

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

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What a trip!

The FVSO delegation has safely returned from their visit to Vietnam. For some, it was their first time to experience the country, its people and sights. While each traveler might react differently to their first Vietnam odyssey, these folks did share one very common emotion: **“the highlight of the trip was spending time with the children of Vinh Son!”** Although an official trip report won't be ready until March, we wanted to share these wonderful stories and images right away.

Also in this edition is a brief summary of the fundraising concert at Thunder Valley. Suffice it to say, it was a **HUGE** success...and a whole lot of fun!

Claire & Dave Christensen

Dave and I were first timers in Vietnam. Each day brought new adventures, history to absorb, beautiful sights and friendly people. Our visit to Vinh Son Orphanage was the highlight. As supporters, we were excited to learn first-hand about this special place. Our group arrived with bags of treats, and the children were anxiously waiting for us. After they greeted us with songs we got right to the fun part of passing out the whirly toys and other goodies. The air was soon filled with flying objects and laughter.

Some of the children followed us around, and happily we got lots of photos. They loved seeing themselves on the screens of our digital cameras. Sister Jeanne concluded the tour by showing us a large, simply furnished room. Here they have set up a simple classroom for the preschool children. With very little they are helping these children get prepared for school. As a former teacher, I was touched by what they were able to do with so little.



Roger Erickson

A great experience! The children were obviously well cared for & happy in what we would consider a frugal environment. I found the children to be inspiring and very quick to interact with our group. It was very moving to have them greet us and show us their singing and dancing skills! I was not sure what to expect when arriving at the orphanages; however, I can truly tell you that the VSO volunteers and donors are definitely making a significant impact in the lives of these children. A great effort by the VSO team, donors and caregivers. My hat is off to your efforts!

David George & Sharon Lewis

Neither Sharon nor I knew exactly what to expect upon visiting Vinh Son 1 & 2 in Kontum. Having the opportunity to observe how these people live day-to-day, their living conditions, their homes, the food they eat, looking at the beautiful animals so integral to their farming and sustenance, seeing their schools, etc, proved to us just how much the Catholic Sisters and caretakers demonstrate loving and care-giving attitudes. Much is made possible largely by the hard work of a few and the generous contributions of many.

One has to travel there to get a full understanding of how wonderful these children really are. That includes visiting their sleeping quarters, their classrooms, seeing how they work together to assist in food preparation, seeing how they bathe and wash clothes and walking through the beautiful vegetable gardens. The best is simply talking with them, watching them play with each other, seeing their faces when they receive small gifts that would hardly dazzle most American children.

Forever Changed

Visitors and Children alike



LEFT: Claire with the girl who drew her “thank-you” letter
 As we toured the grounds it became clear how things got done here with what little they have. We saw the older girls wash clothes in large concrete tubs by "agitating" them with their feet and using rocks and brushes to scrub out the stains. The younger girls then hung them on the line to dry. We saw a well-tended garden with an effective irrigation system. In one area some older girls were using machetes to chop greens from the garden for the pigs. In the kitchen another team of girls chopped vegetables for lunch. The youngest children were being tended by the older ones. Our trip to Vietnam was one of our most rewarding life experiences. **Claire and Dave**



Group Photo, February 2011



Fundraising Concert – A Big Hit!

FVSO is elated to report the success of our first ever fundraising event, specifically a benefit Johnny Cash – Patsy Cline tribute performance staged in Pano Hall on February 12, 2011 at the Thunder Valley Casino Resort located near Lincoln, CA. Featuring the **Rhythm Riders**, the concert drew the largest crowd ever assembled in Pano Hall since its opening in 2003. Over 900 enthusiastic fans filled the room, including 7 FVSO Board members (Chaix-Ruud-Gonzales-McKee-Brooks-Leary-Little).

In August 2010, FVSO met with representatives from two other non-profit organizations (the Boys & Girls Club of Auburn and the Auburn Placer Performing Arts Center) for preliminary talks about forming a coalition. Ultimately organized as “**Arts & Kids**,” the triad came about when a local businessman, Richard Azevedo, offered to underwrite the event. When Thunder Valley donated the room, it quickly became a win-win opportunity for everyone involved.

The **Rhythm Riders** are led by Auburn area residents John and Dee Price, who sang their hearts out, just like Johnny and Patsy would have done. The band was also joined this time by W.S. “Fluke” Holland, Johnny Cash’s drummer for 37 years. W.S. flew in from Jackson, TN, and added his own, unique flair to the 2.5 hour show.

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 Vinh Son Montagnard Orphanage, Kontum, Vietnam

A 2nd show is in the works!

Bottom line: \$8,700 was raised for the children of Vinh Son

Vinh Son Orphanage Facts

- Population – approximately 680 Montagnard children in six orphanage facilities
- Administered by the Sisters of the Miraculous Medal
- Location - Kontum, 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 FVSO administrative costs are paid by the Board and Officers