

Children of Vietnam

www.childrenofvietnam.org

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CHILDREN OF VIETNAM

BUILDING BRIGHT FUTURES

November 2018



Remember COV in your Workplace.

Federal Employees: our CFC # is 15685.
State Employees: COV is included in CA, FL & NC campaigns.

Building bright futures for vulnerable children ... here's how:

MAKE A DONATION TO HONOR OF A LOVED ONE

— you are lighting the path out of poverty.

Disaster Relief

Emergency ready-to-eat food & supplies for families affected by typhoons \$65

Educating

A bicycle to help a child get to school on time and ready to learn \$70

Tutoring and school supplies for a child for 1 year \$150

Healing

Support group meeting for parents with children with disabilities \$20

Critical care to a child with disabilities for 1 year \$350

Sheltering

Disability center and orphanage facility repairs and supplies \$200

Bathroom installed for an ethnic minority family \$700

Nurturing

Business and life skills training for a single mother \$100

Business microloan for a single mother so she can provide for her family \$500



**Poverty hurts children.
Poverty is multifaceted.
The impact is lasting.**

Poverty

37% of all children in Vietnam live in poverty

Poor health

10 million children are infested with parasites

Poor nutrition

24% of children under 5 are malnourished

No sanitation

41% of children do not have access to hygienic toilets

No clean water

Unsafe water & sanitation accounts for half of most of the communicable diseases

Low income

Minimum wage in Vietnam only meets between 50% to 70% of basic needs

Minimal or no education

80% of children with disabilities never attend or drop out of school

From the President, Country Director & Executive Director...

With twenty years behind us working with poor children in Vietnam, our future is very clear and we are ready for it. There still remains hundreds and hundreds of children needing our assistance and support in their lives. These include ethnic minority children in remote mountains, children at-risk of leaving school, and children with disabilities needing care to develop their full potential.

Huong, COV Country Director, just returned from two marathon weeks in the USA celebrating our twenty years in Vietnam and for planning our future goals and activities. Consideration is under way to modify several programs to increase our impact on children's lives. During the coming year, we hope to share these changes which will further our mission of eliminating child poverty.

Thank you to each of you who have sent kind words and continued or increased your support during this past year as we celebrated our 20th anniversary. We are truly humbled by the compassion, kindness and generosity that we have witnessed over these 20 years. Together we have and will continue to transform children's lives.



Ben
Ben Wilson
President

Huong
Luong Thi Huong
Country Director

Nancy
Nancy F. Letteri
Executive Director

Soy Milk & 724 Young Children

Ms. Huong, COV's Country Director, was visiting a remote mountainous area and her heart hurt. She saw children living in bare circumstances in villages with names like Dack Dinh and Bai Mau. She saw kindergarten children eating rice but asked, "What about protein, vitamins, calcium?" In this area, 90% of the households are poor, 40- 62% of the children are malnourished, and all are Xe Dang ethnic minority. How to help these children have proper nutrition? How to do this with a limited budget?

She thought of cow's milk, but the cost was too high. Given our budget, Huong estimated that only 200 children would benefit. Not one to be deterred, Huong worked collaboratively with local government, the Department of Education and the Quang Ngai Charity Fund. A plan slowly came to fruition. Soy milk is a plant-based drink produced by soaking and grinding soybeans, boiling the mixture, and filtering out particulates. It is a good source of protein, vitamin A, B12, D, potassium and almost as much protein and calcium as cow's milk.

The government agreed to purchase equipment for 20 kindergartens and each kindergarten agreed to train at least one individual on how to make the milk. Children of Vietnam would provide the ingredients. The effective cost is approximately three cents a cup of milk, which provides 700+ children with this nutritional supplement. We are thankful for two donors who donated initial funding for this project: Keating Ministries and Twin Cities Kiwanis Club.



Making soy milk for ethnic minority children

Cảm ơn! Thank you!

Small Steps are Transformative Milestones

It is always a happy day when we revisit a child and witness progress...even the smallest steps are transformative for many of our children with disabilities.

When Thy was born, her mother was a factory worker and her father a mechanic. By 10 months, Thy was diagnosed with cerebral palsy. To provide Thy with care, her mother stopped working. Then the family was resettled to a new area where her father's business dropped off. All at once the family, already barely making ends meet, were plunged deeper into poverty. They did their best for Thy, but without funds, the special care she needed was only a dream. Thy lay in bed all day.



Thy waking from a nap

Two years ago, Thy came to our attention and was enrolled in our Hope System of Care for Children with Disabilities. She was frail, non-communicative and could not walk or eat on her own. Together an interdisciplinary team and her parents agreed to a plan. Thy needed to gain weight and with supplemental food she did! Then at home physical therapy was provided to strengthen her muscles. Little by little she grew stronger. Finally, wall railings were installed, and Thy took her first independent step! Today, Thy stands and jumps easily to get her mother's attention! We hope during our next visit, with special utensils, Thy shows us how ably she can hold a spoonful of rice.

With minimal interventions, the world for Thy and her family transformed into one of hope. With your support, there are thousands of other children who could achieve similar transformative milestones.



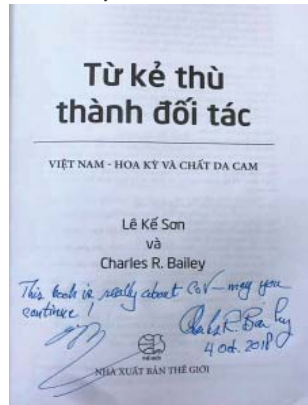
Thy's mother looking very happy with her progress

From Enemies to Partners

The impact and tragedy of war do not end when the guns fall silent... Ten to fifteen percent of all Vietnamese with disabilities are probably Agent Orange victims... Agent Orange is a humanitarian concern we are doing something about.

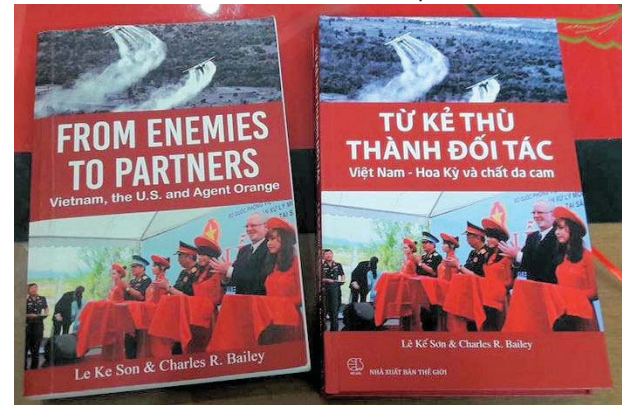
Over a decade ago, Ben and Huong were asked by a local People's Committee Vice Chair, Mr. Le Ahn, to join him when he visited families who had children with disabilities in DaNang, a "hot spot" for the chemical poison known as dioxin/agent orange, a legacy from the war. It was a strikingly sad visit to each household seeing the children languish and parents in great distress.

Shortly thereafter, Dr. Charles Bailey came into our sphere of supporters. Charles, the Ford Foundation Representative at



that time, invited COV to submit a grant proposal to respond to these children's needs. We did, and we are forever grateful to Charles as the lives of over 800 children since that time have been improved.

Over the years, Drs. Charles Bailey and Le Ke Son worked tirelessly to address the environmental and humanitarian war legacy by facilitating research and supporting many charities as well as steadfastly encouraging closer relations between the US and Vietnam



governments. They have recently co-authored a seminal book, *From Enemies to Partners*, that outlines "the moral reasoning for a fuller American response and present further steps the United States and Vietnam can each take in a joint humanitarian initiative to resolve the legacy of Agent Orange/dioxin in Vietnam."

We invite, indeed we encourage, all of our supporters to read this book for a fuller understanding as it "offers a way forward that acknowledges the past while looking to the future." It can be purchased on Amazon in hardcover or Kindle versions.

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Opportunity for Enterprising Single Mother

As parents, we center our lives around the wellbeing of our children. No matter where in the world, all parents try to give their children the best possible. When we first met Ms. Dai three years ago, she was gracious with a kind smile and welcoming eyes, but life was hard for her and her infant daughter, Hoa. Women comprise of 50.58% of Vietnam's population, and Ms. Dai is among the 27% who are single and the heads of their household. They are highly vulnerable to natural disasters, sickness, and volatile agricultural prices. Further, education and health care indicators for women are worse than for men, wage differentials exist, and women are underrepresented in the formal labor market. Single mothers face a myriad of barriers that trap them and their children in poverty. Enabling these women to achieve financial security protects their children.

Ms. Dai is a very enterprising woman who only needed an opportunity. When enrolled in our program **Empowering Foundation for Women & Their Children (EFWC)** she jumped in with all of the energy she could muster. EFWC aims to alleviate poverty for women entrepreneurs and their children through a powerful combination of financial training, networking, small



Ms. Dai with daughter in front of new breakfast cart

business microloans and assisting with healthcare. As part of the training, women develop a livelihood plan to start or expand their businesses. In essence, each woman, with the support of COV, is in control of identifying her own solutions to move out of poverty.

Today, Ms. Dai is running a thriving breakfast bread shop and a day care center both in her home. She followed the livelihood plan she developed during our training and used a small microloan and grant to expand her breakfast shop and repair her home so that parents were comfortable sending their children. In total, she is now earning \$336 per month—way above the local poverty line!

We have been helping single mothers find a path out of poverty since 2009. Recently, we implemented stronger financial training under a grant from Rise Against Hunger, an international hunger relief organization that distributes food and life-changing aid to the world's most vulnerable. Thank you Rise Against Hunger for your trust in COV and believe that these women can do wonders!



Ms. Dai greeting children for lunch

Ten Waiting Students

Tin has severely limited eye sight and yet he has earned top grades and was accepted into the Danang University of Education. He was originally in our Hope System of Care for Children with Disabilities program and nothing seems to set him back. Tin is one of ten students waiting for a sponsor to pledge \$1,000 a year to pay university expenses. Even with this scholarship, the students still need to work to support themselves and help their families.

Other students have similar



stories. Trung wants to attend the Science and Technology

University, but he lost both parents. Dan too hopes to attend Science and Technology, but his father has a serious disease and his mother is disabled. Vy wants to study science but her single mother does not earn sufficient funds to support her two other siblings and university fees. Ten students in total, all with hopes and dreams, all who need a sponsor, and all who will work very hard to graduate, obtain a job and then most certainly "pay it back" by helping their families.

Cycling Out Child Poverty 2019, Hue to DaNang

We Need Your Legs and YOUR Hearts

MARK YOUR CALENDARS—MARCH 26-28 2019 for the trip of a lifetime that will change lives. JOIN OUR TEAM and cycle through the rolling hills and rice patties of Vietnam and make stops along the way to see the children and families who have and will benefit from YOUR participation.

You can't make the trip to Vietnam? WE STILL NEED YOU! Challenge yourself and/or form a team to ride at home. Ride solo, on a team or even on a stationary bike—we just NEED your legs and your hearts.

To get started, contact Suzanne Fulcher at fulcher.childrenofvietnam@gmail.com.

