

July Newsletter 2019 Volume 16 Issue 7

Contact & Donation Information

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Matching Fund Donation Challenge (Part 1)

Beginning in August, every dollar donated to FVSO will be **MATCHED**
up to \$21,750



August kicks off our annual Fundraising Challenge, when your donations are matched, dollar for dollar, up to **\$21,750**. FVSO is again fortunate to have very generous benefactors (see page 4) who have made this year's matching funds program possible. When the benefactor's contributions are matched, the combined total of \$43,500 will certainly help us attain our 2019 operating budget of \$225,000. The Matching Challenge is vital to meeting our commitment to the kids and their caregivers.



2019 Fundraiser: The kids are counting on you!

The smiles you see are a direct result of your generosity and prayers. The kids have just completed their annual dental check-ups and are enjoying some time off from school. However, the work is never over at Vinh Son. As one, they **THANK** you!

FVSO can change lives, both young and old

“I wish to be considered for a Board position with FVSO”

Please welcome Gene Mapa, FVSO's new Assistant Treasurer

Three years ago was my first trip to Viet Nam and the chance to visit the orphanages with Dave Chaix (FVSO ex-President) leading the way. I have returned twice since then, and each time I go back to the FVSO orphanages, I become more committed to the children and the need to help in any way that I can. Next January will be my fourth trip to Viet Nam with Dave, and I plan on more visits in the future.

On my first visit, my wife Susan (now deceased), and I met a wonderful teenage girl at VS-6 named Y Uen. She spoke to us in broken English, explained that she wanted to be a teacher, and from watching her with the other children, we immediately knew that she was going to be a leader and a great example for the kids. We decided to help her with her college education and she has become a wonderful young lady. She keeps us informed about her life in school, her grades, friends and her continuing personal assistance and support at VS-6. Y Uen is a great example of how "pay it forward" can work. She receives our assistance, and eventually passes that dedication down to her work with the Sisters and children at VS-6.

I am passionate about helping the children and wish I could do more. This last February I met a young lady at VS-5, Y Lay. In talking to her through Tano, I found out that she also wants to help the children at the orphanages in the future and possibly become a Sister. When ready, she will also receive help with the cost of her higher education.

Y Uen was an orphan at VS6 and is now getting ready to graduate from college. She is very active in supporting Vinh Son, especially the remote location we call VS-6. She has filled a critical leadership role to help Sr Laboure manage VS-6. Y Uen not only excels in her classes but she also has long list of duties she has assumed. She is responsible for caretaking of the little ones, supporting her fellow students in extracurricular programs, running errands, and maintaining an internship to prepare her for a career in teaching. Y Uen is a wonderful example of the job the Sisters are doing to prepare the kids for their future. Through Gene's marvelous support, the entire VSO community will benefit.

A Letter from Y Uen

Dearest Mr.Gene,

How are you ? I'm here is great and in exam season. I'm so sorry because send letter late and thanks for wonderful photos!

First I would like to express my deep gratitude to you and I thank FVSO, Mr. Clyde and Ms Nga. I don't know what to say to express this feeling in me. I am really grateful to everyone who has always helped me, I have nothing to repay the spiritual and material gifts that people have given. So, in my prayers, I will always pray for good things to everyone; I will try to study and do a good job in Vinh Son as well as at school.

You are like my second parents, always help me a lot. Could I call you mom and dad? My emotions are hard to describe, and the confusion of sad and joy. On the way home, I cried and cried in happiness because I was really lucky to have great help from everyone.

Once again, I would like to express my gratitude to you and everyone at FVSO, who have always accompanied me on my learning path. I promise I will try my best not to disappoint the people who have always helped me.



During the June 26th FVSO semi-annual meeting, Gene was unanimously voted onto the Board. (pictured above) “Father and Daughter”

In the middle of great violence, there was hope

Return to Minh Quy Montagnard Hospital

John Browne

In April of this year, my son, Ryan, and I traveled to Vietnam with Clyde Lewandowski and Nga Wynne (Board members of FVSO) and a small group of vets and family. I wanted to experience the changes that had taken place in Vietnam and to see what remained of the country I knew almost 50 years ago.



Amid a booming economy and deforestation, however, little of that earlier time remains. But diligent efforts by our guide, Tano, revealed clues and locations of old SF border camps, relay outposts and airstrips. A few sites, however, like the Old Wooden Church and other shrines in KonTum, were little changed from the pictures I took in the early 70's.

One site in particular that I wanted to find was the old Minh Quy Montagnard hospital in KonTum, founded by Dr. Pat Smith in the late 1950's. Dr. Smith and her staff of Montagnard and western medical providers and nurses were a beacon of light and hope for the Montagnard people during that bleak and dark time. My first visit to Minh Quy was as a patient (briefly) in early 1971, followed by regular trips over the next year delivering supplies and medicines.

Tano located the old hospital, now in total disrepair and occupied by a group of squatters. Sadness at seeing the old buildings in ruins was offset, however, by meeting Sister Gabriel and Sister Francois, two remarkable Montagnard nuns who had served at Minh Quy until War's end. Although we never formally met during the War, we most certainly crossed paths in that busy hospital. Sharing that connection with them was the high point of my recent visit. Hearing their stories, especially of the final year of the War, and their ordeals afterward, filled me with sorrow, but also a profound respect for their perseverance and unwavering faith. Each Sister now supervises a Vinh Son orphanage complex, having dedicated their lives to the Montagnard people and their children.

To paraphrase a former worker: "Although Minh Quy hospital as such no longer exists, the spirit of Minh Quy lives on in the lives of these two Sisters and their staffs at Vinh Son."

John and Ryan are pictured above with two former Minh Quy nurses who are now caregivers at Vinh Son 1. Also shown are hospital staff from the 1960's (Sr. Gabriel is center right). By supporting the orphanages, we are also helping to preserve the memory of Minh Quy.

Matching Fund Benefactors (part 1)

- Allworth Financial Advisors, Sacramento, CA
- Jim McCauley
- VVA Chapter 535, Nevada County, CA
- Dave and Claire Christensen
- Steve Holley
- Gene Mapa
- Judith Anshin

amazonsmile

You shop. Amazon gives.

We can help you enlist new benefactors

- Board Members are available to speak at military reunions or to local civilian groups.
- Distribute copies of the monthly FVSO newsletter to your friends and interested groups. Forward the on-line versions and website information via e-mail.
- A Power Point presentation, detailing the FVSO story, is available for your use.
- Tell your personal story. Why are you a member of this team? What would you tell a potential supporter about FVSO? Your history might prompt others to reach out to the children of FVSO.



Legacy Fund Update

The goals are:

\$1.0m by Dec 2020

\$2.0m by Dec 2025

Total Contributions

\$605,670

Words of Wisdom

"Help the helpless. Help the poor. Help the needy. Help the orphan. Be the joy for they that suffer in latent. They might not have money to repay you. They might not be able to offer an equal returns of service, but, the inner peace which they may get in their spirit for a moment shall be an awesome lifetime blessings to your body and spirit"

— Ernest Agyemang Yeboah

Orphanage Facts

About 830 Montagnard children live in 7 orphanage facilities in the Kontum/Pleiku areas of Vietnam.

\$12 per month provides each child one nutritious meal every day.

Orphanages are run by the Sisters of Miraculous Medal and St. Paul Chartres.

Officers & Board Members

Pat Leary
Nga Wynne
Ken Tokutomi
Gene Mapa
Bart Ruud
Clyde Lewandowski
Michael Little
Pat McKee
Dave Chaix
Hank Gonzales
Sean Grame

President
Secretary
Treasurer
Asst. Treasurer
Senior VP
1st VP
2nd VP
3rd VP
Board Member
Board Member
Media Expert

Donation Information

Checks should be payable to FVSO or Friends of Vinh Son.

FVSO is a humanitarian, non-profit organization approved by IRS code 501©(3). Donations are tax deductible.

Donations are accepted year round and are also available on-line.