



LOTUS

Humanitarian Aid Foundation

A SPECIAL LETTER FROM LOTUS PRESIDENT

NOVEMBER 2011

Dear Friends,

It's not often that I have the opportunity to share with you wonderful stories about the long-term benefits of your contributions. However, this summer, a few years after their surgery, we crossed paths again with two beneficiaries from heart programs we've been involved with. The importance and impact of our work became obvious.

These are the kinds of results that your donations accomplish. Every donation can help save a young person's life and provide them with the opportunity to experience their potential. In a world too often consumed by stories of poverty, violence, and war, rarely is enough attention given to the positive outcomes that are achieved through the good deeds of American donors. I wanted you to know what your contributions are accomplishing; and these are two very good examples.

Hoang thi Thu Huong:

In early 2001, Ms. Le thi Quynh Trang and I were working for another foundation and had just begun implementing a program that inspired the LOTUS Open-Heart Program. Our second beneficiary was a ten-year old girl named Hoang thi Thu Huong. She was skinny and quite ill. Her fingers and toes were blue, symptoms of a heart disease called Fallot 4. She needed open-heart surgery - and soon. Her father was a squid fisherman and her mother ran a small convenience store in their rural coastal village in Trieu An Commune. They were in no position to pay the cost of surgery and

were at wits end. With our help, Huong was able to have her life-saving surgery on March 19, 2001.

Ten years later, on a hot Thursday afternoon (7-7-2011) Chau (my current assistant) and I were back at that same village doing another family assessment (see box); this time for the LOTUS Open-Heart Program. The home of this family was adjacent to a kindergarten that Trang and I had approved for Trieu An in 2002. To my delight, the kindergarten was still in use; in fact, the local People's Committee had added a second classroom building and the school was thriving.



Huong in 2011, age 21.

After our assessment we decided to visit Huong's family and see how things were going; their house was only 300 meters away. We were in luck, the entire family was home and we were invited to have something cold to drink as it was quite hot. I noticed that Huong was looking very healthy and I prompted Chau to ask some questions about her health and how her life has been.

Huong, now a beautiful, out-going twenty-year old was all smiles. She no longer has problems with her heart. She was happy to inform us that she had just completed the second year of a three-year program at Nha Trang University. After graduation she plans to return to Trieu An and become a kindergarten teacher at the school we built. 'Wonderful,' I thought.

Huong's father now has his own shrimp farm along the river and no longer has to go to sea. Her mother still runs the small convenience store. It was great to learn how our help changed the lives of this solid, working-class family. I was particularly pleased to learn that Huong will become a teacher at the kindergarten we built, thus linking two programs benefiting both a local family and the larger community as well. Revisiting this family and their community brought the kind of personal satisfaction one always hopes to find in this line of work; that is, a tangible knowledge that we are doing something to make the world a slightly better place.



Top, Huong with family in 2011.



Far left, Huong in 2001.

Left, Trang with Huong in 2001, age 10.

Phan Cong Vu:

During a LOTUS assessment in early 2007 we met Phan Cong Vu at his home in Ha Tinh Province. Vu was one of LOTUS's earliest cases. He was 15 years old at the time; his heart disease had been diagnosed when he was only 3 months old.

Without treatment or surgery for so long the disease had progressed significantly. At the time of our first meeting Vu wasn't strong enough to play with his friends or continue attending school; his heart clearly showed as a protrusion against his chest and one could actually see his heart beating through his orange t-shirt; it was disturbing to say the least. His parents are rural subsistence farmers and were never able to raise the money for surgery. No other organization working in Ha Tinh provided the kind of assistance we do. Vu first needed closed-heart surgery to stabilize his condition and this was accomplished in July 2007. His open-heart surgery occurred in December 2007. LOTUS provided the funding for both surgeries. A photo of the LOTUS donor and his family now hangs on a wall in their very simple, basic, two-room home.

We revisited the family again on July 19, 2011. Vu, now 19 years old, was not at home because he had recently taken entry exams for Binh Duong University in the south of Viet Nam. He remained in Binh Duong awaiting his exam results and took a job at a nearby bicycle assembly plant in order to earn some money for his educational costs. On August 22nd we learned that Vu had been accepted to the university. He will study literature and plans to become a teacher. He wants to help others improve their lives.



Vu during first meeting in home in 2007.



Vu with family in 2008.



Vu's family's home with rice and straw drying in front and working bull and cart on right.



Nguyen Ngoc Tuan Anh:

Gender: male

Age: 4 months

Type of Disease: CIA, CIV, HTAP

Chau and I conducted our family assessment for Nguyen Ngoc Tuan Anh on July 7, 2011 in Trieu An, a coastal commune in Quang Tri Province. His medical condition was diagnosed as critical and he had surgery on August 18, 2011.

- The cost of his open-heart surgery was \$1,920.31
- LOTUS contributed \$637.99
- One of our assisting organizations provided \$425.33
- and their insurance company covered \$856.99 of the cost.

Anh is now healthy and home again.



Anh and mother shown above post-surgery.

Photos above and on right taken during assessment.

From January 1 thru October 30, 2011:

- LOTUS has funded and facilitated 70 heart surgeries for children in four provinces.
- Surgeries for another 29 children are funded and they are either in the hospital waiting for surgery or waiting to enter the hospital.
- Another 30 kids currently waiting for funding.

As you look forward to the year 2012, please consider a donation that will help us sustain the LOTUS Open-Heart Program.

Our sincerest thanks to all of you.

Have a wonderful holiday season and a healthy, happy New Year.

J Ward

NOTE:

Le thi Quynh Trang went on to secure a Ford Foundation Scholarship and earn a Master's Degree from Clark University in Massachusetts. She returned to Viet Nam and worked for Finland's Rural Development in Quang Tri Province, then OxFam (UK) in Ha Noi, and is currently with USAID in Ho Chi Minh City monitoring HIV/Aids Educational Programs. She is also now married, has her own beautiful little girl, and serves on the LOTUS Board of Directors as our program consultant. When we first began working together she lived with her parents and two siblings in a small one-room house with only a dirt floor. They had an outdoor pit toilet and pulled drinking water from a hand dug well next to their house. Through their careers in service to others, Trang and Chau have been able to provide a new home with modern, indoor conveniences for their parents as well. Their hard work and dedication have been indispensable to the success of LOTUS.



Trang and daughter, Cefa.



ARE YOU WILLING TO SAVE A CHILD'S LIFE?

The Open-Heart Surgery Program is LOTUS's core program and has been expanded to include two new provinces in Vietnam. We are now working in four provinces.

The opportunity for these children to realize a life-saving heart surgery flows from the open hearts of our donors and the diligent work of our staff. On behalf of LOTUS, we thank all of you for your interest and support.

Open your heart, reach out and touch someone.

Please Send Donations to:
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