

MEDICAL AID FOR VIETNAM

Feb & Mar 07 MISSION TRIP

From February 24 to March 11, 2007 a team of 20 doctors and volunteers had made our thirteenth medical mission to Vietnam treating more than 4,000 poor patients in four remote areas: Ha Thach (Phu Tho), Kim Doi (Hue), Ha Tan and Phu Thuong (Danang). It was the first time that our team have made a trip that far north of the country. (Phu Tho is 100 kms northeast of Hanoi). The majority of our team members were from Vancouver, BC; some were from Ontario, Chicago, California, Hong Kong, and as far as Uganda!

We all met in Saigon on February 25th and flew up to Hanoi. We then took a two and a half hour trip on a rented bus to Phu Tho. Phu Tho is located on the mountains near the Red River. To get to Ha Thach, our team had to travel through small, rough and winding dirt roads. At one point, the big bus even had to climb and ride on a dyke that the locals use as a road. It was very dusty as we saw the dust blowing straight into wide open houses. We all wondered how people could tolerate or even breathe in this cloud of dust! We arrived at Ha Thach Church, checked out the site that would be the outreach clinic for the next two days, unloaded medical supplies and equipments, and then checked in at a hotel twenty minutes away. That first night some of the team experienced for the first time sleeping under mosquito's nets for our rooms were filled with these unfriendly insects! Some were bothered by the mosquitoes, but overall we survived the night.

The two days working in the North were somewhat pleasant for temperatures were not too hot. The local people under the supervision of the parish priest were very helpful in organizing and helping the team carry out our mission. We were well taken care of, everything from regular supply of water, fruits for the breaks, to home cooking meals for breakfast, lunch and dinner. We also had a wonderful faith experience of attending the Mass celebrated by the bishop on the occasion of the Day of Healthcare Workers at the church on site.

From Ha Thach we again ride the bus to Ha Noi and, on its way, took side-trip to the Hung's Temple which is the shrine of the first Vietnamese Kings who founded the country from that place in Phu Tho.

On March 2nd we flew to Hue early in the morning. After checking in at the Heritage Hotel, our team had a chance to visit the historical Royal Palace, King Thieu Tri Tomb, and Thien Mu Pagoda. In Hue, our team went to the second working site in Kim Doi. We worked there for two days from March 3 – March 4. It was here that we met many of the children whom we previously sponsored for heart surgeries. Our team doctors examined them and we were happy to find out that they were all in good health and recovering well. We also came face to face with some of the children who are waiting to have heart surgery. They too were examined by our doctors. Sponsoring children for heart surgeries had been part of our medical project since 2002. Since, our Medical Team had sponsored more than 80 children. Presently, we have a list of more than 20 children waiting for operations. We have learnt from the Sisters who are taking care of

this project that the waiting list is getting longer and longer everyday because more and more people have heard about this charitable project. Each heart surgery costs roughly \$2,500CAN, so whenever our fund raising reaches the amount needed to pay for the awaiting child, we immediately informed the sisters so that the child could be admitted to the hospital for surgery.

On March 5th, we left Hue and traveled by bus to La Vang Shrine nearby for a side-trip and then to Danang. In Danang, our team took a trip to remote areas and set up outreach clinics at two villages. Here, we provided medical cares to 1,300 or so poor patients. At every outreach clinics, we worked together with the local doctors and volunteers. We examined patients, gave out free medications, glasses, gifts and food, and provided dental cares. We also sponsored and provided funds for some poor patients to have follow-up cares or surgeries at the nearby hospitals. On this mission, we have made it possible for 18 children to have heart surgery at Hue Central Hospital by paying for all of their expenses.

Medical Aid for Vietnam now have volunteers from three places helping to organize fundraising banquets to raise money for the missions and to help more children having heart surgery: Chicago on May 5th 2007, Vancouver on May 20th 20 07, and Calgary on June 2nd, 2007.

Please visit our website for more information and pictures of the mission trips:
medicalaidforvietnam.org

Fr. Tien Tran
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