

Kim Son Charity School

On 7 January we hired a minivan and travelled out to visit three orphanages. Our first stop was Kim Son charity school. Kim Son provides free education to about 65 children in the area who cannot afford to attend public school. We were asked to provide a gift for Tet (Vietnamese New Year) to each of the children to take home to their families.



Each child received a care package of noodles, sugar, milk and treats. We also bought some supplies for the nuns including oil, mushrooms, soup mixture and soy sauce. Another tradition of Tet is to receive 'lucky money', a bit like an annual bonus in NZ. It is a sign of luck and prosperity for the coming year. We gave a gift of lucky money to 5 teachers and 1 security guard who kindly volunteer their time to provide free education to the local children.

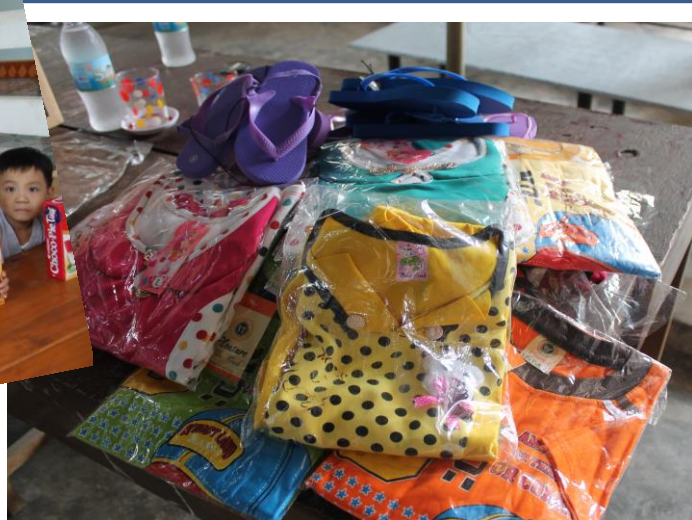
What was spent?

\$15 for the day's minivan hire and driver

\$500 on food

\$100 donated to teachers





Hoa Sen Charity School

Our next stop was to Hoa Sen charity school, about 25 km's from Nha Trang the pagoda provides free education to children of this fishing village. As the nuns also provide meals for around 20 children, we donated rice, sugar, noodles, milk, soup mix and treats for the children. A few days later, Hiep and I returned with new outfits and shoes for all the children.

Last year we donated 15 new school desks to Hoa Sen and it was exciting to see all the children enjoying them.

What was spent?

\$80 on clothing and shoes

\$150 on food

\$15 for the day's minivan hire and driver

Phu Quang Orphanage

The third place we visited was Phu Quang orphanage. The second I walked through the gates the children were jumping around excitedly to see what I had brought. Hiep asked if they recognised me and they said yes she was here last year (good memory!).

The head nun at Phu Quang had provided us a detailed list of supplies they needed which was really helpful. Firstly, she wanted to make new clothes for all of the children as a gift for Tet. She had already purchased the fabric but needed supplies such as cotton, elastic, buttons, tape measures, a ruler, scissors, zips etc which we were able to purchase.

The nun also requested an electric stove so that if the children were sick at night they could boil water or heat food. I purchased this at a local store and delivered it along with their request for paper and calligraphy pens for the children. After this I spent time with 6 year old Mau Thi Ny (see Page 3).

What was spent?

\$15 for the day's minivan hire and driver

\$29 on sewing supplies

\$62 on electric stove

\$150 on food and general supplies

\$38 on books and pens



Mau Thi Ny

This is 6 year old Ny. Late last year some volunteers visited a poor village a few hours away, which had recently been in famine and were in desperate need of help. There they found tiny Ny, she was filthy, blind from malnutrition and could not walk or talk. Her mother died when she was a baby and two days after the volunteers left her father died of cancer.

The group took Ny away immediately as they could see she was starved and neglected. She was described to me as a monkey, not human because she clung to anyone who reached for her. A few months later Ny is cared for by loving nuns at Phu Quang orphanage. Due to our donations and those of others Ny was taken to Ho Chi Minh for surgery on her eyes and is learning to walk and talk.

What was spent?

\$400 donation



Mr Duong

Mr Duong is the security guard at my hotel in Nha Trang. He works from 6.30pm to 7.00am each night and sleeps outside on a make-shift cot. He is woken up constantly throughout the night to let guests into the hotel and Vietnamese weather can be unpredictable so it's a harrowing job. In April 2013 staff at the hotel told me that his granddaughter was very sick and asked if I would visit the family as they knew I helped other children in need.

His granddaughter Nhung is 11 years old and was born with severe brain damage and paralysis. Her parents have two other children and after paying for Nhung's care (food, medicine and nappies) they have barely enough money to feed their other children and send them to school. Previously I donated money to the family to pay for Nhung's expenses and I wanted to do the same again. We purchased milk powder as Nhung cannot eat, medicine to reduce her pain and I also left them money to support their other children.

What was spent?

- \$230 on milk powder
- \$68 on medicine
- \$460 donation



Hong

A friend asked if I would like to visit a family who she knew were very poor. She often takes them rice and second hand clothing so she thought I might be interested in meeting them. In the home is a grandmother, mother and daughter who live in extreme poverty.

Hong is an 18 year old girl who received a scholarship to the best school in Nha Trang but she studies on a concrete slab next to the stove and an open drain. I was astonished to hear that she is top in her class! Quan Am donated food and supplies, a new school bag and stationery, as well as paying for the remainder of her schooling.

What was spent?

\$90 on food and supplies

\$200 on school fees



Phan Thien Hue – Life with no arms

For those of you who follow my story of Hue, the baby born with no arms, here is a little progress report.

Hue is now two and a half and a typical little toddler. He can count to 10 in both Vietnamese and English, speak some basic English phrases, sing songs and loves to play with his toy cars and building blocks. I miss this little treasure every day!



One day old



It was time for a party!

New Years Eve in Nha Trang with two of my friends called for a party – so we threw a bash for the kids at Loc Tho charity school and orphanage. Friends provided music and games, Hiep had organised bags of presents and we had a wonderful time awarding prizes for best dance moves. While in Vietnam I regularly visited Loc Tho and was able to donate new prayer clothes, food supplies, t-shirts for the older kids and gifted pencils from a young boy in America.

What was spent?

- \$280 on food
- \$340 on party celebrations
- \$200 on new clothing



New playgrounds for Loc Tho

What an exciting day back in May when three brand new playgrounds were delivered to Loc Tho school and orphanage. Thanks to wonderful donations from PwC New Zealand and my (amazing!) Mum, we were able to create a happy and bright environment for children at school. The pre-school children received a ball pit, swing and slide and the primary children received a large outdoor playground.

We were also thrilled that the team delivering the playgrounds repaired the old one and re-painted it to look like new.

What was spent?
\$100 repairs
\$1800 on playgrounds



A new bike for kids in Vietnam

The Christina Noble Foundation Australia was recently asking for donations towards bikes so that children have easier access to school. I was pleased to be able to donate a bike – and you can too for only AUD \$130.



Speaking engagements at St Andrews

I have recently been selected as a church missionary for St Andrews in Auckland. Last week I was able to speak to congregations at two services about my latest work and plans for the future. I'm very honoured to take up this role and look forward to keeping my local church updated on my work.

Spotlight on PwC Foundation

I was delighted to be featured in PwC's Foundation newsletter. I have also been interviewed for their upcoming Connect alumni magazine due to come out in September.

Donation to Ninh Tay community

My friend Ngoc had planned to visit the Ninh Tay village after I left Vietnam earlier this year. Her and her friends work very hard to provide assistance to this village living on the very extreme end of poverty. Quan Am donated almost \$600 to contribute towards an incredible humanitarian effort.

School supplies for Khanh Vinh

My good friend Hiep contacted me last month about a trip she has organised to visit children in the Khanh Vinh province. A very poor community, she was seeking donations to buy school uniforms, school bags and supplies to enable the local children to attend school. Quan Am was pleased to donate 40 school bags and notebooks.

A new adventure begins....

To top off the last few years of travel I am about to embark on a new adventure by taking up a job with World Vision in Cambodia. I can't wait to see and learn from such an amazing global charity and of course make many new friends along the way. If you come to visit keep in touch!

