



Summer 2009

Viet Nam Friendship Village

Newsletter of the U.S. Committee for the Vietnam Friendship Village Project

The Vietnam Friendship Village survives 30-year flood

by Judith Moss

Last December, my husband Bill and I traveled to Southeast Asia. We spent several weeks traveling in Hawaii, the Philippines, Thailand and Laos, before arriving in Hanoi on Valentines Day 2009. We went to the Friendship Village for a visit and spent the night. We were aware of the recent damage from the monsoon floods of October–November 2008; we had even seen pictures of



the flood waters. However, actually seeing the high-water mark on the buildings really put things in perspective and allowed us to see in our mind's eye what we had been told about what had occurred. The water at the entrance gate had been waist deep and up to the first floor windows at the dining hall and living quarters. Everyone had to be moved upstairs. Children whose families lived in nearby villages were sent home and the veterans had to take buses to their homes.

The village had suffered many losses. The area around the fishpond was damaged. The organic garden was destroyed. Two elevators, the generator, transformers, and two ve-



PHOTO BY ROSEMARIE MILO

LEFT: Residents watch from balcony and wait for assistance as flood waters swirl below. ABOVE: Director Dung indicates the high-water mark for French Committee head Raphaël Vahé, one of the attendees of the interim meeting held in April 2009.

hicles were all rendered inoperable. Many of the houses were severely damaged as well.

The Veterans Association of Vietnam had provided immediate assistance in the form of much needed food, fresh drinking water, two

boats and money. Hanoi Peoples Committee and Hanoi Clean Water Company also donated supplies. The Red Cross of Vietnam donated food and medicine and the Ministry of Defense brought in a team to help clean and sterilize the village.

By the time we arrived, cleanup and repair was well underway, made possible in part by the generous donations received from our U.S. Committee supporters. Dining room walls were being scraped and sanded so they could be repaired. We were told that computers had been taken upstairs during the flood, so they did not sustain much damage. The desks, however, did not fare so well and looked as if they would not last much longer. Many other repairs had gotten underway, but damage to the housing was extensive. At the time of our visit, the Director was waiting for a report from the engineers describing the extent of the damage and exactly which additional repairs needed to be done.

(See page 5 for "Flood recovery update.")

Every little bit helps...

Thanks to our supporters, the U.S. Committee's fundraising level—and subsequent contribution to the Friendship Village—held steady during 2007-08 (see *Financial Summary*, p. 10) despite the worldwide economic downturn. But the past year has been an especially difficult one for the Friendship Village due to damage sustained in the November flood, and once again we ask for your assistance.

There are many good reasons people support this project. Some feel connected with Vietnam through travel or military experiences, or through relationships with Vietnamese friends or American veterans who served there. The Friendship Village has a special appeal for those looking for expressions of peace and reconciliation in an increasingly violent world, and for those who feel compassion for Vietnamese victims of Agent Orange. For others, this is simply a well-run humanitarian project that provides quality care and services for children and veterans in need. Whatever your motivation, we are grateful for every donation received, large or small.

Donations may be made by credit card via the *Network for Good* link on our website, vietnamfriendship.org (please note that electronic transactions require a 3% processing fee). Or send a check to "VFVP-USA," P.O. Box 599, Arcata, CA 95518. VFVP-USA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and donations are tax-deductible.

A day in the life

...continued from back page

description of where they live, because the residents of each house function like a big family. There is a housemother and 20 brothers and sisters. The older kids take care of the younger ones. They wake each other up, dress and feed each other.



PHOTO BY DAVID ROCOVITS

Some of the severely disabled need almost total care. One housemother couldn't do it all even if she wanted. Some kids have learned sign language so they can communicate with their deaf brothers and sisters. Everyone has a job because the kids need each other.

After breakfast the children file out to class—special education, embroidery and tailoring. Special education classrooms are decorated with colorful wall hangings and outfitted with furniture, blackboards, toys, and teaching materials found only in the finest schools in Vietnam. A giant stuffed King Kong looks down from atop a tall cabinet and a picture of beloved Uncle Ho (Ho Chi Minh) hangs atop the black-

board. The teacher Ms. Nguyen Quy Van patiently repeats instructions again and again. Today's lesson teaches about shapes and names. The lessons develop fine manual dexterity. This is a far cry from the institution of the past, which gave compassionate custodial care but not rehabilitation. And it is a further cry from what the kids would be doing if they were home.

All of the children are here because their parents are very poor veterans, unable to give them the care necessary to develop to their fullest potential. Some of them were living in conditions that, well, we just don't want to think or talk about on Christmas. Since its beginning, great improvements are seen for children after spending only a few months at the Friendship Village thanks to improved nutrition and sanitation, cleaner drinking water, and more physical activity.

Now when I ask the kids their dreams for the future they say, "I want to get a job." Twenty-five-year-old Long (male), who lived at VFV for three years, is now attending a professional IT school. This program was arranged and paid for by U.S. donors, headed by [former U.S. committee member] Suel Jones. Three of the current residents attend Xuan Phuong High School near VFV. Fifteen-year-old Oanh (female) wants to go to college when she finishes and Thai (male), also 15, wants to work in IT. Thai, who is ambulatory, pushes Oanh to school in her wheelchair. Kids helping kids is part of the magic here.

It's the day after Christmas and great Hanoi is in the grips of winter. The kids

are well dressed for the 15-degree (59°F) weather. The flip-flops they wear make my toes tingle, but this is the predominant custom in Vietnam and they are used to it. One special education student is supported in a high quality wheelchair adapted with an insert to hold his weak spine straight. Students look healthy and happy despite the full range of physical and mental disabilities seen here.

The sound of the lunch gong at 11:15 animates some students who did not make it to class this morning and they join with all the others to file into the clean dining room and take their assigned seats around circular tables like a big family. Fried bean curd, cabbage, pork, eggs and rice are served on metal, cafeteria-style, divided platters. They eat their well-balanced meal with no encouragement. Even the normally mischievous kids put their antics on hold for lunch. Big kids feed others who need assistance and then eat themselves. Kids helping kids.

During the lunch break we walk the expanding grounds of VFV, noticing new construction in process. A backhoe is digging ditches for storm drains so as to avoid future in-



PHOTO BY DAVID ROCOVITS

Korean volunteers gather with a few Friendship Village kids to mug for the camera.

undation similar to that of this past November which sent all residents packing to the second floor for three



PHOTO BY DAN ROCOVITS

VFVP-USA Board Member David Rocovits enjoys a meal with VFV kids.

weeks. Unusually heavy rain made a pond of the grounds—almost two meters (6.5 ft.) high at the north end. Residents were ferried around in boats eating only instant noodles for the duration. The floodwaters wiped out most of the organic garden including all the orange trees. It is now being replanted by 20 Korean orphans who are members of “Youth Challenge,” a Christian group that is here to volunteer. Lively like any teenagers on a mission, they run up and ask us (Westerners) to pose for pictures with them. Their work here is being facilitated by Vietnam Peace Volunteers, a Vietnamese-operated non-governmental organization.

Recent years have seen more and more homegrown providers of aid emerging. Social service was formerly the turf of only government offices: like the VFV which is operated by the Vietnam Veterans Association, under the Ministry of Defense. The South Korean Ministry of Defense has taken VFV as a model for a rehab center in Central Vietnam where many Korean soldiers fought during the Vietnam War.

At 1:30 pm the gong rings again and classes and work continue. Twenty-two students are being

trained in embroidery by Ms. Loan. Good eyes and finger dexterity, plus attention to detail are the key to the beautiful work they do.

In the large tailoring room we see 30 professional sewing machines, but only Thom is here cutting patterns for men's pants. She works diligently—not allowing our presence and photography to interrupt her. She continues working even as we question her to find out that the rest of the students and teachers are off for an exam today. Two years of study here has taught 26-year-old Thom about everything she needs to get work outside of this sheltered workshop. One has to look closely to notice that her left hand, which presses

the yardstick to the table, has no fingers and her right hand, which handles the scissors, has three fingers and a thumb one knuckle long—just enough to do the job. Her big dream?—a job, of course. I am sure this young woman will be one of VFV's many success stories.

We are drawn to “The Club” by disco music. This activity room is lined on two sides with floor-to-ceiling mirrors, two rotating strobe lights, stacks of yoga mats, two mar-

tial arts punching bags, and lots of sporting equipment. Ms. Ly leads 30 kids in freestyle dance movements. She then draws them into a circle and invites dancers to do their thing. Three break dancers jump at the opportunity to entertain us. Candy is distributed for a sugar boost and the show goes on till 5:30—the end of the work/study day and dinner time.

The residents are enthusiastic eaters, like any kids their age, but they seem to tire out more quickly. In the evening, activities revolve around TVs and the bathrooms in the six residential houses. Chinese and Korean soaps are the rage. They all know the stars by name. Some kids are already in bed by 8:30 pm when the lights go out.

We go back to our rooms beside the security post. A retired vet guards the entrance and stays awake with the aid of a TV in his enclosed cubical. We discuss the day and how great it would be to have 100 more VFVs throughout Vietnam. With three times more people living with disabilities compared to developed countries, Vietnam certainly could use them.



PHOTO BY DAVID ROCOVITS

After two years of study at the Friendship Village, 26-year-old Thom has a good foundation in tailoring skills.

It is very quiet now and we are tired. It was an exciting 24 hours for us visitors. For the staff and residents it was just one more day in the life of the Vietnam Friendship Village.

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Guidelines for visiting or volunteering

by Liliane Floge

The Friendship Village is located only 11 kilometers southwest of central Hanoi. In August 2008, Ha Tay Province, the province in which the village is located, was formally incorporated into greater Hanoi, but this change has not really impacted the village. Despite Hanoi's intense urban sprawl, it is still a relatively easy commute from the central district of the city to the Friendship Village.

Visiting or volunteering at the Friendship Village is possible most of the year, although it is not advisable during the two to three weeks surrounding the annual Tet celebration (Lunar New Year), from late January through February. Most of the children leave the village during this holiday to go home to their families.

Volunteers should be prepared to work at the village for a *minimum* of one week, although a stay of two or more weeks is usually more productive and is preferred. Interested persons should contact Foreign Visitor Manager, Ms. Nguyen Ngoc Ha, via email at [friendshipvillage18398@](mailto:friendshipvillage18398@hn.vnn.vn)

hn.vnn.vn. Please attach your message to Ms. Ha as a word document so that she can more easily translate it for Director Dang Vu Dung. Indicate the dates you would like to volunteer and what skills you have to offer. (People without special skills may always work in the organic garden if they are willing.)

Housing is available at the village for volunteers, but space is limited, so please inform Ms. Ha in advance if you wish to stay there.

Once in Vietnam, you are advised to call the village directly to confirm your arrival. It may be helpful to ask a Vietnamese-speaking friend, hotel clerk or driver to call on your behalf.

For those who want only to pay a brief visit to the Friendship Village, it is also best to contact Ms. Ha in advance. On weekdays the best time to visit is in the late afternoon, when the children are finished with school and physical rehabilitation exercises. Weekends are also a fine time to visit. Children enjoy playing with visitors and some may want to practice their English or other language skills. It is often possible to interact with the resident veterans as well.

Korean vets sponsor village for agent orange victims in central Vietnam

by Becky Luening

An organization of disabled veterans from Korea, with financial support from the Korean government, is sponsoring the development of a project similar to the Vietnam Friendship Village, to be located in central Vietnam. This new village also will be dedicated to helping victims of Agent Orange, both children and veterans, but will accommodate more residents.

The official name of the project is the **Korea-Vietnam Peace Village**. It is being built in Tam Dan commune, Phu Ninh district, Quang Nam pro-

vince. The total cost of construction, estimated at \$2 million, will be raised by the Koreans, and Vietnam will receive the funds when the project is finished. The groundbreaking of the new village has already taken place and construction is now getting underway.

Over 300,000 South Koreans fought on the side of the U.S. during the American war in Vietnam and about 5,000 died in the war. Korean veterans had already contributed funds to our Friendship Village in the past as a gesture of peace and reconciliation.

Supreme Court decision on Agent Orange *by Paul Wicker*

The importance of the Vietnam Friendship Village was highlighted by a recent court decision. The village has been a beacon of hope to those Vietnamese children and veterans who suffer the effects of Agent Orange either by direct exposure when it was sprayed or by the residual effects of contaminated soil or genetic mutations passed down through generations of those who have been exposed.

Four decades after the U.S. military sprayed the jungles of Vietnam with Agent Orange, a toxic defoliant, thousands of babies are still being born with horrific defects. In 1984, seven chemical companies, including Dow and Monsanto, agreed to a \$180 million settlement with U.S. veterans who claimed Agent Orange had caused health problems. But unlike the American veterans, no one in the war-ravaged country has re-

ceived any compensation from the United States government.

On Monday, March 2, 2009 the Supreme Court of the United States let stand the dismissal of lawsuits brought by Vietnamese nationals and U.S. military veterans against Dow Chemical Co., Monsanto and other chemical makers over the use of the herbicide Agent Orange during the Vietnam War. Without comment, the justices declined to review a ruling last year by a U.S. appeals court in New York that the plaintiffs could not pursue their claims for their alleged injuries from their exposure to the chemical defoliant.

In one case, the Vietnamese nationals said the companies should be held liable for supplying the U.S. military with Agent Orange for spraying in areas of Vietnam in the 1960s, in violation of international law. The plaintiffs had sought class-action

status for millions of Vietnamese people. The appeals court upheld a federal judge's ruling that Agent Orange had been used as a defoliant, not as a poison designed for or targeting human populations. In a second case, U.S. military veterans or their relatives said a federal judge and the appeals court had erred in ruling the companies could assert a government-contractor defense that shields them from liability.

This court decision once again demonstrates that those who care about the effects of Agent Orange on the Vietnamese people may wait a very long time for justice from our government and those companies who profited from its use. While this is an important struggle, in the meantime those who care may also provide direct assistance to Agent Orange victims through programs like the Vietnam Friendship Village.

Flood recovery update

by Liliane Floge

(See article about 30-year-flood on page 1.)

Judith Moss described the flood damage and recovery efforts at the time of her visit in mid-February. We have since learned from Director Dung that all the problems caused by the flood that directly affected the lives and care of the children, such as damage to the dining rooms, the kitchen gas stoves, the electric generator, the transformer station, and the cars, now have been remedied. In addition, the doors of the dining room and library have been repaired, as has much of the hygiene equipment.

Other building repair work continues. Many items that were damaged in the flood still need to be replaced. All the plywood furniture—tables and chairs, beds, and cabinets—will be replaced with metal or stainless steel. Many of the plants in the medicinal herb garden that were

destroyed are being replanted and at the same time the garden is being expanded with additional varieties.

Director Dung also has indicated that improvements will be made to help prevent future floods and the damage they bring, for example raising the village roads and improving the drainage system.

Six of the houses that sustained the most damage will be destroyed and replaced by a new three-story dormitory that will have new, enlarged bathroom and toilet areas more appropriate for children with disabilities. The Vietnamese government will be providing much of the funding for this project.



PHOTO BY DAVID ROCOVITS

A series of signs made for educating students and staff via the organic gardening project teach about themes such as ecology, biodiversity, and using features of the natural environment for seasonal flood management.

Plan of action determined at interim meeting

by Becky Luening

An interim working meeting took place at the Vietnam Friendship Village (VFV) on April 8-9, 2009, attended by Rosemarie Mizo from Germany and Raphaël Vahé from France, President and V.P. of our International Committee, respectively, along with Do Cong Mui, V.P. of the Veterans Association of Vietnam, Dang Vu Dung, Director of VFV, and Dinh Van Tuyen and Vu Van Mam, Vice Directors of VFV.

At the beginning of the meeting, Director Dung reported on the main activities of the village in 2008, providing details on financials, staffing, the health center, and education and vocational training endeavors (see "Operation highlights," below). After consideration and discussion of various proposals, agreement was reached on the following plan of action for 2009 and 2010:

- Funds will be raised to purchase hearing aids for hearing impaired children. [Note: Funds have since been secured through the Vietnam-USA Society.]

- A teacher will be hired and a special education class created for the hearing impaired children at VFV, with salary to be paid from the general budget.

- Ongoing links and cooperative relationships with other special education schools and institutions at home and abroad will be established and maintained for the purpose of learning and exchange of information.

- Special education teachers will attend professional development training courses in order to continue improving their teaching skills.

- A special fund will be set up to reward VFV employees who show special effort or make a significant impact through their work. A total of 10,000 Euros per year will be budgeted for this purpose with equal contributions from the International and Vietnamese Committees.

- Insulation will be added to the ceiling of the vocational training build-

ing to reduce heat inside the building during the hottest months.

- Consensus was reached on measures to be taken for future flood prevention as well as procedures for replacing the houses most severely damaged in the 2008 flood. The Veterans Association of Vietnam will appeal to the Vietnamese government for financing.

- Flood-damaged buildings will continue to be repaired and flood-damaged furniture and other items replaced as needed.

- The wall around the long fish-pond and the drainage ditch outside the pond will be reconstructed and reinforced after completion of the wastewater treatment system.

- Water filtration improvements, including upgrading of pipelines, will be completed in 2009. The holding tank will be located on top of the veterans' building, thereby avoiding the need to construct a water tower.

The following budget requests were approved for the health center:

- 25,000,000 VND (about \$1,400 USD) per year for film, chemicals, and maintenance costs of medical equipment.

- 10,000,000 VND (about \$560 USD) per year for purchase and planting of herbs and ongoing maintenance of the medicinal herb garden. A list of plants and prices will be sent to the International Committee to aid in fundraising.

Operation highlights

Following are a few excerpts from Director Dung's detailed report on Friendship Village 2008 operations.

FOOD

Food prices in Vietnam continue to rise due to inflation, just as in the U.S. Beginning January 1, 2008, the food budget for veterans and children at VFV was raised from 20,000 (approx. \$1.12) to 25,000 VND (approx. \$1.40) per person per day and the veterans' allotment was

raised again to 30,000 VND (approx. \$1.68) beginning May 1, 2008.

The organic garden (reestablished after the flood) continues to be developed and maintained, providing most if not all of the daily vegetables for the kitchen.

Food safety standards have been consistently upheld to avoid food poisoning or food-borne illness, with special care taken during the November 2008 flood.



PHOTO BY ROSEMARIE MIZO

HEALTH CARE

In 2008 the Vietnam Friendship Village was granted a certificate by the Ha Tay Province Health Service to run a public health clinic, regulations were set up for operation of the clinic, and the first patients from outside the village were seen and treated. Three medical employees were sent to Hospital 354 in Hanoi for technical training in ultrasound, ear-nose-throat examination, and dental treatment.

The health center now encompasses the following areas:

- Separate examination rooms for veterans and children;
- An emergency room, three rehab rooms, two physical therapy rooms, exercise room, an Oriental medicine room, and a treatment room for up to 10 patients;
- Laboratory, x-ray, photo diagnos-

tics, and ultrasound rooms;

- Dental, ear/nose/throat, and eye clinics.

During 2008, the recently established consulting service for diagnosis and early detection, in cooperation with German experts, provided free examination and consultation for 32 newborns from nearby areas showing signs of low development. In addition, consultation was provided to families of children with autism, cerebral palsy, and other developmental issues. Fourteen of these children were subsequently admitted to the Friendship Village for residential treatment. With financing from the German Development Service, a seminar was organized on autism and similar disorders for 200 medical cadres and employees from centers across Vietnam as well as families with autistic children. The VFV was also able to provide wheelchairs to those in need: 3 for children and 66 for veterans.

VFV has maintained a treatment program for veterans since opening its doors in 1998. These services are funded by the Veterans Association of Vietnam, with assistance from the Vietnamese government. Veterans receive medical treatment for many conditions including spinal column degeneration, nervous and physical depression, chronic headache, hypertension, diabetes, heart disease, bronchitis, rheumatism, skin disorders, ulcers and other digestive problems. Treatments include acupuncture and herbal medicine as well as Western approaches. Every two months, a new batch of 40 veterans is admitted for residential treatment; in 2008, a total of 200 veterans was served.

Some VFV patients receive treatments from institutions outside the village. Hospital 354, Orthopedic Injury Institute, Vietcot Hospital, Central Eye Hospital and Central ENT Hospital all helped to examine and treat veterans and children in 2008. Hatay Hospital examined, treated and delivered medicine for psychiatric and epileptic patients. Hoai Duc Health Center assisted with many aspects of the



PHOTO BY ROSEMARIE MIZO

health center. And the Army Epidemic Prevention Institute helped with prevention measures including control of mosquitoes and flies.

EDUCATION & VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Special education and vocational classes continued to be refined and expanded in 2008. Fifteen children attend schools outside the village, including Xuan Phuong primary and junior high schools, Xa Dan School for deaf-mute children, and the school for disadvantaged children of Thai Nguyen Province.

At present, 96 children are enrolled in the four vocational training programs offered at the village. All 17 of the children who enrolled in the sixth industrial sewing course offered at the village met the requirements of the course, and two-thirds of the students scored high on the graduation exam.

Students in the sewing, embroidery and flower-making classes continued to turn out souvenirs last year—6500 to be exact—including eight new products. All were sold and generated 67,600,000 VND (about \$3,800) for the village.

A new vocational training center established at the Friendship Village is now offering intermediate level courses in civil electricity, industrial electricity, industrial electronics, automobile technology, business accounting, construction, and restaurant skills. In addition, elementary courses are being offered in foreign languages including English, Chinese and Korean. The free or low-cost training is avail-

able to all Friendship Village residents who are able and willing to learn, as well as to children and grandchildren of veterans and other children with difficult financial circumstances.

CONSTRUCTION & REPAIR

Several improvements were made to Vietnam Friendship Village facilities in 2008:

- New pigpens were constructed in back of the organic garden area, replacing the old ones, which had been located next to the kitchen.

- A new motor garage was built.
- Safety upgrades were made to the electrical system for two houses as well as the special ed and vocational classrooms.

- The natural wastewater treatment system was finally completed, according to the design of Dr. Viet Anh. In the new system, wastewater flows from different sources into a tank, situated near the “long fishpond.” After being treated through a natural filtration system, the wastewater flows back into the environment. This new system prevents the long fishpond from being polluted. The total cost of constructing this system was \$45,000 USD, of which the Ministry of New Zealand Veterans contributed \$25,000 and the U.S. Committee contributed \$20,000.

Additional site improvement projects were identified during the April meeting, some of which were related to damage sustained during the November 2008 flood (see article on front page). The village drinking water filtration and plumbing project originally was to include the construction of a free-standing water tower in addition to upgrading and improving the pipelines. But the most recent plan is to locate the new tank atop one of the new buildings, thereby saving the cost of building a tower.

Even as the Vietnam Friendship Village continues to develop, there remains one main focus: providing the best quality care for children and veterans in need.

Reminiscences



Don Flaxman
(1934–2009)

VFVP-USA Board Member 2005-08

Donald Flaxman died peacefully on January 17, 2009 after a brave battle with pancreatic cancer. Don was born on May 27, 1934, in New Haven, Connecticut, to Barnard and Pat Flaxman. He is survived by his wife Carole; his daughter Jamie and grandson Sam; and locally by his nephew Jon and family. Don's "family" is large and extensive particularly because of his commitment to the creation of the Spirit Rock Meditation Center in Marin and as a grief counselor and board member with KARA in Palo Alto, California. He was a spiritual seeker with a strong sense of justice and participation, as exemplified by his work for the Vietnam Friendship Village Project. Travel was a real passion and Don and Carole had adventures far and wide. He also touched many lives through his wise counsel as a financial consultant and advisor. He lived well and fully and his friends and family will miss his irreverent sense of the absurdities of life.

[Excerpted and edited from obituary published in the *San Francisco Chronicle* on 1/25/2009.

Carl Stancil remembers:

Don Flaxman was a unique person. I remember visiting him in his Los Altos home in 2004 shortly after he had called to ask for more infor-

DEDICATIONS <i>received since our last newsletter</i>	
Donor	Dedication
Eugene D. Alexander	In appreciation of everyone who suffered in the Vietnam war
Janet Ashford	In honor of Chet Boddy
LTC Russell Bailey	In memory of Col. Robert N. Bailey
Jim, Tia & Kai Bannister	In appreciation of Becky Luening, Carl Stancil & Suel Jones (ret.)
Richard Blanchfield	In memory of Bros, 26th Marines, Khe Sanh 1968
Kunyang & Willis Brown	In appreciation of Dan Ryan and his work for peace
Laurie Brown	In honor of Rowena Freeman
Lisa Brown & Kevin Johnson	In appreciation of Brian Willson & Becky Luening
Eva Brunner	In appreciation of the work that you do!
Lena Bullamore	In memory of Laurie Scanlon-Hill
Debbie Cahoon	In memory of George Mizo
John-Paul Catusco	In memory of Amanda Malloy
James Conway	In memory of Chris Matthews
Constance Corson	In appreciation of Dan Ryan
Christopher Dockray	In honor of Marsha & Philip Aaronson
Ray Doherty	In memory of all victims of unjust wars
Helen Eidemiller	In appreciation of Carl Stancil
Janice Eldred & Peter Szutu	In memory of Jeff Huch
Jennifer Eliasi	In appreciation of Jessica Eliasi and Robert Rakowitz
Donald Flaxman	In love & appreciation of David Lippman
	In memory of Carl Stancil's sister
Liliane Flöge	In honor & memory of Don Flaxman
Thomas Gale	In memory of Phillip Berrigan
G.I. Rights Hotline Volunteers Santa Cruz, CA	In memory of Chris Matthews
Elizabeth Goldblatt	In honor of Doug Smith
Alfred Griffith	In memory of Carmen Marie Quirk
Victor & Jean Harper	In appreciative memory of Donald Flaxman
Jack & Elizabeth Heinz	In memory of Chris Matthews
Susan Heinz	In memory of Chris Matthews
Norman & Sallie Hogg	In memory of David Cline;
	In appreciation of Veterans For Peace
Sophia Holloway	In honor, appreciation & celebration of all the hardworking, compassionate members of the village and all the dedicated volunteers of VFVP!
Jim & Betty Huch	In memory of Jeffrey Huch
Yorick Hurd	In celebration of children in Vietnam
Craig Ihara	In memory of Claire Ihara
Pam Itani	In honor & memory of Donald D.D. Flaxman
Peter Joseph & Marcy Levine	In memory of Rudolph Joseph & Art Levine
Pete Jussel	In honor of Ida M. Eddleton, 1905-1989
Maura Kelsea	In memory of Chris Matthews
Barry Koch	In memory of Greg Kelly;
	In memory of all the fallen soldiers who died so gallantly fighting a war that didn't have to happen
Carol Konyha	In memory of Sgt. Toby Konyha & Christine Konyha
Robert & Jane Ladner	In honor of Suel Duane Jones, USMC

mation about the project. We sat at his dining room table as I related the history of the Friendship Village. His quiet, thoughtful manner made me feel at ease and listened to. He was looking for ways to assist us in the project. Before long he was an active member of the Board. His perceptive comments and suggestions coupled with an eagerness to help out made it a joy to work with him.

I recall one board meeting during which I complained that as treasurer I had to acknowledge the donations with thank you cards and it was getting to be too much. Don immediately volunteered to take over this task, saying, "I enjoy thinking about each donor and writing a personal note to each." He felt strongly about the importance of creating a

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Donor

Huan Le
 Bette Lee
 Heidi Lewin
 Charlie Liteky
 Judith Lomba
 Clark May
 Ken Mayers
 George & Susan McAnanama
 Tim McCormick
 Amy Michel
 Virginia & Bill Miller
 Genevieve Piraino
 Rita & Ted Powell
 James Richmond & Leah Weckler
 Peter Rubin
 Dan Ryan
 Shabnam Samoohi
 Jayne Senecal
 Florence M. Schneider
 Kitty Schooley
 Jozseph Schultz & Ann Simonton
 Peter Shaw
 Beth Simon
 Amira Bramson Spendlove
 Bob & Becky Spitzer
 Stanley Stahl
 M.P. Steffen
 Ann Sugrue
 Kristin Tengren
 Larry Timmons
 Bill Motto "Wage Peace"
 VFW Post 5888
 Bich Vu
 Marlene Warneke
 Niki Wells
 Jonathon Wittwer
 Daniel Young
 Anonymous

Dedication

In memory of Mr. Le Sau and Mrs. Ton-Nu Thi Dien
 In memory of Tom Bernard
 In memory of Paco; In honor of Becky
 In honor, appreciation, & happy memory of George Mizo
 In memory of Chris Matthews
 In celebration of Nicholas Hollister Schutts
 In memory of Joan Duffy
 In memory of George F. McAnanama Jr.
 In memory of Conal Byrne, HM2, KIA at Con Thien, 9/21/67
 In appreciation of Jessica Eliasi and Robert Rakowitz
 In memory of Helen Stout
 In memory of Chris Matthews
 In honor & in appreciation of George Brown
 In memory of Paco Hüch
 In memory of Nguyen Minh Khai
 In honor & in memory of my mom, Mildred A Ryan
 In appreciation of Jessica Eliasi and Robert Rakowitz
 In honor of Philip & Marsha Aaronson
 In memory of S/Sgt. Wilbur Schneider
 In celebration of Paul Glairon for Hanukkah
 In memory of Chris Matthews
 In memory of all who died in/from the U.S. war against Vietnam
 In appreciation of all who work for peace
 In memory & in honor of George Mizo
 In memory of George Mizo
 In appreciation of Dan Ryan
 In memory of Ralph Washburn Bedell
 In memory of Jim & Abbie Sugrue
 In memory of my brother, Dave Tengren (served in Vietnam 1968; died 1990 at age 41 of illness related to Agent Orange exposure)
 In memory of Casey Londo
 In memory of Chris Matthews
 In celebration of children and people in the Friendship Village
 In memory of Theodore Warneke;
 In honor of CWO Ronald J. Fulton
 Jini Mulherin
 In memory of Chris Matthews
 In memory of Chris Matthews
 In celebration of Jessica Eliasi's Vietnam trip

In Memorium: Chris Matthews (1946-2008)



A stalwart supporter of the Vietnam Friendship Village Project from the beginning, Chris Matthews passed away in 2008 after a two-year battle with lung cancer. A Vietnam-era vet, he served as a paratrooper in the Army's 508th Airborne Division and was involved in U.S. military action in the Dominican Republic in 1965. He was an outspoken critic of the American war in Vietnam.

Chris had resided in Santa Cruz, California since the 1970s. He was a founding member of the Bill Motto "Wage Peace" VFW Post 5888 and served as the post's chaplain.

Chris Matthews donated regularly through his Irish pub, the Poet and Patriot, and attended many of the special VFVP events held in Santa Cruz over the years. It was with much enthusiasm and a twinkle in his eye that he welcomed the high-ranking Vietnamese veterans delegations that visited Santa Cruz on two occasions, May 4, 1994 (our "Day of Reconciliation") and Sept. 13, 2002. Chris fully understood and appreciated the significance of these reconciliation meetings.

A beautiful tribute to this remarkable man penned by long-time friend and fellow Santa Cruzan Gary Dunn was published in *Metro Santa Cruz* and can be found on the web at <http://www.metro-santa-cruz.com/metro-santa-cruz/08.27.08/news-0835.html>.

—Becky Luening



From our archives: This photo was taken on May 4, 1994, when a delegation of Vietnamese veterans came to Santa Cruz, CA for a Day of Reconciliation. Front row: Nguyen Van Huynh, Chu Do, and Sr. Lt. General Tran Van Quang. Back row: Two unidentified friends with Chris Matthews on right.

VFVP-USA Financial Summary for Fiscal Year 2007-08

Oct. 1, 2007 ~ Sept. 30, 2008

TOTAL ASSETS beginning of year \$ 11,240.12

INCOME

Individual Donations & Grants \$ 57,084.73

Interest from Savings 42.19

Total Income \$ 57,126.92

EXPENSES

Bank Fees \$ 94.45

Photocopies 204.16

Postage 1,680.76

Nonprofit Registration Fee 25.00

Mailing Supplies 416.08

Telephone (Board Conf. Calls) 738.61

Video Reproduction 210.00

Website 131.40

Total Expenses \$ 3,500.46

VFVP FUND TRANSFERS

To VN Friendship Village \$ 51,400.00

TOTAL ASSETS end of year

Savings Balance as of 9/30/08 \$ 12,809.56

Checking Balance as of 9/30/08 657.02

Total Assets \$ 13,466.58

NOTE: Vietnam Friendship Village Project USA (a.k.a. "the U.S. Committee") is an all-volunteer effort, as are all the national committees that support this project. VFVP-USA board members make substantial contributions of their time and/or money, and often organize fundraisers for the Friendship Village. We are always looking for ways to cut down on expenses so that a greater percentage of donations can benefit the village. For example, we recently switched to a free service for our monthly board conference calls.

VFVP-USA Fund Transfers to VFV

• FY 2007-2008

11/19/07 \$ 10,000

2/20/08 30,000

6/30/08 11,400

• FY 2008-2009 (so far)

11/12/08 \$ 18,000

2/10/09 20,000

Remembering Don Flaxman

...continued from page 8

personal relationship with each donor and letting them know that their support made a difference.

Lilane Floge remembers:

When Don joined our board he immediately threw himself into our fundraising work. I had proposed that we attempt a matching grant campaign to raise funds in honor of the village's tenth anniversary. Don thought it a good idea and agreed to spearhead the campaign. He began by pledging a large contribution himself and then contacted many people to help raise the match. Due largely to his efforts we had a very successful campaign. He was also a great supporter of members of the U.S. Board. His regular praise of our efforts on behalf of the village boosted our sense of purpose and dedication. After becoming familiar with Don during our board conference calls, it was a great pleasure to meet him during our 2007 retreat in California. Afterward, my daughter and I were invited to spend a couple of nights at his home while I took care of some personal business in Menlo Park. He and his wife were very gracious hosts and the memory of our short time spent together continues to give me joy.

Don Blackburn writes:

Don Flaxman embodied the three main precepts of Vietnamese Buddhism: Compassion, Wisdom, and Involvement. His compassion and involvement helped relieve suffering and give hope to many people in Viet Nam, the United States, and others around the world. The wisdom of his thoughts and thoughtfulness of his caring guided his actions. The path never ends, and Don was constantly seeking the best ways to follow it. In this way, Don became the path. The world would be a better place if more people followed Don's example, the path he continues to follow through eternity. I would like to offer this short poem/prayer in honor of Don Flaxman:

*Thank you for my life,
may I make the most of every moment.*

*Thank you for my death,
may I pass with grace into eternity*

*Thank you for eternity,
may I cherish every moment.*

Alaskans, we thank you!

On Saturday, October 4, 2008, in Anchorage, Alaska, VFVP-USA Board Member Judy Moss organized the fourth annual silent auction benefit for the Vietnam Friendship Village. "After months of planning, it all came together and was very successful," said Judy. "The weather even cooperated." The auction was held at the Anchorage Unitarian Universalist Fellowship hall, and featured lots of wonderful items generously donated by local businesses, artists and service providers.

Judy is grateful for all the help she received from her "fantastic friends," Sheryl, Cece, Jim, Chris ("Oyster Shucker Extraordinaire"), Carol, Suel, Mike and her husband Bill. John Walsh and friend Ken entertained with Irish music while guests bid on auction items and enjoyed fresh Alaskan oysters, punch, cheese and crackers, and cookies. Great fun was had by all, and Judy was very pleased to present \$4,041 in proceeds for the village, thanks to our generous friends in Alaska!

Viet Nam Friendship Village Project USA Donors

Thank you for your support!

Below is a list of all who made donations between July 1, 2008 and June 30, 2009. VFVP-USA is a 501(c)(3) charitable nonprofit.

Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation	Thomas Dooley	Human Arts Association	Richard Moore	James Snodgrass
Jared Aaronson	Joanne Drapkin	Fred Hummel	Steve Morse	Bruce Sollenberger
Philip & Marsha Aaronson	Jessica Egan	Allison B. Hundley	Judith Moss & William Bartee	William R. Spendlove
Larry Abbott	Helen Eidemiller	Ruth Hunter	Jim Mulherin	Bob & Becky Spitzer
Ruth Adler Ruder	Beatrice Eisman, Chair,	Yorick Hurd II	Andrew Neher	Richard K. Staggenborg
Eugene Alexander	U.S.-Vietnam Friendship Association	Bruce Hyman	Joseph Nevins	Stanley Stahl
Lindsay Anderson	Jan Eldred & Peter Szutu	Craig Ihara	Candy Nguyen	Frances H. Steadman
Jim Anderson & Mary Morris	Claire Englander	Pam Itani	Van Anh Nguyen	John & Beth Stefan,
Janet Ashford	Kertis Engle	Chih-Hui Jan	Van Thu Nguyen	Friendship Force
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Alan Batten	Tomara Fleury	Peter Joseph, MD & Marcy Levine, MFT	Clyde Pomeroy	Kristin Tengren
Thomas Baxter	Leonard & Janice Foreman	Pete Jussel	Rita Kirk Powell	Beverly Arsem & Thomas Omalley
Katherine Beiers	Edward & Mavri Fox	Susan Kauffman	Phillip Poythress	June & Bill Thompson
Valerie Belt	Steve Fox	Maura Kelsea	Paul & Jan Prebys	Larry Timmons
Hillary Bittman	Elizabeth J. Frost	Barry Koch	Mark Pringle	Kate F. Todd
Donald Blackburn	Thomas L. Fugere	Carol Konyha	Francis Quinn	Shala Todd
Richard Blanchfield	GI Rights Hotline Volunteers, Santa Cruz, CA	Daniel Kovalik	Pete Radabaugh,	Minh Tuan Tran
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Lisa Brown & Kevin Johnson, Solutions	Jerry Gentry	Huan Le	Cal Robertson	R. Gordon Vernon
Eva Brunner	Pamela George-Broussard	Bette Lee	David & Amy Rocovits	VFW Bill Motto "Wage Peace" Post 5888
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Michael Cull	Closet Capers	Tim McCormick	M. Shekinah & A. Clive Shephard	Ruth & Norman Williams
Kathleen Dadey	Carol Hazeltine	Alfred & Janet McKegg	Karen Shepherd	Robert Winge
Sandra Dallas	Elizabeth & Jack Heinz	Dennis McMullen	Ruth Sheridan	Jonathan Wittwer
Dimi Dao	Susan Heinz	Darren McPhilimy	Elizabeth Simon	John Wodynski
Tien Huu Dao	Deborah Henderson	Jeffrey Merrick	Jo Slaughter	Roy Wolff
Joseph Degagne III	Cynthia Hensley	Amy Michel	Ken & Tina Slosberg	Stephen Wolff
Sheryl Desbiens	Nancy Hoecker	Mid-Columbia Unitarian Universalist Fellowship	Melinda Y. Small	Amei Woo
Lois Dewater	Jim Hoffmeyer	Virginia & Bill Miller	Ann & Doug Smith	Daniel Young
Christopher Dockray	Sallie & Norman Hogg	Vincent Misiano		
Ray Doherty	Sophia Holloway	David Montgomery		
	Jim & Betty Huch			
	Earl Huch & Lois Eldred			



Vietnam Friendship Village Project-USA, Inc.
 P.O. Box 599, Arcata, CA 95518-0599

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*Greetings from
 the Viet Nam
 Friendship
 Village*

PHOTO BY DAVID ROCOVITS

The mission of the Vietnam Friendship Village Project is to cultivate reconciliation and heal the wounds of the Vietnam War by uniting veterans and caring citizens through international cooperation in the building and support of the Village of Friendship, a living symbol of peace.

A day in the life of the Vietnam Friendship Village

VFVP-USA Board Member David Rocovits and his brother Dan, who resides in Hanoi, arrived at the Friendship Village for a 24-hour visit on the evening of Dec. 25, 2008. Dan recorded their observations of a typical day at the village starting early the next morning.

Morning at the Vietnam Friendship Village begins at 7:30 am with a wakeup serenade from neighborhood bullhorns. This public music program is followed by the day's announcements, which include a list of community roads to be blocked by paving crews, the evils of heroin addiction, and a reminder for parents to register their kids for the next semester.

The first sign of life at VFV is the three hardy vets playing badminton in a slow drizzling rain. Some of these tough old warriors survived ten years living in the jungle under miserable conditions, so a little rain is not going to interrupt their exercise this morning.

About 8:00 the kids start getting up for a breakfast of instant noodles or bread in their six residential facilities. Actually, "homes" would be a better

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