

PREM DAN

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Dear Friends,

This is the last news-letter of this century. Its hard to believe that I spent exactly one quarter of this century doing Social work with the underprivileged children of Mumbai. I have no regrets about leaving my previous assignments for the upper class. Today as I look around I'm surrounded by my ex-students from Prem Dan who are either working and enjoying job satisfaction or ambitious students in reputed colleges and hundreds of children in very good schools competing successfully with the rich and upper-middle class. Prem Dan has truly been "A Gift of Love" for 25 years. I can now celebrate the Silver Jubilee year of my second career.

The Jubilee year symbolizes true jubilation a period of joy to be celebrated in God's honour since it means liberation. It signifies the return of equality and justice, for all children of God since equality implies the existence of righteous governments that seek to protect the weak and marginalized. The Jubilee has always had a spiritual and very profound meaning, which has always occurred in a visible, audible and tangible way. The joy arising from the celebration of this event must not only be inner, but also outward and be manifested. That is why the year 2000 refers to the date of the Great Jubilee: 2000 years have passed since the birth of Christ (the chronological computation started when Jesus came to earth) making the Jubilee a special event for the whole of mankind given the influence of Christ's birth in man's history. Therefore the jubilee of the year 2000 will differ from the past ones in its different religious meaning of the "TIME" in which it is celebrated; the presence of God and His salvation are tangible in every single moment of our lives.

Through Christ's revelation and His message of hope, carried out by His words and His works, Christ gives freedom to all people and brings salvation to the whole mankind thus making the year of our Lord a time of joy to which the Jubilee refers to.

Since I last wrote to you, we have worked hard to give the two schools in the slums: Reay Road and Geetanagar a face-lift. We thank our German Benefactor – Mr.Gerhard Meier for contributing most of the cost of rebuilding the Reay Road School. Now it looks more dignified and has two separate classrooms, adequate doors and windows. The teachers and children will be more comfortable. In the Geetanagar School the repairs were minor but a lot of paint and polish gives it a better look. You will be happy to know that after 15 years the poor children of Reay Road slum will have a school Bus ! No doubt its an old one but it will help the staff and students to travel comfortably to their school.

During Diwali vacation (Festival of Lights) we conducted two Holiday camps for our children – two groups of 50 children went to a Hill Station called Lonavla. This was our first camp at this beautiful Hill station, which overlooks a dam called Bushy Dam. We are grateful to our benefactress Mrs.Zuli Nacooda and her team at Bal Gram. They were very generous and hospitable. We had no power-cuts , no water shortage and the children enjoyed the camp thoroughly. The children loved their bathing and swimming in the river. Thanks a million Zuli for making us feel at home in your lovely Holiday resort!

We had the pleasure of meeting some of our dear friends and sponsors. Elizabeth Hunck came for a holiday to Nepal and spent a few days in Mumbai. It was good to meet our dear friend again. Thanks Elizabeth for all the help you gave us!

Once again our children were thrilled to receive Christmas gifts from their sponsors from Prem Dan Belgium. We thank Uncle Peter Van Wijk for making a special trip just to give this joy to our children.

It was a pleasure to meet Lorenzo and Deborah from Prem Dan Italy. Thank you Mauro Mingrone and all the members of Prem Dan Italy for your valuable collaboration and contribution to the work done in Prem Dan.

We also had the joy of meeting our dear friend and generous Irish sponsor Julie Headon. Her visits always mean so much to our children who follow her like Pied Piper. Many thanks to you Julie!

Tommy, your dream to make the Lufthansa Pilots and Air Hostesses visit Prem Dan, has come true. Many of them have come to meet us with their smiling faces and gifts for the children. Thanks a million Tommy!

Our beloved fairy God Ma – Havovi Medora is still with us in spirit. She has loaded her children of Prem Dan with so many gifts! Uncle Sammy is always carrying her gifts to Mumbai. Havovi we miss you and hope the years can be converted into days to get you back to Mumbai. This Christmas 'Santa Claus Havovi' will not be around – too bad, but we'll have to cope with the separation. Look after yourself Aunty Havovi – We love you and miss you very much.

On the 16th of October 1999 the foundation stone for another building was laid. This will accommodate the students who complete High School in our Boarding. They will attend the colleges in the vicinity. This Hostel will also take care of our school drop-outs. They will be given Vocational Training, Home Science, Computer Training etc. We also plan to help our homeless working girls that cannot afford Hostel Accommodation in the city. I am counting on your generosity to help me complete this needy Project. Donations in cash or useful articles for this home will be most welcome.

May the New Millennium bring you and your family love, peace, joy and hope!
I wish each one of you a Happy Christmas and God's choicest blessing in the year 2000.

Yours gratefully in Jesus and Mary,

Sr. Felicity Morris
(SR. FELICITY MORRIS)

