

Checks payable to: VSO or VinhSon Orphanage

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

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David M. Berdy M.D. - "House Call" to Vinh Son

Dr. David M. Berdy, President of Sylvan Lakes Family Physicians, Sylvania, OH (near Toledo) will visit the orphanages early August 2007 for one week. David found us through a Google search in his desire to expand health care to the poor. He is no stranger to 3rd world countries. He has been providing health care to the very poor of Chittagong, Bangladesh for the last 7 years.

Dr. Berdy is also the Executive Director of the Bridge of Grace Foundation that aims to "endow the lives of those in greatest need

with the love of Jesus Christ through medical, social, educational, and financial outreach to the extent that one day they can in turn do likewise." To find out more about David and his work, go to www.bridgeofgrace.org

Dr. Berdy will assess and treat the children at Vinh Son. We hope that this will be the beginning of a long term relationship with VSO.

Dr. Berdy will visit Kontum after he completes his medical mission in Bangladesh. He will conduct

an assessment of the children's health and provide medical services while he is there. VSO will support his Kontum visit by paying for the medicines, etc. that he will use to treat the children. Other expenses (travel, etc. will be paid by Dr. Berdy). Once Dr. Berdy returns and writes his report, VSO will publish it as soon as possible.



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\$2,500 Donor Challenge From St. Cloud Truck Sales & Clyde Lewandowski - July 11 - August 10, 2007 Will Help Fund Medical Needs

At our June 20, 2007 Richmond, CA semi annual board meeting, Board Member, Clyde Lewandowski informed us that a new Challenge Donation of \$2,000 was offered by St. Cloud Truck Sales, St. Cloud, MN and another \$500 from Clyde for a total challenge of **\$2,500**. Funds from Donor Challenge will be used to support the work that Dr. David Berdy will perform in Kontum and future medical needs.

The Challenge will be officially launched via an upcoming email, as well as regular post. We hope that our supporters will donate during this time frame. Your donation will be matched by St. Cloud Truck

Sales and Clyde which means essentially a double contribution to VSO.

Between July 11 to August 10 - every dollar donated is worth Two

We remind all our supporters to check our web site for the latest news and information. Click or go <http://www.FriendsofVSO.org> to visit our site.

(Clyde at VSO & St. Cloud Truck Sales)



VinhSon Facts

- Population - more than 500 Montagnard children in four facilities
- Administered by the Sisters of the Miraculous Medal
- Location - Kontum, Vietnam in the Central Highlands
- About \$12 feeds, shelters, and educates one child for a month

Finding Peace from the Past - Bart Ruud's thoughts from the February Trip

Roughly three years ago, Friends of Vinh Son president Dave Chaix told me I would one day return to Vietnam in search of emotional and spiritual peace of mind from long-held remembrances of combat zone service with the U.S. Army. Although I had known Dave since the 1960s and had trust in him, my answer was then a definitive "No, I don't think so." Dave, however, allowed that when the time was right, I would make a trip to Vietnam with him. He told me a return there would enable me to find solace from the demons of war and a sense of healing were I to visit with the children and their caregivers in Kontum at the Vinh Son Montagnard Orphanage. The orphanage piece intrigued me because while in-country during the war, I had contributed funds to an orphanage populated by Vietnamese war orphans. Dave's passion for VSO resonated with me and after studying the VSO mission, I began to see the Friends work as an extraordinary philanthropic calling, a calling I would participate in because I saw it as a worthy cause.

In 1971-72, I was assigned by the Army as a Section Chief of a counter mortar counter battery radar section attached to the 3/82 Field Artillery, 196th Light Infantry Brigade with headquarters in Danang. My combat zone experience changed my life forever, and though I buried my war demons for decades, my community college work as an educational counselor increasingly saw me interfacing with young veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan with their own demons of war. That exposure dredged up long-suppressed issues from which I sought relief.

Once again, Dave spoke to me about a trip he was planning to Kontum; he thought the time was right for me to join a small group of travelers that would visit the orphanage as well as key cities from Hanoi in the north to Ho Chi Minh City in the south. It took courage to commit to making the trip, but I un-

derstood I would never know if a return to Vietnam would help me unless I stepped up and traveled there with veterans and others committed to the Vinh Son Orphanage. If ever there were a safe means to travel to Vietnam, it would be with Vietnam war veterans who them-

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selves understood how personal every soldier's war is. A soldier's bond with another soldier is like none other in human experience, and that kind of bonding is a safety net.

Space cannot allow me to fully detail my emotions when we arrived in Hanoi on February 13, 2007. The air held an odor I will always associate with the country, the sights of Vietnamese women in their conical hats working rice



paddies, and old warriors proudly wearing their wartime helmets brought fear and chills and hyper-alertness to my being. The only thing that saved me from bolting was Dave's presence and quiet counsel about what to expect as we entered customs.

Within a short time I realized I was safe, and it was then I resolved to become "Joe Tourist" and soak up all I could. I found Hanoi a fascinating city and I even tolerated a visit to the famed "Hanoi Hilton." My early morning walks with Board member Hank Gonzales to watch the city wake up will be forever

etched in my memory. It was almost an epiphany to realize present-day Vietnam was not the country I left behind in 1972.

Our southward travel with guide extraordinaire, Tano, brought us within a few days to Hue, a locale I knew during the war, and it was there that I began to fight with emotions long suppressed but needing release. Release came in tears that sometimes could not be stymied no matter how hard I tried to control them. It only got worse as we traveled to Danang and Pleiku, but by the grace of God, my friends Dave, Tano, Clyde, Hank, Dennis and others were there to put a comforting hand on my back, walk with me, sit with me, talk to me or give me a hug. They understood my pain, they accepted me for where I was emotionally and they, more than I, knew the healing that might come from revisiting suppressed memories and emotions. These men were my safety net and they brought me through one of the most cathartic experiences of my life. The healing I needed but had long been denied was off to a good start and I know it can be continued with another trip that will again serve a joint purpose of dealing with raw emotion and spirituality as well as with the children of Vinh Son Orphanage.

The VSO effort, supported by thoughtful contributors, is universally a humanitarian cause with yet unknown dividends. The nuns who provide loving care, together with those who work the fields to produce food for the orphanage truly answer the call of God to provide for those that might otherwise perish. The children are happy, healthy, beguiling as only children can be, and they will grow into adulthood with life skills that will enable them to contribute toward the advancement of mankind in what is clearly a developing country, a country recovering from the ravages of a war long since ended.

My next visit to VSO will be easier. Our February 2007 visit found me reserved and detached, in part because my emotions were tied to my own suffrage and healing. Never the less, should anyone doubt the validity of the work of Friends of Vinh Son Orphanage, it would be a grave error. (next page)

Bart's Thoughts (cont.)

The children of Vinh Son gave me more during our 2007 visit than I gave them, but the tide will turn, and one day I hope to share the passion so evident in the actions of my friends. Their bonds with the children were genuine, heartwarming and joyful. I know that because I see it in photo-

graphs and I feel it in recollection of memories of our visit in Kontum.

As Helen Keller once said, "Life is either a daring adventure or nothing at all." My trip to Kontum was a daring adventure and one that changed my life. Thank you, Dave Chaix, for your insight and encourage-

ment to join the many benefactors of VSO.

Project Status Report – 2007

We're only halfway through the year, but it looks like 2007 will be our most successful year yet. During our February 2007 visit to The Vinh Son Orphanage we left funds to help with the basic needs of the children and now it is on to special Projects.

Although there is much work yet to do this year, we at VSO are optimistic because of your generosity and support. We are off to a great start!

The following is a status of our 2007 Project Plan:

<u>Vinh Son 1</u>	<u>Vinh Son 2</u>
<u>Funded:</u>	<u>Funded:</u>
Flour - 1Year	Flour - 1 Year
Tractor Repair	Sewing Formation
<u>Yet to be Funded:</u>	<u>Yet to be Funded:</u>
School Fees	School Fees
Add Teachers	Add Teachers
Wall/Fence	Tractor Repair
Swing Chair	
<u>Vinh Son 3</u>	<u>Vinh Son 4</u>
<u>Completed:</u>	<u>Completed:</u>
Bedroom Supl.	Bedroom Supplies
Kitchen Supplies	Kitchen Supplies
Telephone	Water Well
Kitchen Compl.	Rice - 1 Year
<u>Funded:</u>	<u>Funded:</u>
Bathrooms (3)	
<u>Yet to be Funded:</u>	<u>Yet to be Funded:</u>
Rice - 1 Year	Tractor and Trailer
Building Repairs	

(VS 1 Repaired Tractor Tires)



(VS 3 Kitchen prior to Re-Build)
(VS 3 Kitchen Re-Build next 4 photos)



(VS 4 Well Holding Tank)

