

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

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September 2017 Newsletter - Volume 14 Issue 7

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Matching Fund Donation Challenge

Beginning in August, every dollar donated to FVSO will be **MATCHED** up to \$28,150



The question on her mind is "how can I thank everyone who gives me life?"

Matching Fund Update for August

Beginning Matching Fund = \$28,150

Matched Donations = \$14,174

Matching Fund Balance = \$13,976

2017 Operating Target = \$130,000

Total YTD Donations = \$117,709

Remaining 2017 Balance = \$12,291

It takes “all hands on deck” to maintain Vinh Son & Sao Mai

A message from FVSO President, Pat Leary

We are just launching our annual matching fund campaign. As I write this, I understand that we are doing well in the first month. Dave has a detailed report to follow. Every year we work to establish a budget. Establishing a consistent and reliable budget is of paramount importance for the nuns to plan and operate an organization that raises 850 kids! Through the hard work of the Board and the continued generosity of our donors, we have been able to do that since 2005. What an achievement!

I have often been asked, “how is our money used?” Our mission statement is on the front page of our WEB site, but to recap: “FVSO raises funds to help the sisters provide a quality life for the children....through education, developing life skills, providing a safe environment and providing food, clothing, shelter and medical care.”

That is a pretty big undertaking and quite frankly, the burden of the work falls upon the nuns. FVSO is a significant portion of their support. To be sure, there are also other charities who provide help for the kids. However, it is the daily labors, and I do mean labors, of the nuns that make this whole thing work.

In previous newsletters, you have read how your donations have helped make sure each child gets a protein meal daily, how clean water systems and dental care have significantly reduced medical expenses, how the nuns have been able to develop self supporting enterprises with bakeries, agriculture and live stock. We help fund infrastructure projects so the kids have safe and sturdy living compounds. We have teens in trade school and we have 3 recent college graduates and 19 more in college this year on FVSO scholarships.

Our work is far from over. Next time you are out in a crowd, try to imagine what 850 children and perhaps 150 caregivers looks like. That is the scope of what the nuns must manage 24 hours every day, every week, every month, all year. Your donations throughout the year, and especially during our annual campaign, enable us to establish a budget the nuns can rely on. Your donations help us build our Legacy Fund so that our work can continue after we no longer can. Finally, your donations help us with our scholarship fund, knowing that education is perhaps the longest lasting gift we can give.

Your generosity makes so much possible. Please think of us as the year draws to a close and we promote our annual matching campaign. For those who already have sent in matching funds this year...

A GREAT BIG THANK YOU !!



A look of youthful concern, a smile of complete joy, and a grin for the camera... each one opens the door to your heart

Two Construction Projects nearing completion

Because of our limited budget, FVSO is very careful in choosing building projects, and it takes the Board approval to go forward. The construction of security/safety fences at VS-4 (left) and VS-6 (right) met the criteria for...need, cost, accountability. The safety of the children, as well as the overall security of the orphanages, were paramount factors in our decision making. Everyone can sleep better at night.



Students of Today - Role models for the Future

Education is the key to their future and to those who follow in their footsteps

Education Report (prepared by Clyde Lewandowski)

As you have been reading in past newsletters, education for the older students is becoming more and more important. Ten years ago, there did not seem to be many kids who went to school beyond the 8th grade. But because of the example of some of the sisters and a few of the students who felt strongly enough about higher education to strike out and attend college in Vietnam, excitement about college education has been growing.

Last school year, FVSO contributors supported 10 Kontum students with scholarships. Four more from Pleiku were added two months ago. Based on existing contributions that are dedicated to higher education, we should be able to add 10 new students to the scholarship program each year for the next 4 years. But, the sisters tell us there may be as many as 20 or 25 students who hope to enroll this fall. That is at least double the number we can currently support.

The annual education cost for a student who goes to college in Kontum is about \$1,000 for each year of a 3 or 4 year program. The total cost can be as much as \$3,500 for students who go to college in Da Nang, Hue, or Saigon.

Education may be the key to help these kids break out of the cycle of poverty. And, education certainly leads to a more enlightened society with members who are willing to reach out to help others. Many of those who graduated are paying back by working at the orphanage without pay for a year before taking a job.

If you feel strongly about education, please know that you can direct your contributions to scholarships simply by including a note or writing "EDUCATION" in the memo line on your contribution check.

The sisters, students, and board members thank each of you who are presently helping with the education fund.

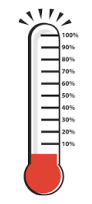
June Board Meeting, Key Takeaways

On June 26th we held our semi-annual board meeting. Because of the geographic distances, we conduct this by phone conference and all Board members were present. To paraphrase an oft-quoted statement...**The state of FVSO is good.** We try to keep Board members and donors current through our newsletters, so project reports were brief and most encouraging. We continue to meet our Mission Statement. We reviewed our work with other non-profits to make sure all of our efforts compliment each other.

A good portion of our time was spent discussing financial issues. From a donation standpoint, we are running 20% behind 2016. 2015 and 2016 were a great years for donations and we hope we can catch up. We have new ads in veteran magazines that are expanding our message. Our Legacy Fund is well established and it continues to grow. We are excited about the possibilities. We are also managing our annual donor challenge. The goal for the year is to raise a total of \$130,000 and with everyone's hard work, I'm confident that we'll get there. Our next Board Meeting is scheduled for the end of December.



Legacy Fund Update
 Target is \$2.0m in 10 years
 Total contributions to date
\$402,065
 % achieved = 20%



Please join us in thanking these benefactors for supporting the Matching Fund Donation Challenge

- Hanson McClain Financial Advisors, Sacramento, CA
- VVA Chapter 535 Nevada County, CA
- Dave and Claire Christensen, Auburn, CA
- Fr. Thomas Relihan & Parishioners, Lone, CA
- Michael and Tina Burke, Auburn, CA
- Jim and Jane Gardner, Mount Aukum, CA
- Marine Corps League 711, Monterey Bay, CA
- Jim and Susan Sheahan, Camp Verde, AZ

Legacy Contributors

- Jim & Jane Gardner
- Henry Huddleston
- Glen Smith
- William Higbee
- Corps Detachment 711

Legacy Contributors

- William Higbee (New)
- VVA Chapter 535 (New)

Long-term supporting organizations

- 189th & 155th Assault Helicopter Companies
- 227th Assault Helicopter Battalion (A and D Companies)
- VN Veterans of America, Chapter 535, Nevada Cnty, CA
- Marine Corps League Detachment 711, Salinas, CA
- Counterparts Association
- 14th Combat Engineer Btn. Association
- MilSpec Tours (800-953-5812)
- Fr. Luke Tran (VN-SHEP) Social Health Education Projects
- Fr. Relihan, Sacred Heart Church, Lone, CA
- Rotary Club of San Juan Capistrano, CA

amazon smile

Support FVSO by starting your shopping at smile.amazon.com

Words Of Wisdom

Those who bring sunshine to the lives of others, can not keep it from themselves.

-- Irish blessing

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** - Nga Wynne
- Treasurer** – Ken Tokutomi
- 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
- Colleen Sands
- Social Media Advisor**
Sean Grame

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