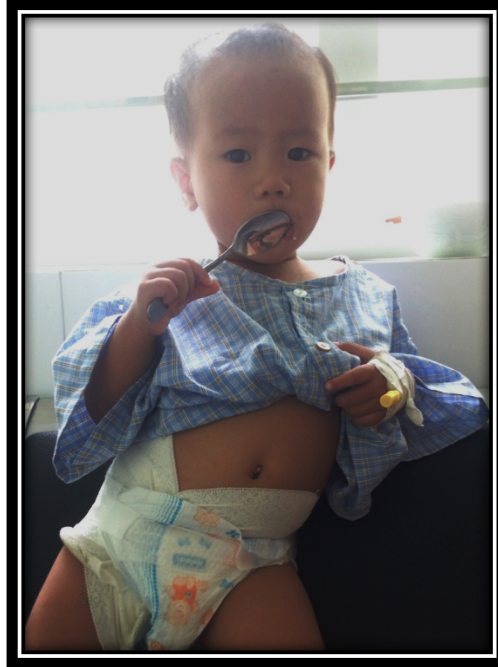


LOTUS OPEN-HEART PROGRAM

CASE PROFILE

NGUYEN THI TRA MY- our 1000th Case



A BIG HEART FELT

THANK YOU

To ALL LOTUS donors

The LOTUS Humanitarian Aid Foundation has now been in existence for ten years. In celebration of the milestone we have launched an updated web site and would like to take this opportunity to introduce a very special person - Nguyen Thi Tra My (pictured above).

Nguyen Thi Tra My (pronounced 'Me') was not born with a silver spoon. She is a two-year old girl, the third child born to parents in their mid-thirties. The family lives in a village within the Quang Hoa Commune of Ba Don Township, Quang Binh Province, which is located in central Viet Nam. My's parents are subsistence farmers who grow rice to feed themselves and, when they can, work as laborers in order to generate some cash.

And what is so special about little My? Well, at the beginning of March 2016 My was diagnosed with heart disease and on June 7, 2016 underwent a successful angioplasty procedure at the Hoan My Hospital in Da Nang, thus becoming the 1,000th beneficiary of the LOTUS Open-Heart Program. If it were not for the generosity of LOTUS donors this program would not exist and My may not have been saved. This is a tribute to all of you and the financial support that you've provided over the past 10 years. Here is My's story:

Born in August 2014, My was never a normal healthy babe. She was often ill with a fever, cough, and pneumonia. She was hospitalized several times at a local hospital but the rural doctors did not recognize the signs of potential heart disease and consequently did not move her to a hospital with more advanced medical care. Although Viet Nam has made significant progress in addressing childhood heart disease, definitive diagnosis and heart surgery remains the domain of major, regional hospitals.

It was not until March 2016 when a delegation of doctors from the Hoan My Hospital in Da Nang came to Ba Don Township to examine children who were ill. These doctors were able to make a correct diagnosis and informed the family that My needed urgent procedure to save her life. They informed the family that the surgery would cost \$1,617.25.

Her parents explained sadly that it was impossible for them to pay such an expense and returned home with My. Fearful and dejected, they had no clue as to how they might fund the procedure. They live in an old house, which they inherited from the grandparents. Its walls were built with cement blocks that were made a long time ago and are now worn, cracked, and moldy. The interior has a thin layer of cement that serves as the floor and the roofing is made of an equally ancient clay tile. They own nothing of any particular value. They are simple subsistence farmers trying to get by.

The parents cultivate about 1,000 square meters (less than a quarter of an acre) of agricultural land from which they harvest two crops each year providing 800kg of dry? Rice? as the staple for their diet. In addition, they raise and sell piglets raising about \$135 during a good year. To supplement the family's income the father works as a mason's assistant contributing an additional \$7 per day to the family when the work is available.

The family depends solely on these aspects of their lives to survive and keep the two older children in school and clothed. It's just barely enough for them to make ends meet. The cost of My's medical treatment made their family's situation more difficult. The parents knew that, at best, they could cover the cost of transportation to Da Nang (approximately six hours from Ba Don) and food costs for My and one parent while she was hospitalized¹. During April 2016, in desperation they sought help from our governmental partner, the Quang Binh Sponsor Association for Poor Patients. In turn, the association forwarded My's case to LOTUS. Responding as quickly as possible, our staff in Quang Tri conducted a family assessment on May 18, 2016. LOTUS then made a financial commitment and worked with two other NGOs to secure the entire cost of surgery that remained after insurance coverage. Documents from the respective NGOs were sent to Hoan My Hospital guaranteeing payment and the family was able to move forward with saving My's life.

This is just one of a thousand stories of need and triumph that LOTUS has participated in over the last 10 years. These children and their stories are the single most important reason we keep doing this work and asking for your help. With your help, LOTUS is on track to help approximately two hundred cases like My's each year.

¹ To add to the reader's knowledge, insurance companies in Viet Nam pay somewhere between 40 and 60% of cost for heart surgery and angioplasty procedures, depending on the type of disease, type of surgery, and the hospital involved. While in the hospital family members of the patient are responsible for bathing the patient as well as providing clean clothes and food.