Signs For Hope

PrayerLetter **Spring 2017**

Deaf Children Thriving in the Philippines & Vietnam and SFH Family Retreat 2017 Update!

SPRING! I LOVE THIS TIME OF YEAR!

The older I get, I turned 58 last week, the more I look forward to Spring during those cold and darkish months of winter. I have to say, though, those months seem to go by so quickly the older I get. Our God's indescribable creativity in His creation includes such amazing and diverse colors and I cannot begin to imagine what He is preparing for us in heaven.

The world's focus on Resurrection Sunday is also something I look forward to with great anticipation each Spring. Yes, I celebrate Jesus' resurrection every day, but the day set aside where we celebrate this eternal life-changing historical event with our Brothers and Sisters globally...there is just something extra special about it. And I have no doubt more people are learning about Jesus during this annual focus than any other day of the year. I was in Vietnam for Resurrection Sunday, last year. Pray those who will "hear" His message this Easter will respond…"YES!"

He is not here! He has risen, as He said!

Forgive my delayed first 2017 PrayerLetter. I could give you many reasons/excuses for this, but I will save you from that.

Our first SFH Adventure Trip for 2017 is now history. A team of 4 of us traveled to the Philippines and Vietnam with 3 different travel schedules. Charles joined us for the first two weeks of this month-long adventure, which gave him the opportunity to see the Deaf work and the diverse cultures in the Philippines and Vietnam, up close and personal. I asked him to share his experiences with you and his story is included below. Tammy Cantrell joined us for three weeks and she too was with us in the Philippines and Vietnam. This was a "sponsor trip" for Tammy since she and her husband,

Brian, have been monthly supporting one of the Deaf students at New Beginnings School for the Deaf in Vietnam (Orphan Voice) for almost 2 years. Tammy has shared her experiences as a sponsor with you below, as well. Keep sponsorship in mind and prayer as we will be sharing new Vietnamese Deaf children and their Deaf and hearing teachers available to sponsor, through our partner organization, Deaf Child Hope International, very soon. Vandora, my armor bearer, as Ed Kofi has dubbed her, was with me the entire 4 weeks. She has recently retired from from teaching over 30 years and has much more freedom to do what she wants and when and of course as her Lord leads.

I pray your celebration of our Savior's resurrection on Resurrection Sunday will be a time of deep spiritual introspection. And you and I will come away with a renewed ability to love Him more because we have been able to embrace His unfathomable love-gift for us, just a little bit more!

TAMMY CANTRELL'S STORY ON MONTHLY SPONSORING A DEAF CHILD IN VIETNAM AT NEW BEGINNINGS SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF (ORPHAN VOICE). DEAF CHILD HOPE INTERNATIONAL FACILITATES THESE MONTHLY SPONSORSHIPS, IN NINE COUNTRIES AND I AM THEIR REPRESENTATIVE FOR VIETNAM.

A Sponsor's Story

by Tammy Cantrell, KY

About a year ago, I first encountered Deaf Child Hope while attending a Christian conference for the Deaf. A [Signs for Hope] booth had information about sponsoring Deaf children from around the world. As a sign language interpreter, I was interested in helping Deaf children so I began to sponsor a boy from Vietnam. I received a photograph of "Tho" and a picture that he had drawn along with a handwritten note about him. That was as far as it went. The sponsorship fee was automatically deducted from my account and I didn't think much more about it.

At the beginning of this year of 2017, I started to think more about Tho. I wrote him a short letter and included a picture of my husband and myself. Soon after that, I received an email inviting sponsors to join a trip to Vietnam in

February and March of 2017. I felt the Lord calling me to join that group and to go meet Tho. I excitedly prepared for the trip and the prospect of meeting Tho. I didn't know that the Lord had much bigger plans for me.

Tho was at the New Beginnings School for the Deaf that had only been open for about three years providing nine deaf children with an education. Prior to that, the deaf children had no opportunity to attend a school in their own language of Vietnamese Sign Language. On the first day of

visiting the school I met Tho. He was a sweet, small, young boy of 11 years old. He did not have a concept of a sponsor and had not yet been given my letter but we became fast friends. A few days later I had he opportunity to hand deliver my letter and picture to him. By that time, I had fallen in love with all of the deaf students at the school and could communicate pretty well with them in Vietnamese Sign Language. By the time he got my letter, Tho knew who I was as a person so he was so excited to receive it and my picture. Another deaf female student also received a letter from her sponsor. I began to realize that my sponsorship not only helped Tho, but it helped all of the kids and staff at the school that I had come to know and love. I am thrilled to know that my small contribution is enabling so much learning and communication for these kids. They were so eager to be there and to participate. It was extremely hard to leave them when the time came.

Now when I see the sponsorship fee through Deaf Child Hope come out of my account, I remember all of the deaf kids at the New Beginnings School who have become so dear to my heart, including Tho. Those kids who came running to greet us when we came to school in the morning like they hadn't seen us for a long time even though it had just been since the day before. Those kids who peeked in my goodie bag everyday to see what activity or game I had brought. Those parents who faithfully drove their children to school and picked them up everyday on their motorbikes. Tho's mother who collected sticks to sell for $1 a day. Tho's grandmother who also came to pick him up some days.

If you never have the opportunity to meet the child you sponsor, just know that the funds are far reaching. They reach the child you sponsor, as well as, all of the other children in that locale. What a blessing that the Lord can use my and your meager offering to bless such precious deaf children.

Tho with his grandmother and Tammy.

Becky: Click here *to see the Deaf children and Deaf Teachers waiting to be sponsored around the world. New Deaf children and their teachers from CDS in Vietnam will be added soon.*

And, as Tammy shared God always has His own agenda...which is usually much broader than ours. In addition to the above, Tammy's many years of training ASL interpreters here in the US and in Guam were also of great benefit to CDS (The Haney's) as they are laying the foundations for their own interpreter training program in Vietnam. ONLY GOD!

Tammy with several of the deaf students and one of their teachers.

2017 SFH ASL-Immersion Family Retreat Update

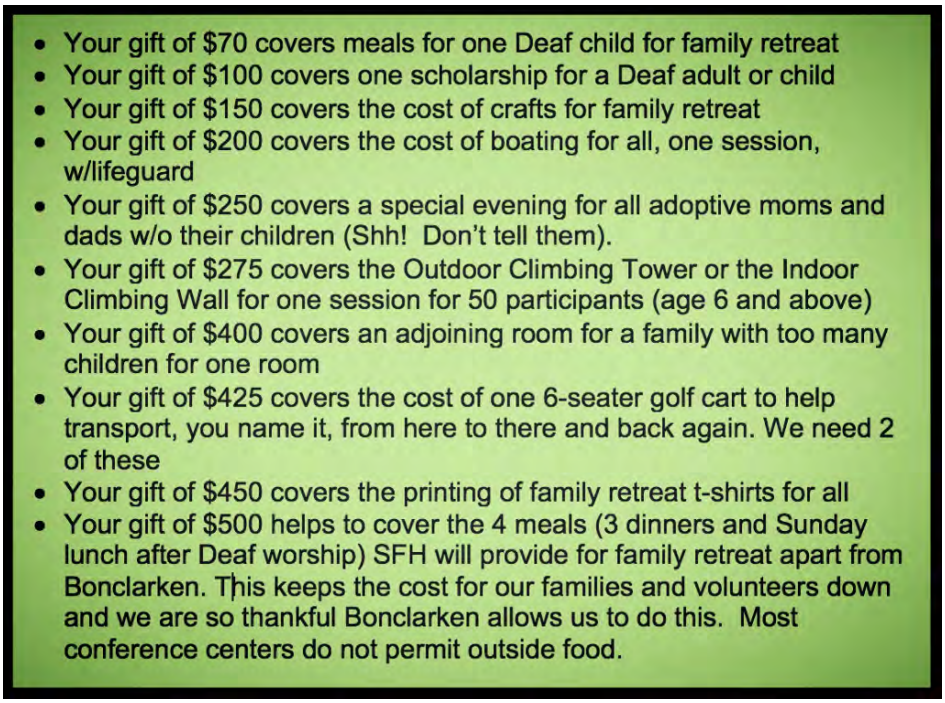
MAY 31ST - JUNE 4TH
(ADDING AN ADDITIONAL NIGHT, AT THE REQUEST OF OUR FAMILIES)

We are a little more than 8 weeks away from our 2017 ASL-Immersion Family Retreat. Last weekend we were able to open registration, finally. Rhonda has been working many hours, for weeks, trying to discover and then create a user-friendly platform (at a reasonable cost) for registering folks electronically, saving as much information as possible for the future. This will hopefully be a long term benefit for Signs for Hope and for those who attend our family retreats for years to come. Folks, a lot of paperwork is involved with hosting family retreat!

Honestly, registration has been slow this week. Six months ago, I opened a FaceBook group for all those families and volunteers already interested and planning on joining us for 2017. At that time, the number of adoptive families planning to join us was almost enough to close registration to all others. However, to date, only two volunteers and one family has officially registered. Just recently, I have had several families, from last year, tell me they will unfortunately and sadly not be able to join us for a variety of reasons. None of those are because of the cost of family retreat, but a variety of other situations that have arisen within their families. Please pray for registration to speed-up for those who are coming and for donations for family retreat to come in, too.

I have held two fundraisers for family retreat 2017, thus far, and have two others coming up soon. You did a wonderful job of helping us keep the costs down for last year's family retreat, making it possible for so many to join us and I am praying God will provide the same support for those who come this year, too. Will you ask God how He wants you involved with our family retreat, this year, please? By the way, you can join us, even if you do not know sign language. Trust me, you will learn some sign while you are with us and you will have a blast doing so! Just ask me about the opportunities to help with family retreat.

I know some of you like to see tangible ways you can help so I have created a list of things we are offering at family retreat this year, much the same as last year. Lord willing, we are offering $100 scholarships for each Deaf volunteer or child who attends, the same as last year. This helps many of our Deaf volunteers and families be able to join us. If we have just 30 Deaf, adults and children join us...that is $3,000. Of course, every $ given helps, so please do not let this list be discouraging to you. I have simply shared it, because some like to know.



And we are waiting on a quote for a Certificate of Liability from our insurance company. This was not something we secured last year, but realized this year is a must, along with background checks on all our volunteers ($13 each). These will be additional costs, this year.

This list helps me and you realize much of what it takes, financially, to host this one-of-a-kind Christian family retreat! This is not something that is duplicated anywhere else, yet. I pray some day, SFH Family Retreats will be held across this country, and even in other countries, making it possible for not only adoptive families of Deaf children to attend but all families raising Deaf

children to attend. This year's family retreat, the same as last year, is a labor of love for all and truly totally dependent on what the Lord leads folks to give. The family retreat account currently has a balance of about $1,000 and we need well over $10,000.Last year, I did not know how much it would cost and I just trusted God to provide. This year, I know, or at least I think I have a pretty good idea of the cost and I wish I did not. $10,000+ is daunting for me this year. Daunting for me, is doable by our God! We have not heard anything back from the Tim Tebow Foundation since the card I received saying their board will meet during the first quarter of 2017 to make their decisions for grants. Pray my enthusiasm and trust in God's provision being exactly what it needs to be, no matter what the outcome, will be just as great as last year. Your prayers for every aspect of this year's SFH ASL-Immersion Family Retreat are coveted!

TRUST IN THE LORD WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND LEAN NOT ON YOUR OWN UNDERSTANDING. IN ALL YOUR WAYS ACKNOWLEDGE HIM AND HE WILL MAKE YOUR PATHS STRAIGHT.

PROVERBS 3:5-6

ONLY GOD!

CHARLES' PERSPECTIVE ON OUR ADVENTURE TRIP TO THE PHILIPPINES AND VIETNAM.

What I Learned on Our Trip

By Charles Lloyd

Did you know that the Atlanta airport is the busiest airport in the world?

Did you know that after this trip Becky has been in nine of the ten busiest airports in the world? The only one she has missed is Dubai.

Did you know that Manila is the most densely populated city in the world? To give you an idea – Asheville has 1,856 people per square mile, Atlanta 3,360/sq mile, Los Angeles 8282/sq mile, New York City, 28,052/sq. mile. Manila has 54,000 people per square mile.

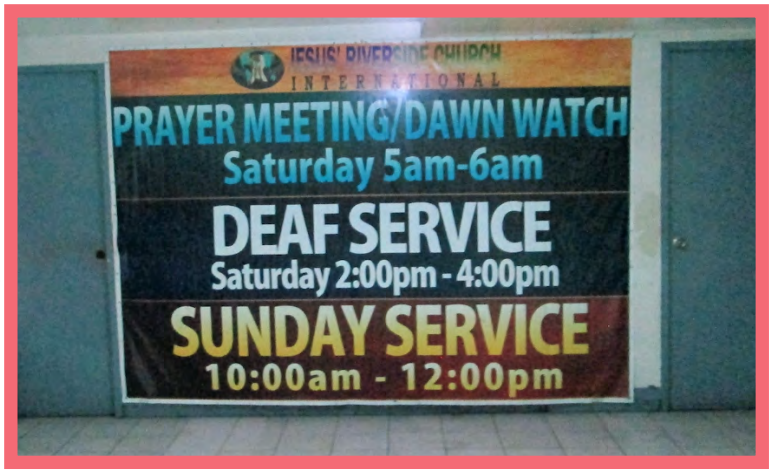
Manila from the air as we departed for Vietnam! And that's only a part of Manila.

Did you know that Jesus' Riverside International Church in Manila sponsors a newly established Deaf Church? Many of the Deaf members of this church are just learning Filipino Sign Language. The pastors use the Scripture to not only teach God's Word but also sign language at the same time.

This Deaf church is growing fast. The mother-church also sponsors a Taekwondo Church for teenagers and it too is growing fast.

Did you know that My Children's House of Hope in Bahay Bata (Manila), run by Talking Hands (a preschool for Deaf children), is reaching the parents of Deaf children? The parents are learning sign language in classes with their children. This same school is teaching computer skills to high school and college Deaf students. These students will eventually become computer technicians and many will be employed by the Filipino government. Did you know that Orphan Voice's New Beginnings

School for the Deaf in Phu Ninh (pronounced Phoo Nin), Vietnam is doing great work? This school has only been open a little over three years and many of the students had NO language before starting this school. Now these students are learning all the regular school subjects and continuing to learn Vietnamese Sign Language (VSL). There is a new girl, age 5, who has been attending NB about 3 weeks. Vandora and Tammy spent some time with her by herself. They were very encouraged by how quickly she learned numbers and matching while they were playing games. They felt that this little girl, if training continues, could one day be a leader among the Deaf. Also, there is a new assistant teacher at the school. She knew no VSL when she started and now she is communicating with the students through VSL because the students taught her. Becky is very encouraged about this new assistant because she is eager to learn VSL and she works well with the students. Please pray for three of the older students that it will be clear as to how to



better help them to continue to learn on a higher level. All the students regardless of age are taught together, at this time.

Did you know that Danang International Fellowship (DIF) Church is a lot like heaven? There are over 18 nationalities worshiping God together at DIF.

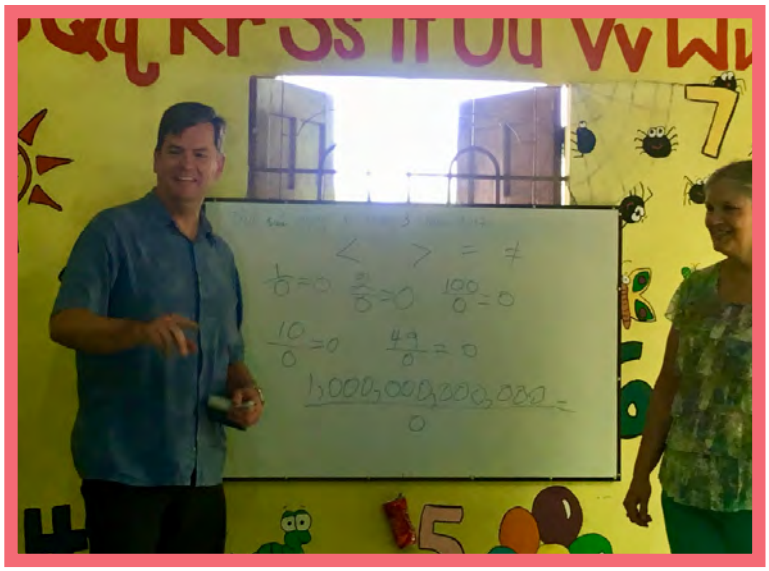
"After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb." Revelation 7:9. Did you know that Central Deaf Services (CDS), in Danang, employs Deaf teachers to teach Deaf children? They are currently searching for more teachers as their school continues to grow. Monthly sponsorship opportunities for these Deaf students and Deaf teachers will be forthcoming, very soon.

Also, please pray that the teacher of the Deaf students and her two assistants at New Beginnings will be able to get more in depth Vietnamese Sign Language training and Deaf Education training.

While there, Becky took part in an introductory interpreter training course that Grayce Fleet taught to give those students learning Vietnamese Sign Language (VSL) an idea of what a qualified interpreter looks like. There are only a handful of VSL interpreters across the entire country of Vietnam.

Did you know that CDS has their first resident Deaf student? Huy (pronounced Whee) is an orphan from south Vietnam; the other Deaf students at CDS are not orphans and are day students. Huy has NO language at this point and is probably about 6 years old. Jeff and Nancy Haney (directors of CDS)

worked over the past 10 months with various Vietnamese government agencies and the director of the center where Huy lived for the past 4 years, to gain permission to bring him to Danang. Please pray the Haney's can find the needed caregivers for Huy and that he can begin to learn VSL.
Did you know that Jesus loves the little children of the World, ALL the little children of the World?



From my heart to yours...

I have so many things I would like to share with you in these last few paragraphs, but this has come to the forefront this past week.

The DeLauney Family (Max is on the right)- At last year's family retreat the DeLauney family, from AL, joined us. Mom, Kristen, her mom, Tricia Noah, brought Max and Miles, both Deaf and adopted from China in November of 2015. Dad, Bryan, could not join us since he was saving his time-off from work for Max's upcoming heart surgery. Not long after family retreat Max had surgery. Recovery was quicker than expected, but a possible additional surgery would be sometime in his future and Kristen and Bryan moved forward with their third adoption, until…

Delauney Family Adoption - March 27

Max Update!

We know a lot of you have wondered how Max has been doing and I know that we haven't posted anything in a long time, but much has happened over the last couple of months. Max went to get an evaluation because he had fluid retention, in January. After getting a heart cath, the doctor admitted him and put a chest tube in. The next step was a surgery to take down the Glenn to help with the fluid retention. It took 6 weeks for Max to get to a point where he could have the surgery. After the surgery, Max appeared to be doing great. He was sitting up and coloring and doing really well. All of a sudden he had a cardiac arrest

I requiring CPR for 2 minutes. He came off ECMO and then arrested needing COR for 11 more minutes. He again arrested needing CPR for about an hour and had to get put on ECOM again. We had to again wait and see if he had massive neurological damage, and by the will of God, he didn't. He is no longer an ECMO candidate, so can't be put back on life support, again. We decided to have another surgery to put him on a LVAD which is basically a pump that works in place of his left ventricle. Max is now on a path to have a heart and kidney transplant. His kidneys shut down from his cardiac arrests and heart failure. This is just in the beginning phases and could be a process that takes many months up to a year to occur. He can't leave the hospital until he gets a new heart and kidney. Max has a long way to go and many obstacles to overcome before he can get the transplants that he needs. We ask for prayers and thank you for all your love and support.

-The DeLauney Family

The above was shared on their Facebook page for their adoptions on March 27th, last Monday.

Max (l to r) just before family retreat last year; following surgery last July; recently.

Please pray for this precious family as they seek God's continued guidance and try to navigate everyday life with one son in the hospital and one son at home, indefinitely.

I do love you, but only because He loved me first,
Becky

Don't worry over anything whatever; tell God every detail of your needs in earnest and thankful prayer, and the peace of God which transcends human understanding, will keep constant guard over your hearts and minds as they rest in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6

Note added 4/14/17 by Becky: Max is now with Jesus! Please continue to pray for the DeLauney Family as they grieve the loss of this sweet boy.

Stay in touch with Becky!

beckyblloyd@gmail.com

828.691.2581

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