

ARTISTS FOR ORPHANS INC NEWSLETTER



Left: Ros Bradbury, Marcie Jones, Roni Wildeboer, (Photo from Midland Express)
Above: NHI, (Khanh Vin Orphanage) is holding a photo of the stunning painting Rose Wilson did of her to help us raise funds.

OUR TIME IN VIETNAM

HO CHI MINH CITY

Marcie Jones and I hit the ground running in Ho Chi Minh (Saigon). The same night we arrived, we met with Son Michael Pham from Seattle and some of his Rotary delegation. Son is founder of Kids Without Borders which is our partner organisation.

The next morning we went out to Go Vap Orphanage. Marcie got the kids singing, dancing, clapping and smiling. This was her first introduction to the children, Some are terminally ill with

Hydrocephalus. So for Marcie, it was an emotional initiation. The good news is the medication we supplied for the Intensive Care Unit here is still going strong. I am now awaiting a proposal regarding equipment for a speech therapy room which will be terrific as some of the orphans cannot talk.

THE TALE OF AN PHUC HOUSE:

The next stop for me was An Phuc House also in Ho Chi Minh City. Bulgarian-Canadian film maker, Ivan Tankushev made a documentary

called “The Tale of An Phuc House.” It was an amazing feat and won “Official Selection, The World Film Festival 2013” (Montreal) and won “New York NYCIFF Best Feature Documentary, 2013.” And no wonder! Ivan lived in An Phuc House while filming and documenting each residents’ personal journey. I met Ivan (who I have affectionately nick named ‘Hollywood’ at An Phuc House.



THE TALE OF AN PHUC HOUSE (continued)

Many of the 20 or so residents of An Phuc House have been tested and proven positive to Agent Orange. Their handicaps are directly linked to Agent Orange. Clarence Ormsby, Vietnam Veteran and champion of those affected by Agent Orange and Ivan Tanushev understandably want to build a new house. The conditions are depressing, the handicaps severe, facilities nearly non-existent, it is hopelessly over crowded and there are no handicapped facilities. Ivan and I sat down and discussed how on earth we can build a new house. It has to be close to the city as they sell their handicrafts and perform music around the city and with such severe handicaps, transportation is an important consideration.

I made the suggestion that we sell 'rooms' at say \$6000 per room and that room would be dedicated to (named after) the donor. We have decided to run with that idea. Rob Woolley of MIVAC (which has charity status) has volunteered to accept and monitor donations on behalf on An Phuc House. If you would like more information on this project, please contact me. Click the link below for a sneak preview of the documentary.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYWPZIr5uvc>

KHAN VINH ORPHANAGE

I have been visiting Khanh Vinh Orphanage for some years now thanks to our friends in Nha Trang, Robert Costabile and the wonderful girls from Lanterns Restaurant. This is the orphanage we have applied to Dept of Consumer Affairs to fundraise for, or as we say, 'adopt'. Ros Bradbury joined us in Nha Trang.

It was wonderful to see the kids again and to introduce them to Ros and Marcie. We took out shampoo, conditioner, soap, washing powder, socks (as they are in the mountains), hats, feminine hygiene products, and of course some sweets, balloons and fluffy toys for the kids to cuddle. This is not our main focus, just visiting and giving gifts. What we are doing is assessing the institution and seeing what is really needed. What this orphanage wants at the moment is a classroom but all this needs to be discussed at our Committee Meeting. In any case these kids are very special and we intend



Residents of An Phuc House (above)



This young man, (above) although blind, wrote and performed all the music for the documentary.



Little darling from Khanh Vinh Orphanage

BUDDHIST PAGODA NHA TRANG

We visited a Buddhist Pagoda/Orphanage in Nha Trang which was just beautiful and the Head Monk invited Ros, Marcie and I to have lunch and chant with them. We convinced them that Marcie was the only one who could hold a tune. Thankfully.

NHA TRANG SHERATON HOTEL

Ros Bradbury arranged a meeting with Catherine Rascko (Australian) General Manager of the beautiful Sheraton Hotel in Nha Trang. We met with Catherine and her Human Resources Manager, Pham Tuan Dung.

During our discussions, it became obvious that the orphanages in the area would certainly benefit from a sex education programme and discussions took place about the best way to do this. Young Vietnamese people, as a general rule, are very naive and protected and those in orphanages are even more so.

We were so impressed the way The Sheraton already supports several orphanages in the area and offered to get involved in organizing said sex education.

Dzung has already recruited other local organizations to help us with this very important project.

Thank you Catherine and Dzung.

VAVA, HA NOI

(Vietnam Association of Victims of Agent Orange)

We did have a meeting with VAVA in Ha Noi. They kindly provided us with updated information on the compounds they are building for Agent Orange families in Ha Noi and Ho Chi Minh, and information on the situation with Agent Orange in Vietnam. We presented them with a token of friendship.

LITTLE MAI FROM BA VI

Regular readers will recall a photo of a gorgeous little baby girl with no eyelids. Well, we returned to Ba Vi (two hours from Hanoi) to see how little Mai was getting on. Our partner, Son Michael Pham of Kids without Borders kindly took her to the Ha Noi Optical Hospital but there was nothing they could do for her. On arrival, the staff said they urgently needed baby formula and nappies which we happily supplied.



Pham Tuan Dung, Director Human Resources, Me, Marcie and Catherine Roscoe General Manager, of the Beautiful Nha Trang Sheraton supporting orphans in their area. Great corporate citizens :)



VAVA: PHAM TRUONG, CHIEF OF OFFICE & NGUYEN MINH Y, DIRECTOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS



ABOVE: LITTLE MAI

TIN THAC ORPHANAGE

Nha Trang. This is a small house where toddlers up to the age of 4 or so live. They are usually the result of unwanted pregnancies. As you can imagine, this is just heaven being surrounded by these little, mostly healthy, children but it is yet another example of how important it is to get a Sex Education Programme for orphanages off the ground.

Below: Young resident of Tin Thac



TINA THIEN-NGA NGUYEN

We met with Tina who is involved with many volunteer groups including the Virtual Medical Miracle network, bringing in surgeons from the USA to operate on giant tumors which the Vietnamese doctors will not touch. One such tumor on a leg weighed 200 lbs. The Vietnamese surgeons are now learning how to deal with these tumors and Tina has been in the operating room translating for the doctors.

We also discussed the possibility of a Central Vietnamese Registry for volunteers, so volunteers with specific skills go where those skills are needed most. This way we make the most of this valuable resource.

“KENNY”

Then there is Kenny. An inspiring young Vietnamese man who is dedicated to supporting many orphanages around Ho Chi Minh. One of the orphanages he supports and briefed me on, is specifically for HIV positive children who have lost both parents to HIV.

He also supports an orphanage for kids rescued from organ traders. The traders kidnap orphans, take them across the Chinese or Cambodian borders and sell them for organs.

For such a beautiful, gentle country and people, or perhaps because of it, Vietnam is vulnerable to predators.

CHUCK SEARCY **Project Renew**



It was a pleasure to also meet up with Chuck Searcy who heads up **Project Renew** in Vietnam. Project Renew is responsible for coordinating the disposal of unexploded ordnance in Vietnam; land mines, mortars etc of which there are still plenty and still doing terrible damage to so many.



Hundreds of unexploded mortars being unearthed near a local house in Trieu Phong District, March 2012.

More than three decades after the war ended, cluster munitions, landmines and other explosive remnants of war (ERW) remain a serious threat to many communities throughout Vietnam. It is estimated that out of the 15 million tons of munitions used by the U.S during the war, 10% failed to detonate on impact (U.S. Dept. of Defense). The ERW that remain scattered all over the country have left a lethal legacy hindering the social and economic development of people nationwide. ERW have been responsible for more than 100,000 injuries and fatalities since 1975, rendering many of the survivors permanently disabled.

As of December 2011 Quang Tri province sustained a total 7,086 casualties from UXO accidents, about 1.2% of the province's population. Notably, 31% of these victims were children. Although data is not available to measure economic losses of agricultural land or other development restrictions due to widespread UXO contamination, these socio-economic costs are considered to be extremely high.

http://www.landmines.org.vn/what_we_do/erw_facts_and_figures.html

IN SUMMERY

It's been a most successful and eventful three weeks and Marcie and Ros were great travelling companions, even though it got very hot, very tiring at times and a little emotional.

I will now write a report for the Artists for Orphans Inc Committee and we will meet and vote on the projects we will support and discuss the best strategies for doing that.

We come home with project ideas, more kids to help and great new Vietnamese friends and associations.

Now it is time for us to start all over again by fundraising.

Can you help us fundraise?

Could you organise a raffle, a fashion parade?
a concert?

Donate items to be raffled or auctioned?

If you'd like to make a tax deductible donation via Rotary, please use this link:

<https://donations.rawcs.com.au/Default.aspx?ProjectID=648&ReturnTo=4>

SPECIAL THANK YOU'S

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Also thank you also to our incredible anonymous donors - you know who you are.

If you would like more information

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“We run on Music, Art & Heart”



AN PHUC HOUSE



GO VAP ORPHANAGE



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