



NEWS FROM

HOINA

HOMES OF THE INDIAN NATION

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Republic Day Celebration at HOINA

By Glory Janes, Executive Director

This winter, I enjoyed being on the HOINA campus as our staff and children and the rest of India celebrated—with much enthusiasm—the anniversary of the day when India became truly independent and embraced democracy by ratifying our Constitution. For this one day each year, Indian people forget their religion, caste, and creed to come together as a country to honor and celebrate our national and military heroes, some who gave their lives for freedom.

Parades take place all over the country, and most schools participate. Watching the children and professionals put in so much effort is a delight and makes Indians proud of their country. In the nation's capital of New Delhi, after the President of India hoists our national flag, a 21-gun salute follows it, and we hear the playing of the national anthem by a military band, which is followed by many more awards and honors. While attendance for the celebrations and parades is mandatory in the schools, sweets are often distributed to the students, as well. While it is a very joyous day, we must not forget the struggle our forefathers endured and the lives martyred in this fight for freedom.

HOINA enjoyed our own fun and celebrations in honor of India's Republic Day. Preparations had started a few days ahead of time with the kids preparing for dance numbers, skits, and speeches with a patriotic theme. Beyond the celebratory rehearsals, complicated food preparations began. We embarked on a three-pronged education plan of teaching: for the girls, how to make coconut milk; for the boys, how to set up outdoor makeshift stoves; and for the kitchen staff, how to make coconut rice—a favorite of most children since it doesn't have any spices and the flavor of coconut is so rich and refreshing.



A patriotic dance was performed by (left to right): S. Hari Haran, K. Tharun, B. Kamesh, B. Yerranaidu, K. Bhaskar with L. Narendhra holding the flag.

As you know, HOINA is a beautiful campus with lush flowering plants, some produce, and plenty of coconut trees. As our coconuts were ready for harvest, we buckled down to work. Since we had 40 coconuts to be prepared, the gardener, P. Appa Rao, started his job two days ahead of our feast and peeled off the fibrous exterior of the large, green coconuts, to get to the hard-shelled seeds inside. After this process is done and all the extra husk cleaned, the hard brown coconut is then ready to be cracked and its meat grated. I headed out to buy five old-school coconut hand graters, and the girls set to

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work. Each coconut was split into two halves and then grated. The girls had fun taking turns grating all the coconut halves (80 of them!). That work went on all evening and the next morning, too. Now and then when I checked on their progress, I noticed them saving bits and pieces of coconut to chomp on, which was just what I used to do when I was given that chore by my mother. They made me giggle.

Once all that coconut was grated, we taught the girls to soak it in warm water and make coconut milk out of it. Delicious! Meanwhile, the boys helped make a cooking pit with concrete blocks laid on top of each other on the grounds outside their home. They gathered wood from all over the campus and started the fire pit. It worked!

Throughout the day of celebration we had competitions in several games and quizzes. The girls and their games of Kho-Kho, running, singing, etc. were fun filled; whereas, the boys' games were more intense. They played cricket (of course) and volleyball. We had saved the best for last—the volleyball finals of the older boys.

The kitchen staff's lesson started with Shadrach, HOINA's house manager, and I gathering the needed items to cook. The girls seemed uninterested in being outside to help us: the television was more fun. Soon the kitchen staff from both homes arrived, and we started the process. Suddenly, the housemother Vimala and an older girl, and then another, and another joined us. We had a whole crew helping with cutting, stirring, and asking so many questions.

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Everyone got involved in the celebration. Our older girls performed a dance (above), and our little girls acted out a skit (right).



Clockwise from upper left: HOINA's gardener, P. Appa Rao, husks the freshly picked coconuts. Housefather Shadrach cracks the coconut into two halves. Bhagya, Teja and Rohini scraping the meat from the coconuts. Our boys spent the day building an outdoor stove for cooking the feast.

HOINA is a 501(c)3, tax-exempt organization.

Contact us at:
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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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Send donations and address changes to:

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Republic Day Celebration continued

As the day progressed, all the girls and staff came over to the boys' home grounds to watch the boys play and cheer them on. I could see the teen boys and girls all blushing but also loving the presence of their peers since they live acres apart on our large property. They were cute! After the fierce volleyball finals, we proceeded to the outdoor stage where the children gave us a wonderful performance. I was so proud of how well they performed considering the little time they had to prepare. After the performance, we all ate outside. Finally, we got to savor the fruits of our labor—the yummy coconut rice with chicken curry for dinner. A buffet had been arranged, and everywhere you looked were little groups of kids, enjoying their food and company.

All of us appreciated this unprecedented outdoor cooking and dining experience so much that I decided this practice must certainly be repeated. The staff, children, and our guests enjoyed a wonderful day and, especially, the coconut rice.



Hard-working staff and administrators honored us with their presence for the day. Pictured clockwise from upper left: Music teacher Rosemary holding little A. Teja Sri with other HOINA girls looking on. Business manager Jani Mastan and India Board member Vijay Bhaskar were our honored guests. Everyone enjoyed the drama of the older boys volleyball final. HOINA Housemother Vimala taking a well-earned break at the game with some of her charges.



From the President
Todd Becker

Greetings from India!

My travel time in India during this trip was exceptionally high with visits to Araku Valley, Bapatla, Chennai, Delhi, and Visakhapatnam all on my itinerary. By the time you read this I will be back in the U.S.

I am blessed by India HOINA adult graduates, trustees or former trustees, and friends of HOINA built up over the last 45 years. Everywhere I go, the first question is always “How is Mom?” I tell them she is fine. They then ask “When is she coming?” I tell them the trip is too hard for her, but she wishes she could come. Then they ask “How is Letti akka?” I reply “She is fine.” They then ask “When is she coming?” I am sure you see the pattern. Those who have sacrificed for the work of HOINA over the years are never forgotten and always loved. I am humbled to be the recipient of good will and generosity taught by those who have gone before me. Those I meet today, care for me the same way they were cared for by HOINA’s founder, family, trustees, office workers, sponsors, and any of you who have made trips to India to volunteer at HOINA. I am blessed.

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