



NEWS FROM HOINA HOMES OF THE INDIAN NATION

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A Real and Important Difference

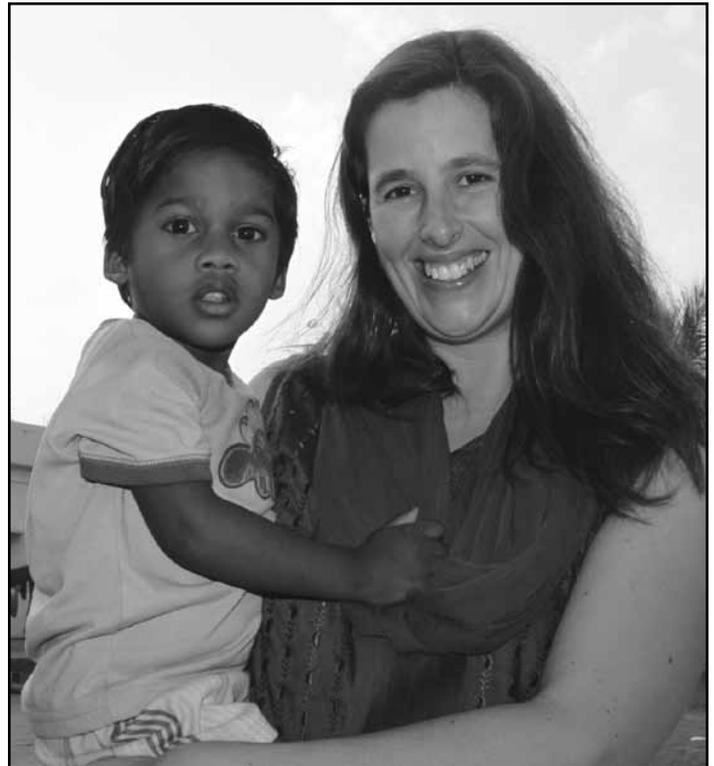
By Jen Yost

On December 28th, our group of ten weary travelers arrived at HOINA after two long days to start our journey. Traveling to HOINA from the United States can be tiring, but arriving at the homes and seeing the smiling faces of the boys and girls makes it all worth it!

I last visited HOINA in 2004 and 2005 with my husband, David Fyfe. At that time, we were visiting HOINA with groups of Penn State students. Now, David is a geography professor at York College, and so on this trip we are here with eight York College students. It is amazing to see how HOINA has continued to grow and evolve since my last visit!

Here, a few highlights:

- Instead of an overnight train ride from the girls' home in southern India to the boys' home much farther north near Kothavalesa, it is now just a quick walk from one home to the other. Having the two homes together in one location seems to be working extremely well for everyone. It is much easier for the staff to work together, coordinate care of the children and share resources, and it's wonderful for the children to be out of the congestion of the city, and now living in this beautiful area blessed with mountains, abundant mango trees and plenty of room to play.
- When I last visited, small trees had been planted to line the entrance road to HOINA. These once tiny trees are now tall and thriving! They provide shade to giggling girls playing after school, refreshing coconuts to be enjoyed on hot days, and produce vibrant, colorful flowers that the HOINA girls weave into our hair.
- The staff house, just a concept on paper when I last came, has been built. Like all of the buildings here at HOINA, the staff house is colorful and welcoming. The young children



Jen and Prasanth.

of one of the HOINA drivers play happily there with their mother each day and eagerly greet their father when he comes to spend his lunch break with them. If he had to drive a long distance to his home every day, he would not be able to enjoy so much time with his family; but thanks to this beautiful staff house, he and other staff members can enjoy living right on the HOINA campus.

- On my last visit, I loved spending time with a bright and friendly HOINA girl in Chennai named Ch. Kamakshi. On this trip, I am delighted to find that Kamakshi, along with many of the girls who were at the home in Chennai, is now settled happily here at the new home. In the time since I've

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last seen her, Kamakshi has gotten married to a boy who was also a HOINA student. While her husband works in Malaysia, Kamakshi is working here at HOINA and caring for her five-month-old son James, whose adorable face graced this year's HOINA Christmas card.

And yet even as HOINA grows and changes so beautifully, one thing remains constant. The HOINA children are healthy, happy, and thriving.

A quick trip to any place outside the HOINA gates is a reminder of the dire poverty so many children in India face. As I gaze around the bustling campus, seeing everywhere the shining smiles of girls and boys who are well nourished, well educated, and so loved, I am profoundly moved. I don't think it's possible for any one of us to think we cannot make a difference in the world when we can see in HOINA how one woman, deeply rooted in faith, has done so very much.

Thank you, Mom. And thank you to each of you reading this for the difference you make with your involvement in HOINA, no matter how big or small. I can say without hesitation that every effort is making a real and important difference. 🙏



Photos of the driveway at the girls' home from six years ago and present day. Use the evergreen on the left side of the photo as a comparison.

York College International Service Learning

By David Fyfe

This year is the second year that students from York College have come to volunteer at HOINA during their winter break. The program is modeled after the Penn State program that I was part of in 2004 and 2005. In the upcoming

months the students will share some of their experiences in newsletter articles, but I wanted to first share a bit about the program itself.

"International Service Learning: India" is a three-credit geography course at York College that is completed over the course of one year. Students apply for the program in April and are selected based on their grades, semester standing, and personal statements of why they wish to participate in the program. We begin classes in the fall semester where students learn about India, HOINA, and what it means to do service abroad and locally. During the pre-departure semester they learn about India through various readings and also read about current events from the perspective of Indian and other international newspapers. They also write a research paper on an aspect of Indian culture that relates to their major. We also spend some time with logistics of applying for visas and getting inoculations and preparing a packing list.

During our winter break we travel to India for

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Left to right: Theresa, Rachael, Jen, Andrew, Kamakshi, Liana, John, Melissa, Nicole, Tim

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Feb 2012



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Won't YOU Become a Sponsor?



Janapareddy Poornima

Poornima's parents were married in 2000. Poornima was born on May 22, 2002. Her father worked in the fields for a daily wage, but he abandoned his family for another woman. Poornima's mother worked as a housemaid and in construction labor to support her children until she was diagnosed with mental illness

and admitted to a mental hospital. At that time relatives brought Poornima to HOINA. The children love getting pictures and letters from their sponsors. If you would like to write to Poornima, you can do so at:

J. Poornima (K265)
HOINA Campus
Kothasunkarapalem
Kothavalasa Mandal
Vizianagaram Dt. 535 183
A.P.
India

To sponsor her, complete the coupon above and include it with your first monthly gift of \$30. 

HOINA is a 501(c)3, tax-exempt organization with international headquarters located at:
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PO Box 87
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York College

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approximately three weeks and spend nearly all of our time at HOINA. While there the students help with whatever tasks are needed, and they are expected to represent York College and America and set a good example for the children and the staff at HOINA. In the past we have worked on a lot of different projects including: whitewashing, painting, garden work, organizing the library, teaching English to children and staff, and also helping in the kitchen. We have regular meetings where we discuss our experiences and relate them to our academic course work during the previous semester. We also help Mom with errands and visiting other parts of India to see the differences between the campus and the community where the children would otherwise have grown up. Students keep a daily journal about their time in India and often they are asked to reflect on specific questions or writing prompts based on the day's events.

After many teary goodbyes we depart HOINA and spend three days in Delhi and Agra seeing the Taj Mahal and other sites. When we return to York, PA, for the spring semester, the students reflect on their experiences in India and utilize their journals to write about what they learned from this program. I also require the students to volunteer locally so they can compare doing service at different scales and within different cultures. Other assignments include writing a newsletter article for HOINA and presenting their experiences to a community partner to raise awareness about HOINA, which also allows them to articulate their experiences to a broader audience.



Pavan's excitement shows in his eyes as he receives his Christmas gift.

This was my fifth trip to India with students. It is my favorite class to teach at the college because I can see the tremendous impact that it has on students. In many cases the experience for students is life-changing because they experience a world that is very different from anything they have known. We read articles about poverty and development, but it is not until they get here that they start to understand the complexities of such terms. Some leave India with a renewed sense of faith and deeper understanding of themselves and American Culture. And most importantly, all leave with about 200 more family members that they call sister or brother.

I want to thank Mom, HOINA, and York College for supporting this program, and I hope to return with a new class in 2013. 