

Guyanese Outreach

*And the King will answer and say to them,
"Truly, I say to you, to the extent that you
did it to one of these brothers of mine, even
the least of them, you did it to me."*

Matthew 25:40

January 2008

Dear Friends and Partners of GO:

On behalf of the Board of Directors, our donors, volunteers here in the US, as well as our staff and volunteers in Corriverton, a most blessed holiday and prosperous New Year to you and your loved ones. May the Lord continue to shine his love and blessings on you and our lovely homeland. I want to share a few thoughts of our activities this past year.

But first, I want to share how GO is evolving. Our focus has evolved as the needs of our community here in Corriverton have changed. Many of you know that GO started since 1995 by delivering containers of humanitarian aid. As the economy improved, GO evolved by offering vocational training classes in sewing and computers. We decided that instead of providing a man a meal, it is better to teach him how to fish. These days, it is rare to find a business in Corriverton that does not have employees that were trained by GO.

For the year 2007, GO has again evolved. We are committed to teaching our children life-skills. These life-skills start a good education. GO introduced our pilot functional literacy program since 2006. It is popularly referred to as GO's After School Reading Program and children attend at no cost. The classes have been enthusiastically received by the children, their parents, and the community. Even more significantly, teachers and school administrators in the greater Corriverton are asking for our help. They are seeing and witnessing firsthand how the children that have attended our classes have improved in their public school grades in reading, spelling and writing. Most of the children that attend our classes enter with a public school grade of C, D or E. After completing just one of our many classes, their public school grades improve at least one full grade point. We are in the middle of curricula redesign and further teacher training to improve those public school grades by at least two full grades. Our success is based on a well designed curricula and well trained volunteer teachers. It is no coincidence that this achievement coincides with GO receiving help from the Peace Core and VSO, for which we are extremely grateful.

Our goal for 2008 is to expand our 7 satellite facilities by adding another 15 in Region 6. Most of the infrastructure and operations are in place from the perspective of curricula, training of our teachers, and program administration. What is basically lacking is additional funds to expand and increase our institutional capacity. During the first quarter of 2008, GO will send about 25,000 books to our Vo-Tech. This will increase our current library circulation from its existing 6,000 books to 31,000. In conjunction with GO's TOPs program, we are exploring how to share our library with our satellite locations and some of the public schools. And as we move ahead with the functional literacy program, GO will continue to offer classes in sewing, crafts, and computers. We will continue our community outreach and helping our sister church affiliates.

My prayers continue to be answered. We are truly making an impact on our most precious assets, our kids. They are our future. We want to provide them with the best opportunities that we can. I continue to be awestruck at the hand of our Lord, at the many volunteers that come forth to help, by the many organizations that partner with us, by the sacrifices that we are all making to make our little part of the world a better place to live. **It has been a good year. Thank you all for your sacrifices. We are seeing the fruits of our labor. We expect this year to be even better.**

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Functional Literacy Program Takes Off!

GO's Functional Literacy Program (After School Reading Classes) has moved beyond the initial pilot stage and is now operational in 7 locations:

GO Vo-Tech Skeldon; Tagore Secondary School # 63; # 48 Full Gospel; # 71 Massiah; Full Gospel Movement Streams of Power # 78; Vo-Tech Skeldon; Lutheran Camp Center Skeldon Line Path.

Since the pilot was launched in January 2007, our total enrollment is 239. On any given week, GO caters to about 175 primary students.

GO's operations got a major boost with the assistance of Amy Frank, a Peace Core Volunteer, (PCV) and Janette Manlangit, VSO, (Volunteer Organization Overseas). GO is blessed that Amy Frank, who comes from the US, is helping GO over the next two years. Amy's focus is on institutional strengthening. She also teaches advanced functional literacy classes. Amy explains that the focus of the phonics classes go beyond helping children sound out words. We help children write the letters of the alphabet, know the sounds for each letter and read basic sentences in books appropriate to their grade level.

The functional literacy curricula also got a boost with the expertise of VSO Janette Manlangit a Primary Educationalist from the Philippines. In designing the After School Reading Class curricula, Janette is helping our staff conduct keen observations of the children in order to select which curriculum best suits their interest and level of development. Our teachers are building their methodology and teaching techniques in phonics through the help of Janette.

Equally as important is the role of parents. We are helping parents to understand that they need to get more involved with their children's education. We are teaching them what they can specifically do to encourage their children to learn. We are showing parents how they can reinforce at home what the children are learning in the classroom.

Since students have already spent an entire day at the primary school when they come to our class, GO's classes are structured with many different activities, never focusing on just one exercise. Students take turn to read out loud, and answer questions about what they have read. We help students improve their reading fluency and comprehension.



Volunteer Amy Frank reading with students at Streams of Power

Facilitator VSO Janette Manlangit at GO's Development Workshop for Teachers

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GO's founder, Ruth Singh, asking parents to make a commitment to participate in their children's education.



Students having snacks before starting class at # 48 Full Gospel.

TOPS Program is a Hit!

GO's Corriverton TOPS program (near the Skeldon market) is teaching 175 primary school students craft skills each week. These primary students are making handkerchiefs, kitchen towels, finger towels, pencil purses and wallets. With clothes pins, they make tissue holders, toy chairs and butterfly wall baskets. They also make photo-frames and stuffed dolls and much more.

The response from the community continues to be overwhelming. As an example, head teacher at Corriverton TOPS, Ms. Kamlawattie Seukarran reports that the children are excited about the hand embroidery and crafts. Those that finished their projects are proudly displaying them. Many of the students that already finished their own project are also proud that they can assist their fellow students finish their projects. This process of helping each other is a wonderful learning lesson for children helping children.



FREE ADULT SEWING & CRAFTS

From January through December, 2007, approximately 60 students attended the craft classes. These include 2 students from Orealla, Market Vendors, housewives and single parents. They make beautiful embroidered pillow cases, towels, table mats, crochet doilies, tablecloth, chairbacks, armrest, hats, rugs and mats. They use their newly acquired skills to decorate their homes, make gifts for friends, and also sell items to bring in additional income.



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Free Computer Classes for Children & Adults

Over 65 primary students each week are learning basic word processing skills. These include the ability to create tables, labels, cut and paste, and add graphics. Parents are expressing their gratitude for this free service, as many cannot afford to send their children to other private programs that charge for similar classes.

Over the period of January to December 2007 about 364 persons attended our adult computer classes at GO's Vo-Tech. These included people from different vocations such as housewives, business people, school teachers, sugar estate workers, clerks and high school dropouts. Ages range from 15-64 years inclusive of both males and females. The written feedback has been very positive. Students commend our teachers for their kindness and patience in teaching. They are grateful for attending the computer classes that are changing their lives positively at work and in everyday life.



Students at GO's free computer classes

Adult Computer Classes

Supervision of our Reading Program

Guyanese Outreach has been very fortunate to have Deorani Khedaroo (Lynn) as a part-time supervisor for the after school reading program. Ms. Lynn is a retired Head Mistress having served in the teaching profession for the past 37 years. Ms. Lynn visits the satellite locations. She observes our teachers in the classroom, their teaching methods, use of language, teachers' relationship with pupils, and lesson activities. She also helps our teachers improve their teaching skills, such as making suggestions in better teacher preparation before actual teaching in the classroom. She reinforces the use of proper language, since pupils learn by example. She continues to work toward curricula improvement.

Minister of Education Baksh Visits

On Friday 30th November, 2007, GO was graced with a visit from Minister of Education, Honorable Shaik Baksh. He was accompanied by REDO, Mrs. S. Bhajan and the Education Officer Secondary, Mr. Alpha Mohamed.

Minister Baksh met our staff and some of our 7 satellite teachers. He expressed his pleasure at the quality of crafts made by our TOPs students and adults. He also toured our computer lab and expressed his approval of our activities and programs and promised to look into how he could assist GO to expand and improve our programs.



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