



July 14 - 30, 2010  
Man Thai & Loc Vinh  
Medical Mission Team



## This is Why We Come: The Special Patient

By all accounts **Phan Thi Ngoc Anh** is a typical 13 year old teenager. She is from Loc Vinh Commune near Lang Co fishing village. That's in Hue Thua Thien Province on the north side of Hai Van Pass, a few kilometers off Highway 1 near the beach and the East Sea. She is the kind of **Special Patient** that VWAM's medical teams look for.

She has a very serious heart condition and will die without surgery. Vietnam vet Nurse Steve Scott and the triage team identified Anh as a possible heart surgery candidate during her initial work-up. Her finger nails were blue as was her lips, a sign of oxygen deprivation. She saw Dr. Bill Jenkins, a Vietnam vet from ME. He confirmed the diagnoses and recommended more cardiac evaluations.

Anh's Father took her to the hospital in Da Nang, catching a ride



on the VWAM team bus. Two days later they brought the results and receipts for the tests back to VWAM. It's done this way for accountability and to avoid fraud in paying for tests or other medical procedures. VWAM's in-country rep Nguyen Van Chinh checks to make sure the actual tests were done and then approves reimbursement. Dr. Bill reviewed the test results and gave his recommendation. Anh was placed on the "To be considered" list for a

heart operation. An evaluation meeting was held at the end of the team trip where heart cases are prioritized. Anh was given a #2 priority rating for heart surgery. The cost would be \$1,900 plus \$800 post-op expenses.

Later that day the family was told their daughter would receive her life-saving heart operation. Overwhelmed with thanks, the Father dropped to his knees to express his appreciation.

Chinh will be with the family throughout the medical process, and he will share the Gospel with them at the appropriate time.

Some day every knee will bow, but it won't be to Man. VWAM hopes Anh and her family will be there on that wonderful day with the rest of us.

To God be the Glory!

### Statistics

- 1,531 medical patients including 97 Chiropractic patients
- 7 cataract procedures
- 2 sets of braces & special shoes for three polio patients
- 1 Kidney dialysis and 1 Chemo/Radiation patient assisted
- 51 wheelchairs, 2 sets of crutches, 10 walkers, 3 hearing aids & 9 canes
- 2 heart surgeries with 4 patients awaiting funding for heart procedures
- 9 other hospitalizations for tests and minor surgeries
- 1 gastronomical surgery (tumor removed), 1 Thyroid, 1 Goiter and 1 Hernia surgery
- 1 Special Motorized Wheelchair (\$190)
- 1,500+ toothbrushes with toothpaste and \$9,897 in medicine given away to patients

### Team Spotlight!



Dennis & Michael loaded, unloaded, and assembled 51 wheelchairs in 100+ temps & 100% humidity!

Vets With A Mission  
POB 202 or 1307 Caldwell Street, 3rd Floor  
Newberry, SC 29108  
803-405-9926  
[www.vetswithamission.org](http://www.vetswithamission.org)

## The Gift of Mobility



"I don't believe this is happening," said Huy Vinh Nguyen, Loc Vinh Clinic Business Manager. He explained that eleven months ago, a young woman, unable to work and without family, had requested a wheelchair from the government but was still waiting. "Now, in one day, she and many people get wheelchairs! I am so happy for her. Thank you."

The disabled girl in the photo was one of fifty-one patients who received a wheelchair (31 at Man Thai and 19 at Loc Vinh). VWAM was able to get wheelchairs from Robert Kalatschan and his humanitarian organization, [www.givingitbacktokids.com](http://www.givingitbacktokids.com).

# Laughter and Heartache

Each mission team experiences plenty of laughter and sadness. The **Man Thai - Loc Vinh** humanitarian team was no different. Here is a retrospective look at what happens during a trip.

The incredible **Mama Sans**, many into their 70's or older, with betel nut stained smiles, wrinkled faces, and eyes that sparkled made the vets smile... **Crippled children**, so deformed and pathetic, made more than one team member slip off to a private place to cry... Watching the **Vietnamese translators** from Hue maneuver for position to work near our young handsome **Lt. Dave**, a Navy physician from Okinawa, was precious... The constant hassles and preying eyes of the police brought grief to patients and team members alike... The screams of the **"Banana Boat Girls"** Megan Ohmer, Holly and

Nickie Riley, Joette Ward and Hannah Ly, as they sped over the waves behind a jet ski completely out of control, brought smiles to all those watching from the beach.

There was the look on a Mother's face and misty-eyed team members when told her baby, suffering from encephalitis, had no chance for recovery and would soon die... There was the joy of a **disabled young man and his family** when given his first wheelchair... and the touching personal remarks by **Vietnam vets** during the recognition dinner in their honor.

There was a teenager who had an embarrassingly large cyst in the middle of her chest. The girls and boys in her village teased her constantly and made fun of her. Its affect on her self-esteem was obvious. She was so embarrassed she couldn't look any team member in the eye. But that all changed when a doctor, with the gentle touch and soothing words that Jesus would have offered, ministered to her.

VWAM doesn't do cosmetic surgery, but this was deemed "a special case" that would change a young woman's life. When told the cyst would be removed, you should have seen the smile on her face!

And, you know, on second thought, *I think Jesus was there.*



## Vets With A Mission Project Office

Ground hasn't been broken, but property has been identified for Vets With A Mission's future project office to be located in Da Nang.

The site is in Da Nang's Hoa Huy Ward just south of Marble Mountain's Hoa Hai Ward. VWAM's in-country representative, Nguyen Van Chinh, was able to identify the property in early August.

In partnership with the People's Aid Coordinating Committee

(PACCOM), NGO Division, the prospective building/office will be approved, hopefully, during VWAM's next request for renewal of its Permit To Operate or PTO.

The corner property is 7.5 meters by 21.5 meters or 24.5' by 70.5' and could cost up to \$40,000.

"It is appropriate that where it all began for VWAM back in 1998 is where its first project office would be built. I never

dreamed this would happen as it has," Chuck Ward remarked, VWAM's Executive Director.

The two or three-level structure will be built as soon as the project office is approved by local Vietnamese authorities and officials in Hanoi.

If you would like to make a gift toward the new project office, please call Chuck at 803-405-9926 or email him at:

[vetswithamission@backroads.net](mailto:vetswithamission@backroads.net).

## Corruption & Harassment

As much as things change in Vietnam they remain the same, or as the Vietnamese like to say, "Same, same but different."

VWAM experienced first-hand police harassment during the trip. While in Da Nang a plain-clothes policeman and local Party official tried to shut-down the medical team on the first day! They said the team would have to leave after 3 days unless "Proper arrangements were made." When VWAM's Chuck Ward

asked what kind of arrangements the policeman took his hand and while shaking it, rubbed his middle-finger in his palm, the universal signal for a payoff-bribe.

Ward and in-country rep Nguyen Van Chinh then produced an official letter, with the proverbial red

stamp of approval, from the Da Nang People's Committee that authorized 5 days at the clinic. End of discussion, no bribe paid.

Also, a Vietnamese-American volunteer and a local Vietnamese businessman received threatening phone calls from police for volunteering and cooperating with VWAM.

