



# NEWS FROM HOINA HOMES OF THE INDIAN NATION

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

## Whew! What a Day

By Roz Vinci, HOINA Sponsor

Slowly the nighttime bird, insect and animal sounds begin to quiet as their daytime counterparts begin to rise to start their music. The subtle changes are felt, then heard, and slowly I awake.

After a refreshing bucket bath, I brush my teeth (being sure to only use bottled water; I've had my bouts of unpleasantness). Next, I tie my hair up in some way in which the girls won't giggle too much. I pick out some earrings that the girls will notice. If I dare forget to put some on, I'll hear many, many times, "Auntie, where are your earrings?" The girls notice everything. They watch how I use a spoon or fork. They examine how I cut an apple. Once, when I asked for salt, (which stunned them for some reason, "Salt?!!!" ) they found me a shaker and handed it to me. Not knowing how much would come out at a shake, I put some in my palm first. I heard a little chorus of "Ooooo" as they watched.

They are so very interested in our American ways. Many questions are asked every day trying to extract just one more bit of American culture or to learn more about me. I cannot tell you how many times I answered: What is your favorite color? What is your favorite fruit? food? animal? fish? Do



HOINA girls having fun in the playground.

you like Indian food? Why do you eat with a fork? What's your name? (It's hard for them to say my name; it sounds more like "Raaaaaz" or "Raaaaj" to them). What is America's national animal? national flower? How much height is the Statue of Liberty? What is liberty? They give me a big smile when I tell them they are "corrrrrrect!" when they impress me that they know the statue was a gift from France to the USA. They especially watch how I drink water from a bottle. I hold the bottle to my lips, which is my custom. Where they, with their heads tilted back, hold the bottle above their mouths and pour the water into their mouths. This keeps the bottle clean without it touching anyone's lips, and

they can share the water without sharing the germs. The kids are healthy, happy, and well fed. What a huge difference to the poverty and malnutrition and desperation outside these walls.

After bathing, I choose a churidar to wear, gather up empty water bottles to return to the kitchen, take a few toys or bunch of pencils to hand out, and set out to see what's in store for the day. I dash from my room and slide the bolt on my large wooden door, fastening it with a big padlock and skeleton key. I cross the courtyard and lock the guesthouse

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# What a Day

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door as I leave the building. I begin to walk to the main house. Oh, no! Yes, I did it again. I forgot my dupatta. Ugh! Now, I have to go back, unlock everything to get my scarf. I wouldn't be properly dressed without it.

Got it. Back outside. I hear my feet crunch as I walk along the grey stone path, passing a medium-sized bush. When I approach, it moves and flutters to life as many little butterflies pop out and fly away. What a lovely way to start my day, being greeted by God's creation. Next, I walk past Sweetie Baby the monkey. Darlene rescued him from a street man who had the baby monkey in chains and would drag it along to make it do tricks for money. I've let Sweetie Baby hold my hands and occasionally let him "groom" me. He grabs at and twists my arm looking for anything to pick off. He's had great difficulty getting at the pesky little freckle "critters" that are very flat on the skin and very hard to remove.

After I pick some leaves off a bush and give them to Sweetie Baby, I begin to walk on the slate sidewalk. That's when the first girl notices me and yells, "Good morning, Auntie!" Of course she is loud, so now EVERYONE knows that I have arrived. I am then charged by all the little girls who run up and squeeze my legs and try to get any part of my hands to touch them. They are so adorable. We slowly walk together as I approach the entrance where I wave hello to the elderly widows who sit in the gazebo for breakfast.

A few days later I learned the story of these two particular elderly ladies. One morning, I was sitting alone outside when the first woman approached carrying a large wooden stick a little longer than the length of a broom handle. I suppose you could liken her to the popular image of Gandhi with his walking stick. I made the namaste hand gesture to her. She returned the same. Next she held up her round tin plate indicating she was asking for food. I gave the Indian side-to-side head shake/nod indicating yes. Under her very thick eyeglasses I could see her tears well up.

Although we spoke different languages, I understood her perfectly. She explained in gestures to me that she was (and still is) all alone. She could not get food for herself and was reduced to begging, and that's why she came to HOINA. She reached under her glasses to catch the few tears that hadn't already fallen to her sari. Many times she motioned her hand to her heart to express her sadness and loss of pride. Another



woman approached. She looked like she had a similar situation. The two of them didn't seem to acknowledge each other very much; however, each handed the gardener, Timothy, her precious plate. The ladies stayed outside the door gates, and he returned with some food. The first woman again made gestures to me while she wiped more tears away. I touched my heart and nodded the Indian way. She and the other lady went to the gazebo. Timothy said, "Gazebo, Auntie, gazebo." At first, I didn't understand his implication. He was telling me that the women will eat their meal there and then sweep the gazebo afterwards. He was trying to tell me that they work for their food and are not beggars.

No matter what we perceive we own or think we lack, we can always give something. Whether it is food to ease hunger or the service of sweeping a gazebo, we all are lifted up by helping another. While I was feeling sorry for these ladies, Timothy was telling me that there was giving on both sides. Sometimes, we get too focused on giving material gifts and must remember that the best gifts of all are respect and love. ♿

HOINA is a 501(c)3, tax-exempt organization with international headquarters located at:  
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This newsletter is published to inform our readers of the work HOINA does among the handicapped and abandoned in India.  
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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.

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**PO Box 636**  
**Brownstown, PA 17508-0636**

Jan/2011



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

Here is my first monthly gift of \$30.

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

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

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

(please print clearly)



**ALL DONATIONS ARE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE**

## On My Mind Forever

*By Christen Buckley, PSU Schreyer Honors College*

During this past August I traveled to India as part of the service learning class offered through the Schreyer Honors College at Penn State University. Our class, eight students and two grad students, spent the spring in a class, learning all about the culture, history, politics and geography of India, but nothing could have prepared us for this trip. The children and staff were so loving and supportive, always a kind word or a helping hand, when we were supposed to be the ones helping them. The work that we did accomplish was incredibly humbling; we taught English, worked in the nursery, took out termite-filled windows, prepared food, tiled walls, built a bridge, and painted signs and tires to decorate the campus. Being there made me truly realize what is important in life and forced me to reevaluate extraneous worries and problems that seemed so important back in the United States. India is an amazing blend of the extremes of poverty and beauty, and being there expanded our world perspective more than I ever thought possible. I consider myself fortunate that my time in India allowed me to participate in a cultural exchange with the incredible children and staff of HOINA. They showed me how to fully appreciate others and how to truly put others before yourself. Every time I tried to help with dishes or help someone else, it seemed as though Rhonda, or Revathi, or Ramadu was there to help. However, the most important product of the trip for me was the fact that my time in India allowed me to discover myself. I know that sounds cheesy, but sometimes our true



values, desires and emotions get buried under our busy schedules, frivolous concerns, and social pressures. Being in the presence of true love and support can bring out your true self, a strong self. We were roughing it quite a lot when we were there, the bugs were astronomical and being around the children and hearing their stories, along with the poverty all around, was emotionally draining to handle. I have never met a rape victim, like Jancie, or hear a five-year-old talk about her alcoholic, abusive father like it was as natural as the weather. These kids were real, vivid, and full of such life. The pureness and shining personalities of the children and staff made them incredibly memorable; they've been imprinted on my mind for eternity. By touching my heart, they have irrevocably changed my worldview. 



HOINA  
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## Sponsorships Make Sweet Surprises



Yellapu Janaki

Yellapu Janaki was born August 30, 2000, and came to HOINA in June of 2010.

Janaki's father fell from a palm tree he was cutting and was killed. Janaki's mother approached HOINA and asked us to take her.

Janaki's favorite animal is a tiger. Her favorite color is white. She likes playing cabadi. Her favorite food is Chapati. She is in the fifth standard in the government school in Mangalapam, and would like to be a teacher when she is grown.

The children love getting pictures and letters from their sponsors. If you would like to sponsor Janaki or any of the other HOINA children, please fill out the form on page 3.

## 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 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!

## A BIG THANK YOU!



We want to extend a big thank you for those who helped us fund the door project and those who prayed for us while it was on-going.