



Children of Vietnam

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

Spring News Update 2007

From our president, Ben Wilson

Vietnam Factoids:

- ◆ Population: 83 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



Dear Friends,

Imagine having a new face that looks normal after suffering years of stigma because of a severely deforming facial tumor. COV is fortunate to have enabled three young people, Tung, Nhan, and Trang,

to take advantage of an opportunity from a wonderful London-based organization called *Facing the World*. *Facing the World* provided international transportation, board, and state-of-the-art medical treatment, and COV facilitated all Vietnam-based medical evaluations, transportation, and board. Tung and Nhan are now back home in DaNang, and Trang is still in London receiving treatment. Removal of these tumors gives a new life to these young people allowing them to once again be seen in public without concern. The services provided are valued at \$80,000 each.



Tung after his operation

COV is blessed with many similar collaborative partnerships leveraging our financial resources and your donations to a much greater level. Another major partner is *Dr WC Swanson Family Foundation* that provided a \$98,000 shipment of medical equipment to the DaNang Health Department. The equipment was specifically requested by DaNang hospitals to increase their medical capacity. Hundreds of individuals will benefit from this new equipment for years to come. An equally significant partnership exists with *Counterpart International*, which provided a \$30,000 45,000-pound container of fortified oatmeal. Our staff is now responsible for distributing this nutritious food to disabled children, orphanages, and street children throughout Central Vietnam. All these programs are provided without charge to any recipient.

We are able to take advantage of these productive partnerships because of our very talented staff in DaNang who have excellent relations with local agencies, Peoples Committees, and other non-profit organizations, assuring our partners that the intended use of donations is fully realized. Thank you to everyone for your support and especially to our partners!

Ben Wilson

THANKS LETTER

Respectfully to: Representatives and Donors of Children Of Vietnam Organization.

My name is Tran Van Viet, I was born in the year 1977, and I'm father of the little girl Tran Thi Cam Van, 3 years old.

My daughter got inborn heart disease but my family didn't have money for treatment long time ago. Recently, my daughter's disease situation became serious so my wife and I brought my daughter to DaNang General Hospital for examination and doctors here have recommended that my daughter should have heart operation as soon as possible to save her life. We were so disappointed with this information because my family circumstance is so poor to pay for cost of operation at 22.000.000 VND (\$1,375). But we are so lucky that we



Tran Cam Van after her operation

could meet Children Of Vietnam Organization and my family was encouraged from staff as well as the support for operation cost from your organization so that my daughter could have operation on March 29, 2007. Now, my daughter recovered her health and we could leave hospital to return our home in Binh Dinh Province in our boundless happiness.

Children Of Vietnam brought happiness to our family, and today I write this letter to show our deep appreciation to your Organization. Thank you for your concern, your encouragement, and your sincere help to my family.

Wishing all Representatives, donors and staff of Children Of Vietnam always to be happy and healthy.

Sincerely, Father- Tran Van Viet

2006 Accomplishments and activity report

In every newsletter we strive to keep you informed with the latest developments and the activities that your support provides. In this issue, we present our year end achievements. 2006 certainly showed growth and, most importantly, a significant increase in the effectiveness and efficiency with which we administer the aid and support offered to children on your behalf. Children of Vietnam still provides all of the listed support for less than 5% administration cost. Thank you for allowing Children of Vietnam to be your representative in the DaNang area delivering the truly life changing aid these children so vitally need. The bottom line is that last year we assisted over **5,300** children and their families plus treating more than **46,260** children for intestinal parasites.

Accomplishments for 2006 - Children Birth to Age 18

Health Care

Parasite Eradication for 46,260 children ages 5 to 18 years
Facial tumor removal for two youth
Funded 14 eye surgeries
Funded 20 heart surgeries
Funded 96 limb operations
Distributed 3850 wheelchairs in 6 provinces

Nutrition --

Monthly rice for 136 families
Monthly milk for 93 orphan children
Monthly milk for 120 Danang Street Children
Nutrition Education for 320 General Hospital Children
Two typhoon assistance programs for 150 families

Housing --

Constructed 73 houses for poor families
Children served - 49,700

Education --

Constructed 6 kindergartens in poor districts for 222 children
Bicycle scholarships 148 school children
Food support for two schools for disabled children
Tutoring for 135 orphan and street children
Scholarships for 324 poor children
University/Vocational School Scholarships for 46 youth
Shoes and clothes for 142 poor school children
Constructed Murphy Orphanage for 25 children

In kind gifts received

Medical supplies and equipment, services, wheelchairs - \$412,900

A COV Scholarship Story

(Based on thank you letters from a father and daughter) by Dr Larry Hungerford



Vo Thi Hong Phuc is a poor first-year college engineering student who faced a bleak future at DaNang Polytechnic University. After she received a COV scholarship on March 12, 2007 she and her father both wrote thank-you letters. The following narrative (with direct quotes) is their story. (To read both letters, go to our website: childrenofvietnam.org)

With two younger sisters at home, an ill father who could only work sporadically and a mother who was a sidewalk-seller of noodles, Vo Thi Hong Phuc thought she would have to quit college to help support her family. She wrote that given "my present circumstances, I was probably [going to drop] out of school [to] help my parents get income."

Her father, Vo Trung Hau, laments: "My health is not good so I often get ill. I myself suffer [from] two diseases: congenital heart disease" and I "had my stomach two-thirds" removed. "I am not the main laborer in my family: this makes me feel wretched." The daughter writes: "My father is often ill...but he [tries] his best to work as a motorbike driver. And when his disease [reoccurs], he just stays in bed."

The family's small income comes mostly from the efforts of the mother. Vo Thi Hong Phuc writes: "My mother sells noodles for breakfast on the street with a small income that [is] just able to get by, [but is] not enough for my two sisters' learning." Her father chimes in: "all three of my children are

at the age of learning and all their expenditures just depend on income from their mother's noodle bowls that she sells every morning [on the] sidewalk." His sadness is evident when he talks about his family working every day: "My family [never has] had an unoccupied day and my children have never known what [it is to play in the] park." He also comments how neighbors have contributed "rice, vegetables, and warm clothes for my children in our present poor time."

How did the family learn about a COV scholarship? The daughter saw a local TV story about COV scholarships for poor students. After meeting with COV Vietnamese staff (and members of COV's Board visiting Viet Nam in March), Vo Thi Hong Hau's received her university scholarship.

The joy expressed by father and daughter is overwhelming. She expresses her thanks: "real luck came to my life when [I met] you all; I feel very happy and so moved. Now, from this time, I can continue going to the university to learn. My dream, my wishes come true now." She states her dream simply: "I can help my parents take care of my two younger sisters [so that they can reach} their learning destination."

Perhaps her father is even more overjoyed; he writes that COV "loved and helped my daughter escape from our present deadlock" and that "my family [is] as merry as a cricket." As so often happens, their happiness brought tears: "my family was so moved to shed tears [for COV's] kind hearts [which] will be engraved on our memory forever."

And finally, we conclude from the very moving closing two sentences of Vo Thi Hong Phuc's letter to COV. "I promise that I will try my best in my learning to become a good engineer [so that I'll] I'll be worthy of your support and your love. Lastly, I would wish all of you to always be happy and successful in your lives."

Meet our staff

Children of Vietnam currently has five staff members managing our DaNang office. We would like to introduce you to one of them as each are key to making our operation run smoothly, efficiently and economically.



Mrs. Huong, Program Director

Ms. Huong has worked with COV since its inception nine years ago. She began as an assistant to Ben Wilson while he was managing a project in DaNang with R.J. Reynolds. Although Ms. Huong has a university degree from the University of Prague in the Czech Republic, she did not speak English. She decided to go back to school to earn a degree in English from

Hanoi University. In addition, her responsibilities with COV increased and today, Ms. Huong is known throughout

DaNang for her keen business abilities. She has a wonderful working relationship with the Vietnamese government and local NGOs, which has contributed to the expansion of COV in the area.

Ms. Huong is married and has two daughters, Trang and Linh. This year Trang, 18, completed her freshman year at Salem College and is an Honor student. Linh is thirteen and attends 8th grade in DaNang.

When asked what she likes most about her job, Ms. Huong, said, "Being able to help the children and make a difference in their lives." She cherishes her relationship with Ben Wilson, who has been her mentor since the beginning. Huong has played a major role in program development for Children of Vietnam.

March, 2007 Visitor Letter --

I had the privilege of visiting Vietnam with several board members and staff members of Children of Vietnam (COV) from March 4 through March 9. My wife and I had been donors in the past and I had previously thought myself fairly knowledgeable of the organization, its mission and its work in housing, education, nutrition and health-care.

However, my time spent in the field taught me that the scope of the work and the number of people who benefit from the COV programs is vastly greater than I ever imagined. Ben Wilson and his board of directors have done a wonderful job of building and focusing the organization. The staff in DaNang has also done an excellent job of working with local authorities and agencies to identify

critical needs and recipients for COV support. The result is that 95% of the money raised by COV actually gets to beneficiaries in the form of houses, kindergartens, scholarships, meals, medications, surgeries, rice, milk, tutoring, school supplies, bicycles and many others too numerous to mention here. Our time in the field touched on all these activities and more.

There is nothing like seeing the faces of the people and the children whom are touched by the benefits of the COV programs. Seeing it first-hand was, for me, an education, a privilege and a life experience I will never forget. My wife and I hope to return and we encourage everyone who is able to go see for themselves.

Bill Kraul, Winston-Salem, NC

Come Visit Our New Blog and Improved COV Website

In the past few months, COV has unveiled a new weblog and made improvements to its website. These new features give COV an even greater ability to communicate over the Internet, and provide more opportunities to share COV's mission and accomplishments with more people. "We are very excited about these new tools to help get the word out about our organization and the children we serve," said COV President, Ben Wilson.

COV launched its weblog, or "blog," in February, 2007 by the creative talent of Jane Pueschel, a dedicated Board Member. The blog allows COV to share its latest news, events, needs, successes, and pictures with the world. In addition, the blog provides a convenient forum for people to make comments about and discuss the issues and topics important to COV and its mission. The blog already has drawn nearly 1000 visitors from countries across the globe, including the U.S., Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia, Italy, and Canada. COV's plan is to start regularly updating the blog with all of COV's latest news. The Internet address to the blog is <http://childviet.blogspot.com>.

In addition, COV completed the first phase of its project to update and improve the COV website, thanks to Chris Steel of Richmond, Va. It is now easier for visitors to navigate through its various pages to find quickly any specific information they want. In the coming months, COV will begin phase two of its website upgrade and improvement project which will include a complete new look and format. The web address for COV is www.childrenofvietnam.org.

We are grateful to our supporters and volunteers who have helped make the blog and website improvements possible," said Wilson. "The Internet is critically important to our ability to communicate with people, raise awareness of the organization, and gain support for our cause. We hope everyone will take the time to visit our blog and website, or better yet, e-mail links for the blog and website to a friend and invite them to see all the good work that Children of Vietnam is doing."

June 2007

Children of Vietnam

817 West End Blvd.
Winston Salem, NC 27101 USA

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 6% administrative charge.

"A Little Goes A Long Way in Vietnam"

- Build a house \$950**
- 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**



COV supplemental rice distribution program assists over 145 families a month..



Child who will get an orthopedic operation to correct a club foot