



NEWS FROM HOINA HOMES OF THE INDIAN NATION

PO Box 87, St. Charles, Missouri 63302 • www.hoina.org • January 2013

Let Go and Enjoy the Fall

*Brian McCreary
HOINA Board Member*

HOINA has been part of my world since high school. Well, not the management, decisions, or mind-bending cross-cultural adventures, but the newsletter. I remember sitting around the kitchen table folding, addressing, stamping, and stapling the news from overseas to keep sponsors informed and inspired.

There were often cookies, usually some tea, and always stories, stories, stories. In the Large household, there was as much adventure to be found traveling to village India as running an errand in Amish Country, it seemed. Never one to pass up a good yarn or a raisin cookie, I stuck with it.

In January of 1988 I jumped at the opportunity to be part of the first tour group arranged by HOINA to educate those interested in the work about the beauty and groaning that thrive in this amazing landscape. I remember animals on the street, diesel fumes in the air and on my shirt collar, floral garlands and cobras outside the majestic Taj Mahal, a river bubbling with methane, and big bright eyes smiling from underneath purple-black hair shining with coconut oil. (I recall a bout of intestinal trouble, too, due to my thoughtless consumption of water from the hotel, but funny how 25 years can diminish that nausea.)



HOINA Board Member Brian McCreary's self-portrait with darling Ammulu, his new friend.

So, when Amy Mowbray asked if I would be willing to accompany her to HOINA in August this summer, I jumped again.

This time around, lots of things were different, including myself. Just two weeks before, I had crossed off a bucket list item by skydiving in Northern PA with my nephew. The preparation was a whopping two minutes of instruction about where

to put my hands and feet, and the rest was up to the professionals. My job was keep my eyes open, enjoy the ride, and try not to throw up. (Aside from packing a bag full of supplies for the orphanage for the journey, my attitude for the trek to HOINA was much the same.)

I could blabber on about the campus, the kids, the spicy food, the way you never really seem to understand anything that is happening, or even that one particularly cramped rickshaw ride with a few chickens, a nursing mother, and an old man over my shoulder tapping me and laughing at me when I attempted to turn and glance at him. But the image that sticks with me most is this one particular night I sat with the boys while they were doing their homework/studies. (Picture sitting on the floor in groups in an open tile courtyard, not a study hall at the newest multi-million dollar school building like the one I work in.) There was the usual "boy" antics: goofing

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around, hitting, laughing,...kids are kids wherever you go. But one scruffy kiddo, about nine or ten, caught my eye.

He was NOT interested in completing homework, that much was obvious. When I stretched out on the floor next to him and picked up the book he was pretending to read, some of the boys around us quickly noticed and clamored to his side. I pointed to the paragraph the book was open to and said, "Come. Read to me." One of the other boys a year or three older interjected that this guy was not very good at English and that his class rank was very low. (Yes, testing and the value/use of score results are an issue all over the world!) His pace was broken,

and there were obviously parts that he had memorized as he forced his way through the page. By now we had a crowd, some helping him, and others seeming to gloat in their own lack of struggle, as boys are wont to do. We got to the end of the reading, smiling that he had successfully completed the task; but he quickly moved on to whatever else he could find to do, other than read.

I just watched him, as two or three preschool kids climbed on my back and wanted me to play with them instead. My young "scholar" was one of those kids who, no matter how hard you scrubbed them or how often you combed their hair, still come out of the bath looking like there is still a layer of dirt on him. He had an impish smile, hair on the side of his head standing straight up and was careless of how he appeared. As he was in his own world, I couldn't help but spy on him.

Free of the burden of his homework, he moved on from the books to his book bag. The bag and he shared the same little boy life experience; that was clear. The zipper had pulled loose from the stitching, and when closed, the bag threatened to refuse to transport those darned books for him. I was mesmerized at his focus, as he struggled to thread the eye of a needle with a long thick string. (Most students I know would be whining about having a new bag rather than working so hard in



Brian with Revanth, Prasad, Erni Prakash, Upendra, Anil Kumar, and Sunil Kumar.

a brave attempt to salvage this tired one.) Eventually, I put my hand out and asked if I could try. I struggled, too. It was a kind of game between us, this mutual suffering until,... success! He happily took the needle, knotted the ends, (Obviously, this was NOT the first time he had attempted this.) and proceeded to fight the battle of forcing the needle through the polyester to recreate the zipper and reclaim his book bag.

As I got up to move on to another area, he looked up and smiled and said, "Thank you, brother," and went back to work, tongue sticking out, sweat on his brow. I couldn't help tussling his hair before I took my walk in the dark back to the Guest House,... thinking about raisin cookies, newsletter nights, book bags, and falling from a plane two miles in the sky,... tethered to a Guide who brought me breathlessly and effortlessly to a safe landing in a place I never imagined I would be, bearing witness to the joy of breaking through—getting high marks on tests, getting a needle through a zipper lining, getting on a plane to go someplace you have never been, or facing a fear and trying to grab a cloud.

Thanks, Amy, for the invitation. And to anyone else who gets the urge to see where your money and prayers take shape, I say, "Jump." Don't overthink it, or you might talk yourself out of it. Let go and enjoy the fall. 🙏

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I want to 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

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Mail coupon to: **HOINA**
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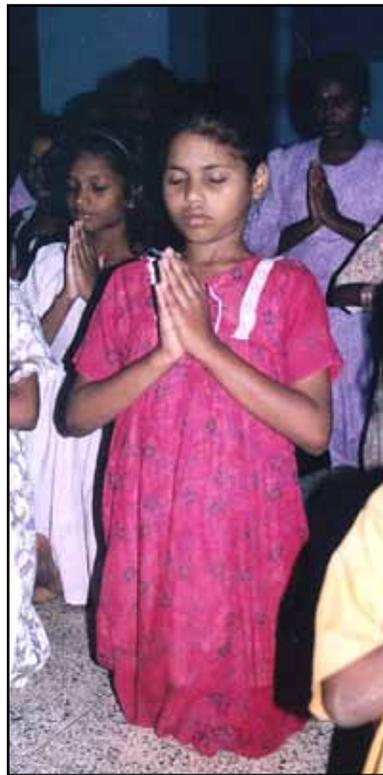
Jan 2013

All donations are tax deductible.

Prayers for Mom's Trip

HOINA President Darlene Large will be in India by the first week of January. Our internet is so unreliable overseas, but she would still love to hear from you. If you can bring yourself to send a "real" letter via snail mail, she'd love to get it. Her address is included below. Her plan is to be back in the U.S.A. by her 78th birthday on Easter Sunday, March 31, 2013. Please remember to pray for her safe travels. Papa Bruce should be joining her in January-February for about 4 weeks.

Mrs. Darlene Large
c/o HOINA Campus
Kothasunkarapalem
Balighattam B.O.
Kothavalasa Mandal
Vizianagaram Dt. 535183
A.P. INDIA



Thanks for Christmas Wishes

Thank you to everyone who remembered our children with their donations to the Christmas fund.

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!

HOINA is a 501(c)3, tax-exempt organization with international headquarters located at:
HOINA
PO Box 87
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Brownstown, PA 17508-0636

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Please, Will You Sponsor Me?



Korukonda Asirvad joined HOINA over a year ago. His father worked as a driver until his death in 2009 from HIV. His mother moved in with her brother because she could not support her two children. However, it was not a good situation, so Asirvad's grandmother intervened and approached HOINA to ask us to accept the children. Asirvad was not old enough to attend school at the start of this school year, but this darling preschooler has a bright future ahead of him with your help! His birthday is November 19, 2007.

If you would like to sponsor him, please send your first monthly gift of \$30 to our office in Pennsylvania. You can complete the coupon on page 3 and return it with your gift. Know that your money will provide food, clothing, shelter, schooling, and medical care for your HOINA child.

HOINA appreciates all of our sponsors and donors. Every gift helps, and we don't take you for granted. Know that our kids are praying for you every day! Please remember to pray for them too!