

Dearest Family and Friends,

Happy New Year and may God richly bless you this year and always!

2007 has come to a close and I have begun a new chapter in my life here in India. I have been truly blessed this past year. I've met so many wonderful people and because of your love and support (both prayerfully and financially) and God's grace and mercy together we have been a blessing to so many. If you would indulge me for a couple of minutes, I want to let you know briefly how the Lord has used me in the past year. I also want to ask for your help.

Many of you have followed these stories in my newsletters but please read on to the end...

The year began slowly and ended triumphantly. We started the Women's Empowerment Thru Enterprise training program with 2 women. One of the women actually said we saved her life. She told us the first day of training that the week we called her to start training she was thinking of taking her life and the lives of her three little girls because her situation had become so desperate. She says that she now has hope. Something she did not have before. She also says that she loves coming to the project so much that she misses coming on the days we are off. By the way, since the start of January we are now training 3 women. They are Sita, Gulabi and Rosie. Please remember them in your prayers.

Also, little Maru who lived in my enclave died in a tragic drowning accident. God led me to reach out to some of the other children in the enclave, children who live in similar circumstances to Maru's. Their parents are laborers who live in tiny huts with no running water, no plumbing at all, no kitchens, no refrigeration and NONE of the comforts of home that we take for granted. None of these children went to school nor had they ever gone to a proper school. I was able by God's grace and mercy to get them into an Christian English medium school and into a home for children in distress. Their parents were and are so grateful. The parents will be leaving soon to move on to the next job that will most likely be far away from their children but even still they are so grateful that their children have an opportunity to leave behind the circle of poverty that their families have been in for generations. Thank God that He put me right in the right place at the right time to make a difference. Now there are 5 children reaping the blessing and we hope to add two more in the near future. By the way, one of those children is Mudamma. Many of you prayed for her during her recent illness. I am so happy and pleased to report that she is up and playing as usual. We hope to send her back to school on Monday. We are planning to send her little sister back to school with her on Monday also!

Then there are the girls at Bandhavi, a home for girls at risk of temple prostitution. Poor girls from small villages ages 5 to 16 who have been rescued from a horrible life of prostitution where their freedom and dignity meant nothing. Sweet, beautiful and smart girls who just need a chance. The Lord led me there and I began to teach them English pronunciation. Learning English here in India gives one a much needed advantage to "come up" in the world. One girl from a different area said to me, "Auntie, teach me American English so I can get a job with AOL."

I thank God that He has equipped me to do things that I didn't even know I could do to be a blessing to others. I thank God for you because you have been such a blessing to me and because of you I can be here. Together we are a blessing to so many people. From the bottom of my heart, *thank you so very, very much.*

The one thing this year that has been most challenging is the devaluation of the dollar. Since I've been here the dollar has gone down significantly from 45 rupees per dollar to 38 and sometimes 37 rupees per dollar with no rebound in sight. That has meant a \$368.00 or almost 33% per month drop in income for me as well as an increase in expenses, i.e. my rent was 12,000 rupees per month and still is but that used to be \$266.00 per month and it is now \$315.00 per month.

So, I need your help. That's why I'm asking you to prayerfully consider making a one time donation or a monthly commitment to the work that the Lord has called me here to do so that I continue doing it. If you are already making a monthly commitment, I am asking that you would prayerfully consider increasing that commitment amount as you are led.

If you would, please, let me know what you have decided to do and remember no amount is too small. A very dear young woman is blessing me each month with a donation of \$10.00 and it has truly been a much needed blessing.

Making a donation or making a commitment is very simple. Just go to www.WorldVenture.com. On the left side scroll down to and click on **Missionaries**. In the middle of that page go to **Find a Missionary** click on the down arrow and scroll down to **Francois, Karen**. On the right side next to *print, email* you can click on either **Make a Donation** or **Make a Commitment** and follow the prompts from there. For those of you who would like to increase your giving please feel free to email Michael Smith at m.smith@worldventure.com and let him know what change you would like to make to your commitment. If you have any questions, please let me or Michael know.

Again thank you *so* much for your support.

Love,

Karen

Karen L. Francois

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