



NEWS FROM HOINA HOMES OF THE INDIAN NATION

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The Power of Attitude

*By Melissa Brosius
York College Student*

In March of 2011, I made a phone call to my Dad; and the first thing I said was, “Dad, I’m going to India. I’m going to volunteer.” I had just heard of the trips arranged by Dr. Fyfe, and though I didn’t know how, I knew I was going. After much explaining and small amounts of begging and pleading, I got my parents to agree. I told them I wanted to help. Almost a year later and after spending almost three weeks at HOINA, I’m not sure if my efforts at HOINA necessarily made a difference there, but I know HOINA changed me.

My first, and so far most lasting, impression of HOINA was of how happy the children were. Our class was greeted by dozens of smiling and laughing children who made me feel more welcome and accepted than I ever have in my life, despite the fact that I was an outsider. The children never grew tired of teaching us new games or hearing our very poor renditions of Bible school songs. Acceptance and love radiates from HOINA, in the way the girls eagerly awaited our prayer lessons or the way the older boys carefully look after the younger ones. However, the most lasting lesson I learned from



(L to R): Anusha, Melissa, and Hema hamming for the camera.

HOINA is one of contentment, taught to me by a girl named Hema.

After dinner one night I wandered into the library and found several older girls studying. I sat down and asked one girl what her name was and what she was studying. “Hema, and I’m studying biology. I’m going to become a doctor.” She answered with a quiet assurance. Over the next weeks I joined Hema in the library on many occasions, discussing many different things.

In every conversation Hema

illustrated a calm assurance of God’s presence in her life. From telling me the story of how she came to know Christ at HOINA, to her future plans. One night I asked if she would be a doctor in India or if she would travel to America. She said she wants to help the poor but “Where God wants me to go, I will go.” Also, Hema continued a trend I noticed in every HOINA child, a complete lack of self-pity. Never once during my time at HOINA did I hear a child complain about his or her situation. Some of

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these children have gone through things that would drag many people into a pit of self-despair, but without fail these children were cheerful, upbeat, and most of all grateful to be at HOINA.

After the Christmas festivities I asked Hema what gift she received. She showed me a university entrance exam study book, to help her with her dream of becoming a doctor and a box with hair accessories and school supplies. She then replied with awe in her voice, "I only asked for this," (her exam book) "but Mom gave me all this! I am so blessed." I've heard more than one of my friends complain about receiving practical items such as books or socks for Christmas instead of "bigger ticket items" while Hema was completely delighted

to receive the same things. There were no iPods or laptops given out at HOINA for Christmas, but there was more joy in those children than I've ever seen during a Christmas in America.

The HOINA children and Hema especially have reminded me of the power of attitude. Life isn't about what you do or don't have; it's about how you handle the situations around you. Hema illustrated to me grace under pressure, gratitude, and a quiet unfaltering faith in God. She reminded me of the large disparity that lies between what we need and what we want, and most importantly, that the less time we spend wanting unnecessary things, the more time we have to see the beauty of God's creation all around us.

Don't Forget to Remember Me*

By Nicole Saunders
York College Student

At HOINA, the most wonderful characteristic of all the children is their desire to reach their dreams; the first question each one of us was asked was "What is your ambition?" This was both shocking and wonderful as we shared our dreams and learned the dreams of many.

Probably the most memorable moment of my trip to HOINA with York College of Pennsylvania in December 2011-January 2012 was the day we left and everyone from the girls' home and boys' home gathered in a huge circle with all of us in the center to wish us safe travel. We then went around the entire circle and got to shake everyone's hand and wish them well. Over the two and a half weeks we had spent at HOINA

we had grown close with many of the children and the staff, so saying goodbye was extremely difficult. As I walked back to get on the bus to head to the airport, the children I had been closest with clung to me reminding me over and over to write letters and send pictures.



Nicole with Lavnya, Meghana, and Sera Jessica.

Swathi and Meghana were the two girls I had grown closest with over the past weeks. Swathi shared with me that she has a mother and a sister both who live in a different hostel in the city. Her mother wanted both her and her sister to live at HOINA, but her sister was still little and did not want to leave her mother. Swathi is in sixth standard and is doing well in school, being given opportunities she would never have if not for HOINA. She has a strong desire to learn new
see **Don't Forget to Remember Me** page 3

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April 2012

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Don't Forget to Remember Me

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things and expand her view of the world. Together we worked on sharing knowledge with each other; she taught me Telegu and I taught her what Spanish I knew. To be sure we each remembered what we learned we each made translation sheets of phrases—hers in English/Spanish and mine in English/Telegu. She was determined to commit the hand game “Miss Mary Mack” to memory so that she would always remember it. By the end of our stay, she knew all the words and could easily teach it to the other girls. On that last day, she gave me a hug, held both my hands and looked at me and said, “Don't forget to write and send pictures. Remember me.”

Meghana was the other girl whom I grew close to during our trip. Like Swathi, Meghana also has a younger sister, but Meghana's sister also lives at HOINA. Meghana is in fifth standard and, like Swathi, has a strong desire to learn and grow. Unfortunately, I did not have an opportunity to learn Meghana's full story, but she did share her art book with me. She is a very talented artist. Her drawing skills were far beyond mine, which we both saw clearly when she asked me to draw a picture of an owl first before she drew hers next to mine. Meghana was the first to cry on that last day; I kept reminding her not to be sad but to be happy that we got to spend the time together that we did.

I am extremely grateful for the opportunity I had to spend time at HOINA. It was an eye-opening experience as I saw first-hand the difference HOINA has made in every child living there. Swathi and Meghana are just two of the girls who are learning and growing every day at HOINA and want more than anything to be remembered.



Nicole shares a happy moment with Vennila, Janaki, and Swathi.

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* lyrics from Carrie Underwood's "Don't Forget to Remember Me"



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Monthly Sponsor Spotlight

Jetti Trinadh's parents were married in 1996 when Mr. Jetti Naidu worked as an auto driver. They had two sons before Trinadh's mother contracted tetanus. Trinadh was born on August 12, 1999. In 2008 Trinadh's father was in a train accident and fractured his leg. Trinadh's mother died from abdominal cancer in May 2009. His father moved the family to his native place of Gotham Village. In March 2011 he became sick with stomach pains, and a month later died. The grandparents were very old and lived in a thatched roof hut. They could not care for the boys, so they approached HOINA and asked us to care for their grandsons.

Trinadh is studying 8th standard in the MPUP School at Gotham. His favorite color is yellow, and his favorite animal is a monkey. He likes to play cricket and would like to be an engineer when he is grown.

If you would like to be Trinadh's sponsor, please send your first monthly gift of \$30 to the HOINA office with the coupon on page 3.

