

Bridges to Learning Annual Report 2018

Mission Statement:

Bridges to Learning provides education, health and social development programs to empower impoverished Vietnamese children to change their world.

As in 2017 we continued coping with board attrition so 2018 continues the rebuilding that began in 2017. Several long serving board members took their leave and we had to begin new searches for qualified board members to fill those large shoes. Support for Anh Linh School and our new school, Viet Anh continued without a hiccup.

Current Board members and our Administrator are listed below:

- Joe Hellman
- Robert A. Mac Murdo
- Mike Miller
- John Nesheim
- Linh Phan
- Pooja Shah
- Stacy Phan, Administrator

Founder Retires

In late 2018 our founder, Jerilyn Hirsch, announced that she was retiring from the board. Jerri ventured to Vietnam in late 2003 on an exploratory visit to Anh Linh School in order to acquaint herself with the scope of what she was about to undertake. She spent the next year and a half teaching at the school and becoming aware of the needs of the school and the children. Over the ensuing fifteen years the children of Anh Linh were her passion and she worked tirelessly to fulfill the needs of Anh Linh. In January 2019 Jerri returned to the school to see the children, probably not for the last time. She continues to support the organization with her wisdom, guidance, and relationships.



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Community Served

Since our inception in 2004 we have focused on the support for Anh Linh School in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam and the children who receive their education and care from the staff at Anh Linh Free School. In 2016, a former principal at Anh Linh assumed the management of a new school, Viet Anh Primary School in the central highlands of Vietnam. Bridges responded to the director's need for support and granted the school \$3,500 annually to augment their resources which provide for the education of minority children in the province.

Major Programs

Bridges to Learning's primary focus of providing for the education for underserved children is carried out through sponsorships funded by a large group of our constituents, our Sponsors.

A sponsorship of \$500 annually provides the student with daily classes that meet the State requirements as well as the following:

- Two nutritious meals a day
- Two new uniforms a year
- School books and supplies
- Monthly haircuts
- Health, dental and vision screening, and treatment as needed
- Special programs and activities throughout the year
- English classes, open library and games when not in scheduled classes

A sustaining sponsorship is a three-year commitment to help the students and sponsors become invested in the relationship that develops with the sponsor. The relationship becomes an important part of an individual's decision to sponsor rather than simply donate. A student is carefully selected based on the principal's belief that he/she would significantly benefit from having a relationship with a sponsor. Sponsorship provides the unique opportunity to:

- Develop a relationship with their sponsored child by exchanging photos and letters
- Know that they are supporting the happiness of a specific child who would otherwise face a bleak and limited future
- See the amazing difference that a small amount of caring can bring

Breakfast Fund

The Breakfast Fund was created early in our involvement with Anh Linh when our Founder, Jerilyn Hirsch taught at the school in 2004-2005. Jerri noticed that many of the children were hungry in the morning. She discovered that many children were from circumstances that could not afford a breakfast meal. Searching about in the ex-pat community in Ho Chi Minh Jerri found someone who could provide high protein supplement for the kids and the Breakfast Fund was created. Now all elementary students receive a healthy breakfast each morning.

Bridges to Learning primarily draws from unrestricted funds to support the Breakfast Fund to the level of \$7,500 annually.

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Sponsorships

Bridges to Learning commits 100% of every dollar received as sponsorship funding to Anh Linh School for the specific child sponsored as these are considered restricted funds. In the past we have strived to maintain a base of 70 sponsored children but through recent attrition we are only supporting 60 students in 2018-2019. That amounts to approximately \$30,000 annually for the 60 children. The total support to Anh Linh for sponsorships was \$42,564.

Viet Anh

Since 2016 Bridges to Learning has provided a grant of \$3,500 annually to Viet Anh school to support the mission of providing underserved minority children an education and a caring environment to support their development. In 2018 we encountered an opportunity with Resource Capital Funds Foundation to submit a grant request to support Viet Anh. The single greatest need for Viet Anh was the ability to provide safe transportation for their students who live long distances from the rural school. We were fortunate to receive a \$21,000 grant from RFC which enabled the school to purchase a bus. From Kim Ngoc, the school's principal, *"The children and their parents are so happy with the school bus. Now, the children can safely go to school in this bus. It's so dangerous if they go to school by motorcycles on a long journey, because they live so far from school."*



Goals for 2019

- Build the number of sponsored children at Anh Linh back to 70.
- Add at least two more board members to bring the total to eight.
- Host two fundraising events: Golf Tournament and Wine Tasting.

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Financial Statement

The 2018 financials reflect the ongoing rebuilding begun in 2017. We had one major event in 2018, a Wine Tasting which was a success, raising over \$8,000. We began the fiscal year with just over \$51,539 in reserves and forecast revenue for the year at 53,937 against an Expense forecast of \$58,618.

We exceeded our revenue forecast by almost \$42,370 almost half of which came from the RCF grant, the continued support by the Hubbard Foundation and our generous donors. The Christmas Computer drive at the end of the year netted \$7,000 to buy new computers for the computer lab at Anh Linh. In addition, the 3M A3tion Group generously hosted two fundraisers which raised \$6,000 for Bridges to Learning, and gave us an opportunity to share our mission. We ended the year with a net increase of \$2,646 bringing our reserves in 2019 to \$54,185. You can find the formal documents at www.bridges2learning.org in the "Documents" section under "About Us" on the home page of our website.



2019

What to look forward to? At the time of this writing we are well into 2019 and meeting our forecast goals and objectives. We have added directors to the board and explored new event strategies which have made a difference. The support for Anh Linh and Viet Anh is progressing. We appreciate all that you, our sponsors, donors and volunteers do to make the lives of the children at these schools hopeful that a better future of them is just ahead.

The year will be a continuing rebuilding of the organization, developing and adding new board members, revisiting our strategic plan and revising where needed. The children of the two schools are our primary source of inspiration and the focus of our goals.