



NEWS FROM

HOINA

HOMES OF THE INDIAN NATION

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Visitors Bask in Shining Smiles of Joy

by David Cunningham
HOINA Friend

Arriving at the HOINA campus is like finding an oasis in an otherwise chaotic and bustling India. One thing that struck me immediately was the flourishing surroundings. Even the small villages outside that were once mostly thatched hut homes have been replaced by attractive and modern homes by village standards. Pollution and litter, which are by most Indians admittedly major problems in the country, appear to be considerably better in the nearby village. Even so, the HOINA campus stands out with beautifully landscaped grounds, including teak, mango, banana, and sandalwood trees carefully placed all around the campus. A literal spectrum of colors flourish against the beautiful white buildings, on the “dedication fences” around the campus, and on the rainbow bridge that crosses the stream dividing the boys’ and girls’ schools. Throughout both homes are beautifully tiled mosaics done by the children. Warmth, caring, and



HOINA girls enjoy seeing themselves in print in our monthly newsletter as David Uncle shows them a recent issue. Left to right: Lahari, Lasya, Joshna, Keerthana, Lydia, and Lavanya.

love are strong feelings you’ll have walking around campus.

With all that said, I haven’t even mentioned the children! This beautiful compound provides refuge and a place to learn and grow for children who might not otherwise have a chance in life. Since my wife, brother, father, and I arrived at HOINA at a late hour, the HOINA children were already asleep. My brother, Jim, and I were up early the

following morning and decided to go for a walk where we ran into the girls waiting for their bus. At first the younger children were shy, but that didn’t last long. They were all very inquisitive as to how our stay was going. *Were we comfortable? Where had we traveled? What have we seen so far in India?* We discovered that the children excel not only academically but also physically: many of them are champs in sports.

Continued on page 2

Smiles of Joy cont.

The girls we met were on their way to a three-day sports competition with 26 other schools.

Our first morning with the kids was far too short, but their smiling little faces had to get to school. That afternoon Lavanya and Keerthana and a few of their friends sought us out at the guest residences upon returning to campus. We were quickly taken by their hands and led to the playground. They found the soccer ball that we brought along, and a big group was playing with that. Others were showing their talents on the swing sets and jungle gym. Smiles abounded. As the sun set, many of the girls, my wife Laura, brother Jim, and I congregated in the gazebo to listen to the girls serenade us with their songs. Then it was off to dinner and study time prior to bed. Many study groups at both the boys' home and the girls' home were formed. Even though the older kids had considerable work of their own to do, they were always ready to help the younger ones when needed.

On one day of our stay, we were fortunate to visit one of the local schools the children attend. We spent an hour or so with the school principal who had great reviews on how the HOINA children perform. HOINA kids consistently rank among the top grades in their classes and, as I mentioned, excel in sports. It was a wonderful experience to tour the school and see HOINA boys and girls doing well.

During our visit we had an opportunity to tour HOINA's new



Dressed for sports and school are Sravanthi, Kavya, Keerthana, Joshna, Lavanya, Joy and Varshitha.



Guru Ciaran, Pavan, Rohit and Prasanth hamming it up for the camera.

vocational school on campus and get an inside look at what the organization is trying to provide for the surrounding villages. The facilities are ready to handle tailoring, cooking, plumbing, and electrical classes with room to grow.

One of the challenges HOINA faces is hiring talented instructors who are committed to teaching. My father, brother, and I spent some time with Bujji and Jani (HOINA managers) discussing plans for hiring teachers and acquiring students for the

Smiles of Joy cont.

school. We look forward to helping them carry out their plans.

On our last evening at HOINA, Auntie Marge (my mother), who instigated our family trip but could not attend, provided a cake and ice cream treat for all the kids and staff. We had an opportunity to address the whole group, thank them for their unbelievable hospitality, then serve them ice cream and cake. In under an hour we dished 200+ servings of ice cream to all the children and staff, and then it was off to study and bedtime. The impromptu party was an emotional and wonderful experience for all of us.

We are so very grateful to Mom Large, the staff, and the children of HOINA, for taking us into their home and providing us with such warmth and hospitality during our stay. When interacting with the children, it is very easy to overlook the fact that many (if



Many thanks to Auntie Marge Cunningham for sponsoring an ice cream party for everyone on campus.

not most) of them have come to HOINA through extraordinarily difficult circumstances. We had the opportunity to hear several of these stories. However, one constant with all of these children is the brightness of their smiles. They know that they

are blessed and loved and, in return, share that same warmth in their shining smiles of joy.



Posing with Laura Cunningham are left to right: Vennila, Kumari, Harika, Lasya, Divya, and Bhavana.

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

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A Sharp Mind Looks to a Bright Future

Mr. Venkateswara Rao and Mrs. Ranjani got married in the year 2006. He used to sell clothes in the streets for a living. Mrs. Ranjani was a homemaker in their small mud and thatched house. On September 14, 2007, the couple was blessed with a baby girl, Aswini. One day Mr. Venkateswara Rao was sleeping on the floor when a snake came and bit him on his ankle. He thought it was an insect and neglected to go to the hospital. The next day he started vomiting and was admitted into the hospital. There he stayed for three months. He died on February 18, 2015.

After his death, Mrs. Ranjani worked as a daily laborer to provide for her family. Unfortunately, Mrs. Ranjani had been ill with a liver problem for a while. She was unable to care for herself, let alone, her daughter. Through a HOINA graduate, Mr. D. Durga Prasad, she came to know about HOINA and was recommended to HOINA. Seeing her poor condition, our HOINA staff admitted Aswini.

Hoping to be a doctor someday, Aswini sharpens her mind now by playing chess.

