



# The Good Newsletter

GOOD SAMARITAN MEDICAL AND DENTAL MINISTRY

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## SUMMER MISSION 2015

The Good Samaritan Medical and Dental Ministry successfully completed our 15th annual Summer Mission trip on July 25, 2015. This year, our team was comprised of 133 volunteers from the United States, and another dozen volunteers from Vietnam. We had to split our team into two teams during the first week so that we could go further into the province, reaching people that we could not have reached if we brought along our entire team because the smaller districts cannot accommodate a team our size. We called our two teams the East Team and the West Team.

The East Team went to Hạ Lang while the West Team went to Bảo Lạc and Bảo Lâm. The second week, both teams joined together in the city of Cao Bằng. Over the two weeks, we saw over 3500 patients and performed surgery for approximately 50 patients. We distributed over 750 pairs of glasses, dispensed over 10,000 prescriptions for medications and vitamins, and gave out candy and stuffed animals to the children.



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## PCP GRADUATION

The Good Samaritan Medical and Dental Ministry held our first graduation ceremony on July 19, 2015 for the 26 physicians from the province of Cao Bằng who have completed our two-year Primary Care Physician Training program. Congratulations Class of 2015!



Another set of physicians began training with GSMDM during the Summer Mission trip. They joined us on the field working alongside our physicians. Training for the new class of 26 physicians continues in November 2015.

# Gifts for the Children of Cao Bằng

At the end of Summer Mission 2014, GSMDM board member Christina Reid-Brown knew that she was going to do more for the children of Cao Bằng this time around when she was once again reminded of how little they had. She spoke with our Mission Director, Dr. Vien Doan, who then spoke with the Vice Chairman of the Province of Cao Bằng to see what we can do to help their children. After much consideration, the local government in Cao Bằng informed us of a need that the children from the districts of Thông Nông and Hà Quảng have.

Unlike most parts of Vietnam, the province of Cao Bằng can get very cold. 750 children were selected for aid from GSMDM as they lived in particularly colder climates, often without a single jacket in their household, and must walk distances across the mountainside to reach their schoolhouses with only sandals on their feet. Christina went home and spearheaded a fundraising campaign to provide these 750 children each with a jacket, a pair of boots, and a back pack.



Due to the generosity of our friends and partners, we were able to bring joy to 750 children in Cao Bằng by providing them each with a jacket, a pair of boots, and a backpack.

Our team members traveled further into the mountainside every day for three days to meet up with these children at various schoolhouses and personally hand the gifts to them.



## DAY ONE

There was a deep hole in the road where our cars could not pass.

Our driver had to contact the locals to find people to come to our location and bring rocks to fill in the hole. Our cars were then able to travel on to the site to meet up with the children.

## DAY ONE (continued)

The road was too narrow and steep for our car and truck to drive our members and supplies up to the school where we were meeting the children, so the team had to set up at the bottom of the hill.

We pulled up a tarp for some shade, and distributed the last of the gifts for the day.

## DAY TWO

The road to the school where we were meeting the children was under construction. There were rocks on the road blocking the one way street so our cars could not pass.

Our members and drivers got out of the car and helped move the rocks out of the way so that we could reach the children waiting for us at the site.

## DAY THREE

On this day, our team was met with a muddy area at the foot of a steep hill. The driver said that we had to move fast to have enough momentum to make it through. As we sped up to cross the mud, a cow appeared in the road.

Our cars were stuck. The team broke branches to lay under the tires and helped push the cars. We finally broke through and were able to reach the site.

The owner of the cow helped. The cow never moved.



THE STUDENTS CAME FROM SEVEN SCHOOLS:

**Hạ Thôn ▪ Quý Quân ▪ Ngọc Động ▪ Vị Quang ▪ Đán Đeng ▪ Cải Viên ▪ Kéo Yên**



Even as our team was met with various challenges while traveling to reach the children, we were still nowhere near where their actual schoolhouses stood. We had to meet them at larger schoolhouses where there were roads that our trucks could drive on.

The children walked through the mountains for an average of four hours each, without proper shoes, to meet up with us.

Some of the children were afraid of getting their boots dirty or wearing them out, so they did not wear them when walking the four hours back home. Since it was the summer and the weather was warmer and drier, the children wanted to save their boots for when they needed them most.



The children above showed their appreciation by singing a song to us.



# CONSTRUCTION MINISTRY

*WE BUILT A PRESCHOOL!*

During Summer Mission of 2014, GSMDM partnered with Sandals Church of Riverside, CA to rebuild the stadium in Cao Bằng, where we held a small soccer tournament with our team and the local residents. We even grilled some hot dogs and hamburgers.

The Vice Chairman of the Province of Cao Bằng then asked us to help rebuild some of the schools in Cao Bằng, as there are various areas in the province that truly needed our help. Dr. Doan visited the surrounding areas, saw the need of the schoolchildren, and began plans to help them rebuild their schools. The commune of

Thụy Hùng in Thạch An District was selected by GSMDM as the first commune we would help in this manner. Thụy Hùng did not have a preschool for the children to go to. They would borrow the district's cultural center near the elementary school when it was available.

A member of GSMDM, Uyen Ly Truong came to Cao Bằng in December 2014 to connect with a construction company in Vietnam that has done this before. They laid the foundation and helped us purchase the prefabricated building and other materials needed for installation.



The district's cultural center is pictured above. When the room below is available, the preschool children of Thụy Hùng would borrow the facilities to use as a classroom.



The school needed some electrical poles, so our team went into the mountains with their tools, chopped down large bamboo stalks, and carried them to the school.



The team proceeded to raise the bamboo stalks and attach the wires to have functioning electrical poles for the preschool.

While new to our team, it is standard practice in the local community to use bamboo stalks as electrical poles.







Our construction team started with the foundation on the left, and within eight days, had completed installing the building on the right. They also built two walls and laid cement for a playground area. The new school has two restrooms, two sinks, one shower and one kitchen.



## Trường Mầm Non Thụy Hùng

THUY HUNG PRESCHOOL

The local residents came out with their tools to help us however they could. On the left, they are helping us dig steps for easier and safer access to the school.



The children decorated the interior of the building for the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony with their artwork, while the team added to the festivities with confetti cannons.





## LIFE CHANGING FUNDS

For many years now, we have made an effort to provide all our patients with a small gift of various food items at a cost of about \$5 per person. We seldom give financial assistance in the form of cash to our patients, as our funds are spent almost entirely on medical and dental care for the patients. However, there are times when we come across a patient that we feel we can do nothing better for than to give the patient some cash. More often than not, this is done by our volunteers rather than our organization as a whole, but our patients rarely distinguish between the two.

Last year, we heard that one of our patients from the previous year told her friends and neighbors that we bought her a pig. Now we do not buy livestock for our patients here at GSMDM. When we came face-to-face with our former patient, she explained that we provided her with some funds that allowed her to purchase a pig, which she was able to grow and breed and sell, and that had resulted in a significant improvement upon her quality of life. Inspired by this story, we decided to take a different approach this year.

During Summer Mission 2015, instead of giving a small gift to all of our patients, GSMDM used these funds to make a greater impact on the lives of local families in particularly difficult circumstances. The local government of the various districts in Cao Bằng had introduced over 20 families to our team members in Vietnam. These are families facing

hardships where a financial gift of about \$200 can make a substantial difference in their lives. Over the course of our time in Cao Bằng, our field chaplains Nasar Aboubakare, Phillip Truong and Kinh Vu visited these families and presented them each with a gift from GSMDM that we hope can ease some of their burdens.



We are excited to return in 2016 to hear what they have done with the money and whether or not it had made a difference in their lives. We expect to work closer with the beneficiaries in the future to help them make fruitful decisions with the funds we have provided to increase their self-sufficiency and deliver a better quality of life for them and their families.



The 15 year old boy pictured below has been paralyzed from birth. His 18 year old sister, pictured here with him, takes care of him as their father works in the field.



Pictured to the left is a 65 year old lady who lives with two visibly large goiters. We had offered to take her to go see our doctors to be considered for surgery, but she refused. She stated that she could not leave her work in the fields as she had no one to help her harvest her crops.

She could not be persuaded, so we presented her with a monetary gift for her to use to better her circumstances and allow her to be able to see a doctor in the future.

Our team presents their father with a gift to help them improve their financial situation.





## EMERGENCY MEDICINE EDUCATION INITIATIVE

The GSMDM Emergency Medicine Education Initiative traveled to Ha Long Bay, Vietnam this year. GSMDM worked closely with the Vietnam Society of Emergency Medicine to hold the five day event, which included a Leadership Conference on March 9 - 10, 2015, followed by the Physician Symposium on March 11 - 13, 2015.



### Stuffed with Love

Lori Miller has been sick for some time now. Since 2013, she has not been able to work or drive due to her illness. Her spirits were low and she was seeking a new purpose in life.

Dr. John Branch is the Chairman of the Board of Directors of GSMDM, and Lori's primary care physician for many years now. She knew of Dr. Branch's work with GSMDM and expressed to him her desire to find purpose in life by helping those in need.

Soon after, Lori received a call from Christina Reid-Brown, also a member of the GSMDM Board of Directors, who informed Lori of the various needs of the people of Cao Bằng, and helped her discover all the different ways she could help. From there, Lori went full steam ahead!

She already had 83 jackets for small children that she had been purchasing for some time now with the intention of donating them to those in need. She had also been crocheting blankets and connecting with women from all over the U.S. who were also hand-making blankets. The

women were very excited to know that their 30 blankets or so would be donated to children in need.

Lori's largest project, however, was purchasing 500 stuffed animals to donate to the children. She had already made up her mind that she would have 500 stuffed animals to give to GSMDM by the time our Summer Mission team left in July.

When the first 300 stuffed animals arrived at her home, Lori was disappointed as they were not stuffed as full as she had hoped. She called in reinforcements and her friends and family members quickly donated lots of stuffing and ribbon. They then opened each stuffed animal and stuffed it with more stuffing, sewed each one back by hand and tied a ribbon around it. The first 300 turned out so nicely that when the remaining 200 arrived, they decided to open those all up and upgrade them as well!

Lori had such a great experience, she has already started crocheting blankets again and looks forward to seeing how she can contribute in 2016. ♥



"Doing what I did for these children gave me the most heartwarming feeling I have ever had. They deserve to have happiness, and to have toys to bring a smile to their precious faces."

- Lori Miller





## SUMMER MISSION 2016

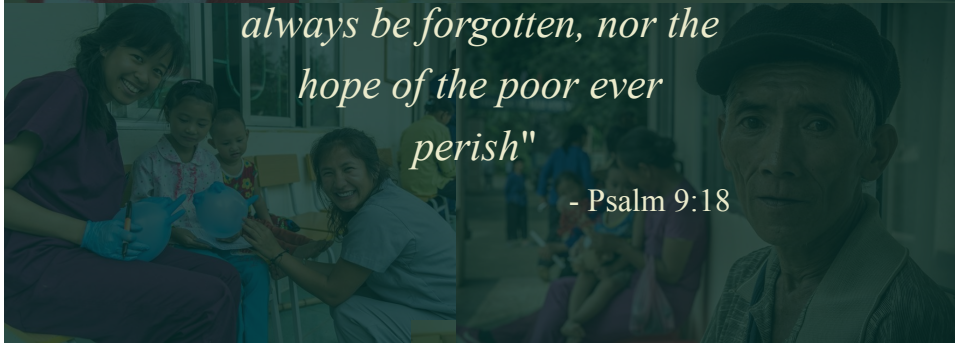
Visit [www.gsmdm.org/contact](http://www.gsmdm.org/contact) if you are a licensed medical or dental practitioner interested in traveling to Vietnam with our Field Team.

Applications for Summer Mission 2016 Field Team for non-medical and dental practitioners have closed. Home Team applications are still being accepted. To apply for the Home Team, please contact us at [www.gsmdm.org/contact](http://www.gsmdm.org/contact).



*"But the needy will not  
always be forgotten, nor the  
hope of the poor ever  
perish"*

- Psalm 9:18



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because of the love and  
generosity of people like you.



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