

Friends of Vinh Son Montagnard Orphanage

MARCH NEWSLETTER

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2023 Budget Report

Our team has safely returned from Kontum and Pleiku. This was our first visit since January 2020. Elsewhere in this newsletter, and subsequent newsletters, we will share their adventure. They were able to confirm a lot of what we thought we knew, plus adding some valuable insight.

The biggest insight was the impact of raging inflation (estimated at 30% for basic food items) in Vietnam. We had some clues, but it appears to be more severe in the rural areas. This had a major influence on our budget commitments, resulting in a vote for significant increases. However, because of your generosity, we had enough cash carryover from 2022 and decided it was best to allocate it now.

The increase breaks out as follows:

- Basic (food and medicine) needs at all 6 VS locations plus Sao Mai increased by an overall 27%.
- We added further dental support to 150 children at a remote Sao Mai location.
- We added one more community that will receive FVSO support, **Sa Thay**, a home for young female adults (more info on Sa Thay in this newsletter)
- As expected, the biggest increase was in Capital Projects. The Sisters submitted 10 projects that totaled about \$156,000. One of the projects, a chicken farm, was funded by travelers during the trip.
- Another project, a water tank at VS-5, did not have enough definition for us to justify the expense right now, so we've asked for more details.

The scope of the projects was similar to 2022, but we found and confirmed labor inflation and basic building materials have increased significantly. Some of the projects are revenue producing (chickens, cows, rubber trees and bakeries), some are sanitary (bathrooms and kitchens) and a few are quality of life (roof and fence repairs).

Overall, our budget increased to \$380,000, which is a 12% increase over last year. It's a huge step for us but we know it is the right direction. Your continued support is greatly appreciated.



Contact & Donation Information

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Meet Sister Marie Y Kham (top center)

Along with a few of her 55 high school students living at the Sa Thay boarding house. All of them belong to the Jarai Montagnard tribe and are focused on the successful completion of their High School education. Hopefully, some graduates will find higher education opportunities as well.

- At left: a welcoming committee awaits the arrival of our travelers.
- Below: a clean water system has been installed by our partner, VietDreams



FVSO “adopts” the Sa Thay student community

Martha, Associate editor, made this detailed report

It takes about 40 minutes to drive from Kontum to Sa Thay district. We refer to Sa Thay as a boarding house because poor Jarai kids living there are not orphans like the ones of Vinh Son or Sao Mai. However, their families are very poor and it's difficult for them to supply meals and to pay for their school fees; but they love school very much so the Sisters built this boarding house to help them.

The Congregation of Sa Thay was founded in 2008 by the Immaculate Miraculous Medal Convent of Kontum Diocese because the Catholic Christians there needed urgent pastoral work and the missionary for this region. In August, 2022, Sr Marie Y Kham was sent to this congregation to be Sister in charge. At the moment there are three Sisters in this congregation: Sr Y Kham, and two other Sisters who are responsible for the young people, ethnic mothers' education and for the missionary in the Jarai villages.

The Sisters face a lot of challenges, such as social evils that have been infiltrating the lives of the ethnic minority people in Jarai villages. There are many families here with difficulties leading to divorce and there are many young Catholic Christians who follow bad trends. There are also many ethnic minority students who have dropped out of school early because their family situation is too poor. The education in this area is very necessary and important for the younger generation, and especially for the young ethnic minority mothers. The ethnic tribes in this area all follow the matriarchy, so the role and the duty of the mother is top priority and most important in the development of the family and in the education of their children.

They have a small kitchen and they use firewood for cooking and they can make their own food. The parish church is near their boarding house so they can go to Mass every day. Presently, there are 55 Jarai female students who are staying in this boarding house. They are in different grades of the high school. The Sisters try to help these poor children who love school and the Sisters hope the children will use their knowledge to get their good jobs. Hopefully, the situation of Jarai people's lives of Sa Thay will be improved. In the future, these families will be good examples for other ones in the Sa Thay district.

In January, a group of FVSO benefactors (Dave, Bart and Gene) visited Sa Thay. While there, they gave the Jarai students: 1 motorbike, 1 whiteboard, 3 bicycles and helmets. They were very thankful to all the benefactors who gave added strength to Sr Mary Y Kham and everyone at Sa Thay.

Sa Thay takes its place beside Vinh Son and Sao Mai with support from FVSO.



- Above: Sister Marie Kham test drives her new motorbike
- Below: The clean water system will make a huge difference in their lives



Expenditures for 2023 Capital Projects

Approved by the Board, January 28, 2023
Electronic Fund Transfers to Vietnam

EFT amount: \$42,160

- VS-2 Build new house and kitchen
(In progress below)

EFT amount: \$37,700

- VS-3 - Toilets, bathroom, clothes drying

EFT amount: \$44,791

- VS-1 \$2,891 for Chickens
- VS-1 \$19,533 for Rubber Trees
- VS-1 \$3,105 Remodel bathroom
- VS-5 \$2,300 Repair Fence
- VS-5 \$17,410 New water system (on hold)
- VS-6 \$16,967 New Roof, Repair Kitchen
- VS-6 2 cows, already purchased (\$1,500)

EFT amount: \$31,500

- VS-4 \$14,400 Rubber Trees
- VS-4 \$17,100 for Hennerly

TOTAL AMOUNT (4 EFT's) = \$156,151

Bart's final comments on his Vinh Son reunion, January 2023

An overall highlight for me is seeing movements toward self-sufficiency with production of bread for sale at the sites with baking ovens, and the productivity of the banana farms, manioc plantings, rubber tree plantations, and hog and chicken production has resulted in a good return on investment. Anything we can do to enhance self-sufficiency and sustainability should be a priority. Nearly equal as a quantifying highlight is the overall health of all the children.



Legacy Fund Update

The goal is \$2million by March 2027

Legacy Fund Balance

\$873,335



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|-------------|------------------|
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Comments are welcome!

Orphanage Facts

About 700 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 (Vinh Son) and St. Paul Chartres (Sao Mai).

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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.