



# NEWS FROM HOINA HOMES OF THE INDIAN NATION

PO Box 87, St. Charles, Missouri 63302 • [www.hoina.org](http://www.hoina.org) • January 2012

## A Home and a Family

By Rachel Ascher

I became more excited as I spotted the big pink and white sign that announced the presence of the HOINA campus. I knew I was getting close, having had the opportunity to visit the HOINA campus for an afternoon last December. A few more minutes' ride through the last village, and I could see the campus sprawled out amid the lush green rice fields, villages of thatched roof huts, and Indian-style houses. The campus was quiet because the children had not yet arrived back from school, but it was just as unique, colorful, welcoming, and artistic with its painted tires lining the driveway, monkey cage, green tiki hut, duck pond, playground, and flower gardens as I remembered.

On the first day of my visit, I was given a tour of both the girls' and boys' homes. I was amazed at the cleanliness and organization of the campuses. Rather than the sleeping mats most organizations in India spread out along the floor in children's homes, the bedrooms at HOINA are neatly lined with wooden bunk beds spread with colorful quilts and blankets for the children. I watched the children make their own beds, with the help of one of the attentive staff members, if needed, and organize their clothes and belongings carefully in a box underneath their beds. I was surprised to find that the older girls rise early in the morning with the staff for morning prayers and to begin studying their homework. Every



Ashwini, Rachel Ascher, and Divya at the HOINA Girls' Home in India.

evening, the children gather in groups by age and grade for study time, and each staff member takes a group of children to help complete their homework. I had the opportunity to help the girls in 9th grade study. Over the weeks of my stay, I grew especially close to these girls. The children in India have the uniquely difficult task of having to study three languages: Hindi and English, in addition to the local language, which

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is Telugu in Andhra Pradesh where HOINA is located. It was a blessing to be able to spend time helping these girls study English and at the same time uncover each of their precious and unique personalities.

I enjoyed meals in both the girls' and boys' homes and still miss the spicy, delicious taste of the Indian curries they served to me and the children. It never ceases to amaze me how they can make each curry taste so amazing from cabbage, or squash, or carrot, or lentil, or tomato, or chicken, or fish, or green leaf ... or anything it seemed! As I sat to eat with the children, they would watch me closely at each meal and ask how I liked the food, always offering to get me another slice of papaya or serving of curry if I seemed to get close to running out. The people of India show their love for you by feeding you. As I ate most of my meals in the girls' home, I was able to watch the three sweet cooks at the girls' home—Lakshmi, Devi, and Indira Amma—serve the children as if they were their own daughters. They even made special meals for the children who had some food restrictions—an extra-difficult task when you are already cooking three balanced, homemade meals and a special snack for over 100 people every day!

What HOINA is all about hit home to me one night after I joined the girls for evening devotions and prayer in the HOINA girls' home. Before the group closed in prayer, one of the girls rose up onto her knees from her cross-legged position on the floor and announced that she had a "sakshum" to share, a testimony of what God did in her life that day. I was lost as she obviously poured

out her heart in Telugu (the local language) to the intent girls and staff and ended in a mixture of tears and smiles. One of the HOINA staff then translated her testimony to me.

The young girl's name is Priyanka, an orphan who has been at HOINA for several years. That day was Priyanka's birthday. Earlier that day Priyanka had a doctor's appointment. Waiting to see the doctor along with Priyanka sat another young girl. Priyanka overheard the girl talking with a couple who sat with her and learned that they were the girl's parents and that that very day was also that little girl's birthday. In India, tradition has it that birthdays for children are very special. Children pass out "chocolates" (what they call candy) on their birthday to fellow students, friends, and family members among other special traditions. The little girl who sat near Priyanka was dressed in a beautiful new dress, talking excitedly with her parents about the celebratory plans they had for later in the day. In her testimony Priyanka said she began to feel very sad and sorry for herself. She thought about how she had no parents like this girl had. She was just an orphan. Priyanka said she arrived back at HOINA feeling sad and lonely; however, she was warmly greeted by the other girls at HOINA. Later that day, Priyanka was able to pass out "choco-



Rachel holds Teja on her lap on the grounds of the HOINA Girls' Home.

lates" to the children to recognize her birthday due to the gracious gifts of HOINA sponsors. All of the girls sang a special happy birthday to her.

HOINA also celebrates the children's birthdays in a special way with a large birthday party (either March 31 or July 4) for all of the children. [I later learned that it would cost around \$20,000 each year to give an individual birthday party to each HOINA child if it were complete with cake and ice cream for the hundreds of HOINA boys and girls!]

God put a special joy in Priyanka's heart, and she realized that she was very rich! She told us she had many, many brothers and sisters at HOINA, a wonderful Mom [Darlene Large] who devoted her life to her and the other children, and a loving heavenly Father who cared for her more than anyone.

I have many memories like this from the three precious weeks I spent at HOINA. Dozens of children from villages all over South India and even two orphan sisters from Manipur become

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Jan. 2012



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

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

This gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is in honor of  
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All donations are tax deductible.

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Rachel Ascher with some of her new HOINA brothers and sisters. Priyanka is immediately to Rachel's left.

family in the beautiful HOINA campus. I discovered that for many of the children, this is the only family they know. Sometimes, I would hear a HOINA child's story from another child or a staff member and then look over at the child and realize as I watched her laughing, playing, eating, singing, studying, danc-

ing, sleeping peacefully, or working that the poverty, loss, pain, and sadness she experienced before is now in the past. The children quickly welcomed me into their family, too. Reaching out and extending their family is what HOINA is all about. It is a joy and an honor to be called a sister in the HOINA family. 

## Thank you for Holiday Greetings

Many thanks to those of you who provided Holiday Greetings for our children and staff. We received over 200 cards, so everyone got one personally! Your participation in our work is a blessing to so many. Thank you for your creativity and generosity.

~ God bless, Amy Mowbray, HOINA Board Secretary

## Annual Giving Statements

You should receive your annual giving statement from our HOINA office in Brownstown, PA, by the end of January. If yours does not arrive or if you spot an error, please alert Amy in our office at 1.877.994.6462 (toll-free) or 717.355.9494 immediately so she can take care of it for you. Thank you for your generous support of our work. We couldn't do it without you!

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## God's Providence for Prakash



Bellala Prakash

We have a sad story with a happy ending as our child sponsorship this month. Bellala Prakash's parents married and had only him as their child. Prakash's father was a dealer for edible oil in the town near our hostel. In 1997 he was traveling home on a motorcycle when his vehicle hit a stone beside the road, throwing him into a deep pond where he drowned.

As a widow, Prakash's mother managed a small shop by the roadside. In July 2010, she asked if HOINA would admit her child, but our staff had to turn her down as she had a means of employment and only the one child. We have many children come to our homes for care, but we cannot accept them all. Our resources are limited.

Just days after she made her request, our housefather, Mr. Anand was in our village on an errand. He saw Prakash begging by the roadside.

Anand realized who he was and asked him why he was begging. Prakash confirmed what another villager had told Anand—that his mother had died. (She passed away from complications of a lung infection and heart disease.) Immediately, Anand gave Prakash a ride back to our hostel to discuss his situation. As it happened, he had a family friend (an "uncle," if you will), who agreed that Prakash would be better off at HOINA. The amazing providence of the story is that Mr. Anand would very likely not have approached Prakash while he was begging if he had not just met him days prior with his mother. Jesus knew when her time was to die, and He provided a way for Prakash to be cared for in advance. How wonderful and miraculous for Prakash.

Prakash is now 12 years old, studying in 8th grade. His favorite color is blue. He has not had a sponsor volunteer to provide the \$30 per month that is needed to feed, clothe, house, and educate him. Your money also covers any necessary medical expenses and his future education.

If you'd like to be his sponsor, please complete the coupon on Page 3 and send it with your first monthly gift to begin your sponsorship. We thank God that Prakash has a home and the HOINA family now. 