

CHEER for Viet Nam
2004 Annual Report



plant
a **SEED** of **PEACE**





C H E E R
for Viet Nam

C U L T U R E

H E A L T H

E D U C A T I O N

E N V I R O N M E N T A L

R E S O U R C E S

mission statement

Since its inception in 1993, CHEER for Viet Nam, a nonprofit, 501(c)3 organization based in California, has been dedicated to economic, educational and cultural projects that

- ❑ improve the quality of the lives of disadvantaged children and people in Viet Nam;
- ❑ enhance cross-cultural understanding, educational exchange and collaboration between Viet Nam and the United States;
- ❑ contribute to the building of trust, tolerance, and peace among peoples.

With limited resources in comparison to the vast needs, we focus on small, achievable projects which can be the turning point in the life of a child, a student, an artist or a teacher.

To nourish young talent, we build schools, establish libraries, and provide scholarships, study-corners, and musical instruments to needy and talented students. To strengthen communities, we provide seed money to impoverished families to become self-sufficient. To enhance cross-cultural understanding and to develop innovative teaching strategies for teachers, we provide opportunities for teachers in Viet Nam and the United States to work and learn together.



Every child is entitled to good health and education,
a safe environment in which to live,
and the right to dream a bright future.

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EDITORS

Linda Garrett

Brock Klein, Ed.D.

Doan Thi Nam-Hau, Ed.D.

Lillian Utsumi, Ed.D.

Photographs by Brock Klein, Nam-Hau, Nguyen Hong Thu, Linda Garrett

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CHEER for Viet Nam:

Fax:

Email:

Website:

P.O. Box 341 . Culver City . CA 90232

819 927 0329

cheerforvietnam@yahoo.com

cheerforvietnam.org

Board of Advisors:

Ton That Chieu
Nam-Hong Doan
John Froines
Bui Boi Tien
Josh Sale
Stanley Sheibaum
Bob Rosen
Bill Zimmerman

Board of Directors:

Doan Thi Nam-Hau, *President*
Carol Kurtz, *Secretary*
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Sally Benson
Linda Garrett
Stephen Lesser
June Pulcini

p r e s i d e n t ' s
m e s s a g e

On behalf of the CHEER Board, I would like to once again express our gratitude for your continued support of and valuable contributions to CHEER's many projects in Viet Nam. For CHEER, 2004 was another year filled with challenges that have given us momentum and enthusiasm as we look ahead.

As you will see in our report, we have accomplished so much together with so little! However, there is much more to do as we look ahead to the 30th anniversary of the end of the war. We want to expand our efforts in 2005, but to support the ambitious initiatives outlined in the report we must increase our fundraising efforts.

Your support over the years has helped improve the lives of many families in Viet Nam and provided opportunities for hundreds of young students to achieve success and teachers to thrive for excellence in their professions.

Join us to plant another seed of peace.

Peace and love,

Doan Thi Nam-Hau

resources for children

Kindergarten
Classrooms

Libraries

Scholarship
Musical Instrument
Awards

Study
Corners

Vocational
Centers

building schools

In 2002 one-third of all Vietnamese children did not make it to grade 5 because their families were poor and could not afford to pay the costs of their education. By building kindergartens, a joint effort between villagers and CHEER, we plan to give children from poor families a head start in their education.

● kindergartens



Since 2001 we have built 8 kindergartens to accommodate more than 500 children in Quang Tri and Thua Thien - Hue Provinces, central Viet Nam. The children at these kindergartens sing and dance, make art and play games. They eat a hot lunch and take naps at noon. They return home in the late afternoon. In 2003 we renovated the three classrooms at Phu Mau 1 Elementary School so that 164 students no longer have to walk 10 km across ricefields to attend schools.

In 2004, Duc Son Kindergarten and Orphanage became the latest addition to our kindergarten project. It is home to 193 poor orphans in Thua Thien - Hue Province. With generous donations from our supporters, CHEER is able to support the teachers at the kindergarten. On September 22, 2004, the newly built Dong Lam Kindergarten, Thua Thien - Hue, ushered 80 children into the new year.

building schools

Rural children in Viet Nam live in homes where they have no place of their own to do homework. More often than not, there is only one table, which is used by the family for everything from eating to working.

Most schools in Thua Thien - Hue do not have a library on site.

- study corners
- libraries



In 1998, CHEER started the Study Corners project: A desk, chair, and bookcase provided to children to study. Hundreds of students have received Study Corners, including 100 students at Hong Kim and Phu Mau elementary schools.

In 2003 we provided funds for libraries and books at Hong Kim Elementary School. In 2004 funds were allocated to establish a reading room at Phu Mau Elementary School.

nourishing young talents

In 2002, a record 91% of all Vietnamese children were enrolled in primary school. Nevertheless, about one-third of all first graders did not make it to grade 5.

Substantial socio-economic and geographical disparities exist between regions. Parents simply cannot afford the costs associated with education.

- scholarship awards
- musical instruments



The CHEER Scholarship Fund provides financial assistance to needy and talented students from elementary to university levels. Scholarships range from \$10/year to \$100/year to provide approximately 50%-75% of each student's educational costs for the year. Hundreds of disadvantaged students from primary schools to university level have received these scholarships.

supporting vocational centers

- care for street children, orphans, and the poor

We provide vocational training for children at three centers, two in Hue and one in Ho Chi Minh City.

One hundred girls learn sewing, embroidery and computer at Tay Linh Vocational Center. Another hundred work on industrial sewing machines and wood carving crafts at Thanh Giong Vocational School.

Thirty-two girls, ages 12-17, rescued from prostitution, receive counseling and vocational training so that they can return to a normal life. CHEER, one of several partners in the project, provides scholarships and resources for the girls.



healing the wounds of war

Massive U.S. bombing from 1965-72 and spraying of the herbicide Agent Orange from 1965-70 left behind huge areas of devastation and generations of secondary victims. The chemical warfare, described by a Vietnamese professor as “time-delayed violence against women,” has had a dramatic effect on women’s reproductive health, the general health and well-being of the population and the environment. The deadly chemical can cripple the life of innocent children for generations.



Thanh Xuan Peace Village, located in Thanh Xuan District, Ha Noi, is home to 100 handicapped children. Eighty percent of the children were affected by Agent Orange, a chemical sprayed by the U.S. during the war thirty years ago. The children receive daily physical and psychological therapy. They attend regular classes. Some learn how to use the computers. Other learn how to sew, embroider, do woodwork or carve stone.

CHEER provides art materials to many of the children who are gifted in visual and performing arts.

capacity and asset building

The No-Interest Revolving Fund is designed to equip disadvantaged families to help themselves, using available resources and common knowledge to improve their living conditions. These families are not the “poorest of the poor” but those who have the capacity, creativity and determination to use the economic and technical assistance to improve living conditions for their children and community.

Working in collaboration with the Association for the Handicapped and Orphans of Thua Thien-Hue and the local committees since 1995, CHEER has expanded its project from 10 to 900 families in 25 villages in three districts of Thua Thien-Hue Province.

Since 2002 we have concentrated in the A Luoi Valley where 100 families have participated in the program. Loans of 1,000,000 Vietnamese Dong (approximately \$65-\$85 US dollars) enable a family to start up a family business. The borrowers repay the no-interest loan at the end of 12-18 months, allowing the next family in line to borrow money. To date, over 90% of the recipients have repaid their loans on time.



the a luoi v a l l e y

Despite efforts by the government and a few international organizations to alleviate local poverty, today more than 40% of A Luoi families still live below the government-defined poverty level with an average monthly income of less than 80,000 VN dong (around \$5.2 USD) per month.

It is estimated that 20% of the children suffer from malnutrition.



The A Luoi Valley is a two-hour trip from Hue, a swath of land in central Viet Nam neighboring the Lao border on the west. Most of 36,000 people in A Luoi's 21 villages are from the ethnic groups of Pa Co, Ta Oi, Pa Hy, and Van Kieu. Except for three new economic villages, Son Thuy, Phu Vinh and part of the provincial town, the rest of A Luoi's 18 villages are still impoverished. Over 40% of the people live in poverty, with a monthly income of \$5.20. The daily struggle to survive the dangers of unexploded landmines, and the residues of dioxin in the soil and well water has made life even harder for these people.

The 345 students at Hong Kim Elementary School are from impoverished families. Except for a blackboard, chair, desk, worn wooden benches and tables, and two posters, the classroom was bare. Most children did not have textbooks, notebooks or pencils. Now with CHEER's aid, they can ...

the a luoi v a l l e y

- building assets
- revitalizing traditional crafts
- building community

**“You must
help us
help ourselves
to
move out
of poverty.”**

Mai Thi Hop
Artisan



Since 2002 we have concentrated our efforts on development and capacity-building projects in the A Luoi Valley. We have presented the no-interest revolving loans to 100 families. Among the recipients are 10 female artisans who are currently reviving Pa Co traditional bead weaving techniques under the supervision of artisan Mai Thi Hop, the dynamic head of the co-op and a master of the craft.

Mr. Quynh Luong, a Ta Oi artisan who designs and produces unusual baskets in A Ngo village, received our loans in 2003 to teach this beautiful craft to younger artisans in the village. In 2004 another 20 families joined the program.

t r a v e r s i n g
b o r d e r s

v i e t n a m
t e a c h e r
t r a i n i n g
p r o g r a m

Traversing Borders: Viet Nam Teacher Training Program helps to promote cross-cultural understanding and to develop new ways to collaborate and experience learning.

The summer program provides both Vietnamese and U.S. teachers with a unique opportunity to interact professionally and to deepen their appreciation and understanding of both cultures. Designed to meet the needs of language teachers in Viet Nam, the program emphasizes observation, skill development and reflection. Participants form a learning community where they can share experiences, master new teaching methodologies and skills, share diverse viewpoints, foster an awareness of cross-cultural interaction, and become partners in a transformation process.



Teacher participants from Hue University and Hue high schools



CHEER's 2004 teaching team

crossing borders
building understanding

“I did attend many workshops before but they were only professional. This workshop is not only professional but also human. We love pronunciation, field trip, reading comprehension and we also love peace and justice, so we feel very happy when you bring us the precious experiences of your country’s history through the language of English. There are many things new to us. The most important thing is that you bring us a dream.”

Nguyen Huu Pham
Hai Ba Trung High School



crossing borders
building understanding

“You have planted a seed of innovation and you can be assured that very soon it will bloom. If one day, you feel your hearts singing cheerful carols, don’t be surprised because these will be the thanks our students send to you for putting their teachers at the starting point of changes and creation.”

Remarks at closing ceremony

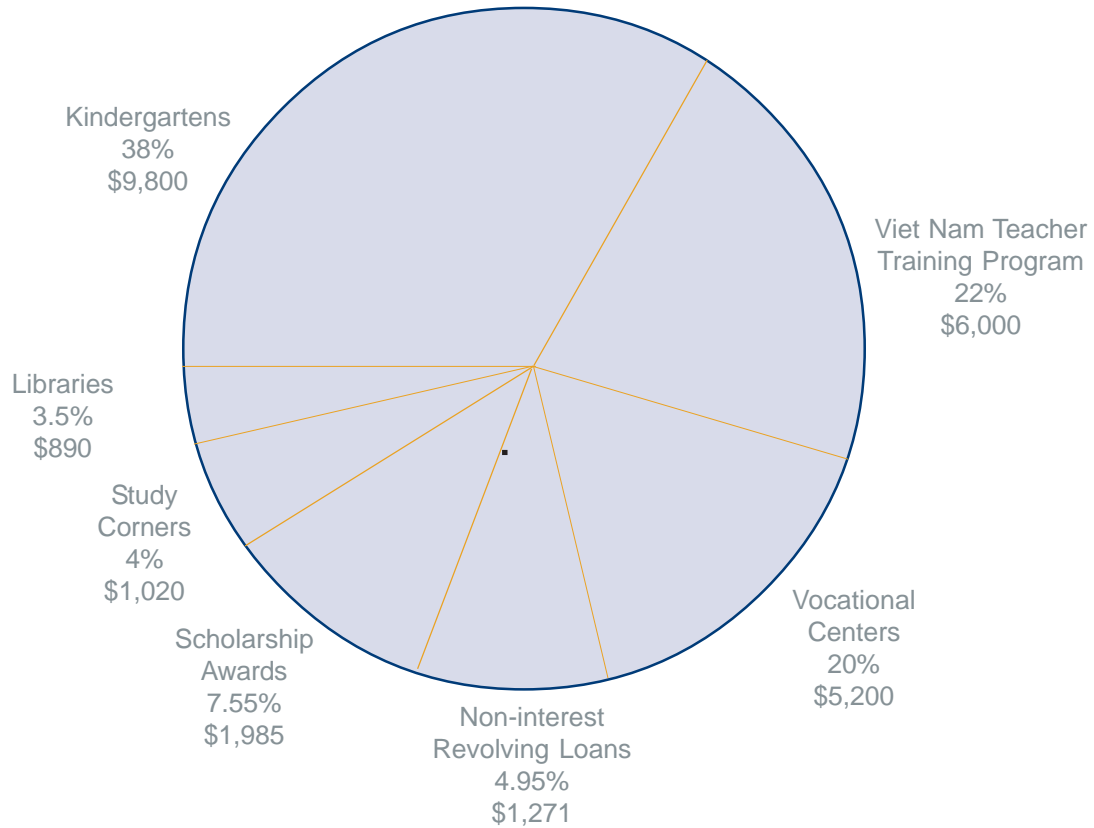
2004



In the summer of 2001 CHEER launched its pilot teacher-training program (VTTP) in collaboration with Ha Noi University of Foreign Studies. The objective then and now is to enhance cross-cultural understanding and to develop new ways for teachers of English from Viet Nam and the United States to work and learn together. Since that first training, 141 Vietnamese teachers have participated in this innovative and transformative experience.

The 2004 VTTP, a partnership between CHEER and Hue University and the new Learning Resource Center, was another success. We were impressed by the eagerness, dedication and passion for teaching exhibited by this mixed group of veteran and young teachers. We were deeply moved by their generosity in exchanging their experiences and life stories with us. Sharing our curriculum with the teachers from Viet Nam demonstrated how we can deepen our mutual appreciation for and understanding of both cultures.

FUND DISBURSEMENT 2004



In-kind donations, professional services: \$150,000

CHEER goals

2005

- ◆ Provide on-going training to 106 language teachers at Hue University, who will impact over 20,000 students
- ◆ Provide 100 laptops to language teachers in Hue
- ◆ Organize the first EFL [English as a Foreign Language] conference at Hue University 's Learning Resource Center
- ◆ Establish a Teacher Training and Resource Center to build a learning community of teachers of English
- ◆ Establish 10 libraries and media centers at secondary schools
- ◆ Provide on-going training for language teachers at Hue secondary schools
- ◆ Provide 100 scholarships to disadvantaged and talented K-12 students
- ◆ Provide 50 scholarships to promising high school seniors
- ◆ Provide 50 four-year scholarships to college students
- ◆ Provide 500 study corners for elementary schools in Phu Mau and A Luoi
- ◆ Provide 100 no-interest loans to families affected by dioxin/Agent Orange in A Luoi Valley

To support these ambitious initiatives, we need to increase our fundraising by 300%. We hope that you will continue your indispensable support and help us bring hope and joy to thousands of children, families and teachers in Viet Nam.

JOIN US TO
plant
a SEED of PEACE
and
MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

GIVE GENEROUSLY TO CHEER for VIET NAM

You can mail your donation to:
CHEER for Viet Nam
P.O. Box 341
Culver City, CA 90232

or

send your donation to us through our website
www.cheerforvietnam.org



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