

## **2018-2019 Program Highlights:**

### *Community Buy-in:*

During our recent Vietnam trip in July 2019, we met several participating parents and children at A Ngo school (in A Lưới) and other schools in Quảng Trị where we held NERP (Nutrition Education Rehabilitation Program) sessions during the previous school year. Many mothers and children whom we saw during our March 2019 trip now looked more alert and cheerful, not looking tired even in 100<sup>0</sup>F weather.

Participating mothers now reported that their children did not get sick and did not lose weight during the summer when school was out. Some even gained weight as they looked chubbier. This was great news to school administrators who frequently observed the fluctuations of children gaining weight by the end of the school year then losing all of it during the summer.

Some participating mothers reported cooking the bean congee, beans & rice or other favorite NERP recipes at least 2-3x a week at home.

- One mother stated that she never used the locally available turmeric in her cooking until she attended our NERP session. She loved it so much that she now uses it in most of her daily dishes. She even showed her fingertips, all yellow, to prove it.
- Another mother stated that she did not know the local green vegetable named “Rau ngót” until now, which she has begun to incorporate into her soup since it is widely available.
- Eating beans with rice is a new way to incorporate more protein in their diet which many mothers now accept and cook frequently at home.

### *Children as Agents of Change:*

Many mothers even stated that the children themselves reminded them to wash hands before eating. The ritual of washing hands before eating in our nutrition and cooking sessions became a good habit for the children. Having access to water and the washing station at schools certainly help to reinforce this positive behavior change at home.

- Hand-washing facilities very rarely exist in the great majority of the pre-school and kindergartens in rural areas. Therefore, to facilitate this much-needed behavior change from non-washing to washing, GDHF subsidized the construction of several hand-washing basins at all of our PNSP participating schools during the last school year. We focused on changing the children’s behavior and turning it into a habit with the hope that the children will themselves become the change agent at home.

### *Collaboration:*

The feedback we received from mothers in all locations are very useful. We encouraged them to share their valuable experiences with mothers of new students at the first PTA meeting of the school year in September. We hope this program will attract new mothers of malnourished children who could greatly benefit from it. Three enthusiastic mothers who already attended these sessions in A Ngo school expressed their desire to volunteer for next year’s program as mother leaders. They all expressed heartfelt thanks to our PNSP staff for caring and showing them the ways to help their malnourished children become nourished.

A few mothers also stated that their friends and relatives began to notice the difference in them and their children and have asked them to share their experiences and recipes. We were elated to hear the spreading of good information on nutrition and health practices!