

Vinh Linh Blind Association Facility Celebrates 5th Anniversary



GLOBAL COMMUNITY SERVICE FOUNDATION

Blind and visually disabled citizens in the poor and rural district of Vinh Linh located north of the "DMZ" dividing line between the former North and South Viet Nam continue to benefit from the construction of a facility that opened in October 2010.

Illinois Society of Eye Physicians & Surgeons (ISEPS) past-president and Army veteran Ronald C. May, MD, was the initial motivating force that led to the involvement of the Illinois state society in the Viet Nam effort. The eye exam training room is dedicated in his honor. Projects have included working with Alcon, Inc. to establish a phaco course at the Viet Nam National Institute of Ophthalmology in Hanoi which has resulted in a vast improvement in the ability of Vietnamese ophthalmologists to treat cataracts throughout the country including Quang Tri.

Through a fundraising effort spearheaded by ISEPS members and with a grant from the Cole-Crone Family Foundation in Deerfield, IL, and in partnership with the Global Community Service Foundation, the Vinh Linh Blind Association now has the ability to teach life skills and provide employment for area residents who have lost their eyesight.



ISEPS Executive Director Rich Paul at the Vinh Linh Blind Association Facility

The Association manufactures toothpicks, incense and provide massage services which provide direct income to the blind individuals working there, as well as income to the organization. The facility also features an eye exam room which, in conjunction with the training program at the Quang Tri Medical College, will utilize a mobile eye exam kit donated by ISEPS to provide a convenient location for local eye care.



GCSF local representative Tam Xuan Nguyen, Vinh Linh Blind Association chairman Le Lao Bang, deputy chair Nguyen Van Khoa, accountant Pham Thi My, and ISEPS executive director Rich Paul commemorate the fifth anniversary of the opening of the new facility.



Rich Paul with visually impaired students from Quang Tri