

Dear Friends & defenders of children,

As I sat down to write this letter to you our Preda van arrived back from the sprawling city and brought five more young children from the horrid dirty overcrowded detention cells. They had been behind bars for days and weeks. They were still a bit shocked at their sudden rescue and flight to freedom; now they are safe from abuse and deprivation, hunger and unhappiness, much of it thanks to you our friends and supporters.

A happy Christmas awaits them at Preda with 64 other children and youth rescued during the past months from similar sub human conditions. Many other children we rescued have been reunited happily with their parents and will spend Christmas at home. Our home for boys is full to overflowing. Our campaign to have the CRADLE youth detention center outside Manila closed down after we uncovered child abuse and torture by guards shows signs of success. The population there is down from 145 two years ago to just 40 today. Preda was given the custody of several boys from Cradel by the courts.

These children gave their recorded accounts of brutal beatings and sub-human conditions bordering on torture and drew pictures that show what they endured. The prison art is available on line at [www.preda.org](http://www.preda.org). Dozens of young children not yet charged with a crime have been released by the legal action of Preda rescue team from police cells to the custody of their parents. The legal department has succeeded in the past three months in getting the courts to dismiss 9 cases of crimes supposedly committed by the minors. With a clean record they have a chance of a better future. Several are undergoing skilled training at Preda. Three of the senior boys are now earning a daily wage as Pedi cab operators. Preda provides the Pedi cabs. Three others are earning and learning as welding apprentices. Others are earning at part-time jobs in organic farming. These boys have developed their own theatre play about the conditions of life behind bars. It is a powerful portrayal of the life in youth detention centers. They present the play at schools and public events. It is a powerful education and deterrent to would be wayward youth. They also join the tree planting project with the Indigenous People helped by the Preda Fair-Trade. 2000 trees are planted every year.

**Father Shay Cullen, Alex Hermoso and the Preda team**