



WOULD YOU GIVE \$750 TO SAVE THE LIFE OF A CHILD?

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By LaRelle Catherman



Her name is Mai. She is 9 years old, but is oh so little, merely 13kg or 28 pounds. Her tiny frame is smaller than my 3 year-old granddaughter. Her hair has a red tone, an indication of years of malnutrition for this village girl in Vietnam. She does not smile much. Her voice is soft and her movements are deliberate. She has to conserve her energy, because she has a hole in her heart that prevents her from exerting herself physically. Complications of her heart defect cause her blood pressure to rise and her pulse to pound through her little frame in attempts to supply her body with oxygenated blood. As hard as her little body works, it is not sufficient.

She just could not gain weight and therefore was not a candidate for heart surgery. She could not overcome the increasing difficulties of this problem. She struggled for breath every day. The prognosis was grave. If she could not gain weight, she could not have surgery. And, if she did not have surgery, she could not gain weight.

Her life was temporary. Not

a mere moment in time, but a long pause in time...There was little hope for her, and her mother knew this. With little resources and no hope for her recovery, little Mai was fed very little, and over time she required very little. Her healthy siblings were given normal portions. In a situation like this where there is little or no hope, is this cruel or is this prudent? What difficult decisions must be made either consciously or sub-consciously by a parent.

On April 13th, life for little Mai changed. MEDRIX and a generous donor were able to give Mai a chance at a new life. MEDRIX's good reputation and establishment of solid professional relationships paid off. One phone call to a friend and colleague and \$750 provided a Pediatric Cardiac Surgeon in Ho Chi Minh City. Dr. Phuong reassessed Mai's weight and it was decided to 'take a chance'. Mai would have surgery to close the hole in her heart even with the risk of her low weight and small reserves.

It was a 25 minute surgery, one that would have been done in the first few months of a child's life in the USA or other first world countries. But in an emerging country where there are few resources and fewer doctors to perform these surgeries, Mai is only one of thousands of children who wait for this "simple" life saving surgery.

After her surgery, Dr. Phuong, the cardiac surgeon, spoke with me. "Your little girl is healed now", she said. We discussed Mai's case and the steps needed before she could return to her village.

I am very happy to report that little Mai is recovering nicely. She is beginning to eat and gain weight. She will be in Ho Chi Minh City for a month before she can return to her village. Her father has been given a job in the city for the month, working for the same generous donor. The mother has returned to the village to care for the other children.

Soon Mai will be able to run and play with other children. She will be able to attend school and learn as her peers are learning, and she will be able to have a productive life as a healthy child.

Wouldn't you love to help in providing children with a new life so they can run and play, go to school, and lead a normal life? Join with MEDRIX to save children's lives.

Viet Nam Newspaper Domestic Press Highlights April 23, 2005

**"8,000 heart patients queue
up for operation"**

"Director of the HCM City Heart Institute, Nguyen Ngoc Chieu, said although the institute is the country's largest place for cardiovascular treatment, it can only operate on six patients a day.

At present, more than 8,000 people are waiting for heart surgery. Many of those in line are children whose lives are endangered by the delay."

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“The mission of MEDRIX is to serve the people of SE Asia by sharing medical, educational, and development resources.”

Ultraviolet Water Treatment System in this picture is now in on-going field testing in Vietnam and Tsunami Relief Water Projects.



You can have a similar water treatment system built for people in SE Asia for only \$50.

MEDRIX Spring Teams Returns From 4 weeks in Vietnam

While there, three teams worked in the following areas:

Psychiatric Nursing Classes: A team of 3 nurses and 1 English Conversational teacher taught for 2 weeks in Ho Chi Minh City. It was the first year of classes for nurses who work with the mentally ill, but have had no formal training. The government asked MEDRIX for a 3 year Mental Health teaching contract. Forty-five nurses attended, spending a total of 60 class room hours studying over the 2 week time period.



Ultra-Violet Water Treatment: Five systems were built in Vietnam and placed in pre-schools near Hue. Preschool staff members were trained in operations, and quality monitoring continues. Several international aid organizations are very interested in using this energy and labor-saving systems to replace the practice of boiling water. The goals of the system are:

1. Simple but effective,
2. Affordable for the family 'who live at the end of the path' and
3. The ability to be entirely built in Vietnam by trained local business persons.



Health Clinic Refurbishment: MEDRIX partnered with local health authorities to provide safe water systems in three clinics. Before there was NO safe water for any of the babies who were born in these locations; no safe water for staff to wash with and no safe water for anyone to drink. Now, each clinic has 3 sinks and a latrine with 2 toilets, one shower and 2 sinks. Safe water is now available for the ladies who deliver babies and for the people who work and are served at these clinics that support 30,000 people within three villages. **Due to lack of funds, MEDRIX was only able to do the water systems. STILL NEEDED: \$16,000 for complete clinic refurbishments.**

Minority Woman and Her New Infant in Clinic During MEDRIX Refurbishment Period

This infant was born only hours earlier. The temperature was nearly 95 at 10:30 AM. Note how the mother and baby are wrapped. This custom is hard to break and contributes to the dehydration often suffered by new mothers and infants. The safe water that will be available in this clinic will help prevent unnecessary dehydration and increase the health of each patient who visits this clinic.



WOULD YOU PROVIDE \$750 IF IT MEANT HELPING CHILDREN LIKE MAI?

YES, HERE IS MY GIFT OF:

\$27 \$50 \$73 \$112 \$750
\$ _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

EMAIL: _____

ACCOUNT INFORMATION: CHECK CASH CREDIT CARD (PLEASE CIRCLE)

FOR CREDIT CARD DONATIONS:

VISA/MASTERCARD ACCOUNT #: _____

EXP. DATE: _____

SIGNATURE: _____



I authorize MEDRIX to charge my
Visa/MasterCard account \$ _____

- Monthly
- Quarterly
- Special Gift

On-Going Support:

Monthly \$ _____
Quarterly \$ _____
Yearly \$ _____

MEDRIX can make it easy for you to donate monthly, quarterly, or yearly.
MEDRIX can charge your credit card and provide a statement for your records.