



# Children of Vietnam

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

Spring News Update 2003

## From our president, Ben Wilson...

Dear Friends

This has been a very exciting year ! Children of Vietnam is thankful and pleased to report that our work with parents and families who have adopted children from Vietnam is proceeding nicely. The humanitarian aid committee of Carolina Adoption Services (Greensboro, NC) has recently donated \$1,974 to support two programs at Hoa Mai Orphanage and Tam Ky Orphanage: (1) nutrition and (2) parasite treatment and prevention. In addition, Adopt Vietnam ([www.adoptvietnam.org](http://www.adoptvietnam.org)) and Families with Children from Vietnam ([www.fcvn.org](http://www.fcvn.org)) have recently included Children of Vietnam in their listings of humanitarian aid organizations working in Vietnam.

We also continue to be in contact with individual families who, having adopted children from Vietnam, want to maintain ties with Vietnam and lend assistance to Vietnamese children in need. We are happy to serve as a



Ben Wilson and one of his new friends at Lang Hy Vong Orphanage. The young lady is a recipient of a hearing aid made possible through your donations and the work of Children of Vietnam.

means of helping adoptive families contribute to the lives of children in Vietnam.

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

## THE CHILDREN WILL BE STRONG AND HEALTHY!

Over a year ago we were approached by the Health Department in Danang and asked to consider helping in a broad based public health intervention. The concern was that so many children suffer from intestinal parasites. The parasites attach themselves to the intestine wall and compete with the children's bodies for nourishment. As a result, the incidence of malnutrition was/is extremely high. The children acquire the parasites by drinking impure water, eating food that is not cooked and by not wearing shoes. The first treatments began in October, 2002, and results are just now becoming available.



We are very pleased to report that the Intestinal Parasitic Treatment Program is producing significant positive results. With your donations, we started the program for the school children of Hoa Vang district, Danang in Oct 2002. A total 30,218 children, including 4,580 kindergarteners, 16,502 elementary and 9,136 middle school students received the treatment of medication as well as educational information.

Children of Vietnam's staff worked with Hoa Vang's Health and School Systems to carry out the treatment in most schools in the district. *See Healthy on page 2*

## Healthy

500mg of Mebendazole was given to all students in Oct 2002 and then in March 2003. The effectiveness of the program determined by random testing a sample of children prior to and after treatment. Of approximately 506 children tested for parasites, 187 were positive prior to treatment and a mere 6 remained infected after treatment – essentially going from a 37% infection rate to a little over 1% after treatment. This is especially exciting since we had estimated a 50% reduction in infection rate but got close to 98%. We could not ask for better collaboration

with Hoa Vang Health and School systems.

They are happy to work with us and grateful for YOUR help for their children.

This is an extremely worthwhile project with far reaching benefits for the children. The cost of treatment for one child is ten cents or about \$3,000 for the whole district. We will continue to support the Health and School systems with their educational programs of personal and public hygiene to prevent re-infection. The next step will be to give sandals to children who do not have

them to prevent re-infection and to provide nutritional supplements.

Based on the results obtained thus far, we are very confident that this is a worthy project. We will work with the remaining children in Hoa Vang as well as the other five districts of Danang. Your support of this project can produce major results for a small amount of money.

The children will grow to be healthy and strong, free of intestinal parasites, thanks to your generosity.

THANK YOU!

## Look what we did together in 2002

This is a brief report condensing major accomplishments in 2002. The complete report can be seen on our web site at [www.childrenofvietnam.com](http://www.childrenofvietnam.com). When we internally measure our performance, we always will try to determine how many children we have helped.

Monthly Rice Supplements	781	Houses built	21
Single Event Assistance*	5,615	Medicines delivered	\$83,000
Parasite Eradication Program	30,327	*includes items such as scholarships, books, emergency medical assistance, etc.	
Estimated children assisted with medicines	2,000		
Bicycles awarded	26		

## In their own words. . . "Too much excitement"

(This article is offered in the form and language in which it was received so that you can experience the "intangible" content of our director's message. Our director, Ms. Huong updates our president frequently concerning activities in the area and progress on our many projects. This article will give you a feeling of the "value" of a house and other items that are made possible by Children of Vietnam).

Dear Mr. Ben,

Sunday last week we went to Dai Loc to give bicycles to poor children at Giang Hoa, Dai Thang Village . We started very early because this Village is much farther than Dai Hong where we gave bicycles before . We had 30 children for bicycles in Giang Hoa on that day . The children had waited for us almost 3 hours before we came . They said they could not sleep at night and they did not want to eat , they wished time passed very quickly so that they would go to the People's Committee to receive bicycles in the early morning. Most of them have long ways to school from home, it's about 7 to 10 km



Child with new bicycle given during a scholarship ceremony

(4 to 6 miles ) on average so they were VERY excited to look forward this day ! There were also many, many villagers gathered here to see bicycles.

The ceremony of giving bicycles happened smoothly . We were received very warmly and friendly by The Village People's Committee . They said that they were so thankful to Children of Vietnam for giving such valuable gifts on Tet occasion . They did not know how to find words to thank us, just saying " Thank you so much ! "

On behalf of 30 children, one student made a speech of thanking . They all were very happy to have these gifts and they promised that they will study harder to have good result in study and keep their bicycles in good condition .

Huong

## Does your group need a speaker?

Children of Vietnam has recently formed a speaker's bureau whose mission is to make presentations to groups and tell the story of our work. We are currently looking for opportunities to speak to adult Sunday Schools, mission committees or men's or women's groups in North Carolina and southern Virginia.

The presentations are rich in pictures of the people and areas that we serve in the greater Da Nang area. The pictures show the people who receive medical aid, scholarships, supplemental food assistance and the housing we build or help repair.

If you are part of an organization, or

know of one, that would benefit from such a opportunity as this, please contact Joe Lorber at 336-869-6715 or by e-mail at joe@childrenofvietnam.com. All inquiries will be promptly answered and scheduled at a mutually convenient time.

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## Trip Report

**A regular feature of our newsletter is an article by one of the visitors who accompany Ben on his twice yearly supervisory trips. We welcome these visitors and especially their reports. The articles they send us are printed exactly as received so that you can experience, through them, our work and the children we serve.**

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On March 3, I made a return trip to Vietnam. My first trip was in 1968 when I was an infantry soldier in the United States Army. I have always wanted to return there, but could never find any veterans who wanted to go. Ben Wilson gave me the opportunity to accompany him to see first hand his Children of Vietnam program and what it was doing for the children in the DaNang area. Ben is a person filled with energy, drive and dedication to meet the needs of the children. He also is a wonderful tour guide and took me to a lot of the places that I had been during the war.

We had a great time traveling through airports and changing planes and meeting so many people. I knew

right away that I was in for a great experience.

I remember the kids from many years ago and they are no different today. They are so in need of love and they just cling to you when you travel around to different places. We visited many places, including: rice distribution centers, vocational schools for street children, DaNang General Hospital and an orthopedic hospital. We also visited people who had recently gotten a new house built by the Children of Vietnam and met with others who were prospective home owners. We saw the fruit tree and pig project, too. We also accompanied Ben as he met with local officials of the Peoples Committee. We met children who had

received scholarships, hearing aids, bicycles, prosthetics and medicine from the Children of Vietnam.

Mrs. Huong, who is the Program Manager of Children of Vietnam, is a dedicated and loving person who loves the children and gives hope to them all. Children of Vietnam is a wonderful program that is clearly making life better for the kids. I would encourage everyone to make a donation to the Children of Vietnam for it is a way to make life better for children who have known war and poverty for so long. Thank you Ben.

Richard H. Pegram  
Walkertown, NC

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## Updates

### Pigs, Fruit Trees and High Yield Rice

This program was started one year ago with 191 families participating.

**PIGS** - Fifty one families were given baby pigs which were bred and now have produced 170 babies. Ten of the initial 50 baby pigs died. New baby pigs were given to 28 poor families to start their program. Other pigs were sold on the market to have funds to

care for children in the families. First pigs given will have five litters before being phased out.

**Fruit Trees** - Rambutan and Mango trees, about 14 each were given to 95 families to raise fruit for the market. The trees are doing well. They will produce fruit next year.

**High Yield Rice** - High yield rice was planted by 45 families who raise two crops per year with 50% higher yield than normal rice. For every 100KG rice harvested, they earn \$100 profit. A very significant and successful program. Money earned from current crop is saved to procure rice seed for next crop.

### "Giving It Back To Kids" Partnership

**CHILDREN OF VIETNAM** is working closely with a newly founded charity organization, Giving It Back To Kids founded by Robert Kalatschan of Huntington Beach, California. He and wife Dorothea have two adopted Vietnamese children.

GIBTK has provided funds for 8 new houses and \$1,500 for crippled children's operations and prosthetics. In addition, they have provided funds for Hoa Mai Orphanage to acquire a washing machine, 8 stone benches and three swing sets. They also arranged

the grant application for 450 special wheelchairs for disabled children. We certainly look forward to working with Bob and Dorothea and are excited about what they have accomplished.

June 2003

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# 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.

Our work is accomplished as 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 7% administrative charge.**

## "A Little Goes A Long Way in Vietnam"

Build a house .....	\$650
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.....	\$35 each
Buy a child's hearing aid .....	\$80 each



One of our guests helps with supplemental rice distribution



Distribution of school books and supplies in the Danang area.