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For over ninety years the Sisters of Mercy at St. Joseph's Home (Neerkol) cared for children who were orphaned, abandoned, or otherwise unable to live in their families. For thousands it was an opportunity to make something of a life that was otherwise deprived. Conditions were difficult and resources were scarce. Strict discipline reflected the thinking of the day. The Sisters did their best to care for the children who had nowhere else to go. Several Sisters regard their years at Neerkol as particularly happy ones even though the work was hard. While being saddened by a knowledge of the tragic life histories of some of the former children, they rejoice in the achievements of many others.

The Sisters of Mercy can well understand that for some children their time in the Home was distressing and unhappy. This is hardly surprising since they were deprived of a normal home life. It is only natural that a legacy of parental deprivation would leave some former residents bitter and resentful. The Sisters' ministry of care did not stop when children left the home and they continue to do all that is reasonably possible to help such people now or at any stage in the future.

Allegations have been made of abuse at the hands of a Priest who was appointed to the Neerkol Parish, and of subsequent willful neglect by those in authority to protect the child concerned. Enquiries made of people familiar with the St. Joseph's Home have not revealed any evidence to substantiate the allegations. The Sisters of Mercy rely on their past record of care for the disadvantaged and are confident of the support of fair-minded people.

For further information contact Sister Berneice Loch, Congregational Leader, on 079-271866.