



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

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February 2017 Newsletter - Volume 14 Issue 2

- Vietnam trip report
- Higher education recap
- A very special letter
- Amazon smile pays off



Dave Chaix's 2017 Trip Report

On the evening of January 8th, we left Auburn, CA by bus with 17 travelers from the Auburn, Sacramento and El Dorado County areas. We had an early morning flight to catch from San Francisco to Bangkok via Taipei. There, after meeting our wonderful guide Tano, we changed planes for Chiang Rai and the northern most tip of Thailand, the "Golden Triangle". From there, to Chiang Mai, then Kachumburi (bridge over the River Kwai) and back to Bangkok for a couple days of touring.

We left Thailand for Saigon on January 19th with an overnight, then a flight to Pleiku and a bus ride to Kontum. Thus began the real purpose of the trip, to visit all 7 orphanages at Vinh Son and Sao Mai.

That evening, we re-grouped at the old Wooden Church in front of VS 1, then entered the orphanage to find a pre-Tet celebration in full swing. All the Sisters of the orphanages were present, along with the new Mother Superior, Sister Imelda. Much entertainment by the children and a good time was had by all.

Over the next 4 days, we visited all the orphanages, played with the children and spent quality time with the Sisters. Mainly, we wanted to observe how the orphanages were doing and review immediate needs.

Four projects were funded onsite:

- VS 6 – Ten bicycles for the High School children \$1,000 USD. These bicycles were needed because VS 6 is the most remote facility and the children are a long way from the school.
- VS 1 – Replace the rice cooker \$360 USD
- VS 1 – Replace the Bread Bakery \$800 USD
- VS 1 – Repair the septic system at the Boy's washroom \$500 USD

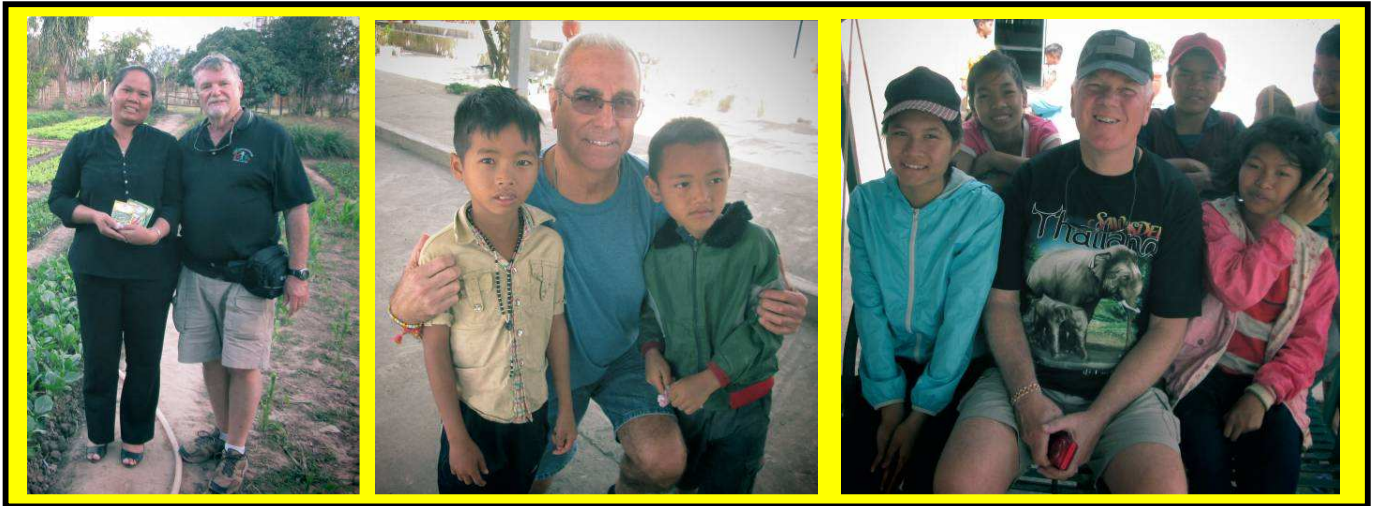
Two projects could not immediately be funded:

- VS 4 – Needs a new tractor \$9,000 USD – current tractor was purchased in 2008 by FVSO and desperately needs replacing.
- VS 6 – Needs the washroom rebuilt \$4,500 – almost not functional and becoming a health hazard.

Finally, we traveled back to Pleiku for our visit at the Sao Mai orphanage. For the first time, we also visited the disabled children who live at a different facility. It's great to see Sister Kiet...she always makes our visits very memorable.

Bottom line...we found the orphanages continuing to improve, taking on more of their own support, via farming (coffee, rubber, manioc, etc. to sell), gardens, pigs, chickens and fish ponds to help feed the children.

The Sisters and children work so hard, but still need our help.



Above Left: Dave Chaix with Sister Kham receiving vegetable seeds donated by Joel and Delores Schultz. Also pictured are travelers and their newly found friends.

Higher Education Scholarship Update

Our plan has been to provide scholarships of \$75 per month for students who do not have a specific sponsor. According to Y Rim and Y Rin this is an adequate amount so long as the student lives at the orphanage and works part time there in exchange for room and board.

Students who go to school outside of Kontum and are required to pay their own room and board need more to get by. Some are able to find part time work and others may receive scholarships from individuals of up to \$150 per month plus tuition.

10 students are receiving scholarships today

Y Lyly – Will complete her nursing degree at Duc Tri College in Da Nang in May 2017. Receives \$150/month plus tuition VS-2

Y Hoi - Graduated with a nursing degree from Duc Tri College in May 2016. Now is studying to be a Y Si at Medical College of Kontum. When this 2 year program is complete she will operate clinics at 6 remote villages working for the priest. Receives \$75/month VS-2

Y Rim – Studying nursing at Medical School of Kontum with plans to graduate in May 2018. Receives \$75 per month VS-2

Y Rin – Working on pharmacy degree at Medical School of Kontum with plans to graduate in May 2018. Receives \$75/month VS-6

A Xok – Studying Computer Tech at College of Technology & Information at Hue with plans to graduate in May 2018. Receives \$75/month VS-1

A Thuy – Studying Computer Information Technology at HCMC University of Technology with plans to graduate in May 2019. Receives \$75/month VS-1

A Thang – Studying auto mechanics at Phuoc Loc Vocational Center in Vung Tau with plans to graduate in May 2018. He is a high school student and stays at a parish center. Receives \$75/month VS-1

A Toan – Studying auto mechanics at Phuoc Loc Vocational Center in Vung Tau with plans to graduate in May 2018. He is a high school student and stays at a parish center. Receives \$75/month VS-1

Y Thoai – Studying Nursing at Medical School of Kontum with plans to graduate in May 2018. Receives \$75 per month VS-2

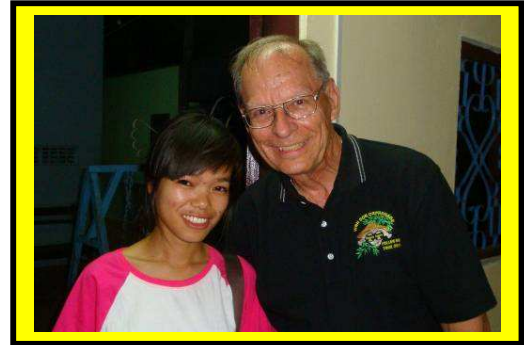
Y Lit – Just completing a degree to teach at a nursery school at Saigon School of Technology. She has a job teaching and her scholarship will end in one month. Receives \$75/month VS-3

Since 2007, Clyde and Connie Lewandowski have experienced the joy of watching Lyly grow and develop into a beautiful young woman

Hi, Dad!

How are you doing? I am fine. Dear Dad, during the internship at the district health care center Dak To, I see the hospital is very clean, spacious and airy. There are some departments namely:

- Pharmacy
- Medical Examination Department
- Laboratory- X-rays
- Faculty of Oriental Medicine
- Surgery
- Internal Medicine
- Pediatrics
- Emergency Department
- The crown of Preventive Medicine employees



Each department is located far away from each other. There are many patients coming to the hospital, so I could have chances to improve my medical skills as well.

All doctors and assistants at the hospital welcomed me with open arms. I feel very happy when people give specific instructions for me if I don't know with their enthusiasm. The Lunar New Year is coming in two weeks, and I am going to spend my holiday time and put all efforts to complete my graduation report. However, I only have one week to stay home for the New Year because I have to go to Da Nang City to do the exam.

At home, I have less time to finish my job since I need to take care of my brother's children and do housework. Thus, I could not make a chance to visit kids in the orphanage. I already told with people working in the orphanage that I was busy due to the internship this month.

My brother, sister in law, younger sister and I are living together, but my mom does not stay with us because she has to work in order to keep a family. She can come back home in the morning only. Now, at that house, we are living up to 7 people since my old house still has not been fixed yet... I am okay as I can visit to the orphanage and my brother's house to have fun. Sometimes, I feel sad, but I think I should not have that feeling.

I think I feel unhappy because between the world of social networks and the real life, I always live under illusion whenever I have happiness or sadness. Consequently, some of my friends would say I was a crazy and weird person like kids. Others did not understand about personality, so they just put a slur upon me. But, I ignored their comments, and laughed.

I was very lucky when I have a new father like you after my biological father passed away. Sometimes, I really want to talk and share my stories with you, but my foreign language is very poor; thus, I could not take the opportunity to have conversations with you. I am so sorry about that. I also thank God for protecting me. Thanks Daddy for helping me with my tuition fees and keeping my spirits up. During Christmas, I have not been written a letter in order to send to you and other benefactors for assisting kids in receiving education. Please send my sincere thanks to your friends for helping kids, also.

Thank you so much!

Your daughter, Y L Y L Y

This letter was addressed to Clyde, but it's just as touching and meaningful to all of us who support the children of Vinh Son

“This is what makes it worthwhile for me.”

AmazonSmile An Easy Way To Help The Children

This email is to notify you that Friends Vinhson Montagnard Catholic Orphanage & Mission-Vietnam (EIN: 16-1724012) has been issued a \$42.95 donation from the AmazonSmile Foundation as a result of AmazonSmile program activity between October 1 and December 31, 2016. The donation was deposited to your organization's bank account on or around February 6, 2017. It may take several days for the donation to appear in the account.

It Works!!

What is AmazonSmile?

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to your favorite charitable organization. You can choose from nearly one million organizations to support. Just type in **Vinh Son Orphanage** to make your choice.

How do I shop at AmazonSmile?

To shop at AmazonSmile simply go to smile.amazon.com from the web browser on your computer or mobile device. You may also want to add a bookmark to smile.amazon.com to make it even easier to return and start your shopping at AmazonSmile. The AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price from your eligible AmazonSmile purchases.

Long-term supporting organizations

- 189th Assault Helicopter Company
- 227th Assault Helicopter Battalion (A and D Companies)
- Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 535, Nevada County, CA
- Counterparts Association
- 14th Combat Engineer Btn. Association
- 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

Words To Live By

After the verb 'to love', the verb 'to help' is the most beautiful verb in the world.

-- Bertha von Suttner

While we try to teach our children all about life, our children teach us what life is all about.

-- Angela Schwindt

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

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Secretary - Open
Treasurer – Mike Burke
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1st VP - Sr. Marie Dominique
2nd VP - Michael Little

Board of Directors

Hank Gonzales
 Rich Lahey
 Clyde Lewandowski
 Bart Ruud
 Dave Chaix
 Colleen Sands

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