



# NEWS FROM HOINA HOMES OF THE INDIAN NATION

PO Box 87, St. Charles, Missouri 63302 • [www.hoina.org](http://www.hoina.org) • December 2011

## An Update on Bhaga Lakshmi

For all the prayer warriors out there, would you please put a young girl named Bhaga Lakshmi on your list? I wrote about her in our summer newsletter issue, but we now have more details about her situation. We are actively looking for help for her and hope you'll share her story with others. I wish you could have been with me at the girls' home back in India in September when I said, "Sweetheart, we need to find you some ears."

She looked up at me and smiled her wonderful smile, "Yes, Mom." From that moment on we became special buddies.

Bhaga Lakshmi's maternal grandparents discovered a tailor in their village in Andhra Pradesh whom they felt would be perfect for their daughter. After her parents married in 1996, her daddy found a better job in West Bengal near Calcutta in a jute mill. In 1998 Bhaga Lakshmi was born. During that year her father began to feel a lot of pressure from his job, so he consoled himself by drinking alcohol. As the years went by, his drinking became more and more of a deadly habit. His angry outbursts and arguments were more violent. One day in 2001 he abandoned his wife and daughter and sent word home that he had found another woman and would not be coming back. Her mother became very devastated and depressed. Alone, living in a small mud and thatched hut, struggling with language prob-

lems, she decided on a course of action. She would end it all and take her life.

Her three-year-old daughter watched as her mother poured kerosene over her head and set herself on fire. As she stood there burning, she hugged her little daughter. The kerosene burned the top of her little head, her arms, neck, and back. The kerosene also robbed Bhaga Lakshmi of her

ears, and all around her hairline the scars left a hairless band on her scalp. That day her beloved Mummy died. Neighbors took Bhaga Lakshmi to a hospital where she spent the next six months. They wondered if she would live yet survive she did.

She was sent to live with extended family in Andhra Pradesh. Moving in with cousins was not an easy adjustment. Their teasing would cause her to run off to hide and cry alone in the darkness of a closet. When she became older, she went to school. Being in public was more difficult than being home with her cousins. Bullies loved teasing her, and there

were no aunts or uncles to defend her at school.

She had come from a world of unemployment and poverty; suffering and hopelessness were everywhere. Each day, she had to get up and face a mirror that told her she was different because she had no ears. She quickly learned to cover up and retreat.



Bhaga Lakshmi

# Update on Bhaga Lakshmi

continued from page 1

One day last June, Bhaga Lakshmi was brought to HOINA. Many kids in village India have lost mothers and fathers, and often an uncle, aunt, or grandparent rescues them. Other children have no relatives. HOINA is often the last chance for kids in situations like this. As



These two pictures show the scarring on Bhaga Lakshmi's head

you can imagine, some children who come to HOINA face serious mental and emotional problems. This makes it difficult for them to learn.

Bhaga Lakshmi is one of those. In early November, as she struggled with a lesson, her impatient teacher hit her over the head several times with a stick. She came home badly bruised on top of the burn scars she already carries. When our general manager Anand called me with the news, I thought of the girl I had left behind in India. I remembered her bright smiles and how she helped the little girls when they were dressing for school. This made me more determined than ever to find her ears. Those scars needed to be replaced.

I had taken her to plastic surgeons in India, but they felt it was just cosmetic surgery. They suggested that I buy plastic ears and attach a band and let her put that head band on. I thought to myself, *No, this is not Halloween.*

They said, "Well, a surgery such as that will cost \$20,000. Also, not many doctors have done ears so this is a major problem here." *Hmmm, I thought, on to Plan B ...*

When I came home to the USA, I approached one children's hospital; but they only help children with cancer. I approached another that had helped us with other HOINA children, but they did not have a plastic surgeon on their staff. I went to a third children's hospital, and they are going to let us know. Please pray that somehow Bhaga Lakshmi will receive her ears. She is now 13 years old. She says she feels so safe in HOINA and is so grateful that God brought her to us. She is working hard to improve her math and language skills. Please pray with us.

I know that we are asking for a lot, but I also know we serve a God of miracles. Jesus can do this. He has opened

so many doors for so many impossible requests in HOINA's past. There is no greater healer than Who He is.

As we anxiously await His answer for Bhaga Lakshmi, we count our blessings. In October we had a visit from an American nurse, Rachel Ascher. She was a definite gift from heaven to us. The staff and children learned so much from her about hygiene and medicines and how to live healthy lives. She cared for our sick children and counseled and encouraged us. Everyone misses her smiles and her help now that she has left HOINA.

As Christmas approaches, the years seem to go by faster and faster. We lost our HOINA Grandmother Dorothy Schaeffer and Auntie Elsie Keeney. Both had visited us in India in years past and left us wonderful memories and ideas of things to do with the children. We will miss my Aunt Honey, too. She crocheted hundreds of baby hats, sweaters, and blankets for the HOINA children and the tribal babies who live in the mountains near us. It was Aunt Honey who said, HOINA belongs to the Darling of Heaven, Jesus Christ. At 97 years of age, He was her sweetheart, she said. I wish all of us could say that. He has certainly been a sweetheart to HOINA. He told us to love one another as we love ourselves. I'm going to make a better effort to do that in 2012. I am going to ask Jesus to show me what He loves about those I find difficult to love. Will you join me? Would you make your corner of the world a little more peaceful, a little more beautiful, a better place for others because God gifted you with life today on this wonderful planet called Earth?

I send each of you 1000 hugs. Please share them with others.

*Darlene* 

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Account Number (on your mailing label): \_\_\_\_\_

Mail coupon to: **HOINA**  
**PO Box 636**  
**Brownstown, PA 17508-0636**



Dec. 2011



I want to sponsor a HOINA boy / girl (*circle one*).

Here is my first monthly gift of \$30.

Gift sponsorship for (name & address of person) \_\_\_\_\_

(please print clearly)

This gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is in honor/memory of

(please give name and address of person): \_\_\_\_\_

(please print clearly)

I would like to order \_\_\_\_\_ sets of notecards @ \$10 each.

Please use this \$ \_\_\_\_\_ toward the Christmas Fund.

All donations are tax deductible.

## How We Do Christmas at HOINA

By Darlene Large  
HOINA Founder

Our church has been packing up shoe boxes with toys, candies, toothbrushes, washcloths, socks, hats, gloves, small books, pencils, pens, and play dough for children around the world through Operation Christmas Child. I am going to do something similar for our HOINA children this year. Normally, they receive just one present each at Christmas. This year, they will have lots of smaller presents to open in their Christmas shoebox. We will keep Christmas as a holy day. The children and staff will have a lovely feast and go to church, but on January 7, we will distribute presents. By then, a group of York College students will be joining us again with our board member, Dr. David Fye and his wife, Jennifer, as their chaperones. They will help distribute the gifts and participate in the celebration.

When I was a little girl, we always had two Christmases. My paternal grandmother celebrated December 25 and my maternal grandmother celebrated January 7 as an Orthodox Christian. When we went to visit her for the Serbian Christmas in January, she had straw on the kitchen floor to remind us that Jesus was born in a humble stable. It was great fun to play in the straw. When I became a bride many years later, I enjoyed living in Caracas, Venezuela, during the holidays. We again celebrated January 6 as Three Kings' Day and exchanged gifts with friends.

see **Christmas at HOINA** page 4

## Last Minute Christmas Ideas

Having trouble thinking of the perfect gift for that family member who has everything? How about one of these:

- HOINA note cards
- A Christmas donation to letHOINA that will be used to purchase a gift for a HOINA child.
- A one-time donation in honor or memory of someone. If you provide a name and address with your gift, we will send your recipient a thank you letter acknowledging their gift. In our February newsletter, we will publish our semi-annual recognition list as well.
- A child sponsorship
- A donation to our education fund, which provides scholarships for secondary and technical schooling for our child.



HOINA is a 501(c)3, tax-exempt organization with international headquarters located at:  
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## How We Do Christmas at HOINA

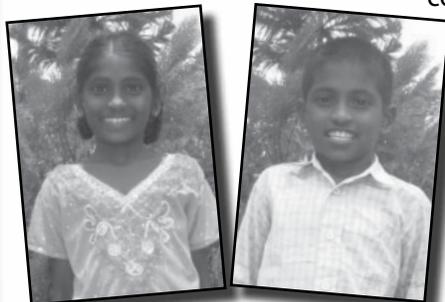
continued from page 3

This will be Bhaga Lakshmi's first Christmas. I love to celebrate with children who have never experienced Christmas before. No matter how many times I hear the story of the birth of Christ, it is always a joy to hear it again and to bless one another with gifts. If you haven't contributed to our Christmas Fund but would like to do so,

it isn't too late. Just send your gift with the coupon on page 3, and we'll be sure to fill a shoebox in India with goodies for our HOINA children. We thank you for sharing with our children and staff. May your own holiday season be filled with joy and family and many happy memories. 

## Sponsorships Make Great Gifts

Would you provide an orphan with some extra love this Christmas? This brother and sister pair are in need of sponsors. Are you their answer? Their parents, Mr. Krishna and Ms. Manga, married in 2002. Mr. Krishna worked as a field worker for daily wages. They had two children, a girl and a boy. After giving birth to her second child, Ms. Manga died from Tetanus. After Ms. Manga's death, Mr. Krishna also got sick and died in January 2010. The children's grandmother, Ms. Narayamma came forward to look after them. As she, too, was a poor widow, she resorted to begging in the village to feed her grandchildren. Seeing her pitiable condition, neighbors of hers approached HOINA and requested that we admit the siblings into HOINA.



Sunkari Kumari

Sunkari Elisha

Kumari was admitted with her brother, Elisha, in June of 2010, and neither of them have a sponsor. Would you consider sponsoring either or both of these children? Your \$30 per month will provide either with food, clothing, medical care, schooling, and a home to live in. Complete the coupon on Page 3 and send it with your first monthly gift to begin your sponsorship for either child. Remember, you can sponsor a child in honor of someone else as a holiday gift!