From the President, Country Director & Executive Director

Dear Friends,

2015 was a tremendous year with many children reached and whose lives are improved thanks to each of you who have expanded your heart to include hundreds of poor, orphan, disabled and other vulnerable children in Vietnam.

As spring begins to bloom for each of us during these months, our staff in DaNang continue to be fully engaged in reaching as many children as possible. They work tirelessly through any means possible. Sometimes we support the children directly such as in our school scholarship programs (783 young students) and other times by partnering with organizations such as orphanages to help them improve their facilities or feeding the children. Another example of our work is with single mothers through Empowering Foundations for Women & Their Children (EFWC). While it is the women with whom we work directly, there are many studies, as well as our own experience, that show it is the children who benefit greatly once a household is stabilized.

For this issue we are focusing mostly on our EFWC single mother’s program. We do this in honor of all mothers around the globe who love, nurture, toil, and sacrifice for their children.

Happy Mother’s Day!

In appreciation,

Ben Wilson
President

Luong Thi Huong
Country Director

Nancy F. Letteri
Executive Director

It’s Personal on a Global Scale

Ok, this title definitely seems like an oxymoron…it is not. Meeting the women in our single mother’s program makes the global statistics very real, very personal.

Ms. Ha is now a single-mother, but at one time she was a young newly-wed filled with hopes. Seventeen years ago she gave birth to her child, a son. Soon thereafter followed the birth of two daughters. But during all this time, she silently suffered devastating abuse from her husband. According to the UN, 1 in 3 women experience physical or sexual violence, mostly by an intimate partner. Not all of the women and their children enrolled in Empowering Foundations for Women & Their Children (EFWC) are victims of abuse, but all are subject to the stress, humiliation, and deprivations caused by poverty. In her own tearful words, “I sat down under a stream of abuse and he ruthlessly beat me for years…he would tell me off, he used cigarettes to sting my legs, he chased me out of the home at midnight and I had to hide at the burial ground.” One night after being beaten unconscious, she finally gathered the courage and left him. She also had to leave her children with her parents and go find work in a larger city. She always wished an incredible change...
Multiple studies have demonstrated that empowered women will improve the quality of life for themselves, their families, indeed their whole community. EFWC leverages this potential by investing in women in Vietnam. Unfortunately, while Vietnam’s economy has experienced a recent surge, a remaining 37.3% of the population still lives on less than $2 USD a day. The economic, health, and educational status of women is particularly inferior as a consequence of cultural traditions that have constrained women’s rights and opportunities. For single mothers living in poverty, and for their children, access to education, healthcare, and adequate nutrition is extremely challenging, if not impossible. EFWC works to break this cycle of poverty by assisting head-of-household, single mothers develop a plan to increase their economic stature through a powerful combination of micro-enterprise, training, healthcare, housing, and children’s school scholarships. EFWC focuses on resolving the single mother’s immediate needs and helping her develop life-long skills that will ultimately lift the family out of poverty.

For Ms. Ha, two years ago, that incredible change happened. She was selected to enroll in EFWC and she started a small restaurant. Now her son is a laborer in a factory, her oldest daughter is attending university and her youngest daughter is in secondary school. Ms. Ha’s business is very successful. She repaid all of the funds she borrowed to start her restaurant and just borrowed additional funds to expand her business to provide groceries in her neighborhood.

The Livelihood Fund allows mothers to borrow funds to start or expand micro-enterprise or farming endeavors. 60% is “support” and is forgiven; the remaining 40% must be repaid to the Recycle Fund.

392 children and 40 additional dependents (e.g. grandparents) are also benefiting from the unwavering effort of the mothers in EFWC who often rise at 4 am and work until 9 pm.

The ultimate goal is for each EFWC mother to be in charge of her future and to earn a stable income that sustains the family, while the children receive an education and a chance at a brighter future.

COV University Scholarship Students
Loving Working Mothers Helping Their Children Thrive

Since 2012, 140 mothers have enrolled in EFWC. Ms. Anh is one of these women. She is a very diligent and hard-working woman with two children. When she was young she became very ill with a high fever that made the left part of her body permanently weak making it hard for her to walk and work outside the home. She and her children suffered hunger regularly. They lived in a house without running water and sanitation. Life was very difficult.

Each woman in EFWC receives a different combination of support depending on her need and skills. Ms. Anh was in great need, she could sew and she had a great dedication to improve the life of her children. She fit EFWC criteria perfectly. Her house was up-fitted with a toilet, school fees were paid for her children, and she received a health check. Importantly, she attended life skills training, and she borrowed $300 from our revolving fund to expand a sewing business and start a small grocery shop.

Nine months later, upon entering her home, she greeted our staff with a huge smile. Her businesses are now doing well. She was able to purchase a refrigerator and save some funds to purchase a used motorbike for her business.

Quick Takes on Other Great News

Tutoring program helps Hoa Mai Orphanage children succeed in school

Backpack gifts for the young children at Binh Dinh Nam Kindergarten

Ethnic minority village gathering to celebrate a new kindergarten

COV Cycling Team welcomed as they cross the finish line

Want to Stay Informed?
We are passionate about giving children a bright future, and we love to share our good news about the children we serve! If you want more current updates, sign up for our e-newsletter sent out 4-6 times a year. Send us your email address (we will not share it) to: info@childrenofvietnam.org with “e-newsletter request” in the subject line.

“Like” Us on Facebook
Keep in touch and share with your friends. We post weekly photos and news about the children and COV work. https://www.facebook.com/ChildrenofVietnam

Children of Vietnam Legacy Society
Leave a legacy that continues your commitment and concern beyond your lifetime. Join the Children of Vietnam Legacy Society by making gift to Children of Vietnam in your will. For more information please contact Ben Wilson, President, at 336.727.1110 or email him at: bwilson8202@triad.rr.com.
Building bright futures for vulnerable children...here’s how:

**MAKE A DONATION IN HONOR OF A MOTHER** — you are lighting the path out of poverty.

**Empowering Foundations for Women & Their Children**
- Provides business and life skills training for a single mother $50
- Helps a single mother purchase and raise a pig for a year $70
- Helps a single mother purchase and raise a cow for a year $500

**Educating**
- Keeps a child in school with books, paper, pencils, uniforms $55
- Helps a child arrive at school on time and ready to learn with a bike $70

**Healing**
- Eliminates parasite infections for an entire kindergarten class $20
- Provides a child with disabilities with health aids (wheelchair, hearing aids, etc.) $350

**Sheltering**
- Builds a bathroom for an ethnic minority family $400
- Supplies enough bricks to build a home for a family $500

**Nurturing**
- Feeds 1,250 vulnerable children specialized vitamin-fortified porridge $25
- Provides infant formula for an orphan for three months $135

*Cảm ơn!* Thank you!