

St. Ann's Orphanage
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St. Ann's Church
25 Eastern Avenue.
Ossining, NY 10562

Dear Sr. Eileen,
Greetings from St. Ann's!

It is with great gratitude that we at St. Ann's kindly acknowledge the receipts of your checks amounting to \$12, 035. I promised to write a while ago and was determined to get something substantial to you but it was difficult with all the children at home for the Easter holidays except for thirteen of them who were out with close relatives or trusted friends. I felt that with school starting again, it would be less hectic and now it feels like I can unwind and get things done. Unfortunately, many of them could not touch base with family as it was neither practical nor conducive. We tried our best to keep them occupied by encouraging them to go to the Holy Week activities at the Cathedral and the parish. Apart from the Holy Week activities, the children enjoyed playing Phagwah with each other and friends who visited in the back yard. They also had a good chance to fly their kites in the back field using all the extra kites they had at their disposal. On the whole, I think that they had a good time.

On January 6, we welcomed Brenda Louhing, a nurse by profession. She wanted to volunteer her services at St. Ann's for ten weeks. I think it was a pleasant experience for all of us as Brenda shared her expertise in the kitchen by baking cookies and pizza. When she was not baking, she engaged the children in remedial reading and sewing. Brenda would like to return next year and was grateful for the opportunity to give individual attention to the girls and for setting her own schedule during her ten week period. We are already missing her quiet and organized disposition. I am hoping that I will have sufficient space to include Brenda with the girls at work in and out of the kitchen.

While Brenda was here, we welcomed once again a group of seven university students from Florida International University. This is something which we can expect annually. Just before this group arrived, we welcomed a group of six young women from the interior of Guyana whom the Child Protection Agency wanted to help. Normally, the university students who come here on an International Outreach Programme usually work on specified projects. Last year, they worked on the backfield to change the old chain-link fence with board facing and gave the walls of the backfield a face lift. This year, they spent their spare time interacting with the girls and doing craft work. Our girls seemed to have had a good experience with this group as they were not busy building but able to spend precious time with them.

We are constantly being asked by the Child Protection Agency to assist them in accepting little girls who are vulnerable to abuse and neglect by parents. So far, we are housing forty-four children, two were re-integrated with family before the Christmas holidays while two more left us in January and February respectively. Since then, we have accepted nine more children for different reasons. From the list of girls, Rebecca Marco who has found work is due to leave us soon once she can get organized with kitchen utensils, a gas stove and all that the necessary requirements to move to the Hostel for working girls. Those girls who will be sitting the Caribbean Certificate Examinations are expected to move on except for one of them who is hoping to remain here to further her studies. So while we say goodbye to some, we say welcome to others who we hope will benefit from all that we have to offer here at St. Ann's. Very soon I will work on a group photograph of those who will be leaving us.

Our girls continue to shine especially in the newly formed choir on Thursday after school. The group comprises all the girls under twelve. Those who joined us lately have already found their niche and I am really proud of them and happy that we can bring out this talent with the kind help of Mrs. Pat Insanally who pays instructors to come here each week. If we continue with such vibrancy, I can see our girls in concert with all the other groups which are sponsored by the Tina Insanally Foundation and hopefully in the Festival of Carols. Our girls are also able to master the guitar and recorder even though very few are able to attend due to other commitments.

Many thanks for all the monetary help we have received from the parish. It has been a blessing in so many ways. I do not worry about how we would meet our bills nor pay the staff for their services here because of your generosity. I pray that God will continue to bless each one in His own special way.

Much love and prayers,

Sr. Leonie De Costa,osu.