

There are more than 400 children in the Central Vietnam living with HIV. Most of these children are from impoverished backgrounds, having lost one or both parents to the disease.

*You can help!*

**\$40 USD / month**

Covers basic needs of food and health care services

**\$150 USD / year**

Covers school fees, books, uniforms and notebooks

**\$900 US**

Allows a family to participate in income generation activities and livelihood improvement



# Soft Shoulders of grandparents



Viet Nam  
Health  
Improvement  
Project



Viet Nam  
Health  
Improvement  
Project

**Contact us:**  
[info@vnhip.org](mailto:info@vnhip.org)  
[www.vnhip.org](http://www.vnhip.org)

## I dream of becoming a doctor

Vy is 7 years old and her brother, Tam, is 10 years old. Their mother died when Vy was only three months old, and soon after her father abandoned them. Because her paternal grandparents refused to raise Vy and Tam, they moved to her maternal grandmother's house. Now, they are growing on the shoulders of their grandmother, Luyen. Right after Vy was diagnosed with HIV, the news traveled fast to the whole village. Neighbors don't let their children play with her. "If they won't play with me, I know to simply walk away. I know to handle my condition and protect others", Vy shares. Vy dreams of becoming a doctor, to take care of her grandmother.



Vy's grandmother's love and determination finally won her granddaughter the right to the education she had dreamed of but was denied. With VNHIP's support, Vy's grandmother was able to persuade the new principal to let Vy start school this fall. Vy loves school and is a good student. Her teacher and classmates are kind, and she does not mind having to sit alone or go home for lunch if it means she can play with her friends at recess. "At lunch time, I take Vy home from the school. Vy loved to have lunch with her class-mates, but the parents of the other children reject her", says Luyen, the grandmother.



*How would my grandchildren survive if I pass away?*

Her kindergarten teacher allowed Vy to finish kindergarten, but pressure from parents and a prejudiced principal prevented her from going to primary school with her friends. Without school, Vy spent a sad and lonely year at home. She missed the company of her friends, whose worried parents now forbade them to play with her. Meanwhile Vy's grandmother added teacher, nurse and playmate to her ever-growing list of responsibilities.



Unable to work full-time, Luyen supports the family by raising chickens and doing casual work when she can get it. They receive some financial support from the government, but it is not enough to cover their basic needs and they are the poorest family in town. Vy's grandmother desperately wants to improve their situation. Luyen is considered too high a risk by government or bank lenders, because of her age and her inability to repay the 20,000,000 VND (1,000 USD) she borrowed to pay for her daughter (Vy's mother's) funeral and care for her grandchildren, and has applied for a VNHIP livelihood grant to raise more chickens and increase their income.

