
Good News Department

Like The Crane, Hope Returns To Vietnam

by John L. McCullough

(NAPSA)—The crane has long served as a symbol of peace and long life for the Vietnamese. During the war, the cranes disappeared from the country. Today, as the land is healing from its war



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wounds, the cranes are returning to Vietnam, proclaiming a new beginning.

Just as the cranes are returning to Vietnam, so is the hope of the people. As Executive Director of Church World Service (CWS), I recently had the opportunity to travel to Vietnam and visit some of our projects in the region. The dedication of the people I met and the work of our partners continually amaze me.

The northern mountainous area of Vietnam is the most neglected and least developed area of the country. Travel in Da Bac district in Hoa Binh province, southwest of Hanoi, is difficult due to the mountainous terrain, dams, and a lake dividing the region. The wet season cuts off many areas. Many communities also do not possess the capabilities to provide educational resources for their children. Because of this, many children travel to the Da Bac Minority Boarding School to receive their education, some traveling as far as 100 kilometers away from home. CWS has supported the efforts at this school since 1991, providing blankets, mosquito nets,

school equipment and books, and training to both the students and teachers.

Our projects in Vietnam and around the world are supported largely with the help of CROP WALK gifts. Every year more than 2.3 million people in some 2,000 towns and cities across the United States participate in their community's CROP WALK, raising money to provide tools of hope that empower people to meet their own needs—globally and locally.

Church World Service has been working with partners in Vietnam for the past 25 years, focusing on relief and reconciliation, human rights advocacy, and grassroots development, especially among ethnic minority communities. Founded in 1946, CWS works in partnership with indigenous organizations in more than 80 countries. CWS supports sustainable self-help development, meets emergency needs, and helps address the root causes of poverty and powerlessness.

Last year's CROP WALKS raised more than \$16 million, allowing us to provide essential assistance to our projects in Vietnam and worldwide. Of that total, locally organized, interfaith CROP WALKS returned more than \$4 million to hunger-fighting agencies such as food banks, pantries, and community gardens in their own cities and towns. Your help is needed to provide hope to our neighbors in need. To find the nearest CROP WALK call 1-888-CWS-CROP, or visit the Web site at www.churchworldservice.org.