

Merry Christmas from all the team at CHIA



On behalf of all the team at CHIA, I would like to take the opportunity to wish you and your families a very merry and safe Christmas and a healthy and happy New Year.

We are grateful for your ongoing support of Children's Hope in Action which enables us to continue to support children who experience disadvantage and hardship through lack of access to health, disability and education services.

Your support makes a huge difference to many young lives.

Best wishes

Robyn Morley
Founding Director

**Chuc Mung Nam Moi -
Happy New Year**

Before the next edition of CHIA News is out we will have also celebrated Tet Nguyen Dan (TET) in Vietnam (26-29 January).

Tet means the first morning of the first day of the new period and thus marks the beginning of a new year on the lunar calendar.

Tet is a huge celebration lasting three days and is a time for family and friends.

So from all at CHIA -

Chuc Mung Nam Moi!

Building healthy communities

The past three months has been an intensive period where over 300 children have been seen either directly by our CHIA health team or by another medical group facilitated by CHIA.

Over 170 children exhibiting a range of symptoms were given a baseline medical assessment of which a number have undergone treatment and/or provision of medication. We also referred 22 children to various hospitals for more detailed examination and assessment.

The months of October and November typically see a sharp escalation in respiratory related illnesses in and around Hoi An, as the temperature drops and the onset of the flood season provides a haven for the spread of viruses and bacterial infections.

Medical consultations were conducted in our clinic facilities in Hoi An and also in the neighbouring district of Duy Xuyen, where high levels of poverty combined with cooler temperatures make the poorest families especially vulnerable at this time of the year. It is not an easy task to get out to some communities, as dirt roads turn to loose mud while some hamlets can be completely closed off due to flooding. We are fortunate to have a flexible and enthusiastic team of Vietnamese staff who not only take themselves out to these areas, but also provide a safe escort for CHIA's Western volunteers who are less familiar with local conditions.

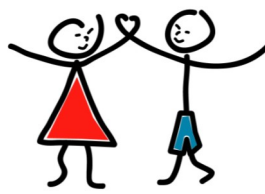
Cardiac Intervention

Since our last newsletter in August, CHIA has facilitated and helped to fund cardiac interventions for three children at the Danang Hospital, located approximately 30 kilometres north of Hoi An. Two year old Tai, who has a more complicated condition, underwent two procedures through catheterisation, and will have a third and, if all goes to plan, final procedure in the relatively near future.

Also undergoing successful cardiac intervention were two year old Ly and nine year old Hoa, both by catheterisation. We are pleased to report both have made a very good recovery.



(L to R) Two year old Tai and her mother, two year old Ly and her mother, and nine year old Hoa and his mother. All children have recently had cardiac procedures by catheterisation.



Building healthy communities (cont...)

Practical Health & Well Being

As part of CHIA's commitment to helping to prevent illness, and in cooperation with the Pacific Hospital, 90 of our more vulnerable children were provided with two flu vaccinations thanks to financial support that was provided through the Australian Chamber of Commerce, Ho Chi Minh Chapter.



Twin boys, Huy and Hoang pictured with their father. CHIA will support the boys until they are 18 years old to help ensure the family can stay together.

In another new initiative, 49 children were screened at CHIA's Hoi An facility for vision impairment problems in cooperation with the Danang Eye Centre and the Fred Hollows Foundation. Of these, 10 have been provided with glasses, others will have their sight monitored while some will undergo surgery. A further screening will take place in the near future for a similar sized group of children who are experiencing vision problems.

CHIA is also providing nutritional milk supplements for four undernourished children, and for two of these, we are continuing to make available a living allowance for a carer to look after two year old twin boys, Huy and Hoang, whose mother died just after they were born. By making available a carer position, it enables the twin's father the opportunity to earn an income to support them and their three sisters.

Typhoon and tropical storm season in Vietnam

Vietnam, a country of 86 million people, is lashed by typhoons and tropical storms from the South China Sea (known as the East Sea in Vietnam) every year, mostly along the central coast. This severe weather claims hundreds of lives each year, typically between July and November.

Between the end of September and November provinces in central Vietnam experienced the effects of three tropical storms causing heavy rains and flooding. While avoiding any direct contact with typhoons this year, Hoi An did flood significantly three times. Furthermore, due to heavy rains causing the Hoi An River to rise above its banks, many streets in the Old Town flooded more regularly.

During this time many enterprising locals brought their boats to the Old Town, not only to help residents get on with everyday life, but to also ferry curious tourists around the flooded town streets for a small (or not so small) fee.



Enterprising locals waiting to ferry residents and tourists around Hoi An Old Town during the floods.

The Learning Room

The newest program to CHIA's disability services, the Learning Room, is now into its second month. The Learning Room provides practical educational exercises for children with disabilities, with learning programs tailored to each child's level of ability.

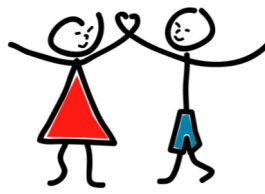
The majority of children with disabilities in Vietnam are unable to attend school as there are few schools catering for children with special needs. The Learning Room is a wonderful addition to the services we can provide to children with disabilities. While the program is in the early stages of development, the initial feedback from the families and our staff is very positive.

New support from Planet Wheeler



CHIA welcomes aboard the Planet Wheeler Foundation as a major supporter of our health, disability and education programs. The commitment made by the Foundation enables CHIA to develop a range of longer term initiatives and provides us with a more stable base from which to grow and extend our services for more children in need.

The Planet Wheeler Foundation was established by Tony and Maureen Wheeler who founded *Lonely Planet*, a name synonymous around the world with independent travel. CHIA is extremely grateful for the support of the Planet Wheeler Foundation which also supports many other grassroots community development projects around the world.



A courageous little girl



Twelve year old My lives with her parents and two younger sisters on beautiful Cham Island, a relatively untouched area of Quang Nam province and located approximately 20 kilometres off the coast from Hoi An. Relying largely on agriculture and fishing, most families earn just enough income to cover the essential costs of living.

For young My, however, life was a particular struggle, despite her ever present smile and lovely nature. When we first saw My she had a very severe case of scoliosis and in a relatively short space of time it became apparent that her condition was deteriorating rather quickly.

While the scoliosis had an obvious impact on My's physical appearance, what was of greater concern was that the continued movement of her spine would soon seriously impact upon her breathing capacity if something was not done, with early death a very real possibility.

It was explained to her parents that she would need two surgeries which, if successful, would not reverse the condition, but rather, halt any further curvature of the spine. It also had to be explained that, because of the severity of the condition, the surgery was high risk and there was a possibility that she may not survive the procedures.

After weighing up the options, My's parents decided to proceed with the surgeries which would take place in Ho Chi Minh City, about 1,000 kilometres south of Hoi An.

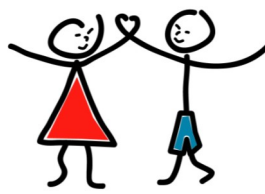
CHIA arranged the 22 hour bus journey for My and her mother, and Miss Lai, our Health Services Coordinator, spent the first week with the family, ensuring everything went to plan and helping to reduce the fear of being in "the big smoke" for the first time.

After a week in hospital the first surgery took place and two weeks later the second procedure went ahead. My's mother barely left her side, spending every night on the floor next to her daughter, and later they were joined by My's father who also made the long journey south.

CHIA is very pleased to be able to report that both surgeries went as well as could have been hoped for, and following 40 days in hospital, My's recovery has been very good. We are obviously maintaining a close watch over her progress but at the moment all the signs are excellent.

We wish to extend a special *thank you* to Dirk and Leo and the Patient Support Vietnam Association in Germany who funded My's surgery and all associated costs (hospital bed fees, transportation and food) which totalled USD 5,500. For a family living on a dollar or two per day, it goes without saying that the family would never have been able to afford the treatment.

We are also grateful to Dr Nhi and the team at the Hospital for Traumatology and Orthopaedics in Ho Chi Minh City. Most importantly, we wish all the very best to My and her beautiful, vibrant spirit which we are sure played its part in delivering the outcome we all, especially her family, sought.



The gates open for a new school year



(L) CHIA's Program Coordinator, Education, Anh, giving out achievement rewards to three children who receive education sponsorships. (R) Sponsored children receiving their new uniforms at the beginning of the new school year.



After a busy few months organising summer school and then preparing for the new school year, our Program Coordinator, Education, Miss Anh, breathed a sigh of relief as CHIA's sponsored children, wearing their new uniforms and lugging their bags full of textbooks, walked through the gates and into the new school year.

The school year is now well underway having started in September. We are pleased to have increased the number of education sponsorships to cover 51 children. The number of children we are able to support has increased directly as a result of new donors to the program and also due to the generous support from a number of community fundraisers.

The children sponsored in this program are all from poor families who struggle to pay for their education. These children are considered at high risk of dropping out of school due to poverty, with parents often faced with the heartbreaking decision of paying for education or food.

CHIA's education sponsorships include school fees, school insurances, uniforms, textbooks, stationery and extra classes. Many people are surprised to learn that in addition to regular attendance at school, children must attend and pay for extra classes. The classes are optional, however it is in these classes that children often learn the information required to pass exams. This places children from poor families at an even greater disadvantage as the family simply cannot afford the extra classes.

We are delighted to have been able to increase the number of children who receive support however there are still a number of children who require assistance. If you know of any individual, group or organisation who may be interested in donating to our Education Sponsorship Program, please pass this newsletter on, or direct them to our website www.childrenshopeinaction.org

Alternatively they can email our Program Coordinator, Miss Anh at education@childrenshopeinaction.org for further information.

Education can help provide a better quality of life and break the cycle of poverty that so many children are caught in. Thank you for your ongoing support of this program.

The Rotary Club of Singapore shines a light for children at risk

On 17th November CHIA welcomed members from the Rotary Club of Singapore to Hoi An. Members enjoyed a visit to the CHIA clinic, meeting local staff and learning more about the children they are supporting.

The club had informed CHIA that it would sponsor six children to enable them to complete their education, however after spending time in Hoi An and neighbouring rural Duy Xuyen, and learning more about the situation of many of the families we assist, the members increased their support to eight children - a donation of USD4,800.

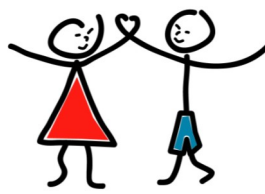
CHIA is sincerely grateful to the Rotary Club of Singapore for their wonderful support which ensures eight children have the opportunity to complete a full primary and high school education.



Hien (front centre) and her Auntie (front right) with members from the Rotary Club of Singapore.



Goh Bok Seng (L) and Stan Low (R) from the Rotary Club of Singapore present their donation to CHIA's Marketing and Business Development Manager, John Tobin.



Farewell to therapy supervisor



Dan pictured with CHIA's physiotherapists Van (L) and Phuong (R) and Sy, who regularly attends CHIA's therapy clinic, and below, Dan with Rom.

In November CHIA said farewell to Dan Johnson, a British Occupational Therapist, who has been volunteering with us for six very productive months.

Dan has been a huge addition to the CHIA team by working with our physiotherapists and complementing their existing skills by adding some basic occupational therapy principles to their work, assisting them to improve their patient management and review skills, while also reviewing the overall program to ensure it continues to meet the needs of our children.

In addition, Dan oversaw the development of the Learning Room program, including child identification, staff training and assisting with the individual learning programs for each child.

Dan, thanks for your dedication, professionalism and laughs – we'll miss you!



Physiotherapy program

The past month has seen a slight change in focus for CHIA's physiotherapists. During the flood season the regular physiotherapy schedule is often interrupted as it is too dangerous for children with disabilities to get to the CHIA clinic by motorbike. Our physiotherapists use this period to provide more home-based services to children most in need, and also as a time to review the progress of each child. On some days it is even too wet for our staff to travel to conduct home visits, and we ensure that their safety comes first.

One of the great developments of the past month has been the acquisition of an adapted tricycle from American charitable organisation, Wheels for Humanity. The tricycle has enabled us to assess the possibility of providing transport for children with cerebral palsy in order to increase their mobility. The adapted tricycle, with low seating, supportive strapping, movable steering device and a pedal breaking system, provides the opportunity for some children to be independently mobile, in and around their home, for the first time in their lives. Environmental issues such as poor and uneven surfaces, motorcycle hazards and limited 'public access' legislation led to some interesting brainstorming sessions to develop a safety awareness document for both children and parents.

Using local disability services in Danang city we have just ordered the first new custom-made tricycle. Many of you will be familiar with Sy, a 14 year old boy who has cerebral palsy, and has been attending regular physiotherapy sessions at CHIA. Sy is the first recipient of a tricycle and is now able to visit his grandmother, who lives just 90 metres away. Not only has the tricycle increased Sy's mobility, it also enables him to be more socially involved with his family which is equally as important.



Sy on his new tricycle which greatly enhances his mobility.

Looking for a Physiotherapist!

As part of the ongoing development of our Vietnamese physiotherapists and to directly assist in working with some of our disabled children, CHIA is seeking the services of a suitably experienced volunteer physiotherapist.

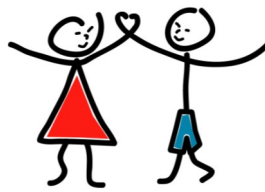
Many of the children who are included in our physiotherapy program have cerebral palsy, while others suffer from a range of congenital conditions. Sessions are undertaken in our clinic facilities in Hoi An and also in rural areas through our home visit program.

If you are looking for an interesting challenge at a grassroots community level, please contact Robyn Morley at CHIA on:

Email: info@childrenshopeinaction.org
Telephone: +84 (0)510 3921 487
Skype: chiarobyn

According to government data, 6.34% of the Vietnamese population (or 5.3 million people) are disabled (cited from the National Action Plan to Support People with Disabilities). The majority of these persons have an impairment affecting their mobility (29.41%).

Most types of impairment derive from congenital causes (35.80%), diseases (32.34%) or war (25.56%). In future the number of war invalids is expected to decline, but impairments caused through traffic accidents is likely to increase.



Head smart



CHIA children, Thach and Thuong, with their new Protec helmets.

CHIA is delighted to report that we were successful in our approach to Protec, recognised as one of the leading suppliers of international standard motorcycle helmets in Vietnam, to donate 25 helmets to disabled children who regularly attend our clinic for physiotherapy – and who previously were not wearing helmets!

Vietnam introduced compulsory wearing of helmets in December 2007. For the most part the campaign has been a success, with the glaring exception being the failure of parents to fit their children with helmets. This situation also reflected ambiguities in the law relating to children and wearing of helmets.

CHIA felt it appropriate that we set an example and we are pleased to report that we often see a number of *our* children on the back of their parents' motorbikes and wearing their new brightly coloured helmets.

Protec is part of the Asia Injury Prevention Foundation with all profits being directed to the implementation of safe traffic programs. It has launched a 6 month campaign in December 2008 to educate parents on the necessity of their children to wear helmets. Anyone who has ever visited Vietnam will understand why this is a very important initiative!



High tea and bubbles

From the flowing chocolate fountain to the divine cream puffs and mouth-watering selection of delicate cakes, to the longest multi-draw raffle in history, this Ladies High Tea & Bubbles was a wonderful afternoon of gastronomic temptations.

The event, held in Brisbane, was attended by CHIA's Founding Director, Robyn Morley, who was in Australia fundraising and spreading the word on CHIA's work in Vietnam.

Congratulations and sincere thanks are extended to Sandy Hammond and her loyal band of helpers for organising such a successful fundraising event for CHIA, with AUD2,550 being raised.



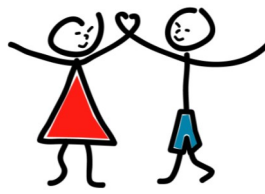
Event organiser Sandy Hammond (R) with CHIA's Founding Director Robyn Morley and a delicious selection of sweets.

Massages, cakes and a cuppa at Ambleside on the Lake

The invitation said to come along and enjoy a ½ hour massage, pancakes and a cuppa (cup of tea) and come they did!

The afternoon offered ½ hour massages for just \$10 as well as a delicious array of pancakes, cakes, snacks and tea, all in the beautiful surrounds of Ambleside on the Lake which overlooks the picturesque Lake Daylesford in Daylesford, an 80 minute drive from Melbourne, the second largest city in Australia.

We are very grateful to Linda Carroll and Fiona Harris, their husbands Frank and Stan, and all who helped to organise this wonderful afternoon as a fundraiser for CHIA. After visiting CHIA in February 2008 Linda said, 'We were all quite moved by the work CHIA does and felt we had to help out more, so a few of us got together and organised this fundraiser. Everyone donated their time, including the therapists, and over AUD1,100 has been donated to CHIA's Education Sponsorship Program which assists children living on the poverty line to stay in school.'



Rotary Club of Bellingin keeps on giving

On 2nd October Robyn Morley, Children's Hope in Action's Founding Director and Cathy McComiskie, from Friends of CHIA in Queensland, were warmly welcomed by the Rotary Club of Bellingin at a fundraising dinner for CHIA.

Carole Young, the Rotary Club of Bellingin's International Director, and fellow club members did a great job of organising the dinner at the Bellingin Valley Motor Inn. Guests enjoyed a live performance by the Junior and Senior Strings section from Bellingin Primary School who generously came together to perform during their school holidays. The evening also provided Robyn with the opportunity to update the group on CHIA's programs and achievements as well as extend our sincere thanks to the Rotary Club of Bellingin for their continued support since CHIA's inception.

A special thanks to President, Peter Bennetts and International Director, Carole Young for their outstanding hospitality and support. Sincere thanks also to Ken Hall, District Governor of Rotary District 9650 who travelled over 100km from Tamworth to attend the dinner.



L to R: Robyn Morley, Ken Hall, Carole Young and Peter Bennetts

Friends of CHIA Brisbane dine under the stars

Dinner Under The Stars, hosted by Friends of CHIA, was held overlooking the beautiful Brisbane River from an informal dining area at the Parliament House Annexe in Brisbane. The room was decorated with a touch of Vietnam including little red table lanterns and hanging lanterns, all made locally in Hoi An.

John Taylor, presenter of the ABC's popular current affairs program, Stateline, and who recently toured Vietnam and visited Hoi An, generously performed the duties of Master of Ceremonies. Guests were treated to a beautiful performance by the Vietnamese Language School's Dance Group under the guidance of their Principal Van Tuy Tran. We are very grateful to Van, the eight lovely young ladies and their parents for the gift of their time.

Sincere thanks to major event sponsors Freehills, Bendigo Bank, Pauline Rhoades of BOSS Property Group and the wonderful people from PricewaterhouseCoopers who served and cooked on the evening - their energy and commitment to the task was a fantastic support.

Many thanks also to Penny Allan of Pot d'Or Colour of Nature for her lovely floral arrangements and to all who helped provide the brilliant range of quality silent auction items, including local supporters in Hoi An who sent items over with Robyn.

Dinner Under the Stars was a very enjoyable and successful evening and raised AUD7,500 for CHIA.

Spicing it up for CHIA

After being introduced to CHIA earlier in the year, Joan Moller decided to help us out when she returned to Australia.

On 19 November Joan and fifty of her friends enjoyed an entertaining cooking demonstration and dinner at the ever-popular *Spice Kitchen* restaurant in Adelaide, South Australia. Enthusiastic owner and chef, Ragini Dey, shared her passion on all things Indian and the group enjoyed a delicious three course meal experiencing the flavours of regional India (and a few glasses of wine).

Not only did the group have a great night out, they also raised AUD1,000 for CHIA. A big thank you to Joan and friends.



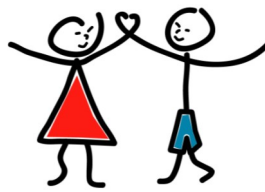
Chef Ragini Dey from The Spice Kitchen sharing her passion for Indian cooking at a CHIA fundraiser organised by Joan Moller.

The kindest of gifts

When Spanish newlyweds Alberto Reinoso and Cristina Lozano visited CHIA, they left the kindest of gifts.

After visiting CHIA and learning about our services and the children we assist Alberto and Cristina, who both are in the medical profession, decided to donate money their family and friends had given them for their wedding; an amazing AUD6,000!

This was an extraordinary act of kindness and from all at CHIA we wish you happiness, long life and prosperity.



Leaving a gift of a lifetime

A growing number of people worldwide are leaving a component of their personal estate to charity, non government organisations and other community service groups.

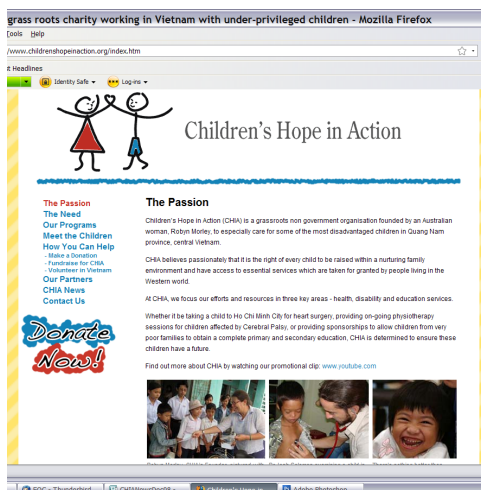
As visitors to Vietnam will be aware, what might constitute a relatively small gift can go a very long way in this country, whether it be, as an example, by paying for a child's life saving cardiac surgery which can be as little as USD500, or providing a complete primary and secondary school education for just over USD1,400.

If you are considering preparing, or making changes to your Will, and would like to know more about CHIA and our work, please contact our Founding Director, Robyn Morley, who will treat your enquiry in strict confidence. Robyn can be contacted at info@childrenshopeinaction.org or telephone + 84 (0)510 3921 487.

CHIA's website updated

CHIA's website has been updated with new information on our programs and services.

Please visit us at
www.childrenshopeinaction.org



How to make a donation

Please consider donating to CHIA this Christmas so we can help more children have a brighter start to the new year.



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: 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