



NEWS FROM HOINA HOMES OF THE INDIAN NATION

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Reflections on a Visit to HOINA

Editor's Note: A group from Penn State University visited HOINA last summer. They offer reflections from their trip to India.

By Jackie Rohrbeck

Despite the months of class leading up to August [2008] and all the readings and talks and videos and presentations that went along with our preparation for India, I don't think any of us girls really knew what to expect when we got off the plane in India. After some thirty plus hours of travel, we were ready to be at the home and to meet the girls we already loved so much and to spend time in the country that had tugged on each of our hearts individually, beckoning us to come and see, almost nine months ago.

I think what we each found shocked us all. We found a family of wonderful, loving girls, ready and excited to greet us with "good morning, Akka!" at 6:15 a.m. when we first pulled into the home. We found we were treated with hospitality above and beyond what any of us expected by a staff who melted our hearts. We found our hands were constantly full of smaller hands, eager to show us their beds and shoes and homework and drawings. We found a home filled with love.

I think one of my fondest memories brings me back to our very first night at the girls' home outside of Chennai, when I was jet-lagged and emotionally overwhelmed from our arrival in India and very much looking forward to climbing into bed for the evening but decided I wanted to help the girls with homework instead. Unsure of what to do or where to go, I plopped myself down among three older girls who were chattering away as they bent over their schoolbooks, hoping



HOINA boys share the joy.

they wouldn't mind my intrusion. Immediately after I sat down, the girls greeted me, asked me my name, and patiently repeated each of theirs and lovingly corrected my terrible pronunciation. Next came a barrage of questions as they sat eagerly awaiting my answers about my family, my friends, what school was like in America, and why I came to India.

In the midst of our talking, the power went out in our schoolroom, casting darkness between me and my new friends. As soon as the power went out and squeals were heard throughout the room, I felt three sets of hands reach out to grab mine. One of the girls whispered, "Sister, do not be afraid – we are right here!" At that moment my heart melted, and I knew I was home at HOINA. My eyes welled with tears as I already couldn't bear the thought of leaving these girls in three short weeks.

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Reflections

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Stories like this one, of unprecedented kindness and compassion from staff and children, flood my memory as I think of my experience at the boys and girls home in HOINA. I can't help but laugh when I remember many afternoons outside of the boys' home in Visakhapatnam when my brothers doubled over in amusement, after trying patiently to teach me and the other PSU sisters cricket and volleyball. I always smile when I think of Patsy, one of the youngest at the girls' home who suffers from cerebral palsy, and how the highlight of my day would be sitting outside with her on my lap, just enjoying holding her in my arms. Perhaps my most vivid memories are from chapel and prayer, listening to the voices of the boys and girls float heavenward and closing my eyes and just knowing there was nowhere I'd rather be than listening to this song at this moment.

Cliché, perhaps, but nevertheless true, my time in India at HOINA changed me in ways I could have never expected. It's hard to describe how a heart is impacted, but I know the girls and boys and staff I met while I was there and the experiences we shared together most certainly left footprints on my soul and mind that I will not easily forget.



Jackie holds Patsy at the girls' home.

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Children Collect Items for HOINA

Our thanks go to the kindergarten students of Lee's Summit Community Christian School in Missouri for collecting first aid supplies, children's vitamins, and undergarments for our HOINA children. Their annual unit study of India wraps up with special guest speaker Letti Becker from HOINA. The items gathered are all greatly appreciated!

Name: _____

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PO Box 636

Brownstown, PA 17508-0636



03/09



I want to sponsor a HOINA boy / girl (*circle one*). Here is my first monthly gift of \$30.

Use this gift to finance HOINA's ongoing projects through the General Fund: \$ _____

I would like to order _____ sets of notecards. Here's my check for \$ _____ made out to HOINA.

This gift of \$ _____ is in honor OR memory of (*circle one*): _____

(please print clearly)

ALL DONATIONS ARE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE

Reflections

Continued from page 2

By Tessa Stubler

Last week, I finally got all of my pictures back and put them into albums. As I began to put them in their final slots for my family and friends, the very first photo was the sign leading into the girls' home in Chennai. I remember when I took that picture, HOINA was just a name on a sign, a symbol of our long trip's end, and a community I had envisioned from stories. But, when I went through those gates for the final time, HOINA was much more than just a name.

When we were first meeting the girls, I felt somewhat like a celebrity. The girls wanted to paint our nails, do our hair, and hear stories about our lives in the United States. With the little girls, there was more of a challenge presented. Peggy Sue was shyer than any of the other children. When I would try to play with her, she would run and hide. When I tried to pick her up, I could tell she was upset. I thought for sure I



After an early morning hike at the boys' home!

scared her half to death. But then, on the very last day, I made my last visit to the nursery before the van left. As I said goodbye to the three little ones, Peggy Sue let me hold her. More than that, she wouldn't let me put her down! It was like she was actually asking me not to leave.

Peggy Sue made me feel like we accomplished something in our

short stay. The boys and girls at HOINA know what it is like to have people care about them, and they truly care about others also. Peggy Sue may not have wanted me to play with her, but she knew that we were a part of HOINA when we finally left. HOINA is a place that creates a home for whomever visits, and makes them a part of the family. ♿

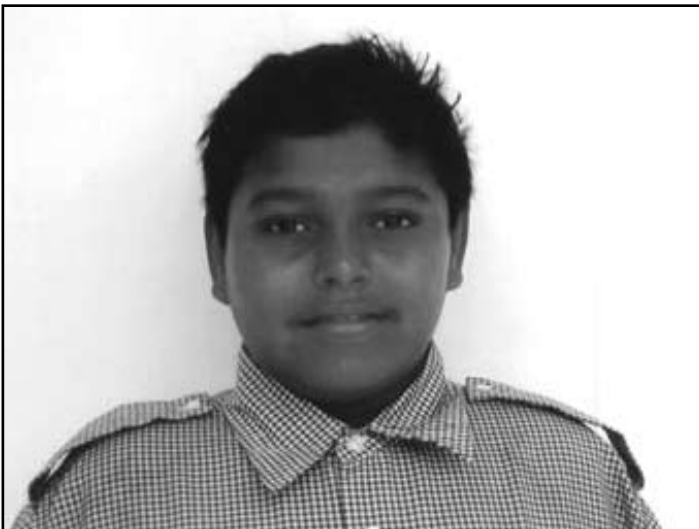


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Tarun Prakash needs a sponsor



Tarun Prakash

Tarun Prakash was born in March of 1995. He came to HOINA in July of 2007 when he was 12.

Tarun Prakash's parents were married in 1991. At the time his father was a Christian and his mother a Hindu. His mother's family disowned her for marrying a Christian. In 1998 Prakash's mother became a Christian, and in 2003 his father went into mission work in a remote area called Raagampeta. In January 2007 his father died from a heart attack, and his mother could not care for her two children. Another mission worker suggested she contact HOINA, and Tarun Prakash and his brother were admitted in July.

Prakash is studying 9th grade. He likes cricket, lions, and the color yellow. He wants to be an engineer when he is older. ♿

Please Pray for MOM While She's in India

Darlene has returned to India and will continue her stay there into May. Please join your prayers with ours as we pray for her work, safety and health. It would also be a great encouragement to Darlene to receive a letter, note or e-mail while she's away.

Darlene Large
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