



September 26, 2017

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Bandage Brigade Update and Notification of Changes Winding down bandage production

Dear Bandage Brigade Volunteer:

The D.O.V.E. Fund trustees returned from Vietnam in February 2017, and had much to report. During their trip, they visited remote leper villages to deliver our beautiful lovingly made leper bandages. In follow up they also discussed the ongoing care of the lepers with the nuns who visit and tend to them.

We learned that, while leprosy continues, most of the open sores which needed bandaging have been healed. Also, they have been able to start utilizing disposable gauze for bandaging. It is readily available there locally and does not pose the challenge of trying to wash and sterilize. The cost for purchase of disposables is just a fraction of the cost and effort for our volunteers to make the knit bandages, ship them to Ohio. D.O.V.E. Fund volunteers packaging/handling, plus increased expenses incurred transporting them to Vietnam and distributing them within the country.

Therefore, the decision has been made to ask our volunteers to use up their supply of cotton thread and turn in their completed bandages by the end of 2017.

We have accomplished so very much in the past 12 years. What began in 2005 as a small group of volunteers blossomed into a literal brigade of thousands of volunteers from the US and numerous foreign countries.

In 2008 we became an official part of The D.O.V.E. Fund (a 501(c)3 organization). This has greatly expanded our support and ability to handle and deliver larger quantities of bandages. In 2010 my husband and I personally visited leper villages to deliver food and medicine plus further assess their needs. We had been told they were starving but did not know what that meant until we personally witnessed it.

The food and medicine we delivered in 2010 was just a tiny start to the assistance that The D.O.V.E. Fund Bandage Brigade continues to supply to this previously forgotten population suffering from the effects of leprosy. The compassion and support provided by the generous membership of The D.O.V.E. Fund has now extended to:

- Annual gifts of food and medicine
- Distribution of solar lights to homes without electricity
- Scholarships for children of the leper families
- Fresh Water systems

Please know that your efforts have enabled great accomplishments in the care and continued support of these special people. It may have seemed like you were "just" making a bandage but you were also helping The D.O.V.E. Fund Bandage Brigade bring attention to the other needs of the leper community.

We have known all along that there are benefits to the volunteers being involved in this project. Many of you have emphasized the therapeutic blessings experienced with your involvement.

Perhaps you will choose to lay down your needles for now and help raise funds for the continuing projects that The D.O.V.E. Fund does for these people. Any donations can be earmarked for “Leper Assistance” if you so desire.

If you still have an urge to use your needles, there are many organizations in our local communities that can benefit from your skills. Just do some searches online and let them know how you can help.

Thank you again for your love, dedication and service to this Brigade – *mission accomplished* – we have done more for the lepers than I could have dreamed of when we started down this path in 2005. The Brigade will “march” on with the continued work of The D.O.V.E. Fund.

Sincerely,
Linda Stocker
The Bandage Brigade, Founder
The D.O.V.E. Fund, Trustee
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