

REI-VIETNAM — A Summary of 2007

An Exciting First-hand Story from REI-Vietnam's Director

"I've lost the blood pressure." Every eye turned to view the wall monitor. A straight line. The operating room was dead silent. **One cardiologist** rushed to the medications while the other grabbed a syringe, received the medicine and began slowly infusing it into the 4 day old baby. The **intensivist** stepped up and immediately began chest compressions on the exposed heart. The **surgeon** moved to the foot of the operating table. The **perfusionist** sat motionless. The **Vietnamese assistants** grabbed the defibrillator. No one spoke. Fifteen pairs of eyes watched the monitor. Silently I became a combination cheerleader and priest: *"Come on little guy! Father, start that heart!"*



Thirty seconds stretched into an eternity. Finally: *"I've got a pulse."* The straight line began to wiggle, then peak and the spaces began to fill in. There were no cheers but only a collective sigh of relief. Vietnamese eyes met one another, and they understood that if they do open heart surgery on infants better systems have to be in place. With this dramatic scene, the 4 day old baby became a statistic, a number: six surgeries on 'terminally ill' children and five are still with us.

Have we as REI-Vietnam done our job when the National Pediatric Hospital successfully conducts open heart surgery on infants? *The work has just begun* when this occurs. **Ten years ago** the Vietnamese would be delighted that five of the six children are in recovery. Today they are evaluating what happened with the one who was lost — *life is being promoted!*

Highlights of 2007

Our Hanoi-based Team Leader, designed an Abstinence-Based AIDS Education program for his university. He deliberately trained his Vietnamese faculty colleagues with these concepts, and now Vietnamese teachers are taking this program around Hanoi and beyond. Thousands of students are embracing *values* that are core to us. *Light is benefiting many as it illuminates personally.*

Three years ago An American couple who are English teachers, along with their children, moved to Hanoi where they have been *faithfully* serving at the university by training faculty. Based on the quality of their service, the university's President invited them to be interviewed on national television. Filming began at the university with the topic centering on *"What's it like to be a foreigner living in Hanoi?"*

At the end of the day, the producer asked: *"Can we come to your home and film you and your family there?"* The crew arrived and set up shop. Their 6 year old son delighted the interviewers by happily conversing in Vietnamese! While this couple is focused on university faculty and students, through this program (to be aired in January) and other professional invitations, they are expanding their influence remarkably.

Summaries of REI-Vietnam work since 1992 are encouraging:

17 Staff Families have lived in Hanoi including 3 there currently,
66 Vietnamese professionals have come to the USA for Observational Fellowships,
299 professionals from 10 countries have joined us,
106 professionals traveled with us in 2007, and 67 of these were returnees!

Numbers alone do not tell the whole story. This is especially true in a work like REI-Vietnam. Whether we are describing our Resident Team, Medical personnel, our Veterinarians, our Business Educators, or our Professional Writers, each goes to Vietnam seeking to forge relationships that *bring hope to the individual — building people to build nations.*