

FoCHgram Beach Trip 2007 Special

A special communiqué from the Friends of the Central Highlands, Inc.

SPECIAL EDITION

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Times To Remember

A group of 57 children from Vinh Son 1 and adult supervisors attended the 3 day Beach Trip to Nha Trang this year. The following is the report made by the Director of Viet Nam Operations, Thien and following a report by Assistant Director Thao.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The FoCH, Inc. sponsored 3 day trip to Nha Trang from June 2 through the 4th is now completed.

Thao and her 2 daughters took train from Saigon the day before and from Kon Tum the nuns and 57 of the children departed at 6:00 AM. The bus stopped in Pleiku to pick up my son and I. At first, we had planned on 65 children for trip, but several of the children were to receive their first Holy Communion and had to remain behind.

Our travel was by modern bus with air condition, something very foreign to these children. Many of them were travel sick

because of their lack of experience from riding in a motor vehicle.

We went on highway 14 to Buon Me Thout then turn onto highway 26 to Nha Trang. We stopped for lunch in Buon Me Thout and children get some rest. In the afternoon at 3:00 PM, we arrived St. Joseph Friary in Nha Trang. After say hello to the priests, we arranged for the dormitory and asked Father Binh to order dinner for kids.

When we visited Hon Chong Beach the children were allowed to buy 1 souvenir and were really comfortable to choose what they like. After that the children, Sister Angela and Sister Phillippe came back Friary for dinner. I and my son, along with Thao and her daughters returned to our hotel and had dinner at a nearby restaurant. Later in the evening we took cyclo to buy food and fruit for next day to Doc Let beach.

On the morning of the second day, we brought food, fruit and swimsuits to the Friary and Thao distributed swimsuits to the children. Just little boys and little girls changed clothes quickly but we had to encourage the older girls to put on their swim wear....they were all very shy and so too were the boys.

When we arrived at Doc Let beach, which was a beach visited by one of FoCH Board Members when he was a child growing up in Viet Nam, we were surprised at that beautiful flat beach, so safe and very clean. While the nuns and me prepared food, Thao helped girls to use sun screen for their protection from the very hot sun. We had to really encourage the shy girls go down to the water, until the little boys and girls ran down to the ocean.....then all of them ran down and started splashing in ocean, big laughing and no more shy. And the fun also included Thien and Thien as we seemed to return to our childhood also. What fun!



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After a few hours playing in water, they got rest then went up for lunch, a hearty meal that they never had before: sausages, cheese, mince pork, bread, lychees, milk, and cake. After lunch they went down again to the water, continue to splashing and laughing till 2:00 PM when we went back city and visited the big stone church and then returned to the Friary for rest and dinner.

The third day, after say thanks and say goodbye to the priests, we departed to return to Kon Tum. On the way we stopped to take boat for visited Monkey Island. Children were watching animals circle, laughing and big laughing with the show and natural monkey groups and then returned bus. We stopped for lunch at the same restaurant in Buon Me Thout. The bus dropped my son and me in Pleiku at 5:30 and the children and nuns were back at the orphanage by 6:30 PM.

Everybody got very tired, but the children had a good time and wonderful trip. The nuns and children said thanks to uncles and aunts from the other side of the earth who cared for them and their happiness.

Specially, I and Thao thank you all, for helping us to make this trip a complete success.

Best Regards,
Thien



FoCH, Inc. Purchased Swim Suits

Dear all,

This is to report that the children, the nuns, Director Thien and her son and niece, as well as I and my two daughters have all returned safely and tired after a beautiful trip. The 2007 Beach trip has ended.

On the first day we all met at Saint Joseph Seminary, and then visited Hon Chong beach of Nha Trang. The afternoon was most beautiful, blue sky and beautiful blue green water. The beach sand was very clean and bright and the shoreline was edged with many large and beautiful rocks and boulders.

After the exciting day the children all had dinner at the seminary. The Fathers there helped us to order the food for the children's dinners. The evening was fun, we were all tired so the kids went to bed at the Seminary while Thao and Thien returned to our hotel rooms for the evening.

Even though the children were very sleepy, we still had enough energy remaining to take a cyclo to go shopping. No, it was not for shoes or clothes, but for food to have prepared for lunch for the children the next day at the beach.



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The second day, after breakfast with bread, kids wore their bathing suits with their street clothes over them. This day was to be spent at another area beach; it is called Doclet Beach, which is about 60 km north of Nha Trang.

I must say that this was the first time the tribal girls ever wore their swim suits and were very embarrassed. Before FoCH purchased swim suits for the children, they wore regular clothes in the water. So it was natural for them to say, "...too much skin showed off" and then run as fast as they could and splash into the water. Once in they were a little afraid to come out.

The teenage girls did look real good in their new swim suits, so much so that the local boys whistled at them. Then they were very embarrassed.

Later on the girls got familiar with their suits and agree to let Thien take their photos. Although the tribal boys were also very shy, they wore their swim trunks with long T-shirts to cover their butts.

Lunch was served with sandwiches, bread, cheese, sausages, gio lua, gio thu, cha chien thit cha bong, fruits: lychees, water melon, longans.....milk and cakes. Talk about a good time, swimming and lots of food! We all returned to Nha Trang after 2 pm, visited the main church of Nha Trang and then back to the Seminary for dinner already ordered and prepared by the nice Fathers there. Sleep for all followed very soon.

On the third day kids went to visit Monkey Island, lunched at a restaurant and then started their return trip to the Orphanage late in the afternoon. The 2007 trip has ended and boy was it a success. We are all very tired and happy.

I will make a note of this, many kids had serious motion sickness, especially little Vi, Mu, Vui. They all carried a small plastic bag with them every where they went in case they had to upload their stomachs. On bus, off bus, from church to beach...each kid each had a bag everywhere they went. It was humorous... but so very touching. If I had been car sick I could not have even moved my head, but our kids, even with their stomachs up side down, still enjoyed everything. Their excitement as if they knew they would not have any other chance to travel for a long time.....if ever again.

Sister Angela was overjoyed with the beach trip which she called, "..... a wonderful gift from *Mr. Americans* for Vinh Son orphanage". Sister Angela sends her deepest thanks for her and the children.

And from Thao and Thien, we send a special thanks to you all, for the Love you show for the children of the Vinh Son Orphanage.

Best Regards,
Thao

And from the rest of us on the Board, we send a SPECIAL THANK YOU to Thien and Thao and to all of you who contributed directly to this effort.

QUICK FoCH NOTES

1. FoCH Board member Jerry Harlowe will be visiting the orphanage in June/July and will be inspecting projects, meeting with representatives from other International Organizations and will be involved in several other projects while there.

2. We have 2 new Board Associates who have joined FoCH, Inc. Joe is from Ellicott City, Maryland and John is from Whitehall, England. The Associate Board member is a



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non voting position for active and deeply involved members, who for others reasons, cannot be full Board Members.

3. The new FoCH web page is near completion and will go live shortly. There are last minute details to get to and when completed we will "go live"please stayed tuned.

4. We are currently building a playground for the orphans and we will report on it shortly. Most of the funds for this commendable project were contributed by an anonymous benefactor.

5. And please do not forget our mailing address for contributions:

Friends of the Central Highlands Viet Nam, Inc.
P.O. Box 123
Kersey, PA. 15846

**A SMALL GALLERY of THE SMILES
YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS BROUGHT TO
THESE ORPHANED CHILDREN.**



Hello to Uncles & Aunts in America



Watching the shows on Monkey Island



Can it get any better or more universal in pure joy than this?

P.S. Planning the 2007 Christmas Party has begun and we will review this beach trip and make it even better next year.

