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FRIENDS

OF CHILDREN
OF VIET NAM

1919 SOUTH UNIVERSITY
DENVER, COLO. 80210

Aug. 27, 1971

7:30 PM

UPMC -

JK Gleichman - Pres. - presiding

Wally Peterson - Treas. - reported balance - \$124.

Following slate of officers was ~~also~~ nominated -

Lesanne Buchanan - Pres. - elected by acclamation

Wendy Grant - V. Pres. - Marlene Hildeman

Nancy Lipincott - Treas.

Judy Libenberg - ~~Treas~~ Sec.

Duane Grant - V. Pres.

Lesanne installed & presided

Wendy moved slate of officers be elected - motion seconded

& passed

Wally - moved that the old officers relinquish their interest in the bank acct. & that new officers sign signature Cards for the bank. & old officers retire. Motion seconded & passed

Nelson The Printer -

555 Santa Fe Dr. 623-6006

623-2476

Has the cut of the symbol

Buchan, Lee Senne 771-3158

has seen social worker

wrote Xue, Lombert, MSVC.

hasn't heard

Feb 26th wrote - hasn't heard as of 3/15
told them to write MSVC again.

march 21- Heard from MSVC + Jean Lambert

5-2 has heard from Taylor 3-24 - will
select child on or after 5-6

Taylor with - Terre des Hommes -

11-8- Child to arrive 11-10-68

1st call 4-24-68 Marcia Bumpus
told her Lambert - 13968 W. 13th Ave.
FMSVC - Golden
279-7571

5-2- Has written to Rosemary Taylor to ask her
to choose child - getting good co-operation
from Jefferson Co. - special consideration
for home study

6-13- Haven't heard for 1 month worried
OK - baby arrived - Nov. 10

Mrs. Otto Gardner - Golden 279-6977

7yr old - welfare refuse approval

12-12-68 { Mrs. Dose new case worker?
has called Mrs. Davis - State Dept of Welfare

FRIENDS OF CHILDREN OF VIET NAM

In addition to the items mentioned in the folder, we now have requests for:

Individually wrapped hard candy

Baby vitamins

Baby food, cereal, powdered milk

Thongs

Cotton sheet-blankets (full, twin, crib)

Braille books

Used eyeglasses

Small plastic bag packets containing such items as: soap, washcloth, small toy, small tablet or coloring book, crayolas, etc.

Donations may be left at 3755 South Broadway (rear), 761-0080, weekdays, between 9 A.M. and 4 P.M. For pickup, call Mrs. Jose Espinoza, 466-0987 or 466-2161.

Drugs and medical supplies may be left at Swedish Hospital Pharmacy, 501 East Hampden Avenue, Englewood, Colorado.

Monetary donations may be made to: FRIENDS OF CHILDREN OF VIET NAM, 1919 South University Boulevard, Denver, Colorado 80210.

For further information call Mrs. Lewis V. Brown, Secretary, 722-3286 evenings.

Your gifts are tax deductible.

March 11, 1974

Dear FCVN Board Members:

On Friday evening, March 8, I had a long chat with our mutual good friend, Cheri Clark, who, as you know, is joining our staff and with kids in hand, is setting off for Vietnam. Cheri asked that we put in print for you a statement of our philosophy and policy as they relate to our potential work in the area of adoption from Vietnam. Further, she asked that we refine and expand upon the philosophy behind our parent group sessions, a keen and positive concept which we are anxious to make available to anyone interested in participating.

My Friends' House Adoption Policy

My Friends' House arranges adoptions for Vietnamese boys and girls of all ages and racial backgrounds. Major emphasis is geared towards placement of the black Vietnamese child and the child who is handicapped. Because MFH seeks to place children who have the greatest need, we cannot accept applications from families wishing to avoid certain racial backgrounds.

MFH evaluates each couple, or individual, on their own merits and strengths and therefore does not place any restrictions on marital status, race or religion, length of marriage, number of children in the family or number of Vietnamese children in the family. In other words, we do not try to find reasons not to approve prospective parents but seek an appropriate and loving home for each child placed.

Our adoption application form offers space for prospective parents to indicate a preference for the type of child they wish to adopt, i.e., sex, age range, and degree of handicap. The past experience of our social workers has indicated that couples' "feelings" towards handicaps need to be analyzed in depth. What would be considered a handicap in one family is not for the next, and so on. While the prospective parents' preferences will be noted and discussed in both group meetings and individual sessions, where they are necessary, MFH cannot guarantee that the child placed will meet any of their specifications.

In reply to those critics of adoption who point out the negative aspects of removing a foreign child from his culture, My Friends' House feels very comfortable in making every effort to seek out acceptable and loving homes for Vietnamese orphans for the following reasons. We are placing emphasis on those children whose future is limited in Vietnam, those who are considered "misfits" due to their race and/or handicaps. The culture of most orphaned Vietnamese youngsters too frequently consists of the four walls of the orphanage, anticipation of the next meal, and an early understanding of death and deprivation. Moreover, the Vietnamese culture, which considers

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— Serving children overseas in Saigon, Vietnam
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March 11, 1974 - FCVN Board Members

adoption within its own society foreign and not consistent with the historical family way of life, leaves little room for alternatives for abandoned children.

On the other side of the coin, we intend to encourage adoptive parents to give their Vietnamese child an appreciation and an understanding of his/her culture and national background. Additionally, if there is a possibility of locating in Vietnam a child's biological family, it is our intention to have our Vietnamese social workers seek out that family, for if the child's natural family is alive, that is the first place and the best place for that child to be.

My Friends' House Group Sessions

My Friends' House believes that the purpose of the home study, from the parent's aspect, is to prepare them for adoption of their child. We feel this can best be accomplished through group sessions, where the parents meet with their peers who are involved in the same situation and can provide direction and support. All will learn and grow together and in the interim provide mutual support. Our primary goal is to free parents from the "expectations" of what their child will be and to prepare them to accept their child for what he/she is.

Each couple applying for a child from My Friends' House will be required to attend five bi-weekly group sessions prior to placement and three post-placement sessions. A packet of information, including topics for discussions and reading texts, will be distributed prior to the first session. An experienced group leader, from among the social workers hired by My Friends' House, and a leader-in-training, will moderate each session.

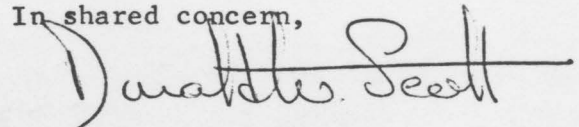
The group sessions have been planned to follow a steady progression towards the time when the child arrives in the parents' home, with followup continuing after placement. At each session an experienced resource person, a parent who has adopted a particular type of child, a social worker, etc., will be invited to address the group and to participate in discussion. Pre-placement topics will include Vietnam in general, adopting across trans-racial lines, the older child, and the handicapped child, among others. After placement the group will get together for the first session with their families. The final two sessions will deal with adjustment, the language problem, illnesses, and so on.

While the group sessions have been designed specifically for those parents whose applications have been submitted to MFH, they will be open to any couple wishing to participate, at a nominal fee for the costs of printing and books. Additionally, MFH is anxious to share this concept with others throughout the country and therefore is making up a kit we can send to other groups containing a reading list, information for group leaders, and other materials.

March 11, 1974 - FCVN Board Members

We are enclosing copies of our Internal Revenue Service tax-exemption statement, along with our Certificate of Incorporation from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. We are pleased to be able to bring our program to your Board and look forward to the potential of a mutually-beneficial working relationship.

In shared concern,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Donald W. Scott", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Donald W. Scott
Executive Director

DWS:mfs
enclosures

Address any reply to:

Bos.-EO-73-29
Department of the Treasury



District Director
Internal Revenue Service

Date:

JAN 9 1973

In reply refer to:

AU:EO:RM

▷ My Friends' House, Inc.
Winslow Drive
South Orleans, Mass. 02662

Second taxable year ends
6-30-74

Gentlemen:

Based on information supplied, and assuming your operations will be as stated in your application for recognition of exemption, we have determined you are exempt from Federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

We have further determined you can reasonably be expected to be an organization of the type described in sections 170(b)(1)(A)(vi) and 509(a)(1). Accordingly, for your first two tax years, you will be treated as an organization which is not a private foundation.

At the end of your first two tax years, however, you must establish with the Internal Revenue Service that for such two years you were in fact an organization of the type described in section 170(b)(1)(A)(vi). If you establish this fact with the Service, you will be classified as a section 509(a)(1) organization for all purposes beginning with the first day of your third tax year and you must normally meet the requirements of section 170(b)(1)(A)(vi) thereafter. If, however, you do not meet the requirements of section 170(b)(1)(A)(vi) for your first two tax years, you will be classified as a private foundation as of the first day of your third tax year. Furthermore, you will be treated as a private foundation as of the first day of your first tax year for purposes of sections 507(d) and 4940.

Grantors and donors may rely on the determination that you are not a private foundation for your first two tax years, unless notice that you will no longer be treated as a section 509(a)(1) organization is published in the Internal Revenue Bulletin. However, a grantor or donor may not rely on such determination if he was in part responsible for, or was aware of, the act or failure to act that resulted in your loss of section 509(a)(1) status, or acquired knowledge that the Internal Revenue Service had given notice that you would be removed from classification as a section 509(a)(1) organization.

You are not liable for social security (FICA) taxes unless you file a waiver of exemption certificate as provided in the Federal Insurance Contributions Act. You are not liable for the taxes imposed under the Federal Unemployment Tax Act (FUTA).

Organizations that are not private foundations are not subject to the excise taxes under Chapter 42 of the Code. However, you are not automatically exempt from other Federal excise taxes.

Donors may deduct contributions to you as provided in section 170 of the Code. Bequests, legacies, devises, transfers, or gifts to you or for your use are deductible under sections 2055, 2106, and 2522 of the Code.

3N150 (9-71)

If your sources of support, or your purposes, character, or method of operation is changed, you must let us know so we can consider the effect of the change on your status. Also, you must inform us of all changes in your name or address.

If your gross receipts each year are normally more than \$5,000, you are required to file Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax, by the 15th day of the fifth month after the end of your annual accounting period. The law imposes a penalty of \$10 a day, up to a maximum of \$5,000, for failure to file a return on time.

You are not required to file Federal income tax returns unless you are subject to the tax on unrelated business income under section 511 of the Code. If you are subject to this tax, you must file an income tax return on Form 990-T. In this letter we are not determining whether any of your present or proposed activities are unrelated trade or business as defined in section 513 of the Code.

You need an employer identification number even if you have no employees. If an employer identification number was not entered on your application, a number will be assigned to you and you will be advised of it. Please use that number on all returns you file and in all correspondence with the Internal Revenue Service.

Please keep this determination letter in your permanent records.

Sincerely yours,

William E. Williams

WILLIAM E. WILLIAMS
District Director

Exemption is granted on condition that you amend your articles of incorporation to delete the following - "The corporation may be an incorporator of any other Corporations of any type or kind" - "The Corporation may be a partner in any business, enterprise which said corporation would have power to conduct by itself" and the words savings, thrift incentive and benefit plans in paragraph 4 page 4 and conformed copies of amendments must be submitted to this office within 90 days from date of this letter.

cc: Attorney

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts



Be it Known That whereas

Donald Warren Scott and Marilyn Free Scott

have associated themselves with the intention of forming a corporation under the name of

My Friends' House Incorporated

and have complied with the provisions of the Statutes of the Commonwealth in such case made and provided, as appears from the Articles of Organization of said corporation, duly approved by the State Secretary and recorded in this office:

Now, therefore, I, JOHN F. X. DAVOREN, Secretary of The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Do Hereby Certify that said

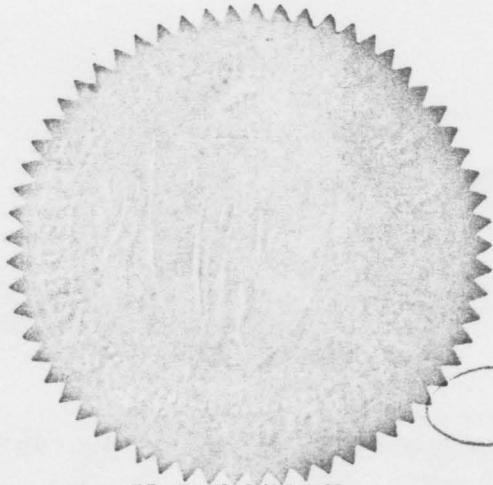
Donald Warren Scott and Marilyn Free Scott

their associates and successors are legally organized and established as, and are hereby made an existing corporation as of September 14, 1972 under the name of

My Friends' House Incorporated

with the powers, rights and privileges, and subject to the limitations, duties and restrictions, which by law appertain thereto.

Witness my official signature hereunto subscribed, and the Great Seal of The Commonwealth of Massachusetts hereunto affixed, this thirteenth day of November in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and seventy-two.



John F. X. Davoren
Secretary of the Commonwealth
Richard L. Dickerson
Deputy Secretary

MY FRIENDS' HOUSE, INC.

161 AUBURN STREET
NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02166

AIR MAIL



Mrs. John Buchanan
400 So. Emerson
Denver, Col.
80221

March 4, 1974

Board of Directors
Friends of Children of Vietnam
Denver, Colorado

Gentlemen:

For some time now discussions have apparently taken place here in the United States, as well as with our field personnel in Vietnam, relating to potential association in one of a number of ways between MFH and FCVN.

A month ago it would have been premature, I think, to have suggested that we would be very anxious to explore such an association with FCVN, even if FCVN had been interested in exploring it with MFH. But today, as our financial position solidifies, our direction in Vietnam becomes even more obvious, and the challenges before us become even greater, it seems from here at least that the exploration of working together may have more value than simple merit.

Our goals seem to be very common...our purposes are uniquely paralleled...our services far-reaching...with the value of making tomorrow not a challenge but a reason for being and, most importantly, where are our goals are for children, I would like to think and hope that this letter would be very timely.

- I. I think that we all agree that having Mr. Ross Medor in Vietnam representing FCVN and creating a clearer flow of logistical support is evidence of a joint willingness to cooperate.
- II. Along the same line, I would like to recommend formally that MFH set aside at our Saigon Nutrition Center a fixed number of cribs to be made available to those orphanages on your Sponsor program list for sick children. Our present facility is geared to the care of 50 children but is quite capable for holding 75. Further, we will very soon begin negotiations for a second facility. This recommendation was discussed during the visit of Sr. Rosalie Elliott and Sr. Helen Reynolds at our facility in Saigon with our Vietnam Director, Mr. Thomas Palmeri, in late January or the first of February.
- III. Further, there would be value in FCVN exploring our training services (see attached). Diane Palmeri, who has created and administers this service, would be quite willing to carry it into those orphanages on your Sponsor program, though this could only be done with one or two orphanages at a time. As Mr. Palmeri has said in his letter of 2-4-74 to Sr. Helen Reynolds, "out of this could come much greater knowledge for you of what is truly needed and where your assistance is abused." I would add that the end result would, hopefully, be

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a better control of your support and the knowledge that your goods and financial support were getting to the children.

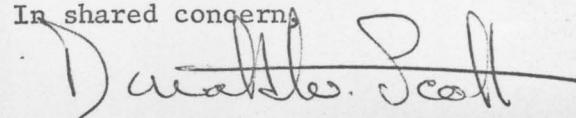
- IV. Lastly, MFH would like formally to request that FCVN allow us to "sub-contract" the adoption section of your agreement with the Vietnam government. We seek such a sub-contract only on a temporary basis, until such time as we negotiate and receive our own adoption contract with the GVN. It has been indicated to us that there is no reason not to think that such a contract would be issued to us --- our concern here is for the time involved in receiving the contract, when we could be placing children. MFH would be putting high emphasis on the placement of handicapped orphans, black orphans and all other Amerasian orphans.

MFH has filed the appropriate documents with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Office for Children and has gone about the business of hiring additional staff to allow us to operate with legal agency status.

I would be quite willing to travel to Denver to discuss personally the above or to have FCVN representatives travel to Boston to meet with us here, if you wished.

Today the private "voluntary agency" working in Vietnam is the only true and effective source of reconstruction in the area of child welfare. The problems, and the challenges those problems create, are large in scope, demanding in resources and energies, and sad in evaluation. The most effective efforts will come about, I believe, only after agencies such as MFH and FCVN couple their resources for maximum input and maximum results.

In shared concern



Donald W. Scott
Executive Director

DWS:mfs

cc: Mrs. Cheri Clark
Mrs. Pam Larsen
Mrs. Deborah McCurdy
Mr. Thomas Palmeri

March 4, 1974

Board of Directors FCVN
600 Gilpin
Denver, Colorado 80218

Dear Friends:

As you all know, our family will soon be leaving for Saigon as members of the MFH team there. I can't begin to tell you how happy we are and how much this venture means to us as a family. Someone once said, "Happy are those who dream dreams, and are willing to pay the price to make them come true." Well, we've never been happier and are willing to pay the price which seems relatively small when one thinks of the contribution that we hope to make. We owe so much to all of you. If it were not for you, and our involvement with you as a chapter, we would not be preparing to sell out lock, stock and barrel and head for Saigon. We most likely would be doing something much less meaningful with our lives. We will always be indebted to you for so much and we will always cherish your friendship.

I have so much to say to all of you that it occurred to me the only way to accomplish it was to write a "form" letter and send it out, but please still think of it as a personal letter to each of you from me. I hope you all forgive me but time is so very precious and there is so much to do before we leave. My chapter is suddenly growing in leaps and bounds and every group that hears we're leaving is trying to schedule a speaking engagement. It's frustrating to think of how long I've been out here in this corn field begging someone to listen to me and now suddenly I'm the state's star attraction. Leads one to contemplate the advantage of us all moving to Saigon! Do hope all of these kind souls remember us when we're gone.

I do hope that you have the time to sit back, prop your feet up, and think about what I am about to say to you. I know that as a board you have had a rough year and that as individuals many of you have been hurt deeply. With your terms winding down and FCVN elections nearing, you are probably hoping to "coast out" without any more major decisions. As a board you have been faced with decisions of magnanimous proportions and have had to make some very controversial decisions. Therefore, I come to you with heart in hand and hope that what I am about to present to you might be of some interest.

Two weeks ago it never occurred to me that I would be writing this letter to you. While it has always been my intent to work closely with you all as individuals and a board, I did not realize how important we may all be to each other.

I believe that most of you are aware of My Friends' House, who they are and what they are doing in Viet Nam. I believe Helen has presented you with a description of the MFH Nutrition Center and the work that the Palmeri's (MFH

Vietnam Directors) are doing in orphanages in the Saigon area. After we arrive in Saigon, two new programs will be initiated. Tom will soon be setting up a rehabilitation center in Saigon. Allow me to quote Don Scott, MFH Executive Director. . . "I have challenged myself to create a center to teach vocational programs to a few of the many thousands of teenagers who have been maimed by the military conflict. Further coupled with that, I would want that center to serve some of the many teenagers crippled by polio, a disease that has been far more crippling to humans than all of the destruction of the war. I envision such a center teaching Honda repair, electrical work and TV repair and maybe even eventually teaching teenagers simple computer technology..." For those of you who have visited Viet Nam, I am sure that you can share our enthusiasm for such a program. The heartbreak of seeing so many young people lying in streets begging for food or shut up in an overcrowded orphanage is unbearable and unnecessary.

And I will be setting up an adoption program. MFH Massachusetts headquarters is in the process of receiving an adoption license from Massachusetts, and we have before us the almost overwhelming task of obtaining a contract with the Vietnamese government. I think each and every one of you recognizes the value of an adoption program and also the need for more programs such as ours. You will all recall that when Miss Taylor visited Denver, we were told that at To Am alone, 50 children were turned away in one month. Adoption means so much to me and I experience great joy in bringing a child and a family together. I have been doing adoptions on a very small scale with numerous obstacles for the past year. We have established relationships with several orphanages that are willing to release children to us for adoption, and I am sure that once in Saigon, we will soon have a full house.

Just recently, we have been negotiating to add another new member to what is rapidly becoming our overseas adoption staff, Miss Le Thi Bach Thuy, who is a Vietnamese social worker and has had considerable experience in the adoption area. Miss Thuy will be provided to us through the Minnesota MABA group and will certainly be a great asset. She has been very instrumental in negotiating Vietnamese contracts for Minnesota PACT which brought many heart patients to this country for surgery. Miss Thuy's contacts with orphanages and government officials would allow us to immediately begin processing...if we had a contract.

We have had a master plan since the beginning and part of that plan is to go to Viet Nam and negotiate our contract as soon as possible. But we are realistic enough to realize that even with the best of luck, it is going to be many months before we can do adoptions. Therefore, I come to you with a proposal that Don Scott and I have put together. I ask you to consider allowing us to sub-contract on your FCVN contract. I do not ask this favor lightly nor do I expect you automatically to say yes. However, I am hoping and praying that you will at least first as individuals, then as a board, give us some consideration. The ultimate result is that we can immediately begin to place children in homes. FCVN could sub-contract us in much the same manner that you had considered doing for FAC. We would be prepared to come to Colorado and meet with you and would do everything to uphold the name of FCVN.

I realize that FCVN's potential as an organization goes far beyond subsidizing an adoption program. MFH is hoping to adjust its adoption fees to insure that adoptions pay for themselves so that additional funds donated can be used to help the children who are going to remain in the orphanages. We can't forget about them.

So here we are in an overwhelming situation; we can sit by and negotiate our contract while children die in our arms or we can come to you and ask your help. I know that most of you are not eager to jump back into adoptions at this time and we could certainly take all necessary steps to see that you don't have to. The agency licensed in Massachusetts could handle all of the cases and we in Saigon would certainly do everything possible to further the name and cause of FCVN. I can find no other acceptable solution. Nor can I accept the fact that children will die while we fight the bureaucratic process.

I suppose it's not fair for me to appeal to you on just the basis that children are dying. You are well aware of that and in reality that is the reason for your existence. Therefore, for the less emotional and more logical board members, I shall continue.

As a board President, I realize that the chapters are in a frustrating position at this point. You might say that they are goal-less. I think if they once again had a tangible operation to work for in Viet Nam, that you would again see the enthusiasm that once before united us. And I am not speaking of financial support for just our operation, but rather financial support for the provincial orphanages through programs such as the Foster Orphanage. Through Ross and myself we can keep all of FCVN informed as to what is happening in Viet Nam and hopefully as soon as the convoys start rolling, you and the chapter members can come and see Viet Nam first-hand. To me this is vitally important.

I hope that you will consider the enclosed proposal and if you feel that there is any possibility that an agreement can be reached in the near future, you will contact me as soon as possible. Don is scheduled to leave for Saigon March 15 and is willing and able to fly out to Denver to meet with all of you if we are on the earth side of a dream. I hope to follow with the reverse Clark convoy the first week of April.

There is so much to be gained for all of us if we work together and so much to be lost if we decide to go our separate ways. I hope that we can move quickly and come to some type of a workable agreement with you soon. As FCVN National keeps saying, "Tomorrow will be too late."

I also ask you to remember that all of this is being done for the children of Viet Nam, not MFH, FCVN, nor any individual person.

I close with love and hope for continued friendship. Hope to see you all soon.

CC:

Donald W. Scott, MFH Executive Director
Pamela Larsen, MFH Adoption Director
Deborah McCurdy, A.C.S.W.
Thomas S. Palmeri, MFH Director/Vietnam

3155 STANFORD Ave
Boulder, CO. 80303
24 April 75

Dear John & Lee Sanne,

Knowing that I share your concern regarding the Vietnamese and mixed orphans, Mariagne has shared your memo to the Executive Comm. staff with me. I am deeply troubled by the AFSC activity in that regard. You are probably not aware of the enclosed article provided to the Univ. of Colo. Daily by the local staff as part of what appears a national effort by AFSC to discredit the humanitarian work of the several agencies involved in the adoption program. It would appear from this article, regularly quoted, ^{of AFSC} John Barton, also regularly quoted here, the memoranda & wire from Philadelphia that AFSC was a major motivating factor (knowing its effectiveness perhaps the main one) in the public controversy which has been generated.

In response to the CU Daily article I wrote what was intended to be letter, but which turned into a major tome, on 11+12 April, then revised it slightly & mailed it after a week's consideration. Copies were sent to Warren Witte, Tony Vile and Steve Williams & their wives as well as to Jon Schneider. The letter speaks for me so I won't belabor the subject further. I except to say thank you for raising the issue with the local Executive Committee.

Our very best

"Med"

FRIENDS OF CHILDREN OF VIET NAM

600 Gilpin
Denver, Colorado 80218
303-321-8262

March 19, 1974

Mrs. LeeSanne Buchanan
400 S. Emerson
Denver, Colorado

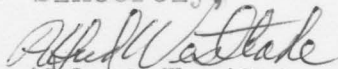
Dear LeeSanne,

The Board of Directors of Friends of Children of Viet Nam wishes to express its gratitude for the many years of service you have rendered to the children of Viet Nam. A contribution such as yours is in itself a living monument to your dedication and selflessness.

We shall feel greatly the loss of your unselfish donation of time, energy, creativity, and leadership. We extend to you our best wishes for any future endeavor and we congratulate any future recipient of your kind hearted generosity, for we have seen how truly effective your undertakings can be.

Friends of Children of Viet Nam's Board of Directors shall miss you among our ranks, LeeSanne. Again, accept our heartfelt gratitude for all that you have done.

Sincerely,


Alfred Westlake

For The Board of Directors
of Friends of Children
of Viet Nam

TO: Denver Executive Committee Members and Staff

April 21, 1975

FROM: John and Lee Sanne Buchanan

We would like to take this means as one opportunity to respond to the statement from Louis Schneider and John Sullivan dated April 10, 1975.

Our initial reaction centered upon the procedural aspect of this statement. Is this statement solely an expression of opinion by Schneider and Sullivan? Or is it an expression of policy adopted by the AFSC? If it is the latter then we wonder if opinion and/or consensus on the part of local AFSC Executive Committees was sought. To our knowledge, the Denver Committee, at least, was not consulted.

Beyond the procedural question there remains the more fundamental issues raised by the content of this statement. The authors clearly support humanitarian efforts to help Vietnamese people and oppose any mishandling or political or political exploitation of them. This is hardly a position anyone could disagree with. But what exactly is meant by these phrases?

In reference to the plight of Vietnamese orphans and refugees the authors state,

"The AFSC, however, supports a Vietnamese rather than an American solution to the problem. Vietnamese on all sides of the conflict are committed to provide for the well being of the orphans within Vietnam and are particularly opposed to the current massive airlift."

Why must a solution be either/or? To follow this principle to its conclusion would be to foster an isolationism and parochialism which is surely incompatible with the shrinking and inter-dependent world in which we live. Further, it may be true that some Vietnamese on all sides of the conflict are committed to the well being of orphans. However, the fact is that for some years the government of South Vietnam has paid little more than lip service to this commitment. Conditions in orphanages have been so appalling that malnutrition, disease and death have been the rule rather than the exception. These conditions have given rise to the efforts on the part on many to adopt orphans. To wait until the Vietnamese authorities are able and willing to care adequately for these orphans is to condemn many of them to suffering and death. Is it, then, political manipulation to offer life and health rather than death and suffering? The authors refer to a 'massive airlift'. As of this date approximately 2,000 children have been airlifted out of Vietnam. In comparison with the estimated hundreds of thousands of true orphans in Vietnam this does not appear to be a 'massive' endeavor.

Like the authors we can concede that there has been some mis-handling of adoptions, especially in the last few weeks. We contend, however, that this situation calls for more adequate procedures in adoption and placement rather than calling for a halt to this type of program.

The authors maintain that the most effective approach to the problem is to bring about peace by stopping military and economic aid which helps to prolong the war. They state that "Humanitarian efforts which fail to stress that are flawed." Let us be realistic enough to recognize that, lacking divine omniscience, all human efforts to resolve any issue are flawed. Admittedly, the ideal resolution to the suffering in Vietnam is peace and the growing ability of that society to care for all its members. Analogously, the ideal solution to poverty and suffering in the U.S. is to change the conditions which give rise to those ills. But until that solution is brought about do we halt all welfare and/or other humanitarian programs? Is there not inherent in suffering an imperative which calls for immediate action and alleviation regardless of the flaws in that effort?

Finally, we wish that the authors had been more specific in their use of the phrase "political manipulation" What exactly is meant by this? Can this charge be substantiated? Are those persons who are part of Vietnamese adoptions guilty of political manipulation? When a child is saved from illness, neglect and even death does it matter to him if he is the unwitting victim of political manipulation.

Moreover, there is plenty of evidence to assure even a casual observer that the Vietnamese have traditionally not placed a high value on the lives of the racially mixed, illegitimate, the disfigured and crippled children. The children released for adoption to the recognized agencies have been certified by Vietnamese to be those who would most benefit by intercountry adoption.

There seems to be implicit in this statement an intolerance and assumption of moral righteousness which we find incompatible with the Friend's traditional position of 'that of God in every man'. We are deeply disappointed that such a statement should be drafted with apparent disregard for the convictions and feelings of those who have sought to walk in the light as God has shown that light to them. We, therefore, call for a more intensive and balanced dialogue on these issues.

VIETNAMESE ADOPTION — A PLEA FOR A BALANCED APPROACH

by Tran Tuong Nhu

Interest in the plight of Vietnamese orphans grows rapidly in the United States, but is this another example of well-intentioned Americans rushing into another Vietnamese miasma? For the most part, Americans who want to adopt a Vietnamese orphan are genuinely concerned over the lack of care and love from which these wretched innocents suffer. They feel that they can provide a suitable home, love and care that all little children deserve. These are fine intentions but may result in more harm than good to the orphans themselves and Vietnamese society.

People have been led to believe that racially mixed children will suffer in Vietnam because they have been told that Vietnamese are racist. While racism exists, it is more for political reasons than cultural ones. The child with foreign blood serves as a constant reminder of the bitter experience of foreign intervention which still exists, but this will most certainly decline when the war is ended, as it did after the French left. Black fathered children are said to suffer the most. This is true, but in my research work in Vietnam, I have seen a number of instances where Vietnamese families have successfully adopted such children, and even cases where Vietnamese men take care of the half-black children their wives had borne.

Adoption is common in Vietnam by the Vietnamese, but it is done largely outside the archaic colonial-created legal barriers to adoption that are now applied discriminatorily to foreigners. Children who lost their parents have traditionally been taken in by relatives, and if there are no nearby relatives then the neighbors look after them. It has been a common practice for childless couples to adopt a niece or nephew. All of this has been done without resorting to going to court or establishing orphanages, which were established by the French. The war has, of course, broken down the traditional system, but Vietnamese people still help each other and should be encouraged to continue to do so.

In contrast to the ease with which Vietnamese adopt, frustrating bureaucratic difficulties have arisen, on both the Vietnamese and American sides, as a result of pressure for inter-country adoption. Paper work is very slow in Vietnam. Civil servants are underpaid, tend to be venal and find it not worthwhile to be efficient, particularly when pressured. Further complication has arisen when the Vietnamese Ministry of Social Welfare set up a Child Welfare Bureau which has the task of overseeing each adoption, treating each application individually—an agonizingly slow task. The head of this bureau is especially interested in placing handicapped children with families. She does not wish to give preferential treatment to Amerasian children which represent a small minority of the orphans. Another complication is the matter of orphanage policies. Catholic orphanages are reluctant to allow non-catholics to adopt, and Buddhist orphanages do not allow adoptions at all.

The main obstacle to inter-country adoption is that two-thirds of the children described as "orphans" have living relatives, and fifty per cent have one living parent. These children have been placed in orphanages because their parents and relatives cannot afford to care for them. Obviously they cannot be adopted without the consent of the parents or kin. In some cases the relatives do not visit the children, nor do they ever return for them, but the orphanages cannot, legally, give the children away.

Because of the great foreign interest in adoption, some of the less scrupulous orphanages, and this is quite prevalent, exact payments for orphans. A baby market has already been created and it is a lucrative business for some. It is astounding for Vietnamese to learn of the exorbitant prices that foreigners will pay for a child, when they can adopt one themselves for nothing. The power of the dollar amid the poverty and insecurity of Vietnam has the same destructive effect on Vietnamese society with respect to the baby business that it has had in other areas throughout the war. The same problem was created in Korea--and continues today--due to well-intentioned American largesse.

by Tran Tuong Nhu

Most of the children waiting for adoption in Saigon have been "voluntarily" relinquished by their mothers to the only foreign agency licensed for inter-country adoption. This is most reprehensible--in a country where hundreds of thousands of children are languishing for lack of attention, the agency should dissuade mothers from giving up their children. Furthermore, while this agency wisely places children in Vietnamese foster homes while waiting for adoption instead of allowing them to die a slow death in orphanages, this often results in the family, having nursed the child back to health, not wanting to give the child up. And why should they? But for the foreign adoption pressure perhaps this agency and others might support the wiser practice of finding homes for children in Vietnam. Rather than allowing mothers to give up their children, new programs should be initiated to counsel and assist mothers to keep their children. Such programs have been started at three maternity hospitals in Saigon.

As mentioned earlier, most of the children in orphanages have a parent or relative. The obvious solution is to reunite the parent with the child, instead of bringing the child half way around the world. This could be effected through day care centers which would allow the parent or relative to work and keep the child. In 1972, there were 250 such centers in South Vietnam, but that is not nearly enough to handle the overwhelming numbers of "orphans". If more attention were focused on this area it would greatly alleviate the burden in orphanages which could be completely dismantled with a program to place remaining children without relatives in foster homes. In addition, there are thousands of runaway and abandoned children roaming throughout Vietnam who could receive homes and attention in this way.

In the Provisional Revolutionary Government areas of South Vietnam and in North Vietnam, parentless children have been totally reabsorbed into the society without any foreign adoption or placement in institutions for other than short periods of time.

There are certainly some children, the handicapped, the black children who might well benefit from inter-country adoption, but the vast majority of Vietnamese orphans should, for their own sake, and for the sake of Vietnam, remain in their country. Vietnam needs its children. It is not up to the foreigners, especially Americans, to intervene at this time to deplete Vietnam of its children. If Americans wish to help, they should consider the alternatives of supporting day care centers or foster homes so that the children need not suffer the loss of their country to gratify well meaning people. Beyond this, one should not forget that the worst obstacle to helping the children is the war itself, which daily adds to the endless stream of orphans and continues to destroy Vietnamese society.

Last, and most importantly, it is hard to convey to Americans how deeply Vietnamese are attached to their country. Granted that little children can adapt to a new culture, but as they grow up in a foreign country, as I have, they discover an undeniable affinity for their mother land, and it is a long journey back. The American way of life is so seductive that the poor material quality of Vietnamese life pales beside it. Yet there are so many other aspects of Vietnamese life which are so rich and meaningful that it is unfair to deprive a Vietnamese of these rights. It is not for Americans to decide for Vietnamese children what sort of life they should live. If they want to help, help them find a life in their own context, in their own country, where they mean something not only to others around them, but to themselves. It is not time to rescue the Vietnamese from other Vietnamese, but to enable them to live together in peace.

Tran Tuong Nhu is a young Vietnamese woman currently living in the U.S. People can write to her c/o American Friends Service Committee, 2160 Lake Street, San Francisco, Calif. 94121 attn: Jane Barton; Copies of this article available from Indochina Program, American Friends Service Committee, 112 S. 16th St., Philadelphia, PA 19102 (215-LO3-9372, ext. 262) @ 10¢, 50¢/10, \$2.50/100 + shipping.

For further background, read "Flight of Vietnam's Children" by Doug Hostetter, reprinted from response magazine, July-Aug. 1974. Available from Indochina Program @ 10¢.

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Dear Mr. Buchanan,

Marge Smolens
In your note to us last month, you requested more information on the adoption of Vietnamese children.

Sandy Silver
Co-ordinator

As you may remember, in the last months of the war, American public opinion had already turned against any further involvement in Vietnam, and the President, in an attempt to make everything more palatable to the American people, appealed to our basic sense of decency to accept the homeless Vietnamese orphans. Quite obviously we have no quarrel with that; however, it was later learned that a good number of the children being brought to this country, were not orphans at all. In some cases, these children were children of Vietnamese politicians who later escaped to this country themselves and joined their children.

We are committed to work toward our goal of eliminating war as a means of settling disputes between nations, peoples, and ideologies. We owe this to all children of the world, and are appalled when governments, any government, use children as their pawns.

Peace and Love,

Sandy Silver

Sandy Silver
Another Mother for Peace

