

Mai Nha Children Foundation Vietnam

Dear friends of Mai Nha,

With year end quickly approaching it is time to bring you up to speed again with what has happened at Mai Nha. In short, all is well! The 16 children are healthy, growing up fast and on the whole are doing well at school. The scholarship program continues to flourish with 100 children participating. As President and CEO I am on the ground 2 out of every 8 weeks. With a strong and active local Board, an excellent staff and a team of hands on volunteer experts in childcare supporting the staff, operations continue to run smoothly.

The children

There are 16 children living at Mai Nha who now are between 3 and 8 years of age. All 16 attend school, 13 at the kindergarten next door built by Mai Nha and 3 at primary school.



As said, the children are doing very well helped by pragmatic, well defined interventions started last year. Recall, these were designed for the children to catch up in terms of autonomy, socializing skills and communication.

This on-going program got a boost over the summer months; in June and July, 2 child psychologists worked full time with each of the children – as a result, we have seen tremendous progress in terms of autonomy, self confidence and interaction with others. Also over summer, we invested in an experienced primary school teacher to help upgrade skills of the older children, where required. Again, great progress be it in math, Vietnamese grammar or more social skills, like listening.

Special care for An, Thanh and Tien

An came to us in 2015 with a cleft palate and deformed hands. She got reconstructive surgery on her palate in 2015, followed by a year in the Tu Xuong re-education center for intensive speech therapy. Results of these interventions have been breakthrough for An; she has transformed from being introverted and rather aggressive into a happy, loving child. Only 3 weeks ago we have started the process of hand surgery; An was successfully operated on by a renown French surgeon who is confident she will gain much improved use of all her fingers.



Thanh has a problem with one eyelid. A team of US specialists have agreed to help her on a pro bono basis! This needs to be done before Thanh turns 5 years old i.e. in the next 12 months.



Last, **Tien**, who is struggling with a heart defect. She is under regular observation and the plan is to operate during the 2018 summer holidays.



We feel privileged that we can give our children world class health care. The

reputation of Mai Nha and our persuasive arguments are big enablers.

Staff

To say that 2017 has been a bit of a roller-coaster for the leadership of Mai Nha family homes, would be an understatement.

Mother Kieu retired in May. We owe her lots of gratitude for her exemplary service. We were also fortunate in finding Mrs. Lan as a replacement; she has extensive experience taking care of disadvantaged children, be it orphans or children with HIV. After a very smooth handover and a promising first 3 months, we were all the more shocked when Mrs. Lan was diagnosed with well advanced cancer. She initially was told there was little hope of recovery but treatment proved so effective that she returned to Mai Nha in September and is, once again, overseeing day to day operations in a very effective way. A true miracle!

Other staff related changes are the result of



staff duties changing as the children grow up. There is less need for baby sitting and thus the number of nannies has halved to 9. We have retained the best performing ones and have trained them, with the help of the child psychologists mentioned above, to provide the structure and regularity in the upbringing

to create self confident, respectful children who are good team players with broad interests.

Mai Nha facilities

Another sign of the children growing up is that they have homework! Additionally, they increasingly are engaged in hobbies as painting, dancing and music. To enable them to do well we are building a two-room “study and personal development” facility on the premises of the orphanage. One room will be equipped with computers and is dedicated to homework. The second room will be used for



the “personal expression” type of activities.

Scholarships

Yet another great year for this program; last August already was the 5th year in which we granted the annual scholarships. As mentioned, we now have 100 children participating, from primary school up to university! The program was set up to make Mai Nha a fully integrated “citizen” of the Thien Nghiep community, where the orphanage is located. We are increasingly delivering against that intent evidenced by the appreciation of our neighbours as well as the strong support of the local and national authorities – all requests for permits are being granted within record timings. A world of



difference versus the struggle we had with permits when we started!

Mai Nha’s new school project

Mai Nha’s senior Management and the local Board are embarking on yet another educational project – a new school! Purpose is to increase the chances of success of local youth on the labour market.

With 5 years of experience of our scholarship program lots of business experience in Vietnam, we came to the conclusion that “regular High School” does not prepare the students well enough for a successful start of a career. Especially lacking are English language skills and “behavioural” skills, like discipline, basic politeness, etc all of which are very important in the pre dominant tourist industry in the Phan Thiet region. Additionally, local students are lacking the help to find out which studies or jobs best fit their skills and passion. A curriculum for the school and a mentorship program are being finalized and we are in the middle of recruitment of the leaders of the program.

The school is being set as a separate legal entity and we are extremely pleased that the start up investment in land and buildings have been secured by two significant sponsors. Going operating costs we expect to cover by

local sponsorships starting with a Dutch company based in Saigon who has committed to a 20 year financial support program which is fabulous news.

Lots to be done but we expect to open the school by the end of 2018; this will be another contribution of Mai Nha to make local youth more employable and, indirectly will help the local economy. No doubt this will help Mai Nha’s standing with the local community and the authorities.

Summary

Another year with lots of progress at Mai Nha. Our children are getting the benefit of a true family life, which was the mission set out at the start of Mai Nha. We are proud of the

way the operations are adapting to the children growing up and our ability to get outstanding support, be it in the form of a committed local Board, top notch medical help or our volunteer child psychologists. Our standing with the local community and the authorities gives us the “safety net” a foreign entity needs in Vietnam. All of this gives us a lot of confidence in the future of Mai Nha.

We thank you wholeheartedly for your support. Without you, Mai Nha would never even have started!

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or suggestions concerning Mai Nha that you might have.

Marc Witlox

Co Founder - President

MAKE A DONATION

IN THE USA

Bank Transfer:

Beneficiary: «Friends of Mai Nha Children’s Foudation Vietnam»

CITY NATIONAL BANK

89 South Lake Avenue PASADENA, CA91101

Account USD:26258006

Swift Code: CINAUS6L ROUTING#: 122016066

Checks:

Beneficiary: «Friends of Mai Nha Children’s Foudation Vietnam»

Address:

Care of: *John GOSCH*

Prager Metis CPAS, LLC

2381 Rosecrans Avenue, Suite 350

EL SEGUNDO, CA 90245

IN VIETNAM

Bank Transfer:

Beneficiary: «Co so nuoi duong tre mo coi Mai Nha»

Vietcombank – Ho Chi Minh City Branch. Address: VBB Tower, 05 Cong Truong Me Linh Street, District 1; Ho Chi Minh City

Account VND: 0071000877585

Account USD: 0071370877593

Account EUR: 0071141093710

Swift code: BFTVVNVX007

