

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

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August 2015 Newsletter - Volume 12 Issue 6

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- The Advisory Board comes to life with two volunteers
- The dental program in Kontum evolves
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## Matching Donation Program

**Beginning in August, every dollar donated to FVSO will be MATCHED up to \$24,500!**

The mission of FVSO is to support basic needs for the children of Vinh Son and Sao Mai orphanages. Basic needs cover daily meals, medicine, and dental care. Your donations over the years have made it possible to do that and more. Today, we support 850 children in 7 locations. Basic needs per child are \$12 per month. That comes out to a budget of \$122,400. Annually, we have been able to make that target and often go over the top.

With the “extra” funds, we have been able to assist the children and the nuns with some extra “perks,” as well as build a reserve fund for emergencies. We have repaired tractors, sent some children to higher education, paid some extraordinary medical bills, helped to replace or increase livestock, build dorms and a number of other projects. However, we always keep in mind our first priority of Basic Needs. If we do not cover Basic Needs, well the rest has much less meaning doesn't it?

So far this year, donations have been about \$75,000. That leaves us 5 months to raise the balance of \$50,000, and hopefully much more. Your generous year-end donations have enabled us to achieve our goals every year so far. We hope to exceed our goal again this year. We are most fortunate to have some dedicated donors who have helped us form a **\$24,500 Matching Fund**....that is, for us to earn their donations we have to first match it with your donations.

**Thank you!**



We want to thank these benefactors for providing “The \$24K Challenge”

**Hanson McClain Financial Advisors  
San Juan Capistrano CA Rotary  
Bob and Carolyn Lee  
VVA Chapter 535 Nevada County CA  
Steve Holley**

The children and the nuns are most grateful for your donations. Please share the FVSO story where you can. Every dollar counts and goes directly to support the kids.

**Patrick R. Leary**  
President, FVSO

## The Advisory Board takes shape with 2 founding members

We welcome John Scott and Bruce Herron to the newly established FVSO Advisory Board. There always seems to be more work to be done than resources available to do it, especially for a volunteer charity. We are most grateful that John and Bruce have stepped up to help us with their special talents. The Advisory Board will focus on one or two specific topics and come up with recommendations for the Board of Directors on how to proceed into the future.

One topic that has been on our radar for sometime is that of grants. Our donors have been most generous, but as we have grown we have seen significant opportunities, special projects, that could be considered, only...if we had the funds, above and beyond what we spend on Basic Needs. We hope that grants might be a pathway that allows us to address those additional needs. We've asked our newly formed Advisory Board to look into grants and see what is possible for us. So, John and Bruce, welcome and thanks much for volunteering! We look forward to the results of your inquiries.

Below is a recent email sent to us from John.



It's real easy to get involved when you see faces like these

Hello Everyone,

It is an honor to be selected to serve on the **Advisory Board**. I hope we can find ways to develop additional means to keep the orphanages progressing.

The grant situation has changed dramatically in the last five to ten years. At one time it seemed like all you had to do was type a proposal and submit it and then you received a letter stating you were the recipient of the grant.

A little about me.

At present, I own a farm near Princeton, WV. I am married with three grown children. My working years until retirement, were with WV University and Virginia Tech as an agricultural extension agent.

Now, I operate a livestock farm (sheep, cattle and goats). We farm 300 of our own acres and rent another 100. This is mainly a grass farming operation. With our mountains, it is impossible to do much cropping.

I will be glad to work with everyone on any project. I am the kind of person that will be agitated if you know something that would assist and do not tell me immediately that something else may be better. If I knew so much, I would sure have a higher calling than a WV Hill Farmer.

I look forward to our future relationship.

John Scott, Jr.

## The Vinh Son kids gather to wait their turn with the dentist



Over the last 6 years, the East Meets West Dental Clinic has been an invaluable partner in bringing dental care to Vinh Son. They taught us a great deal about managing dental services in the Kontum area. Armed with this knowledge, we are now prepared to expand our program, and become more efficient when it comes to pricing and budget concerns.

When FVSO Board members, Clyde and Pat, were in Kontum in April, they noted the logistic problems for getting the kids to and from the dental clinic in Kontum. Four of the six orphanages in Kontum are remote, 30-45 minutes by motorbike on unimproved roads from Kontum. To make it harder, there are no rental vehicles large enough to transport the kids. The biggest would be what we would consider a small van for a soccer mom. Lots of trips, planning, and manpower. And so much could go wrong. A new plan was necessary to maintain dental care for the children of the Vinh Son orphanages.

Our friends, Thanh Le and Van Tran from Children of Vinh Son (CoVS), have been wonderful partners in developing a solution. A local dentist was identified, who would be willing to pack up his staff and equipment and visit each orphanage site. When Clyde and Pat were there, they inspected his Kontum office and reviewed his procedures to confirm his qualifications. Over the last two months, FVSO has been negotiating the program and as of July 6<sup>th</sup>, we now have employed his services. With this new program (in partnership with CoVS), many more kids will be seeing a dentist regularly. This is a great example how your contributions are making a better life for “our” kids. Without you, there would be no dental care for the children of Vinh Son.

FVSO also supports the dental care for Sao Mai orphanage in Pleiku. Through the efforts of our dear friend, Ms. Thien, 33 children were treated at a local clinic in June, receiving care for tooth extraction, cavity fillings, and basic cleaning. According to Thien, “the children feel comfortable on the dental chair.”

We'll continue to provide reports on how this project is progressing. In the meantime, here are some images of the new program. The happy smiles have even more meaning now!



**It's hard to smile when someone has a dental instrument in your mouth, but these kids come away from their appointments with huge grins, perhaps relieved to know...It's over!"**

# Our ad will appear in the Sep/Oct issue of The VVA Veteran magazine

With 77,000 copies in circulation, The VVA Veteran is delivered to all members of Congress, VA Medical Centers and Vet Centers, as well as many libraries, colleges, and research institutions.



## Friends of Vinh Son Orphanages (FVSO) Vietnam

Over 800 children (predominately Montagnards) are living in 7 Vinh Son and Sao Mai orphanages, located in Vietnam's Central Highlands (Kontum/Pleiku). Because they depend heavily on outside assistance for their everyday existence, FVSO conducts an annual fundraising appeal (Aug-Dec), when contributions are matched dollar for dollar. Donations are also solicited and accepted year round from our loyal benefactors.

### Please Help Us

A non-profit humanitarian organization, FVSO was formed in 2005 for the sole purpose of meeting the needs of these very special children. Your donations are critical to that mission, and are tax deductible. 100% of the money goes to the care of the children.

### Keep Their Bowls Full



#### Long-term supporting organizations

- 189<sup>th</sup> Assault Helicopter Company
- Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 535, Nevada County, CA
- Counterparts Association
- 14<sup>th</sup> Combat Engineer Btn. Assoc.
- MilSpec Tours
- Fr. Luke Tran (VN-SHEP) Social Health Education Projects

The best way to find yourself, is to lose yourself in the service of others.

— *Mahatma Gandhi*

The great use of life is to spend it for something that outlasts it.

— *William James*

#### 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

- President** – Pat Leary
- Secretary** - Dennis Coyne
- Treasurer** - Colleen Sands
- Senior VP** - Pat McKee
- 1st VP** - Sr. Marie Dominique
- 2nd VP** - Michael Little

#### Board of Directors

- Hank Gonzales
- Rich Lahey
- Clyde Lewandowski
- Bart Ruud
- Dave Chaix
- Steve Fisher

#### Advisory Board

- John Scott
- Bruce Herron

#### 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