



Children of Vietnam

Mission: to provide direct aid to poor and handicapped children in Vietnam

December News Update 2006

From our president, Ben Wilson

Vietnam Factoids:

- ◆ Population: 80 million
- ◆ Size: about twice the size of North Carolina
- ◆ Half of the population is under age 25
- ◆ Literacy rate: 89%
- ◆ Per capita income: \$350
- ◆ 40% of population lives below the poverty line
- ◆ 38% of children under 5 are malnourished.
- ◆ Land mines and unexploded armament are still a threat to children.
- ◆ Education is not free
- ◆ Children with intestinal parasites are common

DISASTER – During the night of October 1, Typhoon Xangsane struck Danang City in Central Vietnam with full force winds of 90 MPH creating havoc, resulting in damaged and destroyed houses, factories, schools, businesses, trees, and the main power system.

DISASTER seems to be the byword in Central Vietnam this year. More than 20% of the 376 houses we have built since our beginning were completely destroyed and 36% damaged.

Our staff responded immediately and have been working tirelessly to assess and rebuild. Our goal is to replace 75 houses costing \$940 and repair 137 houses costing \$250 at to

excellent living conditions. A typical house is 12 ft X 26 ft, has two rooms, cement floor, brick walls with stucco covering, septic tank, inside toilet, and electricity if available in the region.



Your support is *always deeply appreciated* by the people and their children in such a crisis, as it is the only path to existence. *We are committed to keeping the children we serve from*

falling back into homelessness and destitute poverty by undertaking this major repair program, and we are hoping you will join with a gift by the year's end.

— Ben Wilson

TA BA KHAHN'S STORY

—as told by his mother

When being born, my Son unfortunately got fatal disease: inborn heart disease. Being know that, my family was extremely sorrowful. He is too young, but has to get stuck into a fatal disease. It seemed to my family that, his life will be driven into a nonplus, because if he wants to get over the fatal disease, the family has to spend money of 20 million VND [\$1,249] on his surgery. However, this is a very big money for poor labors like us. We, from bottom of our heart want to give him treatment, but we could not afford the surgery for him. His father is only a porter, does not have a stable job. I myself have to stay at home to look

after my son.

Our family is very lucky when being considered by you and we wish that you will give more and more support to children, the seeds of the future. I wish that there will be happy tears falling down on the face of mothers when their children are saved. I understand that because I am myself also a mother.

The story of Ta Ba Khahn is typical. For many Vietnamese children health care is a luxury their families are rarely able to afford. Basic needs such as shelter and food simply take precedence. When medical needs are complex as in the case of orthopedic deformities, land mine injuries, or heart complications, these children face dire prospects.

Since COV's founding almost a decade ago, we have worked to alleviate the immediate hunger and pain of children while simultaneously providing assistance to them and their families to build sustainable avenues out of poverty. Our Health and Well-being Initiative is one of four in which we work to fulfill our mission. In this initiative alone, during 2005 we offered new hope to children by providing 115 orthopedic surgeries, 11 heart surgeries, 1,650 wheelchairs, 46,000 doses of parasite medicine, vitamins and medicine to regional orphanages, aid to families with children in hospital care, and dental and medical equipment to local hospitals that will benefit innumerable children for years to come.

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Children of Vietnam—Bonds Stretching Around the Globe

Edited from article in Forsyth Woman, Sept. 2006

Respectfully to: Children of Viet Nam (COV)

I am Dinh Thi Hoa, born in 1958, live in Phu Hoa I, Hoa Nhon commune, Hoa Vang district, Da Nang city, Viet Nam. I am writing this letter to you to demonstrate the following problem.

Dinh Thi Hoa, a Vietnamese widow living in dire poverty in an unstable reed-thatched house with a flimsy metal roof dreamed of a real home for her two young daughters. Susan Wilson, a retired health care executive, widowed and remarried with two grown children, hoped to fulfill a personal mission to help women and honor the memory of her deceased husband. Children of Vietnam brought the dreams of these two women together.

I and my two children live in a temporary house in Hoa Nhon commune, Hoa Vang district. To be a poor farmer, I cannot have enough money to renew my house although it is in narrow condition and may be collapsed anytime. My dream is having a solid house so that I and my daughters have the shelter in life, especially a good studying place for my small beloved child.

Susan and her first husband, Steve, met in college after he finished a tour of duty in Vietnam. Steve had fallen in love with the people of Vietnam and often talked of returning. As the years went by Steve's work took them around the world giving Susan

the opportunity to volunteer in women's shelters and orphanages. She witnessed first hand the plight of women in developing countries.



Susan and Dave Wilson with their new Vietnamese family in their new home.

I have two daughters; my first child is named Dinh Thi Lieu born in 1991 and in 9 form and another is Dinh Thi Thoa born in 1994. My family is one of the poorest households in Hoa Nhon commune. My husband died many years ago, so I have to work hard all year round to support family expenses and my children's studying. However, my monthly earnings is not much, so my first daughter has to leave school early to earn for living.

Steve did not get to revisit Vietnam. When he died, Susan went to Hospice for grief counseling where she met and eventually married Dave, an active supporter of Children of Vietnam. COV provided Susan with an opportunity to fulfill her personal mission.

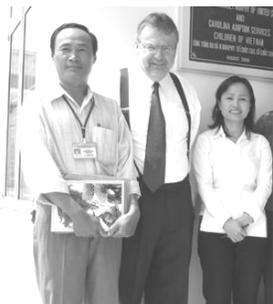


COV has a long waiting list of needy families so when Susan asked to build a home for a single mother, Dinh Thi Hoa's information was quickly forwarded. Susan learned Hoa is a rice farmer, doing the back-breaking work of planting and harvesting rice by hand. For her labors, she brings home \$48 a month—not

enough for both girls to attend school since school is not free in Vietnam. Her eldest

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AMERICAN AMBASSADOR VISIT



American Ambassador Michael Marine from Hanoi honored COV by visiting our Danang office this October. During his visit he met with Scholarship and Orthopedic Operation children and toured the first orphanage we constructed for Carolina Adoption Services in Greensboro named Murphy Orphanage after the donor. Ambassador Marine also

toured Typhoon Xangsane damage around Danang and presented to COV a very generous donation from the 47-member Embassy staff to rebuild a family house destroyed in the typhoon. When young children asked his age (common in Vietnam) - I am fine, he replied!

HAI CHAU ORPHANAGE AND THE LITTLE ONE WITH SIX TOES

We found Ms. Ly at Hai Chau Orphanage with an extra toe adjacent to her "little" toe protruding from the simple thongs she wears daily. This "little toe" was continually getting painfully caught on doors, chairs, and her friend's shoes. In the past her father would never allow her to have the toe removed as it may change her FATE! Reluctantly, he recently allowed the operation that COV funded, and today she exclaims, "Now I can wear NICE shoes!"

Note: Many children are placed in orphanages by their parents because they are too poor to support them. These children are loved and visited by their families, but they must live away from home for survival.

Did You Know . . .

COV improves the lives of over 50,000 children and their families annually with a budget of only \$258,889, most of which is donated by individuals, congregations, and civic organizations. Of every \$100 donation, \$95 goes to directly to programs for Vietnamese children and their families, the

remaining \$5 supports administrative expenses. Your gift is critical, and we thank you.

Tax-deductible donations can be sent to COV at 817 West End Boulevard, Winston Salem, NC 27101, or to learn more about COV call (336) 727-1110, email childviet@yahoo.com, or visit www.childrenofvietnam.com.

Bonds (Continued from page 2)

daughter stopped school in 8th grade to earn money by doing odd jobs. Susan and Dave made the commitment of \$800, the cost of building a two-room house with a floor, sturdy walls, roof, electricity, and a bathroom. After telling their family about Hoa's plight, they all wanted to help. With the additional support of Susan's father, two grown children, grandchildren, and Dave's granddaughter, Hoa's daughters were pro-

vided with a desk, a study lamp, and a bicycle to travel to school. The family hopes to help both daughters get through school and maybe even university.

One day, that dream came true my life. I owned a good house thanks to the help of Children of Viet Nam organization, especially that of Mrs. Susan who offered me a new house and supported school devices for my first child so that she has a new chance of getting a

bright future.

Sincerely thanks, Dinh Thi Hoa

When Susan and Hoa met for the first time this summer during a COV ceremony to present the new home to Hoa and her girls, a special bond was born that now stretches around the world. With the generous support of people like Susan, COV will continue its work improving the lives of Vietnamese children.

TEARS DROPPING AT THE GATE OF A UNIVERSITY

This year, COV has initiated a new university and vocational school scholarship program for 45 poor students in Danang and Quangnam Province. The following memoir gives insight to the significance for the lives of these young students.

By Hoang Tam Duc

In Group 6, Nam Duong Ward, Hai Chau District of Danang City, Bui Thi Hong An was a good student during 12 school years and passed entrance exams to two universities in her senior-year. She received the highest marks possible on the entrance examinations to Banking Department of Danang Economic University and also to Danang Foreign Language University. Getting such good results, she was very happy to inform her parents. Hearing that she passed exams for two universities, her father, whose

legs were paralyzed and who has been immovably lying in bed for many years cried and tears rolled down the cheekbones of an emotionless face. Her mother who is a hired worker placed her coarse hand over her eyes to wipe away sad tears. This 51-year old woman's daily labor earns money to support her children's primary school fees and her husband's medical bills. Therefore she felt heart broken and helpless when she heard her daughter passed two university entrance exams. She could not afford to send her. At this time, the program of COV, For a Brighter Future, awarded Hong An a full scholarship for four years as a significant contribution to her future. At the award ceremony in her Ward, Hong An delivered the following memorable speech:

I was very pleased that I passed two university exams at the same time but

that happiness quickly came to an end because fees to attend universities are very big and my family cannot support my school fees. Although no one in the family talks about this, my parents and I always think of not attending university with current poverty.

Thanks for help and regards to local People's Committee of Hai Chau and to Children of Vietnam and its program director Mrs. Huong, I have opportunity to get higher education level and better life in the future. Now, I and 20 other students are present here to officially receive these scholarships.

I am very happy because it is the scholarship that decides whether I can have a chance of pursuing my dream or not. It also is an opportunity for me and my family to overcome our current circumstances and to have a brighter future.

DREAMS - WISHES - HOPES -

Dreams of toys at Christmas - Dreams of getting a favorite teacher for math - Dreams of receiving a scholarship for university study - Dreams of a favorite job in our favorite profession - Dreams of having healthy children - Yes, all common dreams in our society. Suddenly, in visiting our disadvantaged (special) children in orphanages and street children programs in Danang, our dreams seem pale and unimpor-

tant as compared to theirs of the exact same things - to someday be pilots, teachers, doctors, engineers and artists. These dreams each day we do our best to address with programs for them for tutoring, scholarships, bicycles and other support such as health care, food and clothing. They all know where they want to go and with your assistance they will get there.



Children of Vietnam

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What YOU can do to help!

Our mission is to provide direct aid to the poor and handicapped children of Viet Nam. Our work is done primarily in Danang and surrounding area.

The aid provided is the result of donations given by our friends and partners.

You can make a difference in the lives of the children we serve by making a 501-C-3 tax deductible gift to Children of Vietnam. We cannot continue our work without you.

As a guide, please view the table to the right to see that the phrase "*a little goes a long way in Vietnam*" is a reality and an opportunity for you to make a difference with a small contribution.

We are still providing aid with less than a 5% administrative charge.

"A Little Goes A Long Way in Vietnam"

- Build a house..... \$800**
- Provide rice for a family..... \$60/year**
- Scholarship for child..... \$60/year**
- "Piggy" project (includes some food)..... \$50**
- Fund a medicine pack..... \$250/pkg.**
- Buy a bicycle \$37 each**

New Program -- "For A Brighter Future"

This year, COV has initiated a new university and vocational school scholarship program for 45 poor students in Danang and Quangnam Province. This meaningful program is generously sponsored by Suzanne and Bud Baker of Winston Salem, N.C.



Child receiving a "bike scholarship." Making it easier for students to get to school will keep them there