

Dining for Women



Program Fact Sheet

Program: Vietnamese Hope Foundation (VHF)

Web Site: www.vietnamesehopefoundation.org

Mission:

The **Vietnamese Hope Foundation** strives to improve the quality of life for deprived women and children from remote villages of Vietnam who are denied access to fundamental opportunities as a result of poverty.

"The Vietnamese Hope Foundation's sole purpose is to help underprivileged women help themselves. You can't save the world, but you can help a person who is truly in need! Unlike other Foundations we do not sponsor community projects. Our assistance goes directly to individuals. By helping one woman at a time we strive to improve the quality of life for her entire family and each generation to follow." (Quote from VHF web site)

Where They Serve: Vietnam, specifically the women living in the village of Dong Ha.

A brief history of Vietnam: Long controlled and influenced by the Chinese, it enjoyed nine centuries of independence, until, in the 19th century, the French colonial period began. In 1887, Vietnam became a part of French Indochina.

At the end of World War II Vietnam declared its independence, however, France continued its control until soundly defeated by Ho Chi Minh's Communist forces in 1954.

Shortly thereafter, based on the *Geneva Accord*, Vietnam was divided into two parts; the Communist North and the anti-Communist South. US economic and military aid to South Vietnam began to grow and serious conflict was on the horizon.

In March, 1965, the first American troops landed in South Vietnam, and the bloody conflict called the Vietnam War began.

After tens of thousands died on both sides, and billions in military expenditures, this sad, tragic war finally ended in 1973.

Two years later the remains of the South's army fell, and Saigon, the capital of South Vietnam, was renamed Ho Chi Minh City, and North and South joined together as one.

For the next few decades, Vietnam, demoralized by the affects of war, remained economically stagnant. Over the last five years Vietnam's government has made a series of changes (reforms) designed to make the country more competitive in the 21st Century. (source: worldatlas.com)

History: The **Vietnamese Hope Foundation** was established in **2004** by Xanh "Hoang" Pyle (Lilly), who grew up in the village of Dong Ha during the Vietnam War years. Because of Dong Ha's strategic location in the middle of the country, it experienced a significant U.S. and Viet Cong military presence.

As a teenager, Lilly worked on U.S. bases washing soldiers' laundry and cleaning their living quarters. At times Lilly would have to sweep burning debris from the roof of their home during rocket attacks and guard the village at night against intruders.

During the time that the U.S. was winding down its involvement in the war, the North Vietnamese army was pushing south. Because of its proximity to the DMZ Dong Ha was evacuated. It was at this time Lilly and her family moved to a refuge camp outside the city of DaNang, leaving all of the family's possessions behind.

In 1972, Lilly moved to the U.S. and married an American GI whom she met in Vietnam. Eight years later, with two children to care for, Lilly's marriage ended in divorce. Unable to return to her family, once again she had to fight to survive. With the honesty and innocence that comes from living in a small village, with the wisdom of her father's teachings, and with a strong intellect, Lilly took control of her life and that of her children. Working several jobs, and going to school she earned her citizenship, a high school equivalency, and went on to cosmetology school.

Thirty two years after leaving her homeland and family, Lilly has achieved a comfortable life, put her two children through college (and graduate school), and is now working to help the less fortunate women of her village. After thirty years, Dong Ha has changed little and whiles some new people have moved into the village, the original people

are still slowly recovering and many are worse off than before. Lilly believes it is important to give back to the less fortunate and she is now sharing what she learned in the U.S. with women in Dong Ha through the **VHF**.

How They Work:

It is Lilly's belief that you help the girl, who becomes the woman, who becomes the wife, who becomes the mother, who teaches the next generation. In a country where ancestors are worshiped and respected, there is no greater legacy.

The **Vietnamese Hope Foundation**, supports elementary school children and their families by providing school supplies, clothing and health items. They also provide a trade and work opportunities for underprivileged women. They provide financial assistance for women to help establish an environment suitable for a family and promote the rights of interests of women in Vietnam along with a better understanding of women's contributions to society.

The Foundation's future objectives include:

1. Lilly will travel to Vietnam in order to complete foundation business and to develop a list of future grant opportunities.
 2. Assist ten women with job training.
 3. Award 10 grants to women to provide start-up capital for a home business.
 4. Build fences around four pre-schools to keep the children safe from kidnappers that sell them into slave trades. Once the fences are built, Lilly wants to build playgrounds since at this time there are no playgrounds and not one single toy.
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How They Measure Their Success: Lilly keeps names, addresses and photos of all grant recipients. She's made a trip to distribute grants on two separate occasions. When she returns to Vietnam, she follow-up with former recipients and documents their results. Each family understands that they will only receive one grant and that it must be used for specific purposes to improve the family's economic position and health. One "long term" grant is committed to one college student who is in a four to five year program studying foreign language. Her grant is \$100 per month for school, room and board and basic expenses.

Financial Summary: In 2005, VHF reported \$1,900 in revenue (mainly Lilly's friends and salon customers). In 2004, VHF revenue was \$4,370 with \$3,500 going directly to programs and only \$293 to management costs (net assets at \$577). VHF expenses have been minimal and Lilly pays out of her pocket for most items.

DFW Giving History with Program: New program

