



### Christmas Program Report

Christmas is a time of sharing love, joy and hope, and the awesome truth that God became human to live among us. “Emmanuel”, God with us, is good news to the least of the least. Choosing a humble place for his birth and being laid in a manger, God upholds human dignity through his unconditional love for humankind, especially the marginalized and the neglected.

Canadian Aid to Persecuted Christians (CAPC) receives hundreds of wish letters from young children in the slums of Pakistan every year, wishing to be remembered with gifts as we prepare for Christmas. We are pleased that with the support of our wonderful well-wishers and the collaboration of our local partner in Pakistan, Youth Development Association (YDA), the Christmas Program was held on



Tuesday, December 20, 2022, at Rimsha



Colony, a slum in Islamabad. Around 300 children and adults of this slum participated in the program. We were able to share the joy of Christmas, giving “smile boxes” to 100 children (consisting of chocolates, candies, juices, cupcakes, mittens, hats, and socks for warmth in the cold) to 100 children, and candies and juices to another 150 street children who attended the program. Volunteers and the local team were also given tokens of love and appreciation, followed by the cutting of the Christmas cake which was shared with all the participants.

The program started with prayer to Almighty God for love and peace to prevail in this violence-torn world. Mr. Saleem welcomed all the guests, Church Committee members, School Committee members, Sunday school teachers, parents, and children, wishing them a Merry Christmas.

The children then presented a Christmas play telling the story of Jesus's birth by performing tableaux, singing carols and dancing. What an overwhelming joy to see them enact the play, cheer the birth of our Savior, and feel pride in their faith despite poverty and neglect. The parents and children thanked God for his provision and prayed and expressed heartiest appreciation to all.



While speaking at the occasion, Dr Bashir, a member of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan said, "it is the basic right of every individual to be free to practice his/her faith and celebrate religious festivals. I fully endorse this right of the Christian community". He further said that children are our future, and it is our most important duty to focus on their good upbringing and introduce them to our values.

Mr. Asif John (a minority rights activist) stated that being a minority member it is great to see our children performing a Christmas play, singing Christmas carols, dancing, and making this event meaningful. He said that as Pakistanis it is our responsibility to educate our children not only about our religion but also our history and culture.

Ms. Rehana Tariq, mother of Shaloom, expressed deep satisfaction over her three children studying at St. Mary's Education Center run by YDA, being well taken care of throughout the year for their studies, life skills, faith formation and for gifts at Christmas. "I can't thank the YDA team enough for all that you do so tirelessly for us and for our children", she said recalling all the support given during the trying times of COVID.

Ms. Sonia Mohsin, mother of Mary, grade 3, chimed in, "I am proud that my children perform so well. You encourage them so much, train them to be performers and adore their faith. I am indebted for what YDA is doing for our children. Thank you for everything".

Mr. Liaqat Masih, Head of Operations for YDA thanked all the guests and participants, especially the YDA team, youth volunteers and CAPC for their continued support in creating a positive impact on children through this successful event. Besides goodies and gifts, the children carried home the message of compassionate sharing and caring as well as the joy and pride of spreading peace. He wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Thank you for joining with us in showing kindness and spreading HOPE. CAPC appreciates all contributions, either small or big, to 'Make this Christmas Magical'.



