

Christmas Message 2011



Dear Friend,

I have been in Sri Lanka for over a year now – how time flies! I can honestly say that I have enjoyed every minute of it (with the exception of immigration queues and interminable bus journeys!) This will be my first Christmas away from my home in the Isle of Man and. Although I am sure I will enjoy the luxury of spending Christmas on the beach, it promises to be strange without the traditional Christmas party and groaning on the sitting room floor after eating too much turkey and drinking too much champagne! Luckily my parents and two of my sisters will be visiting in January so I will still get to catch up with everyone.

Every time I visit one of our projects, I am reminded how valuable the work is that we are doing out here – thanks to your support. The areas we work in have few alternatives for development and most of the communities receive no other support.

In Galewela, we are nearing the time where we will withdraw from these villages as they are able to sustain the improvements without our help. This is always a time of sadness as we leave good friends but such joy that the seeds we have planted are making a lasting difference. We are delighted that residents of neighbouring villages, supported by government officials, have asked us if we could help them to implement similar projects in their areas. They have witnessed the benefits that the education, health training and income generation projects have made and want to be part of it. So over the next year we will start to implement new projects in these neighbouring areas.

Sadly earlier this year we had to temporarily suspend our work in the Rahatungoda tea estate due to changes in the estate management. The good news though, especially for the women and children who have been missing our work with them, is that we are now able to resume. I am really excited to be travelling up there next week, to meet the new estate management and get going again. Over the next few months we will be busy installing play equipment for the children, training volunteer health assistants, starting vocational training and working to improve nutrition.



In our project in Kandy, I recently formally opened the new workers rest room that we had funded in Pupuressa Tea Estate. This provides a respite for tea workers from the arduous job of tea plucking. It is also a central location where they can receive information about health and nutrition, women's and child rights and the environment. One simple building has been the catalyst for so much. On another note, Sutton United Football Club were kind enough to donate a set of children's kits to SLCT which we will donate to the school in this area. I hope that I will be able to convince them that football is much more enjoyable than cricket but I am not holding out much hope...

Thank you for your continued support and I hope that you all have a wonderful Christmas.

John Dean

Field Director
Shining Life Children's Trust