

October Newsletter 2020 Volume 17 Issue 10

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2020 Fund Drive Target

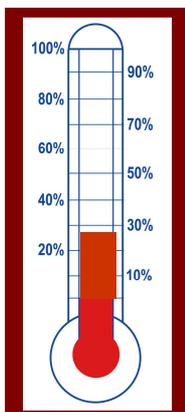
\$150,000

Donations To Date (9/30)

\$42,289

Needed To Reach Target

\$107,711



Percent Achieved Through Sept. = 28.2%

For The Kids Progress Report

You are amazing. Two months into our fund drive, we are 28% towards our goal of \$150,000. This year has been full of more twists than a Bavarian Pretzel, yet you have maintained the pace of last year's donations when the world was relatively peaceful, calm and secure. The children have truly been blessed.

In the October newsletter, you will learn about the kids going back to school and a little about our higher education program.

We are proud of the focus the Sisters have on education. The payback is not only huge but also long lasting. We believe the beginning for many generations into the future.

Our mission has long been to help the Sisters and the kids become self-sufficient. The success of programs like Sr. Kham's chicken ranch and BBQ service and our education programs are clear signs we are on the right track. That would not have been possible without your help. On behalf of the kids, the Sisters and the Board, **Thank You!**

Pat Leary, FVSO President

FVSO Treasurer Retires

It is with deep appreciation for his service that we have accepted the departure of Ken Tokutomi from the FVSO Board of Directors. Ken has served as our Treasurer since April 2017. He has done a wonderful job, often unrecognized behind the scenes, to keep our finances in order. Ken has done this while being an active community leader as well. We have been blessed to have Ken's expertise and guidance during his tenure. The essential position of Treasurer will be filled by Gene Mapa, currently FVSO Assistant Treasurer. Gene is well qualified to fill the role and we are thankful that he has volunteered to assume this critical role.

FVSO Board

School Is Back In Session In Vietnam

The new school year 2020-2021

Article and Photos courtesy of Martha Phanh

The school summer vacation of this year has just ended officially and the new school year 2020-2021 has already restarted for the children of Vinh Son Orphanages (VSO). It is a special school year because it began after a very short summer vacation, different from the previous year. This summer, the children had only thirty days-off at home and after that, most of the students had to be back to school immediately. Because of the Covid 19 pandemic and the long period of isolation, the past school year was interrupted and wasn't completed until very late at the end of July.



On the morning of September 5th, 2020, there were 729 children from all six VSO locations, each wearing clean school uniforms. They happily went to school to attend the opening ceremony of the new school year: The young girls of the senior high school were wearing their Vietnamese traditional white "AODAI" as their school uniform. The boys of senior high school age and all the students of the junior high school also wore their new school uniforms, a white shirt and blue trousers with a red scarf around their necks. They had on white sport shoes with school badges on their white shirts. For the ethnic minority students of the primary school, they were dressed in their ethnic traditional uniforms with many different vibrant colors, looking very nice. Most of the children are very happy and eager to start their new school year. They were very glad to meet their old classmates and teachers, and they quickly made friends with the newcomers in their classes.



Above: "the hat brigade of Vinh Son" boys and girls on their way to kindergarten

Each year, FVSO celebrates opening day of school, along with the Vinh Son children of all grade levels (K through 12), by sharing these images of happy and excited kids. They realize the value of education and try their hardest in the classroom. GOOD LUCK to our students!



Schools are open, but the precautions remain

The opening ceremony was organized differently from the previous year because of the Covid 19 pandemic. It was much shorter. In order to avoid and prevent the infection of Coronavirus, the Service of Education and Formation of Kontum province has instructed all schools to hold the opening ceremony was not longer than one hour, without parades, balloons, musical performances and without reading the school achievements. All the students had to keep the social distance during the period of the pandemic so they must not sit close together in the schoolyard. All wore masks and washed their hands with alcoholic antiseptic gel at the school gate before coming in their school. At school, they had to keep a two meter distance amongst them and they must not gather in the three and four person groups. For the children with the symptoms of coughs, runny nose, or fever were reminded to stay at home and all the students had to be serious in doing their medical reports.

After the shortened and simple rites (saluting the national flag and singing our national anthem), delegates from the Peoples Committee were introduced, as were representatives from local wards and communes. Also, a letter from Vietnam's President was read, wishing the children good luck. Finally, at the end of the ceremony, the head master beat three rolls of drums to signal the new school year has started. After that, the students filed into their classes for the first period and they felt very happy and eager to be back in school.

We hope this new school year will bring back lots of good results in studying and teaching at all the schools here in our Kontum province of Vietnam. Although the Covid 19 pandemic hasn't disappeared in the world nor in Vietnam, we believe that strong solidarity of all Vietnamese people will repel this pandemic. The children of VSO will work hard to obtain good results in the new school year 2020-2021. Now that the school year has started officially, we pray God bless all of us and we wish all the children full of joy, happiness and success in their school studies.



Even if it's a little thing, do something for those who have need of a man's help, something for which you get no pay but the privilege of doing it. For, remember, you don't live in a world all your own. Your brothers are here too.
~Albert Schweitzer





You shop. Amazon gives.

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.

A \$1,000 Investment Returns a Great Bounty

FVSO Board members, Clyde and Nga, manage our scholarship program in partnership with Martha and three student leaders in Kontum. The rewards have been multiple and bountiful. Our \$1,000 scholarships have provided each participant with basic necessities and the tools to succeed. To date, our program has sponsored 46 college students, with 21 having graduated with degrees in nursing, teaching, computer science and social work.

About 25 Trade School students have attended the Don Bosco program, graduating as small engine mechanics, electricians and bakers. FVSO pays for half of their tuition.

Currently, we have 23 active scholarships and will be awarding more in the near future. Many of the graduates, especially the nurses and teachers, return to Vinh Son to apply their new skills and gain practical experience.

We are proud of all our students, and FVSO supporters have our deepest appreciation. If you would like to help these students follow their dreams, please note **“Education”** somewhere on your contribution check. We’ll make sure it gets to the right people.



With education comes hope for a productive and satisfying life. If you can, please help us fulfill that dream.



Legacy Fund Update

The goals are:

\$1.0m by Dec 2020

\$2.0m by Dec 2025

Legacy Fund Balance

\$759,799

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.

Officers & Board Members

Pat Leary
Nga Wynne
Gene Mapa
Bart Ruud
Clyde Lewandowski
Michael Little
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Dave Chaix
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2nd VP
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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 on-line.