

Home for Abandoned and Disabled Children
Huang La, Bac Ninh Province, Vietnam
2008 Status Report - by Mark Girod - Executive Director FPF

Traveling with a group of 10 students from Western Oregon University, we were able to visit the Home for Abandoned and Disabled Children (HADC) in Huang La, Vietnam on Thursday, March 27th and again on Wednesday, April 2nd, 2008. After journeying from Hanoi, we were anxious to see the progress made on the construction of the new facilities. Though the building is not yet complete, it is already a dramatic improvement over the cramped quarters of previous facilities. The new building includes approximately 3,400 square feet of space in four rooms on the ground floor and about 600 square feet upstairs in two rooms to be used for storage and an office. Sister Dinh, the head nun at the HADC, was wise to insist on the completion of about half of the ground floor in two spacious rooms so they could begin using these quarters right away. Once completed, the additional space will allow the HADC to almost triple its capacities and care for many additional children and adults in need.

One year ago, many of the residents lay on old hospital beds with reed mats covering the cold, metal slats. We were pleased to see that each resident now has a new hospital bed and sanitary mats and sheets providing substantial improvements in comfort and cleanliness. These new beds and materials were donated by a group called Abandoned Little Angels based in Houston Texas. The Forgotten People Foundation may consider contacting this organization to collaborate and better serve the needs of the residents at the HADC.

We were surprised to learn that an enormous amount of the labor and materials for the construction of the new building had been donated by local carpenters, ironworkers, and bricklayers. In addition, much work was completed on credit and the HADC will be required to pay local laborers as soon as additional funds are secured. Our group was also pleased to learn that local parishioners regularly donate food to the HADC.

Though many significant improvements have been made in the last two years at the Home for Abandoned and Disabled Children much more essential work remains to be completed. Our first priority must be to continue financial assistance with the completion of the new building. To realize this goal, an additional 35,000 USD is needed. In addition, Sister Luong, one of the caring nuns living and working at the HADC has been receiving nursing training that has greatly benefited the residents. A secondary goal of the Forgotten People Foundation must be to facilitate Sister Luong's training and, if possible, to assist others in also learning nursing skills.

In summary, the Forgotten People Foundation should be very pleased with the improvements that have been made at the Home for Abandoned and Disabled Children. The living conditions are not nearly as dire as they were three years ago as residents have access to more healthy food, clothing, and health care. However, despite these improvements, two resident children died last year. Without question, the role of the Forgotten People Foundation is critical in the health and safety of these most defenseless and vulnerable people. I implore all to contribute liberally as even a little goes so far for those who have almost nothing.

Submitted July 2008 by Mark Girod, Forgotten People Foundation Executive Director