

FVSO Friends of Vinh Son Montagnard Orphanage

November Newsletter 2020 Volume 17 Issue 11

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Through October, we have received \$60,344 toward our goal. We are 40.2% of the way there but \$3,000 behind the pace we need. In this time of many uncertainties, I am encouraged by your donations and trust we will eventually meet our goals. Currently, Vietnam is struggling through a series of massive typhoons. So far, the orphanages have not been severely damaged, but they are literally downstream from the 4 provinces that have been hurt the worst. We won't know until later this month if the orphanages will need funds to recover, but I suspect they will. Four of our locations are in the Dak Bla flood plain. The fund drive now will be key in helping them recover. **Your prayers and support are most needed at this time.**

2020 Fund Drive Target

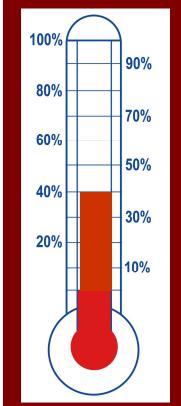
\$150,000

Donations To Date (10/29)

\$60,344

Needed To Reach Target

\$89,656



Percent Achieved Through Oct. 29 = 40.2%

Below is an excerpt from a letter to FVSO from Y Khuyet, one of our scholarship students from VS-4. She expresses her gratitude and concern to Sister Lieng for her life-long dedication to the children.

Yes Uncle, Sister Lieng now goes to the field everyday. She leaves at 7:00 in the morning and returns at 5:00 p.m. in the afternoon. Sister Lieng is really our second mother. She does a lot of work in the fields and when we were still in middle school, we used to go to the fields where she worked. At that time, her health was still good and she had the ability to both work and teach us on how to do it. She always taught us to be very gentle, easy to understand and quickly forgive our mistakes, but she still constantly admonished us to live modestly, economically, to know our circumstances. At present, Sister Lieng's health is old and weak, but she still goes to the fields every day to earn money to support us.

For the past week, Sister Lieng has had a stomach ache which has made her lose sleep for several nights in a row. However, the next morning she still goes to go to Mass, and then goes up to the fields as usual. We feel so sorry. Since I was a 5-year old child in Vinh Son 4 until now, I have felt Sister Lieng's love for us, so great like a mother. We don't know how to repay her, but just praying, obeying and improving our lives for the better each day. We thank FVSO for always taking care of our second mother.



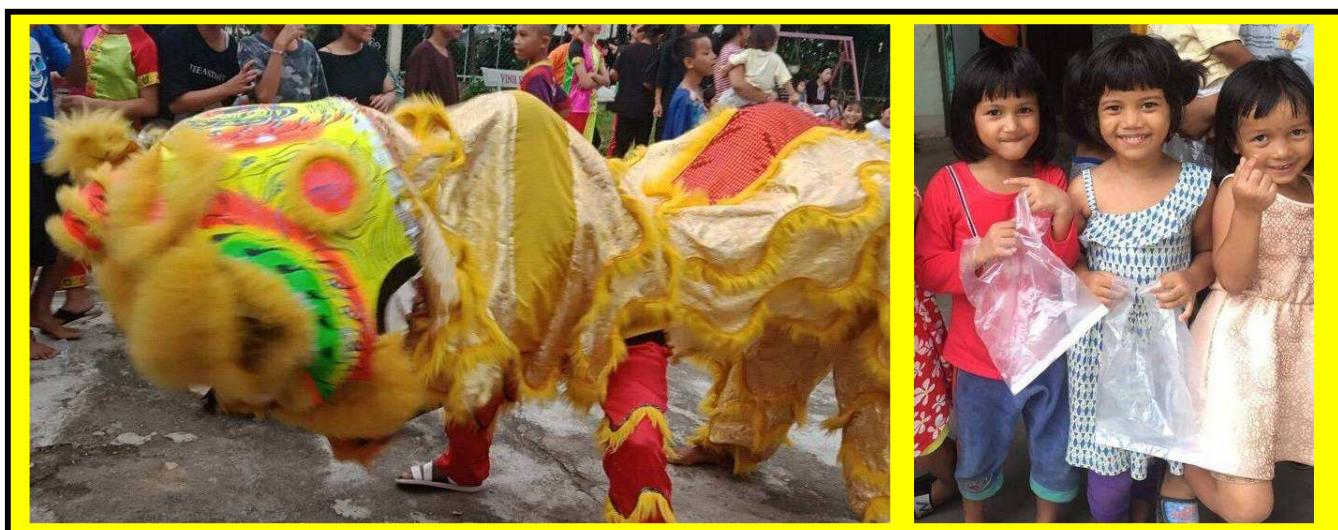
Sister Lieng is pictured above with Y Khuyet, having just come in from the fields where she tends the crops every day. Nobody works harder than Sr Lieng, who does everything she can to make life better for the children under her care.

“Different, but still fun!”

This is the story of Moon Festival on October 01, 2020

On the occasion of the Mid-Fall Festival every year, thousands of children experience this Festival full of joy, and happiness beside their friends, parents, grandparents and family relatives. However, the children of the six VSO orphanages had to celebrate their Mid-Fall Festival differently this year. Because of the social distancing rule, there were no visitor groups, or parties to hand out special gifts to the children, such as lanterns, masks, sweet sticky cakes. There was no special meal for the children on this occasion so they only can see the unicorn dances and sing folk songs.

Because of the Covid 19 pandemic, the Sisters organized the Mid-Fall Festival separately, as each Vinh Son orphanage held their own activities, but they still distributed the nice lanterns, sweets and cakes to each child. Each orphanage organized a music performance for the little children who made their moonlight procession. The older children tried to make the big lanterns to earn the prize of 500,000VND in the contest. Although this year's Mid-Autumn Festival was not as splendid as earlier ones, that did not take away the cheerfulness and warmth of the Autumn Festival because the children happily held little star lanterns in their hands and always smiled brightly, warmly with love.



Three projects making a huge difference

Sister Marie Kham (right) oversees the chicken delivery system at VS-5

The rooster crows at the break of dawn, the truck is loaded with a thousand screaming chicks, preparing for the 118 mile trek from Qui Nhon to Kontum. Destination: the Vinh Son 5 orphanage. Here are some recent "Chicken facts:"

- Un-grilled chickens can now be sold. However, the grilled birds are still favorites of the tribal peoples.
- Cost: one chicken (grilled or not) = about \$4.32
- Cost: one chick from Qui Nhon = \$0.65 cents
- There's a need for a larger chicken coop because of the high demand (30 birds sold on some days).
- The kids get to eat grilled chicken twice a week.

Besides providing income to supplement their diet, there has been an unexpected outcome: **Television!**

Using some of their profit, a television was purchased, and the kids are allowed to watch TV every evening. Favorite shows are cartoon movies and dance groups.



I am Sr Pierre Marie Y Mar, Sister in charge of Vinh Son 1 orphanage.

I send this letter to tell FVSO about a problem in the children's dining room. The tin gutters are very small, out of order and damaged, so during the rainy season, rain water on the roofs flows into the gutters that do not drain outside in time. The water pours into the dining room and makes the room flooded. Also, the electricity system in the room is very old and is dangerous for the children when they have dinner during the rainy season. The tin roof is rusty because it is very old. The walls and doors are in the same bad shape. We ask you to help by funding the repairs to the children's dining room so that they can stay safe and have their meals well during the rainy season and not be afraid of the danger of electric shock.

**Cost: \$3,200 usd
Board approved
Work completed**

- Dismantling the tin roofs
- Reinforcing & repairing the roofs
- Making tin gutters
- Repainting the walls
- Renewing the electricity system
- Reinforcing & changing the glass

Vinh Son 3 has many new improvements, thanks to FVSO and Sister Gabrielle Y Che

Due to a long delay in obtaining the needed building permits, this project was late in completion, but that was finally rectified. At a cost of \$14,000 usd, multiple repairs were finally made to: the bedrooms, toilets, classroom and laundry room. The workmanship is excellent, as seen in the images below.



John Mihalec and Sister Gabrielle re-live some fond memories

My association with the Vinh Son Orphanages and Sister Gabrielle goes back to March of 1972 when I was in the US Army. I had convinced my battalion commander to let me take my week of R&R working at Dr. Pat Smith's hospital for Montagnards in Kontum.

Back then, I was Civic Actions NCO for the 52nd Aviation Battalion, engaging Montagnard villages around Pleiku. I had read about Dr. Pat, who single handedly created and maintained a charity hospital for Montagnards since 1959 and I wanted to meet her. During my week in Kontum, I stayed at the small US Army compound guarding the airport and did whatever the hospital needed, rearranging the supply room, cleaning tent areas where the families of patients lived & holding lights in the operating room, where Sister Gabrielle was the expert in anesthesia.

At the time, the hospital was in town directly across from the church, where there were already many orphans under care, but in a much less organized way than today. So, it was only natural after the War, when the Americans, including Pat, left the country, that Sister Gabrielle, along with Sister Vincent, would be prime forces in the creation of the Vinh Son orphanages.

I returned to Kontum with other veterans in 2012 and received a terrific tour of Vinh Son-1. When I returned in 2014, I learned that Sister Gabrielle was living. In her 80's, she was still running VS-3



and riding her motorbike into town for Mass every day!

I went back to Vietnam a third time in 2017 and enjoyed a dinner with Sister Gabrielle. I gave her an album of old photos from the week we worked with Dr. Smith nearly a half century before.

I hope to return to Kontum again to spend time with people I love and to witness the continuing progress made by Friends of Vinh Son Orphanages (FVSO).

Legacy Fund Update

The goals are:

\$1.0m by Dec 2020

\$2.0m by Dec 2025

Legacy Fund Balance

\$752,195



SPREAD THE WORD

Board Members are available to speak at military reunions or to local civilian groups. Please distribute copies of the monthly FVSO newsletter to your friends and interested groups. Forward the on-line versions and website information via e-mail.

"When you give others a new chance, a new chance is really being given to you."

— Bryant McGill

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.

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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 online.