

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

P.O. Box 9322 Auburn, California 95604-9322 - Email: info@FriendsofVSO.org -Web: www.FriendsofVSO.org

July 2014 Newsletter - Volume 11 Issue 6

## In This Issue

- **Bart's in-depth report on the 1<sup>st</sup> half activities**
- **Financials, readying for the annual Aug-Dec Fundraiser**
- **A Ga Ney, a progress report from "down under"**
- **After Vinh Son, where do all the children go?**



**With your support, we've come a long way since 2005. Smiles like this, and 800 others, make it all worthwhile.**

On June 19<sup>th</sup>, FVSO held its mid-year Board meeting, a 3-hour discussion of pertinent issues, challenges and opportunities that will guide us through the balance of the year. Board member, Bart Ruud, prepared an excellent report for this meeting, and it's reprinted here for your review.

In the spirit of transparency, Bart has laid out exactly where your donations have translated into action and impacted the lives of so many children. For all you do to support FVSO...**THANK YOU!**

## **FVSO Projects and Electronic Fund Transfers (EFT's) Summary - June 30, 2014**

### **Projects undertaken during the period January 2 – June 30, 2014**

1. Pharmacy School for three students. \$800 funded by Richard "Doc" Blanchfield and Lillian Ferretti. January 15, 2014. Students are doing well in the first year of a three-year program.
2. Funds of \$1,375 sent on February 12, 2014 to Paul Cole and Carmel Excell, A Ga Nay's adoptive parents in Sydney, Australia. These funds were holdover funds contributed by members of the 189<sup>th</sup> Assault Helicopter Company for A Ga Nay's care.
3. Water system maintenance and water purity testing every two months under the direction of *Viet Dreams*. Year 2014 funded in December 2013 for the sum of \$2,275. This project is a 50:50 partnership with *Viet Dreams*.
4. Pleiku Dental Clinic with oversight provided by Thien (\$550 used was leftover from 2013 clinics).
5. East Meets West Foundation mobile dental clinic, April 2014. \$8,000 paid in Dec. 2013. Funded by Dave and Claire Christensen, Bob and Carolyn Lee, and Father Tom Relihan and members of his parish in Lone, CA.
6. Epilepsy medications for Sao Mai girls – included in quarterly funds sent to the Sao Mai Orphanage. (\$195.00 per quarter).

## These summaries highlight how your donations make the difference

7. Laptop computer, portable hard drive, speakers for VS-4 as arranged by Marie Tran. \$691.43 reimbursed to Marie Tran, visiting Kontum from Lynwood, WA during April and May 2014. Project approved May 15, 2014. (Project originally approved for \$620 but a cost overrun was incurred and absorbed).
8. Washing Machine for VS-1. \$460.00 sent 6/10/2014 (funded by Bruce and Susan Herron).
9. Motorbike repairs for the bike at VS-4 were required and a sum of \$75 was contributed from discretionary funds to assist with that need.
10. VS-4 Sister Lien requested repairs to a shower facility for the boys. Cost was \$235. Funds sent 6/10/2014.
11. VS-4 requested a sewing room. Cost was \$810. Funds sent 6/10/2014.
12. VS-4 requested funds to send one student to a bicycle repair course, which lasts six months. Cost is \$200 and this includes tools needed. Funds sent 6/10/2014.
13. Five new bicycles were purchased with \$500 in funds left at VS-5 during the April visit.
14. Vinh Son 6 patio development. May 2014. A joint project with Richard Grame. \$2,000. Funds sent to Mr. Grame in May 2014 (project completed).
15. VS-6 Sister Nhun requested an additional \$1,000 to be added to the \$500 left in April 2014 to make repairs to electrical circuits and to the water system. Repair work is in progress and photos documenting the work have been received. The additional \$1,000 was sent with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Qtr. EFT on 6/10/2014 (funded by Steve Holley).
16. Funds were requested to send two VS-6 students to automotive technical training in Gia Lai. Cost will be about \$50 per month for each boy. The cost includes tuition, room and board. Training lasts two years. Funds of \$1,200 for the first year were sent 6/10/2014 (funded by Steve Holley).
17. Vietnamese Language Instruction for one Sister at VS-6 for a trial period of six months. Approved May 14, 2014. Cost said to be \$570. Awaiting project evaluation methodology. (Funding for three teachers was originally requested). Funds of \$570 sent 6/10/2014.
18. Parasite medications for start of 2014-15 school year. \$850 sent 6/10/2014.
19. Five cameras at a cost of \$625 were purchased during the April visit for VS- 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, none of which previously had a camera.

### EFTs distributed during the period January 2 – June 30, 2014

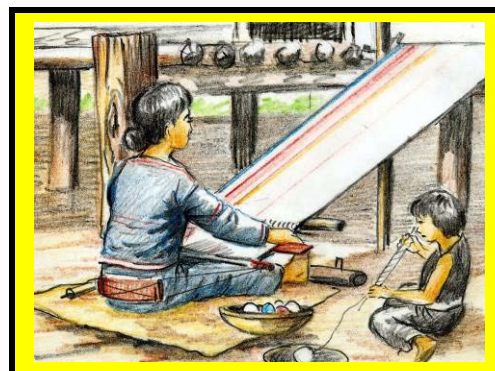
1. 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Sao Mai Basic Needs (\$1,800 sent 3/24/2014)
2. 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter VSO Basic Needs (\$16,930 sent 3/24/2014)
3. Discretionary funds carried to SAO MAI & VSO in April 2014. (\$7,550)
4. 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Sao Mai Basic Needs (\$1,800 sent 6/10/2014)
5. 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter VSO Basic Needs (\$22,405.00 sent 6/10/2014)

### Anticipated EFTs

1. Sao Mai Basic Needs – 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2014 TO BE SENT September 2014
2. 4<sup>th</sup> Qtr. Epilepsy Medications for girls at Sao Mai (\$195)
3. VSO Basic Needs – 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2014 TO BE SENT September 2014.

**Top Photo:** Future seamstresses learning their trade in a modern sewing class.

**Bottom Photo:** How it used to be done



# The work goes on

## Future Potential Projects

1. VS-3 Sister Gabriel requests cooking school for five students. Waiting for cost information.
2. VS-3 requests funds to send one student to Nursing School. Waiting for cost information.

## Matters of Interest

1. *Arts & Kids* Fundraiser with *Rhythm Riders*, February 15, 2014. \$11,500 distributed to FVSO.
2. Joint Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 535/FVSO fundraiser with *Rhythm Riders* on May 17, 2014. \$6,000 distributed to FVSO 6/5/2014.
3. Sister Marie Kham has resumed liaison activities for FVSO after a period of study in HCMC.
4. Diny Jansen Van der Linden and *Orphans of Kontum* will fund government education fees in 2014.
5. Marie Tran and members of *Children of Vinh Son* will partner with The Netherlands group, *Orphans of Kontum*, and fund 10% of school fees for 2014-15.
6. Thien will continue in 2014 to transport Sao Mai children to the Pleiku Dental Clinic. About \$550 remains in the fund she manages and this should cover 2014. (Children of VSO will receive their dental care through the East Meets West Foundation Dental Clinic).
7. The EMW Dental Clinic may be 50% funded by Marie Tran's organization (*Children of Vinh Son*) in 2015.
8. Paul and Nancy St. Pierre in 2013 funded \$1,200 for several students to study English in a three-year program. Year 1 is complete and the students are doing well.
9. Nurses are now in residence at VS - 1, 2, 3 and 5. Another nurse covers VS-4 & VS-6.
10. East Meets West Foundation Dental Clinic is tentatively scheduled for April 20 – 24, 2015 in Kontum.

### Financial Update (through June)

Our 2014 donation goal is \$125,000. To date, FVSO has received 330 donations for a total of \$69,425, down slightly from last year. However, with the fundraising period about to begin in August, our goal is within reach, needing \$55,575 to hit the annual target, setting us up for 2015.

So far, disbursements to the orphanages equal \$55,551. As you've learned from Bart's report, we've met our obligations and look forward to a strong finish.

### COMING SOON

Annual Fundraising  
Appeal  
August – December

Matching Funds  
Program



A Ga Ney leads the way!  
At play with Zac and Dominique

**CHEERS MATE!!**

### A Ga Ney at home in Australia

A Ga Ney has been in Australia for just over 6 months now. Carmel Excel-Cole is doing a wonderful job with him. The first order of business was to have a thorough physical and identify a course of actions for the several problems that he had. To be brief, the treatments for ear blockages, lung development and some blood issues are well on their way and look successful. He is also developing physically and socially very well.

The administrative order of business was to get his 6 months medical visa extended. Carmel was able to do that and his visa now is good until June 2015. There is still the outstanding question of his long term that Carmel is working on.

That was the technical stuff. Now, the fun stuff about A Ga Ney. We are blessed to have someone as skilled and attentive to him for his social development as Carmel and her family. They live on a mini-farm loaded with alpaca, ducks, geese, cats, dogs, a big garden and a number of family and neighborhood children.

# FVSO Board Member, Pat Leary, has been following his godson's progress

## A Ga Ney Continued....

AGN has transformed from a reclusive, shy 2 year old to an outgoing and interactive 2.5 year old, complete with “whopper temper tantrums”. He loves playing with the small animals and is no longer afraid of the bigger ones. He “helps” in the garden, mostly by eating produce “just as he picks it”.

He weighs in at 22.5 lbs which for western standards is the very low side of normal. He looks pudgy because his 22.5 lbs is packed on a small frame. Carmel is doing her best to keep him versed in both Vietnamese and English. He understands both but is speaking mostly English. Basically, he is developing into a 2.5 year old we would all recognize in our neighborhoods.

A Ga Ney is just one of the 850 kids that FVSO works to help every year. He has been blessed by a determination that allowed him to survive 24 months against incredible odds in Kontum and to be blessed by Carmel's care for the last 6. Somehow, I have to believe that A Ga Ney has a significant destiny ahead of him.

I am most privileged to be part of FVSO and thankful to all the generous donors who make this work possible.

## Where do all the children go?

Many people are curious about what happens to the orphans when their time comes to leave Vinh Son. There is actually no rule on when a child must leave, as they are free to stay or go. Each child's circumstance is considered unique, and the Sisters nourish their goals and aspirations. Many children simply stay because Vinh Son is their home.

The Sisters don't have the resources to track the kids once they leave VS. After 12<sup>th</sup> grade, some return to their villages, continuing the traditional work of their ancestors. Others are allowed to find jobs at the orphanage (sewing, gardening, bike repairing, etc.). Some are also fortunate enough to become teachers, tailors, nuns, accountants or secretaries and move away. Of course, a good many will marry and start families of their own; although they will relocate, it's common for the former VS orphans to revisit their old home to pay respects to their caregivers and see old friends.

**“They learn to live with love and unity.”**



**Sister Marie That**, from Sao Mai, is a highly devoted nurse and care-giver. She is committed to the education and development of “her” children. Love for the kids is the basis for everything she does.

### Long-term supporting organizations

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



### 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** - Dave Chaix
- Secretary** - Dennis Coyne
- Treasurer** - Colleen Sands
- Senior VP** - Pat McKee
- 1st VP** - Sr. Marie Dominique
- 2nd VP** - Michael Little

### Board

- Hank Gonzales
- Rich Lahey
- Clyde Lewandowski
- Bart Ruud
- Patrick Leary

### 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