

# GUYANA CHRISTIAN CHARITIES (CANADA) INC.

Registration No. 89096-5649-RR0001-99

1612 Arathorn Court  
Pickering, ON L1X 2B9

## PRESIDENT

Bernard Gonsalves  
905-683-1030

## VICE PRESIDENT

Kumar Singh  
(416) 498-9962

OCTOBER 2003

## TREASURER

Joseph Castanheiro  
(416) 490-1428

## SECRETARY

Elizabeth Abdool  
(416) 499-1528

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear Members, Volunteers, Supporters and Friends:

It is an honor and privilege to serve in the capacity of President and to communicate with you some of our achievements, which could not have been accomplished without your incredible generous support and dedication. Despite our many challenges and our encounter with SARS, the Iraq war, the unexpected blackouts, the threat of West Nile, and the devastating forest fires, the strength of our organization prevailed and we were able to make a positive difference in the lives of many in Guyana.

Our pledges, assistance and commitment to Guyana have been significant over the last 12 months as in any other year, and more so than in most. We were also able to send to Guyana five shipments of varied required items to many organizations/institutions, which cost \$23,000 in freight charges.

Sponsorship for the Marian Academy Scholarship Program is ongoing and we were able to increase our awards. To date, members of GCC, their relatives and friends are sponsoring nine children for a five-year Scholarship program. Five of these are independently sponsored by individuals. The aspirations of this educational institute are to produce graduates of high caliber – a tribute to the dedicated teachers and nuns. This is really a wonderful way of assisting children with their education in order to build and strengthen their abilities for a successful future and to better serve Guyana.

As you probably know, GCC was honoured with a prestigious award from the Consulate General of Guyana in recognition of over three decades of selfless service to Guyana and the Guyanese community in Canada. The success of GCC is due, in no small part, to the efforts of its members, volunteers and supporters and I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank YOU ALL for your confidence in our organization. I am sure that just knowing that you have helped in some small way will give you some self-satisfaction. All donations received are sent directly to Guyana in one-way or the other. This is made possible because we are truly a volunteer organization, no one receives compensation for the work they do on our behalf.

We at GCC look forward to your continued support and would welcome new members, volunteers and supporters.

In closing, I would like to solicit your input for fundraising ideas in order to keep the organization vibrant and strong whilst continuing to embrace the mandate of the GCC. As your President, I thank you for your incredible support, guidance, understanding and wisdom. Teamwork and communication are very important for an organization like ours to be successful. Again, my deepest appreciation for all that you do. Please accept my best wishes for a healthy and happy winter!

God Bless

*Bernard Gonsalves*

## OVER THIRTY YEARS OF SELFLESS SERVICE:

At the Awards Dinner-Dance on July 16 during this year's Guyana 37<sup>th</sup> Independence Festival Celebrations, a number of highly respected Guyanese in this community also received recognition for excellence in their particular occupations and enrichment of Guyanese culture. GCC was presented with the **Outstanding Organization Award** "in recognition of over Three Decades of Selfless Service to Guyana and the Guyanese Community in Canada and in appreciation of the Organization's Exemplary Contribution to the Guyana Festival.

A few years previously we were recognized as being the "Longest Serving Guyanese Organization" which we are likely to retain as time goes by. In October 1994, we received a "Certificate of Appreciation for our Valuable Contribution to the Health Care System" from the Prime Minister of Guyana. In May 1995, from the Government and People of Guyana we were recognized for our "Support Towards Rebuilding their Health Care System."

We were pleased and touched by this year's Award, which we accept with appreciation and a measure of humility. Credit must be given to the magnificent support we receive from everyone – Guyanese and Non-Guyanese. We thank you all!

### *Our Mission*

*Guyana Christian Charities (Canada) Inc. is a volunteer, non-profit charitable organization, registered in Canada, dedicated to providing aid and assistance to all Guyanese -- children, families and individuals, and others in need.*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS – 2003-2004

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\* Past President

### SMALL MIRACLES

Fr. Gregory Gimeyi, S.J. who spanned continents (from Uganda to South America) spent 5 years in a Catholic diocese in Venezuela, arrived in Guyana in October 2002 to serve its people and was assigned a few months later to St. Paul's Catholic Church at Helena, Mahaica. He found he had a really tough road ahead to restore the once successful computer and sewing vocational classes that had been set up by Fr. Terrence Petry for the young people who completed their primary education in that area before his transfer to Barbados. Fr. Gregory was very dismayed that all the computers and sewing machines had disappeared except for one small antiquated hand sewing machine, and the Sunday collections were extremely small to support even the Parish expenses. From correspondence on file, he found our address and asked for assistance. The results of our efforts were simply amazing as you will see.

As soon as we mentioned this appeal among our own contacts 5 sewing machines (which we were told were seldom or no longer in use) were immediately offered. One of the donors mentioned a hitch in the bobbin mechanism should be checked. On being told that all the machines were to be serviced before being shipped, she told us of a Guyanese gentleman who could repair them - and so he did - without a fee! The response to the request for sewing supplies was phenomenal and included an amazing amount of fabric, sewing books and patterns, some of which were purchased at the end of an Auction for the unbelievable sum of \$1.00. A welcome donation purchased new scissors and tape measures. Unexpectedly we also received a total of 4 computers and their components. All these items, together with a supply of Bond Paper and a Printer were shipped.

About this time, two Lay Missioners of Scarboro, Missions, Maxine Bell and Barbara White, were about to leave for Guyana on their first assignment. They had already coincidentally shipped 13 boxes of sewing supplies and we asked them to visit Fr. Gregory. This was the next step in the fulfillment of his dearest wish to have these training classes established -- two wonderful persons skilled in sewing arrived. They repainted a room, helped to organize the sewing supplies that had arrived, and set up the computers and sewing machines. Then, they agreed to stay on -- two ready-made Teachers from Canada - a blessed gift from heaven. Student enrolments were completed and Classes began as early as August 1. Fr. Gregory has frequently thanked us through the prayers of his parish and especially "those who donated all those things".

### SHIPPING UPDATE:

This year we have received remarkable donations of clothing, shoes,, computers, sewing machines, fabric and sewing accessories, school supplies, backpacks, books in many categories from early childhood to University Engineering and other Text Books and a large assortment for the Libraries, a number of bicycles and tricycles, babies' strollers, wheelchairs, walkers, crutches and other accessories for the infirm, medical, home, school and office supplies, and laundry and dish detergent which are always welcomed. Two 20ft. containers were dispatched in April, and May and a 40 ft. in August. The shipping costs for these 3 containers are \$17,895.90, and a conservative estimated value of the contents is \$80,697.

We are happy to state that with these supplies we were able to provide a number of wheelchairs, Walkers, Crutches and other medic-aids to the National Commission on Disabilities and some to hospitals and other care givers. For the Palms we able to respond to their requests for badly needed bed sheets towels and square plasticized washable bed protectors, and wall-mounted Blood Pressure Kits. Besides the clothing they always like to get. we sent them crutches, walkers, a wheelchair, an electric meat grinder and a considerable supply of laundry and dish detergent. The detergent was also sent to 15 other organizations. We also quickly responded to a request from a Scarboro Lay Missioner who had failed to obtain a replacement wheelchair in New Amsterdam or Georgetown for a lady of 70 years who suffers from cerebral palsy and lived at the Canje Hospital since she was 11 years old. Her wheelchair of many years had finally expired totally. We replaced the five bicycles that were stolen from the Guyana Red Cross Society, sent computers to various schools, and are pleased to assist those providing skills training for young people. 3 Hoyer Lifts and 90 boxes of Medical Supplies, were shipped, which included 10 cartons of Pediatric items sent by the Guyanese Canadian Association of British Columbia for St. Joseph's Mercy Hospital, Nursing Text Books from Rev. John O'Connor, a Lutheran Minister and Professor of Medicine, who is volunteering four months again this year to upgrading the nursing staff, and 9 boxes from the Burn Care Unit Committee containing medical supplies, 200 bed sheets and staff gowns for the special ward at the Public Hospital in Georgetown. We regret that space does not allow a more detailed report on all of this shipment.

Presently, we are in the process of filling another container to be sent at the end of October. We think of this as our Christmas shipment and are including as many toys as we can, games, children's books, tins of cookies and candies.

Our gratitude to all who make this possible - our donors; dedicated volunteers who sort and pack and help to pick up donated items when necessary; our reliable and affable van driver who transports our packages to Pioneer World Cargo in Mississauga, who are our dependable shippers of many years, and, as always, to the Canuels in Whitby and Lauren Harry in Scarborough, who provide our free storage. You are all a source of encouragement; we thank you once more and are sure the Lord will reward you with His Blessings for your great generosity in these deeds.

## DREAMS AND DETERMINATION:



From time to time, we become aware of things occurring in Guyana that are disturbing. Then, sometimes we hear good stories that raise our spirits and give us hope for the future of our dear country and its people.

We would like to tell you about a remarkable young Guyanese whose **courage in the face of great adversity is a source of inspiration to us all**. Her name is Karen Hall and she is now 34 years old, but one would think she is much younger from her constant sparkling smile.

We met Karen shortly after she arrived in Toronto to attend Ryerson University to pursue a B.A. in Disability Studies, on a two-year Scholarship, awarded by the Organization of American States. Karen plans to return to Guyana as a Special Ed Teacher and Guidance Counsellor to the handicapped.

We cannot think of a **more perfect role model, knowing the success she has made of her life in spite of severe handicaps**.

From birth only her left hand is perfect, the right has no fingers, one leg stops just below her knee and the other just above her ankle – so she has no feet. For the first nine years of her life, she was taken care of in a home for the Handicapped at Linden, and at the Ptolemy Reid Rehabilitation Centre in Georgetown where she was fitted with leg prostheses. For the next four years she was tutored at home by her beloved mother and at the age of 13 she entered the regular school system. Unbelievably, Karen developed into an academic as well as an athlete, having participated in wheelchair basketball and swimming teams in Guyana.

She was selected to attend a Leadership Training Program in Japan sponsored by the United Nations and The Government of Japan, to examine issues affecting the disabled that were not being addressed. This gave her some confidence to arrive in Toronto on her own, to locate a suitable apartment and to start life in this big city equipped with only her camping kit and a wheelchair.

Fortunately, she had corresponded with GCC a couple of years earlier and gave us a call. Together with Orlean Williams, our all encompassing volunteer, and support from many individuals, in a short while her apartment was furnished. GCC provided telephone service, a computer and printer to facilitate her studies and we have become her “friends”. We were always amazed at how she was able to live on her own, use the TTC and cope with the cold of winter with contentment and an ever-smiling face. A few months later she learned that she is eligible for Wheel-Trans service.

A few months ago, her 10-year old prostheses needed to be replaced at a cost of \$9,000. Fortunately, a student Insurance Policy covered 75% of this and the

remaining 25% was met with donations from some caring persons and contributions from GCC.

A full year has now passed and Karen has studied intensely and has done well in the courses she has undertaken. She has now won The Civitan International Foundation of Canada Citizenship award in recognition of her commitment to making a difference for those whose citizenship is precarious and the Bank of Montreal Award to students who plan a project in their country. Karen’s plan is an Employment Village and Hostel for Adults with Disabilities in Guyana.

This **rising star from Guyana** continues to show that in spite of great adversity one’s hopes and dreams can be accomplished with courage and determination. **KAREN, WE ADMIRE AND SALUTE YOU.**



## ABOUT NEEDS AND WISHES:

We constantly receive a variety of requests from all areas of Guyana and it would be impossible to respond without the donations we receive from our caring friends and supporters. Necessities such as clothing and shoes for all ages and especially for children, bed linen and towels, sewing and school supplies generally top the lists, but there is great need also for books and toys, medical supplies, household utensils, wood-working tools, toiletries, wheelchairs, walkers, bicycles, computers, sewing machines, sports equipment, etc. Actually all the items essential for everyday living are needed. Your donations are really appreciated and utilized. Many lives are made that much more bearable from the help that flows to them.

However, a **friendly reminder:**

The weather in Guyana is always very hot so we **cannot use donations of winter or heavy clothing**. Since we have no facilities for washing or cleaning at our packing garage, kindly ensure that **all items are clean and ready for packing, shipping and immediate use upon arrival in Guyana**.

## THE VOLUNTEER YOUTH CORPS FUND RAISING EVENT:

The motto of this organization founded by young adults in 1996, is **“Caring for Humanity”**. Their programs address the needs of young people in Guyana for personal development and avoidance of the pitfalls of H.I.V., AIDS, teenage pregnancies, and addictive use of drugs. They raise funds to assist children and adults who require Medical Care not available in Guyana, and they encourage young volunteers to visit the Red Cross Convalescent Home, Homes for the Aged and the Geriatric and Paediatric Wards in hospitals.

Their efforts are now directed towards developing a Big Brothers-Big Sisters Program in Guyana. To start up this program, which is endorsed by the Canadian High Commissioner in Guyana and the Future Watch organization of Toronto, a **fundraising Brunch with a Variety Show for Entertainment** will take place at the **Rembrandt Banquet Hall, at Progress & Markham Road on Sunday, November 16, 2003**. Tickets for this event are \$30.00 per person and \$25.00 for Seniors and Children under 12.

They are available from our organization through:  
 Joe Castanheiro 416-490-1428  
 Joan de Barros 905-837-0135, and  
 Edourda Garay 416-926-1985, of Future Watch

Please lend your support to this worthy effort, which will **Make a Difference in the Lives of Many Children in Guyana.**

### Facts and Figures

- ❖ You can request that your United Way contributions be specifically designated to Guyana Christian Charities (Canada) Inc. – Please contact your Human Resources Department.
- ❖ When a loved one passes away you can notify the funeral home and include in the obituary that you wish to have donations go to GCC's Loving Memory Program to commemorate your loved ones in lieu of flowers. -- Most funeral homes have our address or call STAN 905-686-4155.
- ❖ To date the list of organizations we help number 57, including six hospitals.
- ❖ We receive confirmation from the organizations we help for items shipped.
- ❖ The value of the items we send to Guyana is approximately four times the funds we raise.
- ❖ Approximately 50% of funds raised are used for shipping and related costs.
- ❖ Guyana Christian Charities (Canada) Inc. is a registered Canadian charitable organization dedicated to providing aid and assistance to Guyanese – children, families and individuals in need.

### OBITUARY

We are saddened by the news of the passing of John Fernandes Jnr. in Florida after a long illness. John Jnr. is the eldest son of John Fernandes Snr. and Alda Fernandes, whose family has supported and continue to contribute to the welfare of Guyanese. Our sympathy goes out to his wife Evelyn and children, his brothers, sisters and relatives, and to all those who held a special place in their heart for him.



MAIL BOX -- Extracts  
 from some letters of  
 appreciation for our help

**Bait-ur-Rahana (House of Mercy) ....** *"I wish to take this opportunity of expressing our grateful thanks to all you good people who have banded yourself together to serve the poor and needy who are also the creations of God and deserve some measure of happiness and may you receive your rewards in the hereafter. The Masjid (Mosque) is usually full of Worshippers on Friday and I announced your kind help just before the service started"*

**Help and Shelter ....** *"Your continuous support to our organization is of an enormous aid towards providing a temporary shelter and protection for abused women and their children. Your assistance is an affirmation of the kindness and humanity that still exists in the world".*

**Palms Institution ....** *"On behalf of the Administration of the Palms Institution, we must thank you for your donation of used clothing and miscellaneous items. We are very appreciative of the help you have given us and we are looking for your continued support"*

**Davis Memorial Hospital and Clinic ....** *"We at Davis Memorial Hospital would like to express our appreciation for the gifts and medical supplies sent to us. The items are useful to us and will contribute greatly in helping us to continue to provide a service at a reduced cost".*

**Bright Horizon Children's Home ....** *"God richest blessings be yours. Thank you for all the gifts you have been sending us. We desperately need this help. We appreciate your love and concern for our home and children"*

**Ptolemy Reid Rehabilitation Centre ....** *"Kind gestures such as yours help us to better serve the needs of the residents, to whom we strive to offer opportunity and choice within the realm of their disability"*

**Wendy Grenada ....** *"The stuffed toys were a treat to the little ones. I gave to those at lower Kara Kara who missed the previous distribution -- children of all ages flocked to receive a doll, a stuffed animal, a ball and so on. I was surprised that the children loved the shredded wheat. I believe some families use it for children's breakfast in place of nothing for most are single moms with many children. 3 families shared these. The need for children clothing is crucial.*

**Parika Outfall Neighbourhood Foundation Feeding Programme ....** *"I received your packages quite safely. Thank you for the cooking books, also the material for sewing. We want to start our sewing class for August. We need clothes for boys from 4-12 years. Also for the small girls.*

**Our Lady's Missionaries, New Amsterdam ....** *"As usual the boxes were filled with many pieces of clothing and other treasures which will be of great help to many people. The bags of cosmetics and jewelry we will save for Christmas to take along with other treats to the Psychiatric Hospital -- a custom we all look forward to"*

**It is always in your power  
 to help those in need**

**Join Our**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

... Mark your calendars and  
book your tickets early

\$100    \$50    \$25    Other

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Your donation is tax-deductible Charitable (No. 89096-5649-RR0001-99)

Please **send your cheque and this form** to:

Guyana Christian Charities (Canada) Inc.  
1612 Arathorn Court, Pickering, ON L1X 2B9

## FRIENDS OF GUYANA CHRISTIAN CHARITIES (CANADA) INC.

- Yes, I wish to become a member of your organization
- Yes, I would like to help with the:
  - Food Fair    dance    packing for shipments
  - transportation of donated items

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Mail form to: Guyana Christian Charities (Canada) Inc.  
1612 Arathorn Court, Pickering, ON L1X 2B9

## MAILING LIST

- I would like to be on your Newsletter Mailing List.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Mail form to: Guyana Christian Charities (Canada) Inc.  
1612 Arathorn Court, Pickering, ON L1X 2B9

Thank you for your support!

## CALL US TO ADVERTISE

We publish two newsletters each year –  
(May and October)

If you would like to advertise....  
Please call Stan Niccols



TELEPHONE NO. 905-686-4155

The Volunteer Youth Corps  
FUNDRAISING BRUNCH  
with entertainment



Sunday, November 16, 2003

Rembrandt Banquet Hall

Progress and Markham Roads, Scarborough, ON

### Assisted by:

Guyana Christian Charities (Canada) Inc. **and**  
Future Watch

**Endorsed by:** The High Commissioner for Canada  
in Guyana

### For Tickets: Call:

Joan De Barros    --    905-837-0135  
Edoura Garay    --    416-926-1985

✓ YES! I WANT TO HELP  
DONATION FORM

