



NEWS FROM HOINA HOMES OF THE INDIAN NATION

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Life is a Parade

*By Darlene Large
HOINA President*

Many years ago, in the mid 1980's, my dear friend and HOINA board member, Renu Sahgal, who is an advocate [lawyer] in New Delhi, introduced me to Ambassador Rajen Rathore and his wife, Renu. Over the past 20 years, all three of them have been a wonderful blessing to HOINA's children. Some time after we had become friends, Rajen and Renu took me to something called the Republic Day parade. As I sat there on the parade grounds, I was thrilled and amazed by the discipline of the camels. The only movement I saw from

them was the blinking of their long eyelashes. Those interesting creatures did exactly what the soldiers sitting astride them wanted them to do.

While watching all the excitement of the day, I couldn't help thinking that life is like a parade. We, too, can march in the parade as these soldiers and camels and others were doing. Disciplined in every movement, we can march in unison in straight rows and columns, making an impressive display of strength. The hours of drilling required to get a group of men (and animals!) to perform with such precision is certainly not inconsequential. We see only the final product of the parade.

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Life is a Parade mosaic at the new HOINA boys' home.

Life is a Parade

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However, those who have signed up to be part of it have put in countless hours before the starting whistle ever blows.

Before the parade begins, someone must work out the logistics of it. Who will determine the parade's length? What about the marching route? Someone must contact the city offices responsible for closing down streets to keep them free of traffic during the parade. Advertising must be put out to attract participants, as well as an audience. All those behind-the-scenes workers make the parade an event no one wants to miss.

I don't ever remember marching in a parade myself. I was always a spectator. I watched the parade go by, and I cheered and applauded. Certainly, the air of festivity associated with a parade wouldn't be nearly as grand if no one watched. As I enjoyed the fun and music, I had no thoughts for what had gone into planning it or for the pressure on those leading it.

We, too, can lead the parade. We can inspire others to follow us, to help others in need just as Rajiv Gandhi was doing for his country that year I watched the Republic Day parade. Let's not forget the drummer who keeps the beat so everyone can march in step. Then there are band members who make lovely music for our enjoyment. Music is another way for us to be inspired.



Many hands make light work as HOINA boys move into the new dorms.

Music brings us joy as well. I don't think I ever returned home from a parade feeling unhappy.

So it is in life. There are those who inspire and lead us on to do great things for others—men like Mahatma Gandhi and Abraham Lincoln. One of my mentors was a pastor named Jim Curry. His last words to me were, "Go do something the devil doesn't like." While I have followed that advice and marched under that banner, it has often been a tough one to march under. I've not always been so good at marching to the same beat others hear.

I can remember when our daughter was in high school. She and her good friend, Lisa, were co-captains

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05/09



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of the colorful flag squad. Besides the flags, the band front included majorettes who twirled and showed off their fancy footwork and the rifle squad who spun and tossed their guns with precision. Some bands have high-stepping dancers or cheerleaders with pom poms who dazzle us with steps and smiles. Different faces—smiling performers or straight-faced musicians—so many different people wearing different uniforms. Each one has a job to do to make the parade a success.

Letti tells me that when you are in a band, no matter what, you keep marching. Even if the person next to you trips, you must keep marching forward. If you stop, you can cause others behind you to fall out of step or other rows to stack up. Having helpers, like band parents, on the periphery of the parade route allows the band members to focus on their task—marching forward.

Sometimes I've felt that I was marching alone. Often, though, the Lord sends others to march with me. Moving 100 boys to their new home on our property and then relocating our HOINA girls was quite a challenge. Though the boys' home was not completely finished, we moved all the beds, mattresses, books, clothing, and furniture to the new dorms on the day before Easter. The girls were coming to take over the boys' previous home, so we had to be out of their house. It was exhausting, and I was totally burned out. Chicken

pox had begun in both houses. The mumps outbreak seemed contained for the time being. *What next?* I thought when a phone call came from New York City. On the phone was one of our donors, Roz Vinci, asking, "Do you need any help?" What an answer to prayer she was that day! Our parade was getting a boost. We weren't going to be alone. God was sending another member of the band to help us "march" to our new home.

We have two small girls whose daddy was killed in the Tsunami. Their mummy asked if she could come along with them and work for us in our new home near Vizakhaputnam, Andhra Pradesh. Not all of our staff wanted to relocate, so we have been looking for new employees. The girls already knew her, and she speaks

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Young boy needs your sponsorship




Rayavarapu Anil Kumar

[Editors Note: You may have noticed we've featured many boys lately. That's because we're waiting until we accept more girls in our new location.]

Anil Kumar was born on September 25, 2000. He came to HOINA in July of 2007 at the age of six.


Anil Kumar's parents were married through an arranged marriage in 1997. His father worked as a lorry driver and a field laborer. His father died in September of 2001 when Anil Kumar was one year old. After his father's death, his mother struggled to care for her two children. She approached HOINA in July 2007, and Anil Kumar was admitted.

Anil Kumar likes cricket, lions, and the color red. He wants to be a teacher when he is older. 

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their native language. She offered to help care for the children in our girls' home. Another boost to our parade! Both volunteers came from unexpected places. Both ladies could have stood by watching us struggle as we marched on, but they chose not to be spectators. They want to march with us.

So as life goes along, where are you? Do you march in the parade? Are you a drum major leading the parade? Whatever your abilities, I encourage you to get involved somewhere. Help your neighbors, volunteer in your community, pray for those in the parade of life. You can make a difference. Can you hear the drummers' cadence? The parade of life needs you. 



Someone has made a difference in these boys' lives.

Darlene