

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

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## The recovery continues at Vinh Son Life is returning to normal after Typhoon Ketsana



From the reports we've been receiving since the typhoon, it's amazing how far the recovery has come. The children are settling back into their normal lives, boosted by the confidence that FVSO will stand beside them through the most difficult of times.

Gardens have been re-planted, walls mended, kitchens rebuilt, and supplies replenished. The piggeries are back in business and dormitories repaired.

The smiles have returned to Vinh Son thanks to you!



**January 2010**

**Volume 7, Issue 1**

### Board Officers

**President**  
Dave Chaix

**Secretary**  
Dennis Coyne

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**1st VP**  
Sr. Marie Dominique

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Mike Gregersen

### Board Members

Hank Gonzales

Rich Lahey

Clyde Lewandowski

Bart Ruud

Patrick Leary

Pat Keegan

### Vinh Son Facts

- Population – about 600 Montagnard children in six facilities
- Administered by the Sisters of the Miraculous Medal
- Location - Kontum, Vietnam
- \$15 feeds, shelters, and educates one child for one month

# A message from Dave Chaix, FVSO President

For the most part, 2009 was a very good year for the 550 children and their caregivers at the 6 Vinh Son Montagnard orphanages. That's right, there are now 6 orphanages supported by FVSO. As the Sisters identify more children at risk, communities are established to serve them. After much discussion by Board Members, we decided to add 2 small, very poor orphanages that will fall under the Vinh Son umbrella. We began supporting them at the end of 2009 and will continue during 2010. Expanding our reach is only made possible because of the generous support from you - our wonderful donors – **Thank You!**

In terms of accomplishments, 2009 was again truly outstanding. Early in the year, a group of supporters led by some of our Board Members visited the Orphanages and came away with a good understanding of how the funds are being spent and the progress being made. While there, we distributed funding for a number of projects, as well as making an assessment for 2009. As is our custom on these visits, we developed both short and long term goals through our open dialogue with the caregivers at each orphanage site. The result is a roadmap, most of which we can use year-on-year:

## Immediate

- Daily food (rice, bread flour, powdered milk) – always **PRIORITY #1**
- Diet supplements (fish, meat and vegetables)
- Building repairs and improvements
- Medicine and dental care
- Water Filtration System

## Long Term

- Education (school fees, desks, uniforms, computers)
- Bedroom supplies, kitchen supplies
- Training (sewing machines, tractor operation)
- Machinery (new tractor, plow, trailer, diesel fuel)
- Physical plant (Boy's dormitories, Living Room, Dining Rooms)
- Capital projects (pig farm and barn, feed)

Typhoon Ketsana hit the Central Highlands in late September and did considerable damage at the Orphanages. Again, we asked for your help, and you responded. The results speak for themselves:

## Typhoon Ketsana – Actions Taken

- Rebuilt walls and buildings
- Replaced crops and vegetable gardens
- Rebuilt a field hut
- Provided emergency funds for food and medicine
- Repaired a piggery and replaced the pigs
- Replaced lost food stores

Many projects were done in partnership with our old friends: Friends of the Central Highlands, East Meets West and Colour for Kids of the Netherlands. We also welcomed new partners: 1) Stichting of the Netherlands, 2) VN-SHEP (Vietnam Social Health Education Projects) Linden, New Jersey, 3) Auburn Rotary Club, Auburn, CA, and 4) Terres des Hommes, Canada. Working together, resources were targeted, timely, and sufficient to get the job done. It's been a real pleasure working with these groups and individuals from around the world.

This year we anchored our Annual Fund Drive with 4 Challenges, and again these Challenges provided a great incentive for our donors, who reacted with enthusiasm and generosity. Each Challenge was maxed out, resulting in a total of \$42,200 in donations. WOW! What a great way to end the year; it could not have come at a better time with needs so great. FVSO reached its 2009 financial target, and was able to fulfill every commitment made to the children of Vinh Son...once again!!!

The new year of 2010 is upon us. We'll continue to be very vigilant in our efforts to combat the lingering effects of Ketsana. The needs will only grow as we add other Vinh Son orphanages in the Kontum area. Project Manager, Bart Ruud, and I will travel to Kontum in February to assess 2010 needs and close the books on a very successful 2009. **These trips, as with all FVSO expenses,** are paid by the travelers themselves. Our commitment remains...100% of your donations go directly to support the children and caregivers. Look for our trip summary upon our return.

Again, we are so very grateful for your support of these wonderful children, and hope that you continue to help them in 2010. Our donation target this year is \$75,000, which is about what was spent in 2009.

# Please help us welcome our newest Board Member Mr. Patrick Leary

Pat served with the 52<sup>nd</sup> Aviation Battalion in Camp Holloway in 1968. In March 2008 Pat went to Vietnam on a business trip. He took the opportunity to revisit Pleiku, Kontum, and Dak To. He had the most extraordinary experience when by accident (perhaps divine intervention) he discovered the Vinh Son orphanages. The nuns and the children were immediately special. Over time he learned of the wonderful work being done by the Friends of Vinh Son and became an avid supporter of their work. He is proud to be on the Board and honored to be associated with those who started the organization and have done so much for the kids.

Pat lives in Pleasanton CA with his wonderful and patient wife of 39 years. He is semi-retired. He works with a trading company based in China. Working with FVSO gives a special purpose to being retired. Helping the nuns and the children is a most meaningful experience.



Pat was unanimously voted onto the Board in December. He replaces Mary Waterfield, who is leaving us, but will remain a loyal supporter of Vinh Son. Many thanks, Mary, for all your help! And Welcome Aboard, Pat!

## Annual Board meeting held on December 28<sup>th</sup>, 2009

### Agenda Items

- Introductions and Sign-in
- Update Vinh Son I, II, III, IV& V
- Project Status Reports
- Meet the Children on the website
- Website Update and Statistics
- Website Update EMMA
- Financial Review
- Annual Fund Drive
- Tutoring at the Orphanages
- Water Purification efforts
- Other non-profits working at Vinh Son
- Donor recognition (commemorative book)
- Larger Projects
- Long Range Plans for Growth and Succession
- Dak Doxi (Vinh Son 6)

The annual Board meeting reviews past performance, ongoing commitments and future needs. Top of the most discussed issues were water purification, education, and the inclusion of additional Vinh Son communities. Because of you, we are poised to continue supporting and maintaining a better quality of life at all 6 Vinh Son sites in 2010.

## Tourist's impressions of their visit to Vinh Son 1

**Dave (FVSO President),**

**Greetings from Madison.** We are home and filled with memories of our time in Vietnam. It was a fabulous trip for us, and as much as we enjoyed being tourist throughout the country and enjoying the food, people and sites, our time in Kontum is something we will never forget. We want to thank you for your guidance in giving us an opportunity to learn more about the orphanages and the ethnic communities surrounding Kontum.

We have come home wanting to be of some help and confront the issue of what to do. We will make a donation directly to FVSO.

Congratulations for your ongoing commitment to the community and our thanks for your guidance.

**Email from Eric and Jane Englund of Wisconsin**



Please make checks payable to FVSO or Friends of Vinh Son

Donations are accepted, with gratitude, year round

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

	<p><b>Now Available</b></p> <p><b>The Friends of Vinh Son Collectable Cap</b></p> <p>This great looking, one-size-fits-all, cap is still available for sale at \$20 each. Simply ask for it when making your donation to FVSO. All proceeds will go to the kids.</p>
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