

**Project: Helping PREDA to build a safe home for children freed from adult prisons**  
**Partner: The PREDA Foundation, Philippines**



PREDA (People's Recovery Empowerment and Development)

Foundation is based in Olongapo City North-West of Manila. Led by Father Shay Cullen, founder of PREDA and Nobel Peace Prize Nominee 2001 and 2003, twenty professional staff help children abused by international predators. CNN recently featured PREDA rescuing children as young as 5 years old from prisons where they live and sleep in cramped cells alongside hardened adult criminals, some pedophiles. Most have only minor offenses like stealing a loaf of bread. Since governments perpetuate the system that puts young kids in jail alongside hardened criminals, getting help from the government in the Philippines is virtually non-existent.



Last year, PREDA lobbied the Philippine government to give the Foundation two abandoned government buildings and a piece of land to grow vegetables for the children they freed. This never came to pass. After several months, the municipal government offered a smelly dilapidated warehouse and a hectare of land to be leased under onerous conditions that made it impossible to accept. PREDA is looking for a site to house these boys. The President of the Philippines has signed the juvenile justice and welfare act into law and PREDA can expect more boys to be released to the Foundation. This project is a response to an urgent request for international help to build a safe home for the distraught children whom PREDA rescues, so the children can be counseled and rehabilitated and returned to their families and society.

**GUARDIAN ANGEL GLOBAL AWARENESS**



The angel with the teardrop and broken wing represents the pain of children who suffer abuse by predators and neglect of governments to protect them. PREDA is internationally recognized for its work protecting children in the Philippines, resulting in laws in several countries that enable prosecution of their citizens who abuse children abroad. Fr. Shay Cullen and the PREDA Foundation are worth nominees for the Nobel Peace Prize for the work they do in curbing the sex-trade industry.

## THE RAPE OF CAGED CHILDREN MUST BE STOPPED by Fr. Shay Cullen

The Filipino translator began to weep. She could not continue translating the interview of a young boy rescued from a Metro Manila prison. Jose, a small 14-year old, shy and embarrassed, found courage to describe how he was dragged into a toilet at night in a prison cell by a brute of a man who attempted to rape him. Jose resisted, squirmed and finally managed to twist out of the rapist's embrace.



Pedro, a younger boy, was not strong enough to resist. He was rendered docile and submissive in fear while criminals raped him repeatedly and the rewarded him with extra food and a place near the electric fan to ease the smell of urine and feces pervading the cells.

Jose was beaten and made to clean out, with his bare hands, the blocked toilet full of excrement. This abuse is common in the hundreds of jails in where minors are detained in proximity to adults in violation of Philippine and international law. Jose's plight was recently told on ITN/CNN, how children are easy prey to adults.

Many hoped the ITN/CNN report on August 2005 would move the wealthy politicians to change the situation. If that failed then the shame of such conditions would do it. It was an empty hope, little has changed. The minors in one jail were sent to youth detention camp south of Manila. Last week, there were 18 more minors in that same horrid jail cell, so overcrowded that even the cockroaches have fled.

We were not allowed to visit them. They were brought into the yard, dazed from hunger and cramped conditions and traumatized. Prison officials say exposing conditions blackens the image of the Philippines and must be stopped.

Visits to minors in cells is usually banned, and we have to fulfill strict legal rules to visit and to give them food, medicine and legal help. This is a serious harassment and a violation of the human and civil rights. It proves there is much to hide.



The Comprehensive Juvenile Justice Bill, recently passed by the Senate, does away with the medieval model of punitive justice in favor of restorative justice. It raises the age of criminal liability from 9 to 15. The bill sees a young person in need of recovery if proven guilty. Most children accused are not guilty of serious crimes. Out of 114 boys rescued by PREDA, the majority have charges dismissed.

The shining lights in the middle of this dehumanizing darkness of kids behind bars are the judges. Under the enlightened guidance of the Philippine Supreme Court led by the reform-minded Chief Justice Reynato Puno, family judges are increasingly practicing restorative justice. They are transferring youth under 15 to formation training centers like PREDA in Olongapo City, a model of progressive best practice. There are no guards, gates, padlocks, or lock downs. The freedom and family environment ensure youth have a stake in staying at PREDA and training for their future.

The need for a safe home for these children is urgent. We made a request for the use of an abandoned government building and a piece of land. Alas, after a year of waiting, only a trashed warehouse smelling of goat droppings and urine with huge holes in the roof was offered to us. We must now seek international support to build a home for these children, where we can give them professional help to rehabilitate them and return them into society.

***Last week, there were 18 more minors in that same horrid jail cell so overcrowded that even the cockroaches have fled.***

**Nothing is more important than to protect the child and bring the abuser to justice**

*Published in the UK & Ireland, Sunday Examiner  
HK The Sunday Times, Philippines and www.preda.*

It took 9 years to get the Juvenile Justice Bill passed in the Philippines and signed by the president. Many children's rights organizations in the Philippines and abroad lobbied hard for this great historical step forward. We cannot forget the faces of young children behind bars as shown by ITN, CNN and ZDF television all over the world. I was happy to help get the cameras into the jails. That is the only way the world could see these secret cells and the cover up of the subhuman conditions.

The situation has not changed yet, but change is possible. We worked with Jubilee Action in the UK and ITV presenter Chris Rogers to bring the story of children behind bars to the public in the two reports last August and February. They had a big impact and motivated the congress to pass the new law that will prevent kids being jailed and instead establish restorative justice. Children 15 years and younger cannot be charged. Hopefully kids will be released. I went to the Pasig police station jail last week after the president signed the Bill into law. There are 4 minors in that filthy overcrowded cell where these youths were jailed with criminals.

*There are four minors in that filthy overcrowded cell where these youths were jailed with hardened criminals.*

The Pasig family court is one of most compassionate and the judge, the best. She gives custody of minors to PREDA when the court social workers recommend it, which helps to save many young lives. I had a court order to get Juanito, a 13 year old boy, out of the Pasig police station. Small, skinny hungry and in rags after two months of terror inside with hardened criminals, he is still traumatized. He became despondent and angry in the jail when his parents did not visit him. He felt rejected when they moved away and did not tell him where they were going. I got him out and brought him to the PREDA Foundation. The next day, with

the help of the national TV station GMA 7 his mother was found and brought to PREDA. Juanito would not speak with her. He had suffered so much rejection, physical and verbal abuse at home that he had run away and was jailed for homelessness and stealing to survive. When he has his cry therapy and gets all that anger and bitterness out he will be able to be reconciled. The mother admitted her failings and asked his forgiveness. Family therapy will reconcile them.



**The PREDA youth theatre touring Europe, with hosts and Father Shay Cullen, lower**

Dear Rainbow of Hope for Children and Friends,

I'm in Germany with the theatre and then to Holland and back to PREDA June 9. We have a few other partners offering support and have commitments for about half the cost of the building. We need another US \$ 50,000 which will give us a basic operating center, not high quality, but the kids don't need that, just basics. We are waiting if we can get land donated and save money otherwise it will cost more. We have some partners donating to operating cost, so the burden will not be all on one NGO, but shared. PREDA is expecting a big inflow of children as we begin to implement the new law which will release kids from prison and send them to homes, like PREDA. Newly accused children are supposed to be sent to the homes but there are none, only a few in the whole country, so we expect that they will be held in jail or in special building that will be jail like. It will be a big campaign to implement the law. So, could Rainbow of Hope target US\$50,000 for the new center. A big hello to people we met in Wainwright on our theatre tour a few years ago. Thank you so much for your compassion to help our distressed children. Bless you. Best regards ... Shay

## RAINBOW OF HOPE'S ASSOCIATION WITH THE PREDA FOUNDATION

Some will remember the PREDA Theatre troupe, 9 Filipino youth ages 19 - 24 who performed in our community, telling their sad story of environmental and sexual abuse.

Rainbow of Hope had funded their training with the Akbay Professional Theater in the Philippines and hosted a tour in Western Canada in July 2002, partnering with community and theatre groups. The title of the play was "The Truth Behind the Mask".

They performed to 3000 people in 30 venues and held several workshops with Canadian youth. They were interviewed on radio and television in major centres and CFRN TV in Calgary filmed part of the production.



PREDA's street performance at Eou Claire Centre, Calgary held the attention the young and old, as they told their story of a Canadian mining company whose dam broke, poisoning the valley with arsenic and the abuse families faced. The environmental neglect sparked an outcry from United Nations.

### PAST ADVENT PROJECTS

- Land for families in El Salvador who lost their homes in the devastating 2001 earthquake. They named their new community *Arcoiris* (Rainbow).
- Fundanor Girls' Home for girls rescued from the streets of Palmeira dos Indios in Alagoas, Brazil
- *Pastoral da Crianca* (Outreach for the Child) Centre for the production of a high nutrient supplement in Marechal Deodoro, Alagoas, Brazil. See story at [www.rainbowofhopeforchildren.ca](http://www.rainbowofhopeforchildren.ca).
- Thalita Home for girls rescued from the streets of Maceio, the capital of Alagoas Brazil. It is run by a consortium of sisters.
- Helping families with HIV/AIDS in South Africa.

Those wishing to help PREDA build a home for the recovery of children whom they manage to free from adult prisons, can do so by offering a cheque payable to RAINBOW OF HOPE. Please designate PREDA .

**Rainbow of Hope**  
**P.O Box 2883**  
**Wainwright, AB T9W 1S7**

Your donation will be acknowledged with an income tax receipt. Thank you for your kind support.