



*Robyn Morley with representatives from our local partner.*

### NOKIA HELPING CHIA TO REACH OUT!

CHIA is delighted to announce the launch of a major new program — thanks to the generosity of the widely respected international telecommunications company, Nokia.

The **CHIA – Nokia Reach Out!** Program is a long term initiative that focuses on two key areas: Increasing access to health, disability and education services for children from marginalised families, in remote communities. And building human resource capacity within CHIA, utilising the skills of Vietnamese and international professionals, to enable more children to receive high quality services.

The name of the program reflects the nature of a traditional Outreach health program. CHIA will seek to extend its services beyond Hoi An, to work with highly marginalised families from more distant communities. With health the key driver, CHIA will engage its own staff, plus visiting international medical professionals, to provide initial consultations and necessary treatment for children who otherwise would not have access to such services.

The fact remains that many children, especially in regional areas of Vietnam, either die at a young age or endure a life affected by chronic illness because early intervention and treatment is not available to them. This is largely because in Vietnam, as in other developing countries, major urban centres are far better serviced in terms of physical infrastructure, such as hospitals and schools. Also, doctors are typically attracted to work in more modern facilities in major cities such as Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.

Jenny Lim, who oversees Nokia's community development projects in the Asia-Pacific region commented, "From the first time I learned of this initiative and the opportunity for Nokia's involvement I was very interested. This is truly a grassroots program and our expectation is that many hundreds of children will benefit directly. We are also delighted that what commenced as a health project in our initial discussions with CHIA has been extended to also include support for disability services and education sponsorships."

The program was launched in an official ceremony in December 2008. Its significance, especially from a grassroots regional perspective, was reflected in the large audience which included representatives of the local medical community, the Vietnamese Government, the Hoi An business community, the media and very importantly, a small group of parents of children supported by CHIA.

CHIA wishes to acknowledge Nokia's generous support and looks forward to making a significant difference to the lives of many children in need living in the region of greater Hoi An and the neighbouring district of Duy Xuyen.

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### **CHIA's good-hearted supporters not daunted by economic crisis**

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Despite the gloomy economic situation, over the last few months CHIA has been able to continue to support many children, especially those needing urgent health interventions.

So far this year, CHIA has assisted more than 35 children to receive much-needed procedures such as heart surgery, colorectal surgery, orthopaedic surgery and plastic surgery.

These procedures were carried out by both local and foreign medical teams, in a number of hospitals in different cities in Vietnam, including Ho Chi Minh City, Da Nang, Hue and Hoi An. The foreign medical teams, cooperating with local medical teams, came from Germany, Ireland, United States and Australia.

These procedures are expensive and would not be possible without the help of our supporters. Thankfully for the many children supported by CHIA, our donors and funders dug deep to make it possible for many children to "see brighter skies" and anticipate a better future. Our heartfelt thanks to you all!

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## Tet for disadvantaged children – 2009



*Giving Tet gifts to children in Duy Nghia Commune, Duy Xuyen District*

For the third Tet (lunar New Year) CHIA's young staff members are busy and excited organising Tet gifts for our lovely kids who are disabled or from families in difficult circumstances. Like Christmas Holidays in western countries, Tet is considered the most important event in the cultural and spiritual lives of all Vietnamese families.

"Working hard throughout the year is all for TET", we often say. Tet is the happiest time of the year. It's a time when people put their daily work behind them and relax. It's a time for family members, especially those who live and work far from home, to reunite and have a great time together sharing memories, happiness and successes. People from the richest to the poorest do their best to get ready for Tet, preparing good food, buying new things for their house and new clothes and lucky money for themselves and children.

What about the poor families and disadvantaged children who we are working with? Do they prepare for Tet? They do, but instead of buying good food and new clothes for their children, they clean their belongings and work even harder to save money for the family's food during Tet. Many of these families are supported by farming and seasonal labour and stopping work, even for a day, can cause hardship. Because most businesses close during Tet our beneficiaries' parents prepare for the celebrations a bit differently from other families; they work harder to save money for food for the days when they cannot work. Our lovely children are still very excited about Tet without anything new; they are happy with what they have for Tet.

At CHIA, we do as much as we can to make their Tet happier by organising gifts for them and the small gifts we organised meant more than we could have hoped for. This year, it was a big effort to organize 261 Tet gifts for our families and children in Cam Ha, Duy Nghia, Duy Vinh, Duy Hai and Duy Nghia communes. But CHIA's staff wish to bring more smiles to our disadvantaged children's faces at Tet each year.

*Written by Mr Binh, Operations Supervisor*

## John and Michelle

Many of CHIA's supporters will have had contact with John Tobin and Michelle Foy since they came to work at CHIA in late 2007 under the Australian Volunteers International (AVI) program.

Both John and Michelle made a very valuable contribution in helping to move CHIA forward, especially in terms of training and developing the skills of our Vietnamese staff.

John and Michelle headed home to Adelaide, Australia in January 2009. We would like to thank them sincerely for their efforts and the enthusiasm they brought to CHIA. We also want to congratulate them on their recently announced engagement!

While we miss John and Michelle, we are delighted that AVI will continue to support future volunteer placements at CHIA. We are currently working through a new round of recruiting in cooperation with AVI's Vietnamese office in Hanoi.



## Thanks !

To Ian Blackford and his team at **Design Conscious!** We would like to say thank you for designing our wonderful logo.

[www.designconscious.com](http://www.designconscious.com)



## News from the Physiotherapy Program



### Lâm Đình Vũ

It is always distressing to see a child with a bad disability. I have worked as a physiotherapist for CHIA for one and half years and I treat many children with disabilities.

On one visit I was almost moved to tears to see a 15-year-old boy, Vu, who has cerebral palsy. Vu lives in the same street as CHIA and has been cared for by his family since he was born, but his family had no knowledge of cerebral palsy and had no one to tell them about the disease. He was being cared for by his aunt as his family is very poor and has many children.

Vu is now receiving physiotherapy at CHIA and is receiving medicine to help manage his epilepsy. CHIA continues to help Vu and his family to improve his situation and make their future brighter.

*Written by Ms Phuong*



### Võ Thị Phụng

Phung was born to a poor family and about three months after her birth, her parents noticed that her body's development seemed unusual.

They decided to take her to Danang Orthopedic & Rehabilitation Centre (DORC) in the hope that Phung would be given treatment to help her body grow normally.

The doctor assessed Phung and found problems with her legs, arms and some of her joints. Fortunately, Phung's age and condition allowed DORC to give her free treatment, though her family still paid for daily activities. Phung received treatment including over 20 changes of plaster, but she was still in a serious

condition and DORC had no funding to provide her with further treatments.

The family supports 2 other children on a meager salary of 1,500,000 VND (Approx \$150 AUD) per month and were unable to pay for further treatment.

Phuong and her family were introduced to CHIA and we now in touch with DORC and have plans to take Phung there for more treatment in the future. Every effort is being made to help this child and CHIA is working to ensure that her condition improves and she has a happy future ahead of her.

*Written by Ms Van*

## CHIA's young team

The first half of 2009 is proving to be a very exciting time in the lives of CHIA's employees.

Anh Ngoc, Coordinator of our Education Sponsorship Program, started the trend in early March, when we attended her wedding to Duy Tran.

Two other employees of CHIA have also announced their engagements. Loc Pham (our social worker and IT technician) and Van (one of our two physiotherapists) will celebrate their weddings on 13<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> April respectively.

I'm sure that all of CHIA's supporters and friends join CHIA's staff in wishing these three couples long, happy & successful lives together.



*Anh Ngoc and staff on her wedding day*

## A big thanks goes to ....

Kitka Hitula at Kitka Websites for designing our website.

[www.childrenshopeinaction.org](http://www.childrenshopeinaction.org)

[www.kitka.com.au](http://www.kitka.com.au)

In the past, most Vietnamese marriages were arranged by the parents or extended family, and while children were sometimes consulted, it was nearly always the parents' final decision. It was not surprising to find that a bride and groom had only just met on the day of their engagement or marriage. However, in the last few decades, Vietnamese women and men marry based on love rather than arranged marriages.



## News from the Education Sponsorship Program

The education sponsorship program is now supporting 54 children, mostly from Duy Xuyen, Hoi An and Thang Binh. We are so happy to help these children stay at school, as this gives them a chance for a brighter future. Also, they can concentrate on studying because they can stop worrying about whether their families will be able to keep them at school. Most of the children learn very well, and some have earned prizes in the "Excellent student" competition. They make their families and everyone at CHIA feel so proud.



### Nguyet

Unfortunately, we have some very sad news to tell. One day in February, a bad vehicle accident took the life of one of our beneficiaries, Nguyet. We feel so sad about her and share this sadness with her family. Nguyet's death is a big loss for her family. She was a dutiful girl, who took on a lot of responsibility in looking after her siblings and helping with household chores. Nguyet was the eldest of four children from one of the poorest families in the village. She had a job in the summer as a waitress, so that she could help her family to reduce their financial stress a little bit and contribute to her schooling expenses. She was a good student and well liked at school. Many people came to Nguyet's funeral. They were all sad and cried for her. Sympathizing with the family's difficulties, Nguyet's sponsor (Children's Education Foundation) quickly agreed to transfer Nguyet's education sponsorship to her younger brother. We want to do our best for Nguyet's family and try to help them to overcome their difficulties.

### Trieu

CHIA has many children who perform very well at school, despite having extra problems. A good example is eight-year-old Trieu, who is affected by Dwarfism. He is very small for his age, but is very smart and active. Trieu used to be class monitor of grade 1 and has received many school awards for excellence. Every day, Trieu's father must take him to school on their old bicycle. But now things are going to be better for Trieu and his family. An Australian girl called India saved money from her birthday to donate for Trieu's education. India's grandfather also sent money for CHIA to buy a new bicycle for Trieu. India and her grandfather are doing their best to help Trieu's family to keep him at school. They will meet Trieu one day soon when they come back to Hoi An.

Thanks to Children's Education Foundation and all of our donors. Your generous donations help many children to have a better life and lift themselves out of the poverty cycle. Hopefully, together, we can help many more children to stay at school in the future.

*Education Sponsorship update written by Ms Anh*



## Volunteer opportunities

If you are interested in volunteering for 3 months or more and have experience in health or allied health please contact CHIA at [info@childrenshopeinaction.org](mailto:info@childrenshopeinaction.org)



## News from the Medical Program

### Tran Van Minh

Minh is 16 months old and lives in a small house in Cham island, about 16kms away from Hoi An. This unlucky boy was born with several disabilities – his right hand is malformed and he has a heart problem and an imperforate anus.

We met this endearing child on our trip to Cham Island in December 2007 when delivering Tet gifts to our beneficiaries. At that time, he was suffering, with a big colostomy on his side. After our western doctor assessed his health and determined that his heart was stable, we were able to send Minh to Saigon for surgery.

Fortunately, an Irish surgical team, led by Dr. Martin Corbally, was coming to Saigon in March 2008 and we were able to call upon him to help. Minh had the colostomy repaired so that it looked nicer and was easier for his parents to manage. His parents were taught to use medical equipment to widen Minh's anus to prepare for the next operation. Minh recovered well and continued to grow into an active boy, despite his disabilities.

A year later, Dr. Martin returned to Saigon and closed Minh's colostomy. Minh's parents are really happy as Minh's continence is now under control, allowing him to have a more independent life. Many families had told them stories about their children who had had four or five operations but were still incontinent so Minh's family are very grateful that Dr. Martin did such a great job.

Today Minh is on the top of luck, as there's a plastic surgery team coming to the hospital in two more weeks and Minh will have surgery on his right hand. We now agree that this little boy is not unlucky at all!



*Written by Ms Lai, Medical Coordinator*

### Nguyen Van Khoi- Nguyen Van Khang



Khang and Khoi are three and a half month old twins, who live with their grandmother, father, mother and older sister. They have a wonderful family but they were born in response to a strange belief.

When their sister was born, 10 years ago, their mother had difficulty giving birth and, as a result, suffered frequent seizures. Neither medication nor time helped, so when a neighbor suggested that having another child would stop the seizures, she decided to conceive, to try and improve her health.

Khang and Khoi were a surprise as their parents didn't expect twins. Their mother's condition didn't improve; and she had a long seizure right after giving birth. Since then, her condition has deteriorated. Sometimes she cannot recognize her children, hurts herself and just walks around the village to find food. The twins' father is facing many difficulties and is struggling to support the whole family, especially his malnourished twins.

CHIA found out about this family a month ago and felt it was a high priority to help them. We showed the twins' father and their 81-year-old grandmother how to feed the twins formula so that they no longer vomit after drinking. We are also providing formula and routine check ups. As their father often misses work in order to look after his children, we are also planning to hire someone to look after Khang and Khoi during the day.

*Written by Ms Lai, Medical Coordinator*



## How to make a donation

No matter where in the world you live, you can help CHIA by making a donation.

### 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](http://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](http://www.paypal.com)

## News from the Specialised Education Program

### Specialised Education And International Women's Day

With the desire to open a place where disabled children in Hoi An can learn and have fun, we have started a special program for groups of disabled children.

Thanks to the great help of volunteers who come to share their knowledge as well as their experience in teaching children with disability, we now run a class of children with cerebral palsy, aged between 7 and 12.

Classes run every weekday morning, from 8:00 am to 9:30 am. During the 90 minutes, the children learn to do exercises using their hands. After this warming up time, they are learning to read, write and do mathematics as well. Even though they have trouble with their bodies, their brains work very well!. The class time ends with different group activities in which the children enjoy not only playing games but also learning skills like working with others in a group, and how to support themselves and their friends.

One of the activities that the children joined with great joy was the celebration of International Women's Day this year. The children's parents and CHIA's staff were invited to join the small party held in our classroom. It was an opportunity for us to say thanks to everybody, especially the mothers and ladies in CHIA, who have helped us in different ways with their patience and their support.

It was such a touching moment when the children brought roses to their mothers. The way they looked at their mothers intensely and whispered things from their hearts touched us all. The mothers almost cried and so did I!

On behalf of the other children in class, Nhan, a little boy with cerebral palsy, gave Robyn a bunch of flowers and said "We would like to say thank you very much for giving us the opportunity to be together in a class. We have lots of fun on every single day when we are together to learn and play..."

The silent moments of happiness and tears were quickly replaced by funny moments when the children were singing happy songs, dancing and playing a comedy show. Laughing and hand-clapping followed each other continuously while playing the show.

For the children and me, it was a great time to let everybody know that we are happy and making progress every day.

*Written by Ms Vy, Special Education Coordinator*

