

HELPING CHILDREN DEVELOP INTO EDUCATED,
PRODUCTIVE AND RESPONSIBLE ADULTS.

News From Anh Linh School

The Story of Diem My



Tran Diem My (pronounced—Chan Yiem Me) is 9 years old and attends first grade at Anh Linh Free School. Her mother died of AIDS and her father abandoned her. She now lives with her grandmother and several aunts in a small rented shack. One of My's aunts is also dying of AIDS, and her only uncle is in prison.

To support herself and her granddaughter, My's grandmother crochets baskets. My helps with cooking and cleaning and other chores.

My's grandmother didn't know that it was possible for her to go to school until she heard about Anh Linh Free School, so she started first grade this year, at age 9. She told Cam Thuy, the principal that she likes school very much and hasn't missed a day. Her favorite subjects are math and English. Besides her morning classes for first grade, she comes to school twice a week in the afternoons to participate in an English class that Bridges To Learning sponsors.

Diem My dreams of being a teacher when she grows up. Her grandmother's dream for her is to attend school and study hard so her mother would be proud.



Inside this issue:

A Letter from Cam Thuy	2
New Initiatives at Anh Linh School	3
Bridges to Learning Receives UBS Grant	3
Basilica of St. Mary's Event	3

You can make a difference in the life of a child like Diem My. Please consider sponsoring a child and providing them with the education they need to fulfill their dreams. Fill out the enclosed envelope to contribute today!

A Letter from Cam Thuy, Principal of Anh Linh Elementary

Dear Friends,

Immediately after I got off the airplane after being gone for two years, I visited the new school. It was my greatest joy. I was so struck by its existence because before I left for my studies in the U.S.A it was only a plot of land. Now it stands majestically as a spacious and comfortable school—beautiful as a dream. Indeed, our dream has come true!



The challenges and struggles seemed to disappear when I saw the teachers and students working in our beautiful

"I understand [our students] better and have new ideas on how to address their problems.

I dream of a better future for all our children."

new school. I saw how the children had grown so much but are still so thin and small for their ages. I wanted to hug them all, as you do in American culture, but I realized, in time, that I was back in Vietnam, so I waved my hand and smiled in greeting.

Looking at the spacious and comfortable new school I thought of all the benefactors who made it happen and

"I saw how the children had grown so much but are still so thin and small for their ages."

who had supported me in my time in the U.S. And then my tears overflowed. I remembered your faces, your smiles, your kindness and your generosity to me and to our children. I realized that I was terribly "homesick" for my Minnesota home, and then I laughed at the strangeness of feeling homesick when I was in the middle of my home!

After two years away I saw many changes in Ho Chi Minh City, especially a lot of new high buildings! I rejoiced inwardly for the development of my country, but when I visited the families of our students I felt very sad. The development of the infrastructure has made their lives harder. The landlords raise the rents, so families have to move farther out from school in order to find cheaper rents. The cost of living has also gone up. Our students still have to help their parents by working. I try to persuade, explain or help financially so that the children can go to school regularly. It is heartbreaking

to see those children having to earn a living in order to go to school, but it also challenges me to make big plans for them.

We are now waiting for permission to rebuild the elementary school. I have

big plans/dreams for it—a library, a computer and language lab, a room for science, art and music, a teachers'

room and six classrooms. Eventually we hope to add more dormitory space for girls and boys in difficult family situations.

After two years of study in the U.S. I am back working here. I feel more self-confidence and more patience in spite of our student's difficult lives. I understand them better and have new ideas on how to address their problems. I dream a better future for all our children. I will write more about that another time.

I sincerely thank all of you who have been so generous to me and to the children at Anh Linh. We are encouraged and strengthened by your love and support. I think everything will eventually pass away, but LOVE will remain forever.

Sincerely,

Sister Cam Thuy

Principal, Anh Linh Elementary School



Sister Cam Thuy studied English and educational methods at The College of St. Catherine in St. Paul

New Initiatives at Anh Linh School

April, 2007

Middle School Finished

Construction completed on the new Anh Linh Middle School. The school has classrooms for 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th, graders, although only one grade will be added per year. There is space for an auditorium that will seat 300 children on



small stools, and a teachers room.

The 6th grade class started in the fall of 2006 and used one of the classrooms in the elementary school in the afternoon. They moved into the new building as soon as it was ready.

School Starts at Anh Linh

School began in the middle of August, but things got into full swing in September. Anh Linh elementary school started out with 155 students, but after Cam Thuy went visiting families in the neighborhood, the enrollment rose to 180! There are 50 students in the 6th and 7th grades.

Elementary School To Be Rebuilt

Plans are underway to tear down and rebuild the elementary school in order to create more outdoor/recreation space for the two schools. This year, the elementary students will use the middle school for their classes while their school is being built. With the increase in size of the elementary school however, Cam Thuy reports that the class sizes are between 30 and 40 students and they are running out of room!



Bridges To Learning Receives Grant From UBS

November, 2006

Tom Brandt, who is a financial advisor for UBS and a friend of Jerri and Bob's encouraged Jerri to apply for a grant that UBS was making to employees' favorite charities. Jerri wrote a short proposal and submitted it. After several weeks Tom suggested to Jerri that all of the charities that had applied would probably get a percentage of the available monies and that the grants would be

small. Several weeks later, she got a letter from UBS informing her that Bridges to Learning had been awarded ALL of the money. **That turned out to be \$39,200!**

The same day, the Fall, 2006 newsletter had been sent out telling that we had raised \$61,000 of our goal of \$100,000 for the new middle school. So, with the UBS grant, we hit our goal and exceeded it by \$200!

Thank you to everyone who chose to contribute to Bridges to Learning in 2006. We hope you will continue to support the students of Anh Linh in 2007 & 2008!

Basilica of St. Mary in Minneapolis Holds Appeal for Anh Linh

Fr. Michael O'Connell, the pastor of the Basilica of St. Mary visited Anh Linh school in December, 2004. He was touched by the kids and the wonderful work of the sisters and teachers. Fr. Michael is also the pastor of Ascension Catholic Church in North Minneapolis, whose parishioners and students face similar issues of poverty and crime as the families and

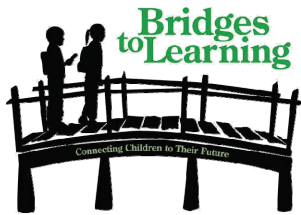
students at Anh Linh school.

Fr. Michael was determined to help Anh Linh and the children. The weekend of August 4-5, 2007, Fr. Michael talked about Anh Linh school and the difference it is making in the lives of poor children in Ho Chi Minh City. For the first time in his 16 year tenure at the Basilica he asked his parishioners to support a project that

was very special to his own heart.

Bridges To Learning received almost \$17,000 for the kids at Anh Linh. And 8 new people requested to be sponsors!

We are deeply grateful to Fr. Michael and the staff of the Basilica for their wonderful efforts on behalf of Anh Linh School.



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Visit our website:

www.bridges2learning.org
to learn more about Bridges To
Learning and to contribute today!



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