

Surinamese President Gets Kids' Advice About Child Abuse



Read what they had to say

By Zarissa from Suriname, member of the Regional Network of Adolescent Communicators, LACVOX



Paramaribo, Suriname November 2008 – “Today is the International Day against Child Abuse – but violence against children isn’t something you talk about just once a year. One day just isn’t enough. Everyday, we all should work on ways to protect children,” Lillian Ferrier says. She is the chairperson of the Foundation for Human Development in Suriname, and not only a child psychologist, but also a hardcore soldier when it comes to fighting for child's rights.

She recently held a 7-day campaign, called “Be Nice to Kids.” The main idea of the campaign was the participation of children -- even when it comes to decision-making. Together with the help of Lillian and the Foundation for Human Development, more than 400 school children wrote letters to the president of Suriname, Ronald Venetiaan, all advising him in their own words how to protect them against violence.

These are just a few letters out of the hundreds. The children who wrote these letters are from schools such as the Renckewitzschool, Christiaan Davidsschool, the Saint Ignatiuschool, Gijsbertus school and Flu I school:

To: President Ronald Venetiaan

My name is Darrel and I'm in the fourth grade. Children should not have to be beat up. I don't want my mother to beat up my little sister anymore. If my sister doesn't want to go to bed my mother hits her and then my mother leaves and stays away for a whole week. I have to make food for my sister and sometimes I don't have time to do my homework. Sometimes my cousin does my homework for me.



Dear Sir,

I think it's bad that kids get abused. That's why I'm writing you this letter:

Dear Mr. President, I think it's really terrible that kids get abused by their fathers, mothers, relatives, teachers, baby-sitters, or friends. Sir, if you want to prevent mental abuse, you can do this: 1. make sure kids don't get tight when they go to sleep, 2. make sure kids don't get laughed

at and 3. That kids don't get frightened so they can't sleep. If you want to prevent physical abuse, prevent parents from giving children scars or skin burns. If you want to prevent sexual abuse, make sure that men and women from touching children on their private areas. If some people do it anyway you should send them to jail. You can choose how long they have to stay there.

**From: Kevin
For: the Nice President Ronald Venetiaan**

To: the President of the Republic of Suriname

Dear Sir,

I wonder why children get abused at home or school. They get hit by their parents and by their teachers. I wonder why children get beat up with wires or scoop spoons, and get scars and bruises on their bodies. I ask you mister President of the Republic of Suriname to not let kids get treated this way. Not even if they get low marks on tests.



Alan

**My name is Anthony
I am 10- years old
I go to the Christiaan Davidsschool**

My message is that the president should talk about child abuse on our independence day so parents won't hit their children

**My name is Keith
I am 8- years old**

President, if you don't want children in Suriname to get abused you have to put the pictures and names of people who abuse kids in the newspapers for everyone to see who they are. They shouldn't be let out of jail too.
