

GRAINS of SALT

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“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that, some have entertained angels without even knowing it.”

Hebrews 13:2

OUR ASIAN ANGELS

By Vickie Elsesser-Vu

When SALT board members Amy Scheffler, Kristine Millen and I set out for a three-week mission trip to Crossroads for Children in Vietnam, and The Gentle Nest in Thailand, we had no idea what to expect. What were the daily operations like? Were the children healthy and happy? What more did they need?

After a 30-hour journey by air, two bus rides totalling nearly seven hours, and a literal hike up a mountain side, we arrived at Crossroads.

The eight children were eating their lunch and appeared quite shy, but curious about these Americans who showed up with a bulging suitcase.

Our guide, Khiem Tran, Crossroads founder, introduced each child by their new Biblical names before unpacking the suitcase filled with SALT T-shirts, puzzles, model airplanes, markers and craft projects.

We played games, crafted, and sang with the kids. And when we sang the songs, each in our own language, we knew we had all bonded. The smiles on their faces were heart warming.

But that didn't compare to the next day when we took the kids, who ranged in age from 5 to 14, and their house mother, Loan, to the city of Nha Trang on the South China Sea, a five-hour ride by van.

Their exclamations and wonder at their first sight of

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Kids from Crossroads for Children, Vietnam, enjoying their first trip to the sea. The two-day outing was made possible by donations received from the SALT benefit dinner held in June.

HUNGER NOT THE ONLY DANGER FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN

By Kristine Millen

I first saw Meeyae crouched on the broken cement of a Chiang Mai, Thailand street, clutching a used plastic cup in her dirty hand. As tourists came by she raised the cup, saying nothing, just looking up with huge brown eyes glazed with hopelessness. She was about 5 years old, unaware of any danger, she only wanted to eat.

What Meeyae did not know was that she was a prime target for sexual predators who also frequented the area.

According to the U.S. State Department more than one million children worldwide are exploited in the commercial sex trade, with the highest numbers being in developing countries where anonymity and the availability of homeless and/or children involved in prostitution (usually by force) make it easier for sexual offenders.

Meeyae, now 11, is off the streets. She is enrolled in school and attends church weekly. But most importantly, Meeyae has a future filled with hope.

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ASIAN ANGELS (cont.)

the ocean, their squeal of delight when they threw themselves in the waves was its own reward.

At the hotel, they played with the elevator and flushed the toilet over and over (all firsts!). The sight of them walking back to our hotel from the beach two-by-two wearing their SALT T-shirts will be forever printed in my heart.

After returning to Crossroads and seeing them again the next day, they threw themselves into our arms, so delighted in the relationships that were growing in trust and in God.

Later that day, we met the pastor and his wife who provide the spiritual leadership for the children. They were so genuine and kind-spirited. Our questions were getting answered.

The language barrier was not a problem either at the Gentle Nest in Thailand. The language of God's love and play once again reached into the hearts of the four toddlers, and two Karen hill tribe girls helping Angela, the housemother at the Gentle Nest.

Giggles and laughter were heard as we read stories, rocked the babies, and baked a cake.

Yes, they too, received a bulging suitcase filled with rubber pants, clothes, toys, and shoes.

It was obvious that at both the Gentle Nest and Crossroads, the children were healthy, happy, well-cared for and that Christian love and beliefs were being showered upon them. No doubt that these children represent the future of the Christian faith in their countries.

SALT IS HELPING MAKE THAT DIFFERENCE!

HUNGER (cont.)

It's much easier to protect these children if we can reach them BEFORE they are on the street. And that is exactly what the four facilities assisted by SALT are doing. While the conditions and governments in each country are different, the basic needs of the kids are the same. Each of the homes, The Gentle Nest in Thailand, Light of Hope in Bangladesh, Crossroads for Children in Vietnam, and Mudzini Kwetu in Kenya, are committed to addressing the individual needs of each child and providing a loving environment. The children start and end each day with prayer and songs of praise to their Heavenly Father and are taught that they are all members of the family of God. Add the fact that they are now being "connected" to others who are willing to help put food on their tables, clothes on their backs, shoes on their feet, and prayers in their daily lives, these kids have a strong chance of not only survival, but of being adults who will be voices of justice for the next generation.

The dedication to caring for these at-risk children by each of the individuals who established these four ministries was the inspiration to form SALT. The more funds we can raise, and the more people we can recruit to pray for the needs, the more children we can help.

There are so many more children out there waiting for a chance like the one Meeyae received. With your support and prayers, their lives too, can be changed.



Meeyae

HOW TO SUPPORT SALT

To make a tax-deductible contribution, make checks payable to **SALT**. If you wish your donation to go toward a specific ministry, please designate the country on the memo line of your check. Mail to:

SALT
41261 Queen Arbor Court
Mechanicsville, MD 20659

"Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, 'Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead." James 2:15-17 (NIV)

SALT T-Shirts available

White T-shirts with the original SALT logo (shown to the right) are now available. Adult sizes: small through 2XL, are \$15 or two for \$25; children sizes: S, M, and L, are \$10.



To order, send check, payable to SALT, to the above address. Include \$2.50 for postage and allow four to six weeks for delivery.

Additional information about SALT may be found on our web site at www.saltkids.org.