

Easing the pain

Two of our youngest patients, Ky and Huy, both less than 6 months, and a parent of each were accompanied by CHIA staff member Miss Lai on the 1,000 kilometre bus trip to Ho Chi Minh City where they underwent successful cleft lip and palate surgery. As a result of their condition, both babies were previously considerably underweight before CHIA provided them with nutrition support to prepare them for surgery.

Both children will be able to drink more normally once they have recovered from the surgery, while aesthetically their facial structure will take on a more conventional appearance as they grow into childhood. We would like to thank our friends at Project Boomerang who worked with us to facilitate this very positive outcome.



Baby Huy (above) and Ky (below), pictured before surgery. Both were born with severe cleft lip and palate.



Full steam ahead

The past three months at CHIA have been very busy as an increase in our resource capacity, both in financial and human terms, has directly translated into more targeted intervention for a greater number of children in need. We are pleased to be able to share with you some of the key highlights.



At CHIA we are often involved with children and their families who are in desperate situations. There is nothing we enjoy more than seeing the heart-warming smile of a child. Pictured above are Minh and Cun who both attend CHIA's therapy clinic.

Our HeartKids

We have been working closely with 15 children who are now confirmed as requiring cardiac intervention in the near future. Following detailed testing and evaluation we are making necessary arrangements with local cardiac centres, while for the more serious cases, we will refer to visiting Western cardiac teams. Open heart surgery and catheterisations* will be performed in major hospitals across Vietnam.

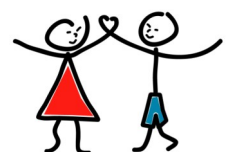
One child has already undergone successful intervention in Danang through catheterisation, while two more children will undergo open heart surgery in the next month.

CHIA considers the Heartkids Program to be one of our most important areas of work as children with life threatening conditions can be given the opportunity to lead a long and healthy life as a result of our intervention. While surgery fees will typically average around USD1,500 per child we consider these procedures to be very worthwhile in terms of the benefit to cost ratio.

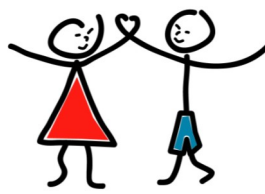
** Catheterisation involves a procedure where a thin tube is inserted in the arm or leg from where it can be advanced into the chambers of the heart or coronary arteries. It is a lower risk procedure used, where appropriate, to treat children with congenital heart defects.*

Update for CHIA logo

The CHIA logo has been updated ever so slightly - the CHIA boy now has shorts! If you require a copy of the new CHIA logo for fundraising or promotion, please contact Michelle at dev2@childrenshopeinaction.org



Children's Hope In Action



Meet one of the CHIA team

CHIA is extremely fortunate to have secured the services of Carol Nagy as our Health Services Manager on an 18 month assignment supported by Australian Volunteers International.

Born in Hobart, on Australia's second largest island, Tasmania, Carol was awarded her General Nursing qualifications in 1979 in Sydney and later went onto to obtain her certificate in Intensive Care Nursing. She brings with her over 15 years experience in intensive care, coronary care, cardio thoracic and emergency nursing, in both paediatric and adult settings.

Carol has worked in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and remote areas of Australia. Her recent experience includes coordinating HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis projects in Cambodia for Medicines Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders). She has also worked in challenging refugee settings in Africa and with internally displaced populations and other refugee communities in China, India and Africa.

Carol also brings with her experience in public health and primary health care delivery in remote, indigenous areas in central Australia and with very poor communities in Kenya and Cambodia.

We at CHIA think we are extremely lucky to secure Carol's services and she is already making a significant impact in terms of helping to better define those areas where CHIA can make the greatest impact for our resource commitment whilst also introducing new operational management structures. A key component of her role will also be to build the capacity of our Vietnamese health workers to ensure the long term sustainability and effectiveness of our health programs.

Thanks to Australian Volunteers International (AVI)

Australian Volunteers International (AVI), an INGO under contract with the Australian Government's AusAID international development program, places volunteers from a broad range of professional backgrounds around the world with the aim of promoting knowledge transfer and community development and a broader goal of creating a peaceful world.

CHIA wishes to acknowledge the support of AVI which is sponsoring Carol's position and also that of John Tobin and Michelle Foy who also joined CHIA on 18 month placements in December 2007. John was previously General Manager, Public Relations & Marketing and Michelle the Communications & Events Manager with the highly respected Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia (Central Operations).

Through AVI's support and utilising the skills of our volunteers, CHIA is implementing a range of structured initiatives to enhance the skills and knowledge of our Vietnamese staff in areas including management processes, health program delivery, project management, marketing, fundraising and communications.



Carol Nagy, CHIA's Health Services Manager, caught on camera before the start of a GP clinic.



Orthopaedic treatment

Many of our supporters will have heard of 13 year old Trung, who has undergone a lengthy and sometimes painful process to enable him to walk normally and without the use of mobility aids.

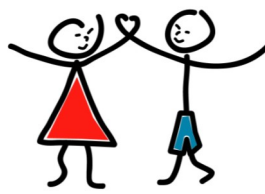
In July Trung underwent major surgery on the upper and lower sections of his right leg in nearby Danang. We are delighted to report that he visited us in Hoi An not long after the surgery and is making excellent progress. We are confident that Trung will not require any major surgery in the future in relation to his condition and we expect to see him walking freely and with a spring in his step in the near future which is a wonderful outcome.

CHIA has also been working closely with My, a very shy 11 year old girl who lives on Cham Island (a two hour boat ride from Hoi An) and who suffers from severe scoliosis. In the near future we expect to be escorting My to Ho Chi Minh City where she will undergo quite complex surgery to prevent further deterioration in her condition.



Trung (right) had severely deformed legs when we met him and (below) after recent successful surgery on his right leg.





Education update

The arrival of June saw the end of the school year. Our CHIA team is currently assessing the progress made over the past year by each child who receives an education sponsorship while we are adding some more children to our program in 2008/09 which is a positive development. To ensure the effectiveness of the program, each child's report card is evaluated to determine their desire to attend school and participate in learning activities. We also visit each family to ensure that every child is provided with the support and encouragement they need to attend school.

Michelle Foy, who joined CHIA under an Australian Volunteers International placement, is working closely with our Program Coordinator, Education, Miss Anh, and our Operations Supervisor, Mr Binh to develop their capacity to manage this important program over the long term without the need for reliance on western *expertise*.



Are you able to help a child like Sy?

Without education sponsorship Sy (pictured left with her father after receiving her new bicycle) would not be able to attend

school. Her family are very poor living on \$1 a day. We have a number of children who are waiting for sponsorship to ensure they can complete their schooling. For just USD120 a year you can keep a child in school. If you can help please contact Michelle at dev2@childrenshopeinaction.org

New developmental play therapy program

As there are no schools that cater for disabled children in Hoi An, CHIA has rented an additional property, adjacent to our existing clinic, where we will soon be providing educational play therapy for up to 20 children with a range of disabilities. This is an important development, aimed to complement our existing physiotherapy program, and will further enhance children's social, intellectual and functional skills.

To help ensure the ongoing sustainability of this initiative, we will be employing a Vietnamese Program Coordinator who will initially work under the guidance of qualified Western volunteers, including special education providers and our visiting British occupational therapist, Dan Johnson, who recently worked in an orphanage in Romania. Our special thanks go to Alison and Edwin from Adelaide, Australia, who gave up a week of their holidays to purchase the supplies and paint the new centre pink and yellow to give it a happy and playful feel.



Alison and Edwin lending a hand to help prepare the new house which is home to our GP clinic room and developmental play therapy program.

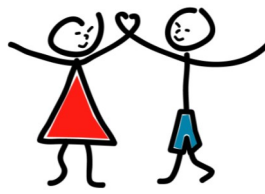
Looking forward

In cooperation with the internationally respected Fred Hollows Foundation and the Danang Eye Hospital, we have commenced working on a new initiative to assist over 100 children registered with CHIA who have potentially serious vision problems. Many of these children live in remote communities and up until now have been provided with little or no testing and assessment

CHIA will be responsible for mobilising the children and undertaking initial screening which will commence in August. Through our association with the Fred Hollows Foundation, in particular, we look forward to moving this project ahead in the coming weeks and months and with the aim of facilitating surgery that will prevent a significant number of these children from going blind.

Special help from Ireland

In July Dr Martin Corbally flew to Vietnam from Ireland for two days to undertake a follow up assessment of the six children with colorectal conditions that he assisted in March of this year, including two with major anal reconstruction surgery. Dr Corbally said he was very pleased with the progress being made by all six children and we hope that in time they will be able to lead far more normal lives and partake in education, work and community activities which most people, especially in Western countries, take for granted. Our sincere thanks to Dr Corbally who, at his own expense, flew from the other side of the world specifically to help these children.



Schools making a splash

Following on from contributions received from other schools earlier this year, we wish to thank St Dominic's Priory College in North Adelaide, South Australia for their donation of AUD2,000 to support our health programs. These funds were raised from the College's hugely successful annual Gala Day which has been running for many years and supporting lots of wonderful causes.

Our special thanks are extended to Sister Jill Havey and the Student Representative Council for choosing to support our work.

Children helping children



No matter where you live in the world, if you are involved in a school community, be it as a parent, grandparent, teacher or in some other capacity and would like *your school* to consider supporting CHIA, please contact Michelle Foy at dev2@childrenshopeinaction.org

Michelle will send you all the information you need which can include suggestions for exercises to create a fun and educational learning experience.

Winds of change



Rice field worker in Hoi An. While the poverty rate is 10.8% in urban areas, it rises to 27.5% in rural areas. (www.unicef.org/vietnam)



The Vietnamese flag blowing on a boat anchored in the Thu Bon river in Hoi An.

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the 13th most populous nation on the planet, is going through a very interesting phase as annual inflation of around 25% tests the economic credentials of the government in one of its most interesting challenges since *Doi moi*, or economic reforms, were introduced in 1986.

Over the past two decades, a fusion of ultra conservative politics has co-existed very effectively with market capitalism to create one of Asia's modern tiger economies, typified by strong growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employment.

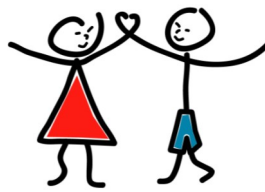
In response to the surge in inflation, the Government has reacted to control further upward pressure on prices and wages, with the State Bank of Vietnam raising the base interest rate in June to 14% (from 12% and following other previous increases). Government spending in non priority areas has also been sharply curtailed in order to put the brakes on the economy and restore faith in the Vietnam Dong which has depreciated by 15-20% against many major currencies in the past 6 months.

At the grassroots level, rising food prices are impacting on the most vulnerable, in particular those who live on less than \$50 a month, although the Government moved to stop speculators from hoarding food supplies by announcing that such actions would lead to punishment. Rice exports have also been put on hold to ensure local demand can be met.

On 21 July the regulated retail price of fuel, which is an important component of household expenditure, rose by 30% and the flow on effect has been almost immediate.

Despite the uncertain economic environment, foreign investment in Vietnam remains buoyant, as international companies search for reliable, low cost labour and a supportive government to ensure competitive cost structures. One of the interesting outcomes will be whether local workers seek major wage rises to compensate for the price rises, which will have the effect of eroding some of this competitiveness.

As for the person on the street.....the Vietnamese seem as resilient as ever and while they are feeling the pinch, we believe that in typical fashion they will grit their teeth and work hard to ensure they pull through relatively unscathed. Nonetheless the next 12 months will certainly be interesting.



Extending our therapy knowledge



Final year Occupational Therapy students Amber Overton (left) and Brie Bates (right) spent six weeks at CHIA working closely with our Physiotherapists and the children we assist through our therapy program.

Over a six week period in May and June, CHIA was fortunate to draw on the expertise and experience of a team of visiting occupational therapists and students from the James Cook University (JCU) in Townsville, Australia.

The team was led by Senior Lecturer in Occupational Therapy, Yvonne Thomas who was accompanied by supervisor Nicole Boccalatte and final year students Amber Overton and Brie Bates.

The JCU team, as they affectionately came to be known, worked in close cooperation with our volunteer British occupational therapist Dan Johnson, and Vietnamese physiotherapists Van and Phuong. Interacting on a daily basis with our disabled children, the JCU team encouraged our physiotherapists to consider alternative exercise and treatment options that needed to take into account the realities of working in a developing country.

Van and Phuong practiced various activities that extended the focus from strength and mobility to include, in particular, functionality, which is very consistent with occupational therapy methodology.

The students, in collaboration with Dan, encouraged Van and Phuong to consider the possibility of modifying the children's everyday living environment to suit their individual needs and by using local, low cost resources. One such example was the redesign of a simple plastic chair and table, which, after some do-it-yourself (D-I-Y) sawing that involved cutting a semi-circle out of the table, allowed for the child to be placed in a more functional and supported position.

Many of the children with Cerebral Palsy do not have the ability to balance themselves when sat upright, so with the additional support offered by this modification, these children could concentrate on using their hands and arms to play, eat or carry out simply daily activities. Examples such as this may sound simple, but when also applied in the home environment, can make a profound difference on a child's quality of life.

All of us at CHIA would like to thank the JCU team for their enthusiasm and willingness to both listen and offer advice. Their visit was a very positive one and we look forward to developing an ongoing relationship as part of our objective of continuing to offer new learning experiences for our staff. It would also be remiss if we did not acknowledge their contribution to our Thursday night soccer matches on the beach followed by a traditional Vietnamese dinner – always a great way to end a productive day!

Boosting health capacity

We have commenced a recruitment process to secure a Vietnamese trained nurse to join our medical team and work under the supervision of Carol Nagy (see profile) our highly experienced Australian trained nurse who has worked in developing country settings around the world. This is an important development as we seek to boost our Vietnamese resource capacity which is critical to the long term development and effectiveness of CHIA.

Inspirational guest speaker

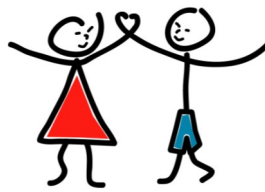
Robyn Morley, CHIA's founder and director, will be in Brisbane (Australia) throughout September and October.

If you would like to book Robyn as a guest speaker for your service club or organisation please contact Cathy McComiskie from Friends of CHIA Australia on 07 3391 1245 / 0418 719 685 or friends@childrenshopeinaction.org

Law-abiding fashion!



From December 2007 wearing a motorbike helmet became compulsory. Ever the entrepreneur, the Vietnamese have found a way to make helmets a little more trendy through accessorising!



Making life beautiful

A chilly June evening in Adelaide, South Australia saw the holding of a highly successful fundraising dinner under the banner of *Cuộc Sống Đẹp*, which is Vietnamese for *Life Is Beautiful*.

"The theme reflected the aim of the evening, which was to make life a little more beautiful for the children in CHIA's care," said Pam Tobin, principal organiser of the event.

In the warm, intimate surrounds of the Phore Seasons restaurant in seaside Adelaide, some of the city's best known chefs donated their services to cook up a storm for the 80 guests who filled the venue. Their generosity was coupled with wonderful support from local suppliers who donated fresh produce covering every course and complemented by South Australia's world famous wines.

With flamboyant TV celebrity chef Ed Halmagyi in fine form as the Master of Ceremonies and auctioneer, over AUD10,000 was raised which was recently donated to CHIA. Our special thanks go to Pam Tobin and Judy and Gio Musolino, owners of the Phore Seasons restaurant for their efforts and generosity.



Pam Tobin, pictured with Phuc (aged 4), at the CHIA therapy clinic during her recent visit to Hoi An.

A generous gift from Down Under

CHIA would like to extend a sincere thank you to the Cubit Family Foundation for its donation of AUD30,000 which will help to underpin a range of key health program initiatives. A strategic donation such as this greatly enhances our forward planning ability and the overall effectiveness of our individual programs, while also providing us with the capacity to be able to treat more complex conditions necessitating more specialised surgery.

Mark Cubit, Trustee of the Cubit Family Foundation commented, "It is often difficult to ascertain the effectiveness of a charitable organisation from the other side of the world. I was fortunate to see first hand the work that Robyn and her team are doing at CHIA and was very impressed with the impact being made. We visit numerous projects in many different countries but I hope even those who don't get to visit CHIA will consider supporting this great team of people."



The most popular sport in Vietnam is soccer (or football) which is known locally as *bóng đá*.

While Vietnam is not so well known on the international stage, boys and men all over the country can be found wearing imitation shirts featuring Manchester United, Chelsea and the other big teams from England and across Europe.

Dinner Under the Stars

In the State of Queensland in north eastern Australia, we are fortunate to benefit from the great work undertaken by our Friends of CHIA volunteer group.

On Wednesday 10 September 2008 from 6.30pm, Friends of CHIA will be staging its biggest event to date in the form of its inaugural Dinner Under the Stars in the magnificent surrounds of Queensland Parliament House and with wonderful views overlooking the Brisbane River.

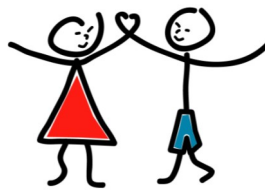
Special guest speaker will be Robyn Morley, Founder and Director of CHIA, who will give a first hand account of how and why CHIA was formed, current priorities and needs, and a fascinating insight on what it's like to run a grassroots charity in Vietnam. There will be the opportunity to meet with Robyn and to ask her questions about CHIA of specific personal interest.

There are also a few other surprises lined up so don't miss this great night out. Tickets are just \$55 and include a gourmet Australian barbeque and dessert. Proceeds raised from the event will go directly to supporting CHIA's vital work.

For ticket information and related enquiries, please email friends@childrenshopeinaction.org or call Cathy McComiskie on 0418 719685.

To our other CHIA supporters around the world, if you have an interest in organising a fundraiser to help us, please let us know and we will be happy to help you promote your event and also assist with presentation materials.





AusCham's right behind CHIA

Helping hands from Hanoi



We are delighted to report that the Hanoi Chapter of the Australian Chamber of Commerce Vietnam (Auscham) and the Australia & New Zealand Women's Group recently made a donation of USD7,000 to CHIA. The funds will be applied to our Therapy Program which provides disabled children from the local area with access to vital therapy and rehabilitation services which are otherwise unavailable.

Auscham was established in 1998, with chapters in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, to represent the interests of its members and to encourage the development of Australian and Vietnamese business relations. It now has well over 600 members which reflects the growth in trade and investment between Australia and Vietnam over the past decade.

The Australia & New Zealand Women's Group in Hanoi holds various events and activities to support a range of charities and other community development projects in Vietnam, while also providing an important social and networking forum.

The funding will be used to enhance the quality of therapy we are able to provide to children with disabilities in our clinic in Hoi An and also through our home visits program. Many of the children we are assisting suffer from Cerebral Palsy and a key focus of the program is to improve their mobility, range of functions and as a result, their independence. Therapy is nearly always conducted with a parent present so that the exercises learned can be applied at home which substantially enhances the effectiveness of the program.

CHIA wishes to extend its gratitude to Auscham Hanoi and the Australia & New Zealand Women's Group for their support of this important initiative.

AusCham in the south also digs deep

CHIA is also very pleased to announce a generous donation of USD10,450 has been made available by the Ho Chi Minh City Chapter of the Australian Chamber of Commerce Vietnam (Auscham). These funds will be applied to a range of health initiatives including general health assessments, specific testing, a vaccination program and nutritional supplementation.

In addition, a number of specific training initiatives will be undertaken as a result of the funding to help build the capacity of the CHIA health team through formal and informal arrangements with local and international medical teams and health educators.

The direct result of this will be an enhancement in the quality of service that we will be able to provide to children in our care which will translate to improved patient outcomes. On behalf of the many families that will benefit from this initiative a sincere thank you to Auscham Ho Chi Minh City chapter, which annually raises over USD50,000 for its Charitable Program to support sustainable initiatives in Vietnam. To find out more about the AusCham Charitable program and events, please visit www.auschamvn.org

Meet some of our children



Thanks to CHIA's Therapy Program children like Sy (above) are reaching for the sky.

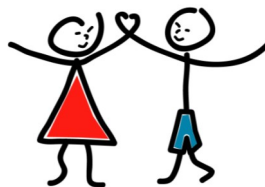


Children like Viet (above left), Nhan (above right) and Vy (below) all benefit greatly from CHIA's therapy program.



Dr Josh (below) consulting at one of CHIA's regular medical clinics.





Intrepid's community spirit shines



Enjoying a laugh at the local beach in Hoi An

In 2002 Intrepid Travel, well known for its reputation to take travellers *off the beaten track* in small tour groups, established the Intrepid Foundation to support the grassroots work of non government organisations in the communities where Intrepid is active.

The Foundation recently added CHIA to its Intrepid Community Project Fund. Donations made by Intrepid travellers to The Intrepid Foundation, intended for CHIA, will be matched by Intrepid Travel.

A related outcome of our new association is that various Intrepid Groups travelling through Vietnam will stop in CHIA, providing their guests with the opportunity to meet some of our children and view our work first hand. For further information on the Foundation go to:

www.theintrepidfoundation.org



How to make a donation

No matter where in the world you live, you can help CHIA by making a donation by one of the following methods:

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: CHIA donations
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