



NEWS FROM

**HOINA**

HOMES OF THE INDIAN NATION

P.O. Box 636, Brownstown, PA 17508-0636 • [www.hoina.org](http://www.hoina.org) • November 2022

## From HOINA Student to Bride

By Todd Becker, HOINA Board member

*[Editor's Note: Sharmila was featured in our March 2022 newsletter, which you can access on our website under the "Latest Updates" tab.]*

Our eyes met, and we both smiled with joy. We had never met; yet, we knew each other. That moment happened when Sharmila and I saw each other for the first time at Andhra Baptist Church this past summer. She was up front sitting on a couch beside her fiancé Finny. I had just been seated in the front row, because I was from HOINA, and so was Sharmila. HOINA's Executive Director Glory Janes and her daughter Rachel were seated with me. Numerous HOINA staff and girls were in the chapel as well. Many graduate HOINA girls had travelled 500+ miles to celebrate this marriage. As hundreds of people filled the seats, the building was buzzing with excitement. A beautiful reunion of family and friends made this a joyous occasion.

Final preparations were being made to the sound system for the speakers, musicians, and singers; bright lights were being adjusted for the photographer and videographer; and seating was being sought for all of the guests as everyone tried to get as close as they could for a glimpse of the bride and groom. At just the right moment, the musicians began to play. The family and then the bride walked up the aisle to endless photos and well wishes. And so the service began.

The wedding was filled with three and a half hours of rich ceremony and steeped tradition interwoven with messages from multiple pastors, bishops, and apostles



As part of the wedding ceremony, Finny and Sharmila were presented with a Bible.

sharing scriptures in a blend of the Telegu and English languages. Sharmila and Finny sat together taking in the wisdom and knowledge being shared as they anticipated the time when they would take center stage. Finally, that time arrived. Each step in the wedding ceremony was humbly embraced and carried out including much music and song. The songs were a combination of traditional wedding music and personal pieces written especially

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## Student to Bride (continued)

for the occasion by individual performers.

Once the speakers concluded, Finny and Sharmila took their rightful place at the center of the stage. The bride and groom exchanged personal vows. Sharmila, being shy, insisted on reading her vows directly to Finny without the microphone in a very personal, private moment for the two of them. Observing the expressions on their faces, both Finny and Sharmila were blessed and encouraged by the other's words. The rings were exchanged with tears. Finally, Finny lifted Sharmila's veil, and he was able to see his bride clearly without covering. A happy man was he! Then came the exchange of floral garlands, which are similar to the exchange of rings in a Western wedding ceremony. The presentation of a Bible to bind their marriage together with the Word of God followed. Finally, the ceremony closed with a prayer over the couple from all of the pastors present at the ceremony. The pastors were a large group of men praying for God's favor.

Once again, our eyes met and we both smiled with joy. We hugged, exchanged a few quick words and had just enough time for a photo. We knew each other's faces from the many photos Mom had shared. We knew each other's stories because of the reports Mom related as she worked to bring her two families together—merely separated by the North Atlantic Ocean, the Arabian Sea, and thousands of miles! God's



HOINA's newest bride, Sharmila, big sister Vennela, HOINA Executive Director Glory, and baby sister Nandita

love in and for each of us, rises above the physical world where we live.

I also had the pleasure of meeting many more HOINA graduates at the event. With each of them, the jubilant reaction was the same. The HOINA bond of brothers and sisters is stronger than the geographic and cultural distance between them. They also feel a bond with us. As sponsors, we impact their lives in a deeply felt and grateful way. We are in the business of transforming lives. Sharmila and Finny are simply one example of the impact HOINA has every day in India.

A HOINA grad and now a new bride, Sharmila is a mechanical engineer working in Vizag, the big city near HOINA's campus. She is also a middle child of three sisters from Chennai, and all three women were HOINA children. Finny comes from a long line of Christian pastors

and is following in his father's footsteps. Together, they are a beautiful couple both inside and out. I look forward to spending more time with Sharmila and Finny when we meet again.

In closing, one of the pastors mentioned Sharmila comes from humble roots as an orphan in this world. I will add I know someone else who transformed the world for all of humanity. He, too, had humble roots, having been born in a stable. Like that Man, Sharmila has thousands of brothers and sisters. All of the HOINA children are knit together with the common bond of humble beginnings and transformed lives into healthy, well-educated adults. With your help and support HOINA raises children to become adults who, we hope, will find a spouse, marry, have children, and make India a better place.



## A Most Wonderful Time of the Year

Does Christmas shopping make you shudder? Are you struggling to think of something to give that person who has everything? HOINA has your answer!

An honorary or memorial gift is easier than shopping for and wrapping a gift for a loved one and helps our children and staff, too. Your recipient will be listed in a coming issue of our newsletter. Feel free to designate those gifts to our general fund, or education fund, or give to our Christmas fund. See our coupon on page 4 or give online at [www.hoina.org](http://www.hoina.org).

We appreciate our donors who contribute to HOINA's Christmas fund to provide a gift for their child or for one without a sponsor. Would you consider helping us to provide a celebration for all of our children and staff? (We appreciate your not sending special gifts directly to your sponsor child as it makes our other students without sponsors feel left out.) Please make sure Christmas fund gifts arrive by early December to give us time to send the donation overseas.



If you are an Amazon shopper, consider using AmazonSmile and choose HOINA as your designated charity.

AmazonSmile is a simple way for you to support HOINA every time you shop, at no cost to you. AmazonSmile is available at [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) on your web browser and can be activated in the Amazon Shopping app for iOS and Android phones. When you shop with AmazonSmile, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added benefit that AmazonSmile will donate 0.5% of your eligible purchases to HOINA. All you have to do is choose HOINA-Homes of the Indian Nation from the list of organizations. Here is the direct link: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/23-2063713>



## Remembrances

Thank you to the many donors who chose to give memorial gifts through October 1, 2022. When requesting a gift to be listed in someone's memory or honor, please include the name and address of the individual or family so we can send them an acknowledgment.

### *In Memory of*

Carol Boyer  
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Margaret Johnson  
Bruce Large  
Robert Lyszkowski, Sr.  
William Ottaviano  
Uma Rana  
Pat Robinson (2)  
Eric Simon



### *In Honor of*

Darlene Large (4)  
Melissa May  
Gautam Ranji  
Dawn Rapchinski



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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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November 2022 

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- Please use this gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for the general fund.
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**OR please consider donating online at [www.hoina.org](http://www.hoina.org)**

All donations are tax deductible.



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## Orphan Seeks Sponsor

Shyamala's parents married for love in 2006. She is the eldest of their two daughters. Sadly, both parents died in 2011—the mother first, followed by her husband three months later. The girls' grandmother took custody of the two sisters until she also died due to illness in 2019. After that, their uncle took care of them until last year. He was not in a good position to take care of both girls, because he had an accident and broke his leg. His wife approached the Kothavalasa Police Inspector to find a place for one of the girls. The inspector requested a seat for her in HOINA, and seeing their pathetic conditions our staff admitted Shyamala.

Would you like to sponsor Shyamala? Fittingly, her favorite color is green since she wants to work in agriculture some day! Perhaps you have a green thumb? This teen will celebrate her birthday right around Christmastime, so sponsoring her would be a great gift for someone on your list. Write to our office either with the coupon above or through our website: <https://hoina.org/contact-us>

