO has operated on the premise that our mission has been provision of basic needs, needs that we define as food, shelter, education and health care. In that light, we do not marginalize preventative care, and we do this by several primary means.

Provision of safe drinking water is one priority. In partnership with another organization, Viet Dreams, we have installed and maintain water purification systems at all orphanage sites. Safe water reduces intestinal illness and contributes to long-term good health. Very recently, the latest round of maintenance, basically installation of new filters, has been completed by the MK Company, located in DaNang, Vietnam. With our donor's help, we invested \$1,260 in this effort to cover year 2013 maintenance.

A second priority involves dental care. We do this through two means, one being the annual dental clinic brought to Kontum by the East Meets West Foundation at a cost of \$6,000 and secondly through a program instituted with a dental clinic located in Pleiku, one hour south of the orphanages. Some of the VS children are regularly transported to this clinic for expert prophylactic care and provision of dental work as deemed necessary, at a cost of \$2,500 annually. These two projects are underwritten by six of our supporters and we remain grateful for their substantial donations to fund this care.

A third ongoing preventative care program has been our provision of medicines to offset any intestinal parasite issues that children may arrive with at the orphanage. As our readers may understand, children from outlying villages who have had no access to potable water can and do have parasite issues that can be debilitating. The medications provided through our donors' help alleviates parasite problems.



We are the world, we are the children
We are the ones who make a brighter day
So lets start giving
There's a choice we're making
We're saving our own lives
Its true we'll make a better day
Just you and me



Staying healthy in Vietnam is a full-time job

Eye care, whether for prescriptive eyeglasses to correct astigmatism or for surgical procedures to correct strabismus (crossed eyes), is a fourth line of preventative care, which we undertake on an as-needed basis. A pair of eyeglasses costs about \$7.00 for each child needing corrective lenses.

A less commonly dealt with arena of care has been provision of heart surgery for children in need of valve replacements or other procedures that assure life. Events such as these are rare but we have stepped forward with care for children born with congenital heart problems on more than one occasion. Such surgeries have cost about \$1,200 per surgery.

Given that tuberculosis is found across the Vietnamese population, it should be no surprise that an occasional illness will be found among our orphanage population. When such a problem is found, however rarely, immediate care is provided. In recent years, only one child has been afflicted. He was successfully treated and today is a well and happy child.

Our officers and board members are grateful for our donors' assistance, which assures health care for the children of Vinh Son and Sao Mai.

How we spend your donations

It's heartwarming to see how the kids take care of and depend on one other



Last year, due to fluctuating costs and limited donations, FVSO presented a "position paper" to the Vinh Son and Sao Mai leadership that outlined our planned level of support going forward. We basically created a budget that addressed the two largest spending categories, Basic Needs and Special Projects. A number of factors went into the document, which was well received, since it's intended to benefit the children and make spending decisions easier for their caregivers.

The annual budget for Basic Needs is \$63,600 and covers things like food, powdered milk, flour for bread, fish and meat, vegetables, diapers and soap, medicine, etc. The Special Project budget is \$55,600 and is designed to support education, water filter maintenance, equipment purchases, building repair or construction, dental programs, major medical, and any other expense not tied to Basic Needs. Often, FVSO partners with other charitable groups to help fund the Special Projects.

The total 2013 budget (Basic + Projects) is \$119,200
The annual donation goal is \$125,000

Accountability is very important to us, so we take great steps to ensure that funds are spent as directed. All expenditures are verified via written receipts, photos and first-hand observation. Below is a list of projects we tracked during the first half of the year:

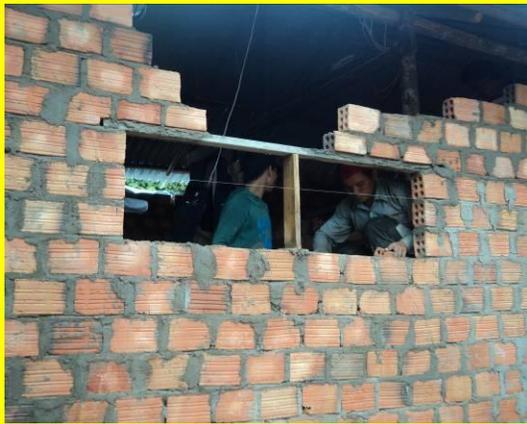
1. Walkway Project VS-1 \$2,472 (Complete)
2. Water System Maintenance at all sites - \$1,260 – a 50:50 project with Viet Dreams (ongoing)
3. Placed water filtration system at VS 3 - \$1,440 funded by Steve Holley (Complete)
4. Pleiku Dentist -\$2,500 funded by Dave & Claire Christensen, Bob & Carolyn Lee, Bruce & Susan Herron (In progress)
5. Medicine Replacement Funds - \$1,275, hand-carried and distributed in Pleiku and Kontum (Complete)
6. Boy's Dormitory Repair VS-4 – \$2,865 funded by Bob & Carolyn Lee Bruce & Susan Herron (waiting for government approval)
7. Girl's Furniture VS-4 - \$850 (Complete)
8. Repair Boy's Bathroom VS-1 \$385 (Complete)
9. East Meets West Foundation Dental Clinic \$6,000 funded by contributors: Scott & Valerie Hanson, Tim & Ann Sullivan, Paul & Nancy St. Pierre (August)



Pending Projects (unfunded)

- Parasite Medication \$850
- FVSO share of school fees \$5,194
- VS-1 Girls Washroom \$3,330
- VS-4 Fence \$1,965
- VS-4 Repair Girls Dorm \$2,750
- VS-5 Vaulted House \$2,470
- English Language Students \$1,200

Whether it's a new dormitory, healthy teeth or safe drinking water, the children at Vinh Son and Sao Mai have a lot to be thankful for because of your generosity. They THANK you!



“All the children just love him. One can see why. He’s a great little bloke.”
 Derek Smith, Australia, talking about A Phuoc

In Search of Happiness
 The story of a boy named A Phuoc

On a quiet day 3 years ago, a motorbike made its way up the dirt trail that runs adjacent to Vinh Son 3, past children who were hanging out at the orphanage main gate. Not much later, the motorbike sped back down the dusty road, and disappeared forever. Wrapped in a jacket and abandoned in the bushes for others to find was a newborn baby boy. Upon discovery, he was immediately brought to Sr Gabriel, who took him in despite lacking the proper facilities for such a young child. She named him A Phuoc, which means “happiness.” At right is one healthy little boy and his guardian angel, Sr Gabriel.



Organizations supporting FVSO

- 189th Assault Helicopter Company
- Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 535, Nevada County, CA
- Counterparts
- 4th Infantry Division Association (NY & NJ Chapter)
- 14th Combat Engineer Btn. Assoc.
- MilSpec Tours



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** - Dave Chaix
- Secretary** - Dennis Coyne
- Treasurer** - Colleen Sands
- Senior VP** - Pat McKee
- 1st VP** - Sr. Marie Dominique
- 2nd VP** - Michael Little

Board

- Hank Gonzales
- Rich Lahey
- Clyde Lewandowski
- Bart Ruud
- Patrick Leary
- Alan Brooks

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