

December, 2002

Dear Friends,

Warm greetings from all of us associated with SOS Children's Villages of Pakistan. May the New Year be happy and prosperous for you, your families and for Pakistan. May it also see an end to the strife which continues unabated in many parts of the world and brings suffering to so many, but especially, the children.

This year a great honour was bestowed upon SOS Kinderdorf, the umbrella organization for SOS Associations worldwide. It was the recipient of the Hilton Humanitarian Award, which is a million dollar prize awarded annually to an organization making an extraordinary contribution towards alleviating human suffering. Congratulations to SOS KDI which, with over 1500 projects in 131 countries, is certainly most deserving of this recognition.

For us the past year has been a continuing saga of success with your support enabling us to work steadily towards reaching our goal – a day when we have enough projects all over the country to reach out to needy children everywhere. As it is we are already in a position to accept any child brought to us for admission and never turn away those who meet our criteria. The children admitted by us have all suffered severe trauma and often experienced violence in their lives. Many of their stories are heart-rending. However, they respond to the secure and stable environment of an SOS Village and are soon transformed into cheerful, confident individuals. We cannot thank you enough for making it possible for us to provide for these children, give them back their childhood and offer them hope, opportunity and a fair chance in life. We cannot change their past but we can, and do, give them a future.

Over the years hundreds of children have passed through our hands. Many have done very well, some not as well as we would have liked, but they are all equipped to earn a living. This year I am presenting some success stories which are a sampling of what the children are doing. There are many more, including a Major and Captain in the Pakistan Army, and a considerable number who have gone abroad to seek greener pastures.

Due to the expansion of our activities the Board of Governors decided to appoint two more Vice-Presidents. This was duly ratified by the General Body at its meeting held in September. Mrs. Safia Awan has been elected Vice President, Northern Region and Mr. Yacoob Zamindar, Vice President, Southern Region. Both have made an enormous contribution to the promotion of SOS and we welcome them to the Board.

We now have 35 projects so it is not possible to provide details about all of them but I will present some highlights from the various centres.

Corporate Support:

Apart from the support of thousands of concerned individuals we are encouraged and gratified to see the increasing interest of the corporate sector in our work. Their acceptance of social responsibility translates into support of organizations, such as ours, and gives a tremendous boost to our efforts.

Last Ramzan, Nestlé launched a campaign to finance the construction of three family homes in SOS Villages. A portion from the sale of every carton of Milkpak was to go towards this and as a consequence we received three million rupees. The homes were constructed in Multan, Sargodha and Muzaffarabad and were opened in October by Mr. Friedrich Mahler, Managing Director, Nestlé.

During the year Standard Chartered Bank held a week-long charity drive. Three leading welfare organizations were identified of which every client was to indicate one. The Bank volunteered to give Rs.10 for each selection and we are proud to have been the top recipient, nationwide. Both Standard Chartered and Nestlé sent us a total of 50 computers when they were upgrading their systems. These have been installed in our schools and are of great benefit in the computer classes.

Mr. Ghouse Akbar of McDonalds, who is a good friend of SOS, has donated a million rupees for the construction of a family home in the SOS Village, Lahore. The groundbreaking was performed by Qazi Afaq Ahmad, Secretary Social Welfare on November 20th, Universal Children's Day.

We have experienced serious problems with the electricity supply in the SOS Village, Lahore. Mian Nasim Saigol, Chairman PEL has been extremely generous in providing us with a complete new distribution system and also donating a transformer, when the old one needed to be replaced.

Shell Pakistan has been a longtime supporter and recently conducted a promotional campaign, through their petrol pumps in Multan. SOS banners were displayed, a video clip sponsored on cable television and a percentage of their sales, for a one month period, was donated to SOS.

Totalfinaelf is new in Pakistan but has been quick to make their mark in the social sector. They have committed US\$60,000 towards the construction of an SOS Youth Home in Karachi and we hope to commence work soon. Presently the boys are occupying rented accommodation which is totally inadequate.

DHL is another generous supporter and provides free delivery of our overseas packages, in addition to including SOS in their worldwide initiative 'Time for the World'. Children from SOS Villages all over the world, painted pictures based on the theme 'What my perfect day would be'. These were exhibited throughout Austria and compiled in a book.

I must not forget to mention the advertising agencies, Interflow and Asiatic which also provide their services free of charge and enable us to get our message to you.

Many, many thanks to all of you. SOS is truly a combined effort of the community and a fine example of how much can be achieved if we work together.

Lahore:

We look forward to receiving visitors in the new National Office. It is situated adjacent to the Village so we will continue to be in close touch. Training courses are a regular and very important feature of our activities. Apart from teacher training, workshops for Village Directors and training courses for mothers from all the Villages, were held during the year. We are also fortunate to have the services of Ms. Musarrat Mirza, formerly with the Beaconhouse School System. She is advisor for all our schools in the Punjab and her expertise and dedication are producing excellent results.

The first important event of the year was the annual SOS Walk in early March which, as always, ended with a party at the Governor's House. This is a fundraising event in which children from many schools participate and raise money to subsidize the SOS School. The Governor, Lt. Gen. Khalid Maqbool, and his wife, graciously joined the participants and distributed the awards.

Later in the month Princess Salimah Aga Khan, SOS Kinderdorf International Ambassador for Children, visited Lahore en route to Peshawar. She, along with Begum Khalid Maqbool, were guests of honour at a colourful garden party in the SOS Village.

The summer months were exceptionally busy with a record number of volunteers participating in the summer camp. This began with one month of homework and extra studies, followed by many interesting extra-curricular activities.

Groups of children also visited the Rawalpindi and Karachi Villages and enjoyed sightseeing and visiting the children there.

Two more girls were married during the year with the customary festivity. This brings the number of girls married from the Lahore Village to 26 and a total of 54, nationwide. Friends of SOS, as generous as ever, take care of the entire expenses involved. In this regard Nasim Rashid Butt, Kulsoom Dawood and Razzaq Dawood deserve special mention.

Many generous donors have arranged parties for the children and distributed gifts and Eidee. Students of several schools, in particular the Lahore Grammar School (Defence and M. M. Alam Road), Beaconhouse (Garden Town) and the Lahore American School have been very active and brought much happiness into the lives of the children. Thank you all.

During the winter holidays a five day Inter-Village Cricket Tournament was organized with six teams participating. The winners were the ----- team and the runners-up were the boys from ----- . This was the first time such an ambitious programme has been organised and credit goes to the hosts, SOS Lahore, for making excellent arrangements and looking after over 60 boys.

Dhodial / Abbottabad:

This Village has continued to steadily expand and the 14th family home has been added. In addition, a 25,000 gallon overhead water tank and pumping station ensure a good supply of water. There are plans to add a 15th, and final, family home as well as an auditorium and Girls Vocational Training Centre. This latter facility is presently located in temporary premises and the girls are receiving instruction in various crafts. Sports facilities have been improved in both the SOS Village and Youth Home, Abbottabad with the commissioning of basketball and volleyball courts. Instructors in physical training and karate are conducting regular classes.

The boys in the Youth Home are doing well in their studies in school or college and also attend evening sessions in the adjacent SOS Vocational Training Centre. They are receiving training in the trades of welders and electricians. This Centre is now affiliated with the Skill Development Centre, Peshawar from which the students receive their diplomas.

The children in these projects are very fortunate in being able to participate in the programmes of the Adventure Foundation which is providing unique outdoor activities for the youth of the nation. They have been included in the Young Wilderness Courses, Rock Climbing Course, Watermanship Course and a National Youth Mountain Conservation Meet.

Karachi:

The homes in the Village have all been upgraded and a new house named “**Sana Habaaz**” opened. The Village has a bright and cheerful look with increasing plantation and a delightful enclosure for pets.

In February a Children’s Carnival was once again arranged by the Friends of SOS. The event was very successful and thoroughly enjoyed by all who participated -besides generating funds and goodwill for SOS.

The children have had a busy year with regular coaching classes after school to help them with their studies. During the summer a programme full of fun and activities was organized. This included glass and fabric painting, art work, photography, drama and visits to many interesting places. Scouting and cricket coaching (sponsored by Nike) are a regular feature in the children’s routine and contribute to their development. Two lucky boys were sponsored by the PIA Scouts to attend the International Scouts Jamboree in Bangkok.

Many groups of students from various educational institutions visited the project, in addition to numerous other visitors. They are always welcome because we are aware that our best publicity is through those who come to see for themselves how we function.

A flat donated by Dr. Usman Saeed has been renovated and is ready for occupancy by some senior boys. We are fortunate that it happens to be located not far from the Village.

Faisalabad:

Many visitors to the SOS Village have contributed towards the happiness of the children. On the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha, the Principal and professors of the Government Municipal Degree College, Abdullahpur arranged a programme in the Village. Stalls of soft drinks, burgers, fruit, balloons etc. were set-up and free items were distributed to the children. Needless to say, they had a wonderful time.

In April, 35 children were the guests of McDonald's and, on another occasion, the management of KFC, along with the popular 'Chickee', visited the Village.

Thirty children visited Lahore during the summer vacation and especially enjoyed their trip to the Zoo.

Chaudry Zahid Nazir, District Nazim of Faisalabad has shown great interest in the project and promised to assist in the completion of the Community Centre. He was also chief guest at the Independence Day function and was impressed by the performance of the children.

The Principal, staff and students of Divisional Model College, Faisalabad arranged a function in the Village and have sponsored a house which has been named DMC Cottage.

A group of 35 children participated in International Smile Day, which was celebrated at the Serena Hotel. They shared the laughing / smiling competition and won prizes. We are grateful to the management for including our children in this cheerful event.

Rawalpindi:

This complex is humming with increasing activity in the four projects situated there, the SOS Village, Youth Home, High School and Technical Training Centre.

In the spring the children organized a successful Meena Bazar followed by a fundraising programme with Zille Huma, organized by the Managing Committee at the Pearl Continental Hotel.

A welcome addition to the Village is a library with about 3000 books on different subjects. This has been setup by Maj. Gen. (R) Waqar Khan who is now also a member of the Village Committee. The health of the children is well taken care of with hepatitis vaccination, courtesy of the Pakistan Red Crescent Society and a dental camp arranged by the Margalla Institute of Health Services. A free medical camp was also arranged by Shell, Pakistan.

The Youth Home boys visited the Iqbal Air Base Camp, Dhamial. This was arranged by Brig. Zakiullah Bhangoo who will fly around the world, in a light aircraft, to collect funds for SOS Children's Villages.

The Technical Training Centre is extremely popular and has introduced evening classes. The Chairperson, Engineer Ch. Rasheed is now busy establishing an automobile workshop which will, no doubt, prove to be equally popular.

Sargodha:

This year saw the completion of the last three family homes, bringing the total to 15. The Youth Home has also been constructed but will not be occupied for the time being until it is time for the older boys to move in.

We now have a new Managing Committee with Brigadier (R) Ahsan Bhatti Chairperson, Malik Mazhar Hayat Noon, Vice-Chairperson, Mrs. Bushra Piracha General Secretary and Dr. Zulfiqar Bhatti, Treasurer. Other outstanding personalities are also included in the committee which is taking a keen interest in the welfare of the children.

Plantation Week in Sargodha commenced from the SOS Village. The chief guest was the District Nazim, Mr. Amjad Ali Noon and many other officials were also present on the occasion. The President, Rotary Club and senior Rotarians also planted saplings.

Otherwise too, the facilities are being upgraded with the donation of new playground equipment by the International Bazar, Luxembourg. Refrigerators have been provided in all the 14 family homes, courtesy Mrs. Kulsoom Dawood, who also donated deep freezers for Lahore and Dhodial Villages.

On Pakistan Day a function was held and coincided with the prize distribution of the School. The number of students in the school is gradually increasing and the senior boys have shifted into their own building.

Multan:

This has been an exciting and event-filled year for the children. As they waited anxiously to move into their new Village they completed their annual examination and got brilliant results. The children obtained a 99% passing rate and 13 children attained positions in their classes. Afshan Siddiqui, aged 11 also obtained a position in the District Children Speech Competition organized by the Social Welfare Department. In March, the Annual Sports week was held and, combined with Basant, was a festive occasion. Competitions were held in high jump, long jump, musical chairs, discus and javelin throw and even eating food! A cricket tournament was also arranged and, much to the amusement of the children, a mothers tug of war.

In July the children moved into the Village and are so happy and proud of their new premises. The architectural design of the project is most attractive and it has been further enhanced by the bright and cheerful decorating done by the General Secretary, Mahnaz Fareed.

The District Forest Office assisted with the plantation of a large number of saplings which will add to the beauty of the surroundings. The cricket team of the Public School Multan also visited and played a friendly match.

A donor residing in London, Mrs. Naila Imtiaz, deserves special mention. She has provided funds for the construction and furnishing of a family home, is sponsoring five children, has solicited sponsorships for another eight and, to top it all off, has donated a bus for transporting the children to school and elsewhere. It is because of people like her that we dare to dream.

Muzaffarabad:

The construction of this Village is now in the finishing stages and it will be ready soon for occupancy.

Another international group from the National Defence College visited the project and were highly impressed by the design and quality construction. Combined with a beautiful location this project will provide an idyllic environment for the children.

Sialkot:

Thirty-three kanals of land have been donated by the Government of the Punjab for the construction of an SOS Village and the groundbreaking was performed by Mian Javed Naeem, District Nazim Sialkot in November. On the occasion he announced the donation of a family home through the Zila Council, and also promised further support. This city has an outstanding reputation for philanthropy and positive initiative and we are confident that, of all our undertakings, this will prove to be the most successful.

SOS Rural Support Programme:

This programme is being successfully executed in 20 villages situated in the border area of Kasur District. It includes initiatives in health, education, micro-credit, adult literacy centers and improvement of livestock. Over 1000 students are enrolled in eight schools and over 2000 persons benefit monthly from the health centers in six villages. Organic farming is being introduced and Youth Committees are playing a positive role in development programmes. It is very creditable that two women councillors were elected from this area in the local government elections.

SOS Afghan Relief Programme:

This programme for the Afghan refugees is now well established and the Medical Centre in Peshawar is, literally, a lifesaver for countless infants. Sick children are referred here from our basic health centers in the camps. Often they are in critical condition, compounded by severe malnutrition, and the doctors are doing a splendid job in restoring their health.

Princess Salimah Aga Khan visited the programme in March and, besides the Medical Centre, performed the opening of the Girls School in Shamshatoo Camp and opened the playgrounds in Azakhel and Badaber Camps. She also visited the construction site of the Girls School in Badaber which is now complete. She was greatly impressed by the services being provided.

In December, the Afghan Minister for Refugees, Mr. Enayatullah Nazari, visited the Medical Centre and the Afghan delegation visited the facilities in Shamshatoo Camp. They were full of praise for the high standards being maintained in the projects.

Some Success Stories:

(Note: File attached)

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Friends of SOS:

Friends of SOS in Pakistan and abroad provide invaluable support and collect funds for new projects. The SOS Pakistan Supporters' Group in UK have sent us money for the construction of family homes in Muzaffarabad, Multan and Sialkot, besides sponsorship for 71 children in six Villages.

Friends of SOS Pakistan in Washington DC have been steady supporters over the years. Last year we received US\$36,000 designated for various projects. They held another fundraising event recently and will again be allocating funds to different Villages.

The support group in Kuwait is sponsoring 16 children in different Villages and has sent a donation of Rs.350,000. They have also indicated that they anticipate the donation of two family homes by a well-wisher.

From SOS Friends in Riyadh we have received sponsorship as well as payment towards a family home in a new Village. Through the good offices of Dr. Tahir Paul and his associates, a dental clinic in the Lahore Village has been equipped and sponsored. This provides dental treatment for our children as well as other under-privileged children.

An Asian chapter of SOS Canada has been established by our most capable and dynamic Tahira Haq, on her migration to Toronto. She has already organized a successful Fashion Show and Basant celebration and has exciting plans for the future.

I would like to take this opportunity to invite any of you who would like to establish Friends of SOS chapters in your area to please contact us. The best contribution anyone can make to our cause is to publicize it as much as possible. We are aware that there are any number of Pakistanis living abroad who are interested in supporting worthwhile projects back home but lack the necessary information.

Future Plans

Thanks to the steady support we receive from all of you we are able to plan very ambitiously. The next projects we propose to establish will, inshallah, be located in Peshawar and Hyderabad. The delay is due only to non-availability of land. Even though we have been assured of donation of land by the respective administrations, nothing suitable has been identified so far. Hopefully this will be resolved before too long. Following the construction of these Villages we plan to focus on Quetta, where we already have a site.

Let me remind you that the establishment of each Village is also followed by a Youth Home and a Community School, so the work goes on and on.... However, we are not deterred and are confident that the necessary support will be forthcoming, as long as we continue to work with devotion and dedication. All we are achieving is because of you and we look forward to your continuing assistance. Without you we can do nothing and together we can do so much!

In ending I would like to, once again, express sincere gratitude for your concern for the orphans and your confidence in us.

God bless you for caring.

Yours sincerely,

Souriya Anwar
President