



NEWS FROM HOINA HOMES OF THE INDIAN NATION

PO Box 87, St. Charles, Missouri 63302 • www.hoina.org • October 2011

Apology Not Necessary

By Sarah Montminy
PSU Schreyers Honor Student

I've never really had trouble remembering names. It's actually something that I have always made an extra effort to do when meeting and working with new people – ask their name once (twice at most), remember it, and use it. Remembering and using someone's name is such a simple but profound way, in my opinion, of expressing a genuine commitment to building a relationship. I think this is especially meaningful to children who are generally thirsting for attention; approval; and stable, trustworthy relationships. I've worked with large groups of kids in many settings before and have generally succeeded at my self-imposed "name-game," but when I arrived at HOINA my name-recollection capabilities were challenged in a way that they had never been before. I thought that memorizing 50 English-named children within three days at summer camp was a formidable feat, but it was nothing compared to the over 150 Indian-named children I encountered at HOINA.

I remember being so excited to meet the children the first night we were there but walking away feeling somewhat discouraged and dejected by my inability to learn more than a handful of names. I felt as if I were letting the children down or in some way had failed to give them the best I had to offer. Each time one of the children – whom I knew I had

just met – put my memory to the test and I drew a blank or guessed the wrong name, I felt I was missing a critical opportunity to convey to them how much I wanted to know who they were. The first several days I was uncomfortable and frustrated with the difficulties I was having learning names and was haunted by the discouraging thought that



Prasanna and I became "close relations" to the point that we didn't need to say 'sorry' or 'thank you' to one another. We became sisters.

this could remain a permanent obstacle to relationship-building.

As each day passed and I spent more time with the children, I was able to cut myself some slack on the name-front, namely because they were. Admittedly, they got a temporary thrill when I did remember their names or were temporarily disappointed if I didn't, but what

mattered far more to them was that I was simply present with them smiling, laughing, playing, and loving. Realizing that they weren't putting nearly as much pressure on me as I was putting on myself freed me up to enjoy and truly engage during the time I was spending with them rather than holding back in unnecessary frustration. Ironically, the less I tried, the more easily and quickly the names came – because they were coming attached to someone who was situated meaningfully in my mind and in my heart as a whole person, not just an isolated face. Learning names no longer became an intentional task but a natural part of the process of learning about these children.

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I remember one moment in particular when I accidentally called one of the girls whom I had gotten particularly close with by her sister's name, and when I apologized for it she said to me, "Sister, we are close relations. You don't need to say 'sorry' or 'thank you' to your sister." That comment struck me deeply because it eliminated once and for all my insecurities about letting these children down over mistaken names. Not only was I proactively forgiven for forgetting or misusing a name, but, evidently, for every action that might warrant an apology in my opinion. This was the level I reached in my relationship with these children—the level of family. Had I remained preoccupied with my "name-game," I may not have had that opportunity. While I still think it's important and meaningful to make an effort to remember and use someone's name, I learned from my experience at HOINA that relation-



Sarah and Jen teaching at Telugu School

ships are not contingent upon this success but rather on a genuine commitment to learning and experiencing a person's internal character. ♿

Little Things Bring Smiles

By Suzanne Zakaria
PSU Schreyers Honor Student

This summer, I spent three short-lived weeks in southern India at the HOINA orphanage. Most of my time was spent at the Girl's Home. I won't lie, at first, I was overwhelmed with the affection the students there would give us. They would jump on us, hug our legs until we paid them sufficient attention, and memorize our favorite colors. After the first day a little girl named Teja came to me with a notepad and pen and had me record not only my name but also my favorite food, my best friend's name, my pet cat's age, among other seemingly random information that she was



Suzanne says goodbye to the girls.

thrilled with. I'd never been so immediately accepted as a sister, into the family of these orphaned girls.

It's interesting, really, to think about how little I had to do to put a smile on the girls' faces. One day I gave away hair clips, and they were so overjoyed with them that I felt guilty for putting such little effort into their purchase. The next day I saw one of the hair clips on a housemother; this is a testament to how loving these girls are.

Sure, my peers and I did chores around the campus. We painted, tiled the walls with cute animals, and helped make HOINA the best possible environment for the kids to live in. But, let me repeat, all of this was insignificant compared to our simply being physically present with the children. Helping them with homework, learning their dances and hand games, we became their "akkas" and "annas," their sisters and brothers.

The day before our departure from HOINA, one of the girls, Priyanka, was rather angry with me. I'm not quite sure why; my guess is that she felt I was paying more attention to other girls and not enough to her. I was worried throughout the entire day, trying to get her to laugh, but to no avail. She was distant, and I was a nobody in her life. She was right in a way, but I felt like such a HOINA Akka that I was unhappily surprised. Then, during our morning departures, she came

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Name: _____

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Mail coupon to: **HOINA**

PO Box 636

Brownstown, PA 17508-0636



Oct. 2011



All donations are tax deductible.

I want to sponsor 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.

Please use this \$_____ toward the Christmas Fund.

I would like to receive the newsletter via e-mail. Please send it to my e-mail address below:

E-mail: _____

Cards for HOINA Kids

For the last several years we have sent Christmas/Holiday cards to all the HOINA children.

With the help of church groups, school groups, friends, and relatives we have made 200 cards to send to ensure that each child gets one with their Christmas present.

If you would like to make or buy a card specifically for the child that you sponsor, please print your name on the card, and your child's name and number if you know it. If you would like to make one or several cards for the children who do not have sponsors still put your name on the card.

Please mail them to the HOINA office at:

HOINA, PO Box 636, Brownstown, PA 17508

Please do not include an envelope, as it just doubles the weight and postage required. **To ensure that the cards are to India by Christmas, they need to arrive in our office by Nov. 23, 2011.**

If you have questions, email:

hoina@frontiernet.net or call

the HOINA office at

717-355-9494. 



Christmas Fund Appeal

Those of you who sponsor HOINA children would probably love to send them a gift during the holidays. But for the sake of our children who haven't yet been blessed with sponsors (and because overseas shipping is so expensive and unreliable), we ask that you consider making a gift to HOINA's Christmas Fund instead.

HOINA's Christmas Fund allows us to buy gifts for all of our children—making sure each boy and girl receives something special—and, when funds allow, to give bonuses to our Indian staff members who do so much to run our homes with dignity and love.

Consider sending a gift—any amount would be a blessing—to HOINA's Christmas Fund with the coupon on this page. Feel free to send a photo of yourself or family to your sponsor child. If you follow the directions in the article at right, we'll make sure your card gets to your child.

As always, your generosity is such a blessing. You make HOINA's important work in India possible, and we are so deeply grateful.

HOINA is a 501(c)3, tax-exempt organization with international headquarters located at:
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Little Things Bring Smiles

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to me with tears in her eyes. She held my hand and told me she would miss me.

I later learned that her father abused her mother and sisters. I can gather that her anger towards me did not come from indolence but rather was a coping mechanism. She was so strong, but at that last second, the façade came down. I gave her a Dr. Seuss book, and she had me write, "Suzanne loves Priyanka" in the inside cover. I wrote this in English and then in Telegu, "Nenu ninu premise-tinanu." Her tears stopped as my own eyes welled up. With this small memento, everything was forgiven; my world was right again. 



Receive Newsletter in E-mail

We are currently compiling a data base for those who are interested in receiving the HOINA newsletter as a monthly e-mail .pdf file. If you would like to be added to our database, please send us your e-mail address. Also, include your donor number (which appears on the newsletter mailing label). Our e-mail is: hoina@frontiernet.net 



HOINA Child Sponsorship



Durga Prasad

L. Durga Prasad was born on September 26, 2003. His parents married and had two children. Durga Prasad's father, Mr. Peddi Naidu, is a field laborer, who makes a very small daily wage. After giving birth to her second boy, Ms. Lakshmi became ill and was unable to work and take care of her children. Seeing the family's condition, Mr. Robert, a Project Director of the local Women & Child Welfare Department in Vizianagaram, recommended that HOINA accept this little boy into our hostel.

Durga Prasad is currently studying in second grade. He enjoys soccer, likes the color green, and hopes to be a policeman someday.