



A new set of wheels

On 18th November, CHIA in coordination with Wheels for Humanity(UCP) distributed 50 wheelchairs to children and adults with disabilities in Hoi An city and surrounding districts.

It was the 10th day I had been working at CHIA. This event left in me with a deep impression and helped me understand more about the difficulties people have to suffer in their daily life. What I learnt from the day was that, although these people were disabled physically, they had an optimistic view of life.

Among the recipients, Quang Huy, a young boy with Cerebral Palsy, who lives near the World Cultural Heritage site My Son, came with his parents very early. He had a long wait, but finally when the CHIA and UCP staff put him into the wheelchair to find out whether it fit him. He was so eager and excited that he didn't want to wait for the UCP technicians to make some adjustments. He couldn't help laughing while riding his new wheelchair. With his first new wheelchair, from now, he will no longer be a burden to his family. He can do some personal activities in his daily life without sitting in the corner of his house and always asking for help. Seeing the happiness of Huy and his parents, we realized that giving him a new set of wheels was best gift for his family.

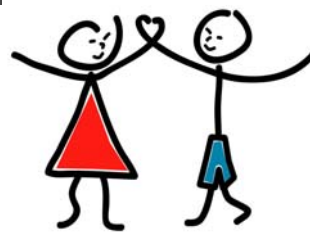
Thank you Wheels for Humanity (UCP), Mr. David and his crew, in particular who provided our organization with the wheelchairs and some spare parts. Their generosity has given the disabled a chance to integrate to the social life. We would also like to express how thanks to Kianh Foundation, Reaching Out, Hoi An disability group, Steady Footsteps and Project Indochina for helping identify beneficiaries amongst the Hoi An community.

Written by Ngoc Hieu, Communications Officer



Huy and his new wheels





Training for a better workplace

In order to continuously improve our services in working with disadvantaged children from poor families, CHIA's policy is to facilitate training for staff either internally or externally. This practice matches well with our young staff's hunger for enhancing their skills. When staff first come to CHIA, many don't have the professional qualifications to fulfill their role immediately. This is understandable since our first criteria when employing new employees is that they must have good heart and be willing to learn.

Internal training includes training and experience sharing from volunteers and experts whose expertise is critically needed for our three main fields of services: Health, Disability and Education. We have volunteers from different countries and fields of profession. They are either experts and knowledgeable people like doctors, Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapists, Nurses and Business Advisor or students exchanging what they learnt at University, which is often more up to date compared with what is taught here.

From time to time, we also learn from our difficulties through open discussions with input from all staff and volunteers. One example of this is regarding cultural differences. Once, our medical interpreter raised the point that she felt uncomfortable telling a mother of a terminally ill child that her child was going to die. She changed the message in the way that she felt comfortable and to make the mother less sad. Since the key point in the message wasn't transferred, the mother might think her child's condition wasn't severe and would continue borrowing money with the hope of her child being treated. In contrast, the doctor thought his message has already been delivered to the mother.

We discussed this within the office and came up with the solution that whenever an interpreter feels uncomfortable and wants to change the message, she/he must talk to the doctors first before the message is given to the family.

External trainings are also facilitated at CHIA. We have had staff attending training workshop in Vietnam and overseas. On their return the staff will run a training session back to others at CHIA. This approach is really useful as they will use the facts at CHIA to demonstrate the content of the training.

It's fortunate that we have great, eager to learn young staff with right attitude of doing charity work. We also recognize that we need to be better. From work and trainings in different ways, we will constantly improve ourselves in order to better provide your services to our families and children.

Tran Duy Binh, Project Coordinator



SML leadership course



Circle of knots—team building



Merry
Christmas
✦
Happy New
Year
From the CHIA family

From the Director *Ode to CHIA staff*



CHIA staff in action

During the last few months, I have been working a lot from home, focusing on financial management. I am so proud to be able to say that all of our staff manage themselves extremely well in my absence.

I've also had several people associated with other NGOs in Hoi An, comment to me lately, words to the effect that CHIA is very lucky to have employed all of the best staff. Maybe there is an element of luck in it, but I think it has more to do with good staff recruitment choices and also that we are benefiting very much from our investment in staff training.

I'd like to express my sincere thanks to donors who support staff training, so we can continue developing CHIA towards less reliance on western input.

Robyn Morley, Director



News from our education program

Typhoon Ketsana hit central Vietnam and destroyed many things in its way, Loc's house did not survive. When I came to the house, I could not believe what happened. Flattened with debris everywhere, everything was broken, and in a chaotic mess. "I don't know where we will stay and how we can survive" cried Loc's mother. Loc's family circumstance is difficult. His father died of disease and the eldest sister drowned a long time ago. The heavy burden has been placed on the mother's shoulder.

All of family members have to live in a very basic bamboo and corrugated iron house with a bed and table as their only possessions. Loc is a good student at school. He is a well-liked boy and participates in all activities. Loc will be in grade 7 this school year and his mother is in desperate need of support to be able to keep him in school. He has previously missed one year of school despite her efforts, as she did not earn enough money.

Sympathizing with his family circumstances, QBE decided to sponsor him go to school. The sponsorship covers Loc's school fee, insurance, additional tuition, uniforms, textbooks, etc, and a bicycle if required. This support greatly reduces the financial strain on Loc's family and ensures he can complete school. The local government supported several million dong to rebuild a stable house. However, the family can not build a "stable" house with this money and asked CHIA for help.

Although CHIA staff don't have any experience in construction, we did our best to cooperate with the family and quickly found a builder and now the house is on its way to be completed. "Thanks to CHIA, thanks everyone who has been keen and enthusiastic in helping us to build this house" said Loc's mother. We are now so excited and waiting for our "dream" house to be finished.



Good people always around you



Kieu is safe and secure, lives within a family and she continues to go to school. Kieu is studying at grade 7 now and is a good student .

Kieu was born and lived with her parents and 2 older sisters in a poor but happy family. However, the happiness was short lived, Kieu's father passed away because of severe illness. The mother went away with her new husband and Kieu with her 2 siblings were raised by the paternal grandparents who didn't care for them. The two older sisters left for HCMC to earn a living, and have not been heard from since. Kieu's maternal grandmother took Kieu back to stay with her. Although the grandmother was so poor, and she had to work as a local acupuncturist to earn a little money, Kieu and the grandmother loved each other very much.

However, after 8 years of living with the grandmother, the doctor discovered that the grandmother had jaw cancer in the advanced stage, and she died some months later. Again, Kieu fell into the loneliness and sadness. At that time, the uncle tried to raise Kieu, but he had some more children who were still going to school so that he couldn't take care of Kieu so well. Sympathizing with Kieu, Ms.Oanh, from the Department of Population and Children in Duy Tan commune discussed with her husband and agreed to "adopt" Kieu. Ms. Oanh said "we already had 2 sons, but it's better if we have one more daughter". We really were moved by Ms.Oanh's action and wished that we will have more generous hearts who are pleased to help all children like Kieu's. CHIA continues to sponsor Kieu's education.

Written by Ms Ngoc Anh, Education coordinator



News from the health team



Flu vaccination

In November, 2009, we held a flu vaccination injection clinic for 203 children at Hoi An Pacific Hospital and Health Care Centre in Duy Xuyen District. All of the children who have had difficulties with their health or get sick easily, so the flu vaccination injection will be very useful and helpful for them.

To carry out the flu vaccination program, we cooperatively worked with doctors and other experts to get useful information and good support to carry it out effectively. We worked with local government and children's family so that the program could benefit these children as much as possible.

Many families, government and doctors gave their support to implement the program and they encouraged us to develop more programs like flu vaccination to help people's lives.

The flu vaccination in 2009 was successful and got people's agreement and support. Everybody hopes that CHIA will improve the flu vaccination and other similar project in the future to bring a better life. Hopefully, in next time of flu vaccination, we can get a large number of children in the list for flu vaccination.

Written by Vuong, Interpreter

Giang's story

Following the footsteps of the person in charge of Dien Hoa commune, Dien ban district, we arrive at a small house where little girl Giang with hydrocephalus is living with her mother and 2 older brothers. Giang is lying in her cot alone and her oldest brother is cooking at the kitchen while their mother is out in the rice field.

Giang's mother rough life started when her husband was first found to have mental condition. He not only couldn't help the family for daily living but also sometimes broke the furniture in the house that made life hard for the family. One day, during a heavy convulsion, he cut his son's arm off and not long after the father died. A few years later, the mother remarried a man in a neighboring village and gave birth to Giang. Unexpectedly, Giang was born with a big head and it gets bigger day after day. Disappointed with the family, Giang's father went away and left behind a heavy burden on the wife's shoulder.

Giang has been assessed by a local doctor and was recommended to a hospital for treatment but the mother had no money to send Giang to hospital. Thus, Giang stayed at home in her cot for a long period receiving no treatment. Although knowing that surgery will not completely help Giang to be a normal child, CHIA still recommend her to Danang hospital for possible shunt surgery which may help her feel more comfortable at least. However, doctors in Danang hospital were unable to operation on Giang because they think it is a high risk. Poor little girl Giang!

Written by Lai, Health coordinator



**CHIA will be closed from
6th to 21st February for Tet.**



News from the therapy team

We miss you Lyn

CHIA Memoirs (the short version)

Ever since I can remember, I have been telling friends and colleagues that "one day" I wanted to do some voluntary work overseas. Even I was getting a little bored with the same tag line of "one day".

When I was accepted for volunteer work at CHIA, everything then became a reality. While I am capable in my role in Australia, I wondered what on earth I was doing. The first day at the office was a little overwhelming. A guided tour included the introductions of staff. Now, I can never remember names at the best of times. But that day I could only tell the males from the females.

With CHIA providing me with a pushbike for transport for the next three months, I pedaled to work, in culturally appropriate clothing, and turned down the volume on my voice and sometimes boisterous enthusiasm. Could not remember one single name, but it did not matter, I was welcomed into the CHIA family as if I was just returning from a holiday. The Aussie Food Hamper was given a greater welcome than I. AND it worked!!

Offered a desk and a chair to station myself at, I commenced work on a list that outlined some of the projects that I was given an opportunity to tackle. Conversational English, Policy Development; ball-skills with the children, helping the translators refine their already impressive English, helping other children overcome their frustrations and COMPLETING a wooden puzzle! One of the things I did not succeed at was joining the staff at lunch for a nap. While this was a disappointment to them, I am sure that a snoring westerner would have caused chaos.

The days easily turned into weeks, and I suddenly realized that I was really part of this wonderful team of people. About 4 weeks after commencing at CHIA, out on the horizon, a typhoon was forming. The closer it got, the more concerned I became and ran away to Ho Chi Minh for a week. With flooding, damage, no power and water for over a week, the town was a wreck. The staff all rallied to support not only each other, but other NGO workers and of course the children of CHIA and their families. Made me feel a little coward like for running ... but.

Vietnam is truly an inspiring country in so many ways, and the services and support that CHIA provides to the most disadvantaged Vietnamese people I can't actually find the words that would adequately describe how this small team of people put their hearts and soul into everything they do for the CHIA children and their families.

Did I make a difference at CHIA? I don't know, but this experience has certainly had a most positive effect on me!



WANTED

Toefel trained
self funded volunteer to teach
English to CHIA staff.

Independence



Recently, the therapy team along with 2 OTs visited Van & her family in Duy Xuyen. It is a region that is always impacted by natural disaster.

There are 3 sisters in her family. Van is the oldest. Her next sister suffered from CP and died 5 years ago. Van has CP and her 2 hands & 2 legs have been deformed from birth. Thank to the dedicated care of parents, she could get by on her own, however now she has problems with her hands.

Although we didn't start with an early intervention, the therapy team & 2 OTs tried to help her. We showed her how to hold a pen and provide exercise training to the family. We helped the family to reduce their anxiety by trying to find some adaptations for her to do by herself in her daily activities e.g. dressing, undressing and going to the toilet etc.,

After the intervention, Van is now able to perform some personal activities independently. This is a just small intervention but brought about a BIG change in Van's life. She is now 12 and Van and her family are very happy with the changes. The team is also happy because we could help the child to achieve some daily activities independently.

Ms Van, Physiotherapist



Thank you

Montogomerie Links

GDG

Pacific Hospital

OGCDC

mentored organization development

**Blue Dragon
Children's Foundation**
mentored organization development

Cathy McComiskie
liaison of Friends of CHIA Austral



Volunteer Corner



As volunteers registered with Australian Business Volunteers, Roger or I could have been sent almost anywhere in the Asia/Pacific region, but we could not have wished to be involved with a more rewarding and deserving charity than CHIA. And what a bonus for us to be in delightful Hoi An. We learned so much and made so many good friends that I only hope we were able to do some good in return.

We were impressed with CHIA's competent management and the way in which the dedicated staff are helping disadvantaged children access health, education and disability services. Some of the cardiac cases I saw were particularly heartbreaking, while the high incidence of other conditions like cerebral palsy, hydrocephalus, cleft lip and palate and severe gastroenterological problems, make CHIA's presence in Quang Nam province really worthwhile.

CHIA is making a huge contribution to the lives of so many underprivileged and needy families in and around Hoi An through its holistic approach to family problems. An example of this which I found particularly innovative was the provision of a full time carer for very young children in a family where the mother's disability made her incapable of looking after them herself.

Roger enjoyed making a contribution in his rewarding role as Marketing and Development Manager, and we would love to come back next year!
Written by Gabi, ABV volunteer

Please visit us at
www.childrenshopeinaction.org

From Australia

(tax-deductible receipts available to Australian donors for donations of \$2 and over)

Deposit into CHIA's bank account:

Bank: Bendigo Bank
Branch: Corrimal, NSW, Australia
Account name: Children's Hope in Action
BSB: 633 000
Account number: 1275 43924
BPay biller code: 342 949
Swift/IBAN code: BENDAU3B

Post a cheque / money order to:

Children's Hope in Action
PO Box 7360
East Brisbane, QLD 4169
Australia

From the USA

In order for donations from US citizens to be tax-deductible we have partnered with Global Development Group USA.

Please stipulate that your donation is to go to "Project J156 - CHIA's Quang Nam Project Vietnam".

Donate online:

www.globaldevelopmentusa.org

Post a cheque to:

Global Development Group USA
1314 Longwood Oaks Boulevard
Lakeland, Florida 33811
United States of America

From Anywhere in the World

You can donate to CHIA from anywhere in the World using details provided in the "From Australia" section. While we will provide you with an official record of your donation, at this time we are unable to offer tax-deductible receipts outside of Australia and the USA. Alternatively you can donate through PayPal.

Donate through PayPal:

www.paypal.com