

QUICKgram*

A Letter from Kon Tum Friends of the Central Highlands, Inc.

January 2011

Dear All,

2010 was another great year for the children as FoCHclause came to visit for the 5th consecutive year. The Christmas parties for Vinh Son and leprosy children were held on 19th, 20th and 21st of December.

Early in the morning of the 19th, I had my driver load everything into the van. All of things which were prepared before same as the present, soft drink, spice, etc... On the way to VS 1, I dropped in the market to buy some more fresh vegetables.

This year I had many people come to help: the butcher help me to chop the chicken, Gerald had his camera to make a video and his wife, Jeanette, help to decorate the hall. As in the past, in the morning we prepare everything then cook in the afternoon and give the present in the evening.



WHAT A MEAL

Even though it was the fifth Christmas party at Vinh Son 1 the children are always eager for this special occasion. The older girls helped with the cooking and many of the little kids stayed around the kitchen to help and to smell the cooking chicken and other foods. Y Ly Nuong helped to make a fire and told me in her low voice, "I like to eat chicken". I told her, "Well, your dinner will be served with chicken and beans, bread and a desert of fresh tangerine. A nice smile brightened her face!

The children had dinner at 6:00 PM. Following their FoCH feast, they all went to the hall. There they sang Christmas songs very loud under the direction of Gerald... so funny!

As the children sang "Where is Santa?" came suddenly the reply from Santa Frank... "Here I am...Merry, Merry Christmas" The excitement was quick and all waited for Santa Frank to give the presents and after that they were opened.

The Christmas Party ended after Stefano and Jeanette cut the huge Noel cake and everyone ate cake and drank soft drinks. The party ended about 9pm and everyone returned to their dorms to enjoy their new presents and to let all of that food and party sweets digest in their big bellies.

THE PARTY FOR DAK KIA LEPROSY VILLAGE CHILDREN WAS ON DEC. 20TH

Since this was a normal school day for the children, the Nuns at the kitchen were there and we all cooked the same meal we presented to Vinh Son 1. As I said before I will have the same menu for three places. After I mixed spice with chicken and did some works in the kitchen. Jeanette and I decorated the hall while the nuns continued cooking and distributing food for the adult patients.



IT'S ALL IN THE PREPRATION

As this was the first time FoCH had a party for the children of Dak Kia they were very exciting to find their name on the presents under the Christmas tree. They said very loud: " Oh, here is my name".

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After the food was distributed to the adult patients then the nuns came to the hall and distributed food for children.

At 11:00am was lunch time for children but some older students still don't come back yet. They ate quickly!

Gerald, his wife and me returned at 6:00pm, and some minutes later Banh and her group came too. We had to wait for the keeper of the hall to open the door and turn light on.

All the children came to the hall then Sr. Thieng announced to children about the party. Never having had a party before, the hall was quiet so Banh have started with some team games. Then Santa came into the hall. He scared many children!! WHO WAS HE? WHAT WAS HE? Hahaha Some kids keep away from him. Gerald and Santa went out to take them in. There was one boy who was so afraid he did not want to get anything from Santa! haha...

But after some presents were given to the kids then the atmosphere became hotter all of children came and surround Santa same as a bees' nest break. The Nun, Banh and I called them to return with a circle or the rows but we could not control them anymore.

At first Jeanette thought that she is too heavy with a small plastic chair so she was standing to cut the cake then the crowd of children surrounded and pushed her knee down. At that time we had to pull them out by distributing present, soft drink, cake and tangerine at the same time. My! What a party!

Children got present, drank, ate cake and tangerine then gone. Everything went quickly. The party finished at 8:00pm.

This first time party for the Leprosy Village was a learning experience and we will approach it a little differently next year.

THE PARTY FOR JACKFRUIT CHILDREN WAS ON DEC. 21 ST.

The number of children in Jack Fruit is 65 for now so they have been building a lot, the kitchen is rebuilt also. So I have cooked in the morning to avoid the sun in the afternoon.



SANTA FRANK working the crowd at Jackfruit

That day nurse Lan helped me cook. The house was messing with material so I let Gerald and Jeanette get some rest in the morning.

We returned to Jack Fruit around 5:30pm, and Banh's friends and children were there already and singing in the garden. Usually, they had dinner at 6:00pm. The place for eat has no light, spoon and glass were put in storage area. After I set the table it looked dark so we had to move to in front of the house to get light.

The tables are just enough for 32kids and the rest had to sit on floor to eat. It took me for a while and a little confusing.

After dinner children got into the room and the presents were given to them from Santa. Next they had soft drink, cake and fruit. The party finished at 8:00PM. Children had a good time and a lot of fun.

Thank you sponsors, donors and FoCHVN, Inc. members for great things you do for children.

Happy New Year and best wishes to all.
Sincerely,
Thien