

The Princess Project

Newsletter No. 11, June, 2012

It is good to be home again after a very rewarding experience in Vietnam. It is so good to see the children again and to see where the donations are being directed. The Project has so far donated almost \$40,000.00 to the care of the children and provision for their futures, since we started in 2009. There are also two very needy families in the community which are assisted. These families are very grateful for your help and are doing as well as they can and much better than without the help they receive.



Chris Doulis, My, Ron, Quyen Ngu (Princess), Binh, Huyen and Bao Han preparing for performing National Anthem at ANZAC Day Friendship Match.

Despite not having a “normal” home life with biological family we really believe our children are far better off than many of the kids we see on the streets every day. Our children are loved, cared for and protected from harm in the Centre and people who visit the Centres always remark on the fact that they appear clean and well fed. There are a number of very sick children in the Centre mostly as a result of their HIV status and sadly one little boy died whilst we were there and two others have been diagnosed with terminal illnesses. It does pose the question of HIV and their life expectancy, despite their excellent medical care being provided by the Bill Clinton Foundation.

The government is demolishing the Centre at Ngo Quyen and building a much bigger purpose-built centre to house all but the older children who are doing trades of school in the City. This is really good for the young ones because the N Centre has

lots of room for the kids to play games and have some outdoor equipment which is not possible in P Centre in the city. One major snag is that shortly all the residents of N Centre will relocate to P Centre and goodness knows where they are all going to fit whilst the building is in progress.

The Long Hai Centre was officially opened in April and classes have commenced in the Computer Lab, and Sewing Room. Blue Scope Steel donated a shed for the motorbike mechanic training and the demolition and conversion of the old toilet block into the hairdressing, nail, and beauty training area is complete. Soon they will begin to take residents at Long Hai including about 80 children who are disabled as a direct result of Agent Orange



My Huong, Translator, Ailsa, Ron, Lynette Bergner, Chris and Jacki Doulis, and Trang Dai

We were presented with a certificate to acknowledge the contribution made towards this Centre by the project and by some direct donations



Swannies players with girls before the match

of friends associated with the project. There were generous donations made by a visiting AFL football team from China after a visit to P Centre – thanks heaps, and from the Vietnam Swans which went towards the construction and concreting of the motorbike workshop area. We have also donated substantially towards the construction of new toilets, workshop and beauty training areas.

Swannies made an equal donation from the proceeds of the Anzac Day Friendship Match to their major cause, Vietnam Swim Program. Good on you Swannies and Reds.



Reds players with children during their visit.



Conversion of old toilet block to beauty training centre



Teena and Ken Betteridge in new library at Long Hai



Construction underway on new toilet block at Long Hai

My Huong was appointed Deputy Director of the Long Hai Centre which actually comes with the princely income of VND5 million per month (A\$250). This is a step forward but it just means that as well as her voluntary full time role in the other Centres, she goes to Long Hai (hour and a half round trip) a couple of times a week or as required. She still also teaches English at the Language School two nights per week and all day Saturday and Sunday to make a living to keep herself and family. You can't help but be amazed at her dedication and energy.

Some of the other items purchased are a digital overhead projector for the Computer Lab, cupboards for the dormitories, desks, as well as clothing and food packages. Washing machines were bought with donation from friends and family of John Carey.



The work crew on moving day at Long Hai

We had a party for the children at N Centre one Sunday afternoon with Brian and his group, Sharon and Laurence and Chris and Jacki. We also took a group of older children from the P Centre. They had LOUD music, games and played footy with Steve, Brad and Darcy. Then they had dinner – a magnificent spread and didn't they eat! When we left we were sure there was lots left over but My Huong assured us that before they went to bed it was all gone. We also had drinks and ice creams for them and after dinner we handed each child a parcel with a new set of clothes. On a previous visit to Ngo Quyen we had noticed that the children had no towels – they just put on their clothes so we also bought a towel each for them. Brother in law, Brian was pleased to see the fridge which was purchased with donations from Val's friends, and to see how popular it was with the children and staff.



With the children at the indoor play centre

We took the opportunity to take the children from P Centre to the park a couple of times with Norm and Maureen Perry and then with Sharon, Laurence, Darcy and Brad. Great fun but amazing how our 20 or so children increase to 50 when we start buying drinks and snacks. Also a great relief when there are the right number of children when you get back to the Centre especially when we

walk through a market and across a divided 6 lane busy road to and from the park.



Darcy with Binh and Bao Han at craft room in Co-Op Mart

Other outings were a trip to Co-Op Mart a shopping mall, with a couple of the children where they played in the fun parlour, chose a set of clothes each and had KFC before going back to the Centre. Also there were two trips to a little centre especially set up as for indoor play for little ones – excellent little venue and the little ones don't get out very much so they had an absolute ball.



The Hewat girls training to be childcare workers at indoor play centre.

This trip we have met so many generous and really friendly people who visited the Centre and met My Huong and contributed to the Centre. We were also really happy this time to meet the Patron of APER the French volunteer group who raise money and oversee the work they sponsor in the Centres.

Vietnamese schools are now on their long break. Children usually do extra school work with paid teachers during this time which explains some of the reasons why our children do not do so well – they cannot afford to pay a teacher to do extra lessons. However they do take the opportunity to give the children access to recreations they

otherwise don't do especially swimming activities which they just love.

My Huong's program is packed as tight as it can be right now and hopefully next newsletter she can give us a report and some stories about some of the children again.

We cannot express how much the support you give to the Project means to the staff and children at the Centres . We are only the vehicle that delivers your love and care to the children and it is such a privilege to do so. Hopefully more of you will have the chance to visit and see first hand what makes the people who care for these children such selfless and dedicated people. From the security guy who sits out the front to Trang Dai the Director, they have a united goal – the children. Please remember them in your prayers.

Ron & Ailsa



Nie with her new clothes.

Email: verno1@bigpond.com

Phone: 0747834109

Bendigo Bank

IA, RL & CG Vernon

BSB & A/c 633-000-114027691

If you have an email address and prefer that method to receive the newsletter and you don't already, please email us to include you on email mail out.

For information about Vietnam Swans check out their website



My Huong and Samuel (Huang)