



NEWS FROM HOINA HOMES OF THE INDIAN NATION

PO Box 87, St. Charles, Missouri 63302 • www.hoina.org • April 2010

An Amazing Place Awaits You

By Cecilia Gutierrez

Editor's Note: Cecilia Gutierrez is a US citizen of Dominican heritage. She has a Masters in Public Administration and has spent this year on a journey. She spent nearly six months in Africa, a short time in Dubai, and concludes her journey in India.

The sound of laughter is the first thing you hear at HOINA. Then comes the onslaught of greetings, "Good morning, Sister! Good evening, Sister!" depending on the time of day. And then gloriously, you hear the running of small feet as the children fight to shower you with hugs. What a marvelous way to start and end your day! And how I will miss it when I leave.

The HOINA campus is truly a special place, a quiet haven in this vast magnificent country with 1.1 billion people. The children and staff, living on HOINA's 22 acres with dogs, ducks, rabbits, cows, a monkey, and occasional snakes, are simply wonderful. Well, not so much the snakes.

Everyone welcomes you with such love, such kindness, and such warmth especially the children, who epitomize



Auntie Cecilia gets hugs and kisses from the girls at HOINA

hospitality. If you have ever thought about visiting HOINA, I urge you to come. You will leave transformed, re-energized, and inspired. And you will fall in love with India— its children, its people, its beauty, and its culture.

Upon arrival, I quickly came to understand that HOINA extends far beyond its orphanages, elderly feeding programs, and free clinic. HOINA is a source of support and

hope for so many people. Almost daily, people come to HOINA for help for a variety of problems and ailments. Men, women, and young adults who are disabled, displaced, poor, hungry, in need of medical assistance, with tears in their eyes, and nowhere else to turn. They come because they hear of "Mom." They hear about HOINA. And while "Mom" and the staff can't

see **AN AMAZING PLACE** - page 2

An Amazing Place

Continued from page 1

help everyone, they certainly try.

Indeed, you can't spend a day with "Mom" and not be compelled to do your part in making this world a better place. In helping the poor, the rejected, the lonely, the unwanted, and the unloved. It is challenging and exhausting work, not for the faint of heart; and only a few, like "Mom," heed the call. Imagine the difference we could make if more of us were so inclined to serve those most in need.

For 45 days, I was blessed with the opportunity to serve at HOINA. The children and staff now feel like family. Long gone are the moments of unfamiliarity that plague volunteers or visitors in a foreign country. Now, we joke freely and share stories and work together on projects. With my limited Telugu, I try to communicate, often resorting to lively hand gestures and poor drawings to make my point. We smile often and laugh at each other in our effort to be understood. It is amazing how well one can communicate with few words.

I came to India because I wanted to serve and experience the country. I chose HOINA because two wonderful friends of mine told me about the orphanages—Jen Yost and Dave Fyfe [HOINA Board Member]. I did not know Darlene or anyone associated with HOINA. I came as a perfect stranger on the recommendation of Dave.

The truth is that from the moment I heard about HOINA I wanted to come. It has taken me years to finally save money and gain the courage to travel for a year on my own. I quit my job, packed up my things, left my



Auntie Cecilia surrounded by children and staff at HOINA

family and fiancé behind to pursue a dream to embark on a "service and spiritual" journey. I have spent most of my time in South Africa at McCord Hospital in Durban. It is not by coincidence that I sought to serve in the lands of Nelson Mandela and Mahatma Gandhi.

And while I can write about the amazing children, the heartbreaking stories, the countless funny moments, the caring staff, the beautiful campus that is constantly being transformed, (since I have been here, we have acquired nine ducks, built a new pond, painted walls, created murals, added more beds to the boys' home, and so much more) the challenge of eating with one hand, the art of putting on a saree, or the uniqueness of India, I am choosing otherwise. Instead, I want to share with you my experience with "Mom."

After two seconds of meeting Darlene, you can't help but be immediately inspired. What she

and many others have been able to accomplish over the last 35 years takes your breath away. Darlene is quick to acknowledge the many people who make this work possible. Any donation distributed to the children is done so by first acknowledging the individual(s) responsible for the gift.

I am in awe of this American woman who journeyed to India to provide a loving and nurturing home to children most in need. How brave. What a tremendous gift to the world, and to India. And while I stand in admiration, I can also share that she is as flawed as the rest of us.

Darlene is tough. She's demanding. She's opinionated. She's stern, and when she's not pleased you know it. But even after 35 years, she is still moved to tears. Indeed, she is one of the most honest and caring women I have ever met.

With a candidness that is unlike others I've met, she is the first to

see **AMAZING PLACE** - page 3

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Account Number (on your mailing label): _____

Mail coupon to: **HOINA**

PO Box 636

Brownstown, PA 17508-0636

APRIL/2010



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

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

(please print clearly)

Use this gift to finance HOINA's ongoing projects
through the General Fund.



ALL DONATIONS ARE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE

Amazing Place

Continued from page 2

share the many mistakes made and insurmountable challenges that seemed sure to derail this work. When I asked her if she had ever thought about quitting, backing up and doing something else, she did not hesitate in her response. "Never! This is God's work." There are lessons for all of us to learn from her. When the going gets tough, Darlene doesn't run; she stands firm, makes adjustments, and is determined to persevere.

Darlene is passionate. She is lively and full of energy. She listens. She's a

problem-solver and swift to forgive. She's curious. She freely dispenses hugs and advice. She's generous. She's smart. She's tenacious. She's a dreamer. And she is always, always, God's servant.

Just watching her exhausts you. She works 12- to 14-hour days (sometimes longer), never taking a day off, as there is far too much to do and only one of her. And you can't believe she is actually 75 (as of March 31). Both in appearance and energy she belies her age.

The sacrifices have been great, but the rewards, even greater. I have worked for many organizations, have

run my own non-profit in the States, and can honestly share I am impressed. HOINA is proud to boast that only 7% of the funds received go to administrative costs while 93% go to operating the children's campus, feeding programs, and the medical clinic. Having lived here for so many weeks, I can attest to the thoughtfulness placed on every rupee spent.

I am most impressed with the love and care given to the boys and girls calling HOINA home, with the unwavering focus on education, and with the effort to provide a nurturing family for those long forgotten.

see **AMAZING PLACE** - page 4



"If you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. The Lord will guide you always; He will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail."

Isaiah 58:10-11 (NIV)

"Mom" – HOINA President and founder Darlene Large





HOINA
 PO Box 636
 Brownstown, PA 17508-0636

Return Service Requested

Non-profit Org.
 U.S. Postage
PAID
 Permit #242
 New Holland, PA

Please Sponsor

Lenka Neeraja was born May 6, 1996 and came to HOINA in July of 2009.

Mr. Appa Rao and Ms. Sarawathi were married in 1963. After 11 years they had a son. After 20 years, Neeraja was born. She was born prematurely. After an unsuccessful surgery in 2005, she was still unable to walk. Her parents cannot afford to give her the medical care, and asked HOINA to care for her.

Neeraja is studying 7th grade. She likes dogs, the color pink, and playing chess. She would like to be a teacher when she is grown. 



Amazing Place

Continued from page 3

While Darlene will never tire of doing God's work, she needs our collective help. She needs us all to step up, not just the faithful supporters. She needs new donors to fulfill the rest of her vision.

Darlene dreams of building a vocational school for surrounding villages, of constructing a free clinic for women and children, a home for the elderly, and a chapel. I want to be a part of helping her realize the continuation of her mission; I hope you'll join me. Please share HOINA's work with a least three new people. Invite them to visit the website, to come to HOINA, to join this effort.

I want to ask for your prayers that the property in Chennai [former girls' home] be sold. With the funds from the sale of that property, and the support of current and new donors, the vision for the expansion of the 22-acre campus can become a reality.

I hope, too, that you'll come visit. I promise you the hugs and warmth received are priceless and well worth the journey. 

HOINA is a 501(c)3, tax-exempt organization with international headquarters located at:

HOINA
 PO Box 87
 Saint Charles, MO 63302-0087
 U.S.A.
 Email address: hoina1@yahoo.com

This newsletter is published to inform our readers of the work HOINA does among the handicapped and abandoned in India.

Layout by Eberly Designs, Mount Joy, PA.
 Printing by Freedom-Graphics, E-town, PA.

Send address changes to:

HOINA
 PO Box 636
 Brownstown, PA 17508-0636
 U.S.A.
 Tel. 717.355.9494
 Toll-free: 877.99.HOINA (4.6462)
 Email address: admin@hoina.org
 Website: www.hoina.org

The official registration and financial information of Homes of the Indian Nation (HOINA) may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling, toll-free in PA, 1.800.732.0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.