



NEWS FROM HOINA HOMES OF THE INDIAN NATION

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Papa Bruce Reflects on His Visit to HOINA

by Bruce Large

[Editor's Note: Papa Bruce wrote this as he neared the end of his annual trip to HOINA in India. By the time you read this, you can know that he is safely home in Missouri and was able to celebrate Easter and Darlene's birthday with the family at the end of March.]

Children's Homes Update

Even at zero dark 30 the white buildings of the campus could be seen from the road as we approached. The lights of the campus were sparkling like stars. It gave a sense of "welcome home." All the houses gave the appearance of being freshly white-washed. As I walked across the courtyard to get to the steps to Darlene's apartment, I couldn't help but marvel at the cleanliness. Here it was at the end of a day, a girls' house populated with a 100 girls, most of them not teenagers yet, and the house was clean.

Our power from the electric grid is normally cut from 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM. At that point we must switch to our generators or do without the power. The generators are a mixed blessing. They are used extensively whenever Western guests are present on the campus. The current is used for the fans which we wimpy Westerners desper-



Deepika is all smiles as she holds her teddy bear.

ately need whenever the temperature goes over 90 degrees Fahrenheit. However, our boys will be out playing cricket or soccer in the sun with the temperature at 95 degrees and will never even break a sweat.

The negative impact of the generators comes when we have to pay the fuel bill. At the current cost of diesel fuel, it costs us about \$2.00 an hour or \$24 per 12-hour day to run the generators. When no guests are on the campus, they still need to be run, but not the full 12 hours. While \$24 per day

doesn't sound like much to us Westerners, when thinking in terms of children's support of \$30 a month, it amounts to the equivalent of the amount needed to support 24 of our children each month.

Both homes were found to be well maintained and in reasonable repair. With two, 15,000-square foot homes, a guest house, Darlene's apartment, a staff house, and various small out-buildings serving 240 kids and staff, something always needs to be fixed. The only serious problem facing us at the moment was the doors and window screens installed in the new boys' home need to be replaced. They were of inferior quality and cheaply made

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of plastic when installed in the new house and are now generally disintegrating. We are in negotiations with the seller to see what kind of discount we can get on the purchase of aluminum-framed windows and doors. We are currently in the dry season, so mosquitoes are not much of a problem, but the screening needs to be fixed before the rainy season starts in July.

HOINA's Menagerie

Our 23 acres are populated with 200 kids, 40 staff persons, a dairy herd of 24 cows, a small goat herd, a flock of guinea hens, a flock of ducks, a green parrot, four large doves, a pair of parakeets, a warren of rabbits, and two dogs. Only four cows are giving milk at present, but another eight are in various stages of pregnancy. There are three young heifers and a small calf as well. The bull calves are usually sold. The goat herd started with a pregnant goat that Darlene rescued from three wild dogs up in the mountains two years ago. This nanny goat is prolific; between mama and her daughters we now have six goats. We sold one male for a little over \$100. The guinea hens are holding their own, but are not increasing. We know they are nesting and have seen baby chicks from time to time. I think that the babies are falling prey to crows, hawks, dogs and snakes. Possibly some two-legged critters as well. The ducks fall into the same category. Interestingly, after I started commenting about the discrepancy, the ducks went out and magically laid six eggs.

The dogs are the protectors of the property. At least you think so, until you get close enough to scratch their bellies. Heidi is Darlene's Daschund and is getting old. Her daughter Honey is a "Heinz 57" dog and is our fearless snake killer. We don't have many snakes, but over the years Honey has killed three cobras and this last one she killed turned out to be not venomous, but at over seven feet long, no one stopped to ask. After the event was over, Honey, looking very self-satisfied went and laid down under a bush. We think that one of the reasons we don't have many snakes is that the guinea hens run all over the place making an awful racket which probably scares the sneaky snakes away. I read a report that said that guinea hens have been known to kill snakes. Apparently, their thick covering of feathers protects them from



The snake killed by Honey.

snake bites. At any rate, we are grateful for the dogs and the birds doing what they do best!

The green parrot is learning to talk and will take food from a person's hand. He lives with pigeons and parakeets and seems to be very much at home. To everyone's delight, our beautiful bird seems to enjoy human company.

Progress & Blessings

The reverse osmosis water purification system is working very well. It gets a portion of the credit for keeping kids and staff healthy. To not have sickness sweep through 200 kids sleeping in bunk beds, 20-24 in each dormitory, is a real blessing.

After a number of years, the old girls' home outside of Chennai has finally been sold. Many prospective buyers were turned away by a conspiracy of the neighbors to the property, who felt they could buy it at a cheap price if no one else did. They would tell prospective buyers that it had already been sold or quote an outlandishly high price

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May 2013

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Honey and the Snake

by Rejiv Reddy

It is a Sunday morning. A snake had appeared in HOINA at playground and it was observing everything. How HOINA was going and how were the children playing. Our dog Heidi had seen the snake hiding in rocks, and dog asked, "How dare you to come into our place?" Then the snake told, "By mistake, I came here." After some times they were friends. They shared their views to each other.

The snake told, "Please tell me about your HOINA, and I will tell about other things." So Heidi told about our Hostel and about the staff and children and how HOINA was running, and the snake told some things about the world and how it was.

Then Heidi told, "Your children are very educated. They are full of moral values. They do their duties very well." By all this, our Hostel is seen like a 5-star hostel.

By hearing all this the snake thinks it was not a place for him to live. The children will fear at seeing him.

Suddenly Honey, [the daughter of Heidi] comes. She sees the snake as the enemy to HOINA. She attacks



Rejiv with Honey (left) and Heidi.

and kills the snake. Heidi shouts, "Stop! Honey! This is not a poisonous, dangerous snake."

Like so many of us, with set ideas of people. We see, we judge and then many times we kill.

Our Mom taught us one good song. I am liking the words: "Let there be peace on Earth, and let it begin with me."

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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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Saving a Sweet Smile



Sravani

T. Sravani was born on August 23, 2002.

Sravani's parents were married in 1996. Unfortunately, her father was an alcoholic, and he died of TB in April 2012. At that point, her mother tried to support her two children on the daily wage she earned but could not make enough money to feed and clothe them.

Sravani is studying 5th class at Gandhavaram School. This 11-year-old likes tigers, the color white and swinging.

If you would like to invest in this young lady's life, please send your first monthly gift of \$30 with the coupon on page three to our office.

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to discourage them from buying. The proceeds from the sale will fund the vocational school project which will be built on the hostel land in Visak. Darlene is still trying to buy some good agricultural land within 35 miles of the campus. The plan is to raise crops for our homes and sell the surplus at the market. She would like to buy 50 acres or more. The relatively large area of land she wants to buy is part of the problem. Most acreage that is for sale is only five to 10 acres. In order to get the required acreage, one has to deal with numerous parties. This becomes very complicated, very quickly. The second part of the problem is that people are perfectly willing to sell what is not theirs! Telling lies is just part of the game. It has resulted

in 20 wasted trips and countless hours. When looking at land, Darlene puts in a 12-16 hours of work each day.

When not looking at land, her days are mostly limited to 12 hours. I think most parents of a few children would agree that with kids, the day never really ends. Just imagine what 200 of them can do to a good night's sleep. Teenagers are teenagers, no matter where you go in the world. One minute they are being the most wonderful people in the world, and the next minute you wonder if they haven't become possessed by demons. Ours are no different. The good news is that the vast majority of them truly are great young people whom anyone would be proud of.