



NEWS FROM

HOINA

HOMES OF THE INDIAN NATION

P.O. Box 636, Brownstown, PA 17508-0636 • www.hoina.org • Summer 2023

“Everyone’s Different & Everyone’s the Same”

By Abby Piotrowski, York College of Pennsylvania Student

When I was in New York City a couple years ago, I took a picture of a mural that said, “Everyone’s different and everyone’s the same.” For some reason that quote has stuck with me all this time. It wasn’t until recently that I was able to put real meaning behind those words.

When I was preparing to come to HOINA, I didn’t know what to expect. I’ve worked and volunteered with children my whole life, but I knew that this would be different. I worried about the language barrier and if we would be able to overcome it to build meaningful relationships with the

kids. I worried about how I would relate to the children at HOINA; after all, what do I have in common with children in India? What I learned almost immediately after stepping onto the HOINA campus was that these kids are not defined by their pasts. They are defined by the people they have chosen to become and the futures that they are working hard to build with the help of HOINA. These children are aspiring engineers, artists, teachers, doctors, and nurses. They are hardworking students, caring friends, faithful followers of God, and so much more.

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Back Row: Monica, Meghana, Sravanthi, Tejaswini, Sravanthi, Abby, Gayatri, Bhaagya, Niharika, Harika, Tejasri.

Center, Kneeling: Parimala Grace, Divya Sri, Prasanna Jyothi, Keerthana, Aswini. Front, Kneeling: Shana Laxmi, Geethika.

An RA Goes to India

By Isabel Cox, York College of Pennsylvania Student

My name is Isabel Cox; I'm a senior psychology major and business administration minor at York College of Pennsylvania. I spent about a month studying abroad in India during my semester break, and three of those weeks were spent volunteering at HOINA.

Over the last three and a half years, I have worked as a Resident Assistant (RA) at York. For those of you who are unfamiliar with that position, an RA plays a huge role on a college campus as they serve as a resource for on-campus residential students. An RA lives on a residential floor with anywhere from 20-50 students. The RA's role is to plan programs catered to their residents' needs, create door decorations for every resident, serve on-call and respond to incidents as they occur, as well as help to build a community among the floor members.

As I previously mentioned, one of the key aspects to the job is creating door decorations for every resident. This is something that usually happens somewhat monthly, meaning by the end of the year, every resident should have 4-6 door decorations on the outside of their bedroom and/or apartment door. The décor are bright spots in the halls that everyone can see as they are walking down the corridor. Making door decorations does not need to be something overly strenuous. However, I have found that many residents choose to keep their door decorations at the end of every year and hang them back up on their new apartment doors at the beginning of the following year. I believe door decorations play a huge role in helping to make students feel welcomed and appreciated.

With that being said, I believed this craft was something I wanted to bring to HOINA. I spent some time teaching the children at both the girls' and boys' homes how to make their very own door decoration. I made some samples for them to look at. Some of the supplies I gave them included googly eyes, stickers, plastic jewels, markers, cardstock, scissors, and glue. I was blown away with the creations the boys and girls made. Traditional to a door decoration on a college students' bedroom door, I asked the kids to write their names on their door decorations. I explained to them that many people write their name on the front, but they could write it on the back if they would like.

My hope with this activity is that the children have something they can hang on their bedroom doors and/or on the wall by their bed that allows them to feel welcome, but also allows them to claim their very own space. The creativity these children had was truly incredible, and I loved watching them create their own door decorations, as well as watch how much they helped each other during our art time. This project was something that truly meant a lot to me, and I am glad I was able to bring this piece of my life from York College to India at HOINA for these kids.



Tejaswini shows off the beginning of her door decor.



The HOINA girls hard at work creating their own expression of art to decorate their personal dorm space.

Different and the Same continued



Divya Sri, nicknamed "Laddoo," gives an enthusiastic hug to Abby.

Each child I met at HOINA was special and stood out in his or her own way. Early on I learned that Amu is the dancer. Wherever she went, she was probably dancing there, throwing in a few spins on her way with a smile on her face. Teju is a hugger; she was young so her English wasn't great, but her hugs spoke thousands of words. Mounika is a leader. As one of the oldest girls, her sisters look up to her; and she's a great role model to them. Sravanthi has a huge heart; she cares for her sisters and is always there for them. Harika is the perfect balance between serious and silly. When it's time to get things done,

she puts in her best effort; but as soon as it's time to play, her goofy and fun side comes out. Tejaswini wears her heart on her sleeve. She wants you to know how much she loves you, and she'll always remind you to smile. Gaya knows how to make you laugh. She's probably one of the funniest people I know, always telling jokes and lifting others in the room. Baaghi is full of love; she puts her whole heart into everything she does and just her presence brings more light to your life.

All of the kids at HOINA are loving, kind, and full of personality. At the end of the day, we all have things about us that make us who we are and make us unique from everyone else: on the other hand, at our cores, it turns out we are all the same. We are all just human, and love brings us together. Yes, we come from different places, we all have different stories, and we look different from each other, but if you look deep enough and get to know someone well enough, I bet you'd find a lot more in common than you'd expect. I sure did. These children—that a few weeks ago I didn't even know and I thought I had nothing in common with—have become some of my favorite people within just the five weeks I spent with them. They have taught me so much about life, happiness, humanity, stepping out of my comfort zone, and most importantly loving others.

I encourage you to also step out of your comfort zone, see others for who they are, love them for what makes them unique, and recognize that deep down we really aren't all that different. Support others when you can and lift up those around you. After all, "everyone's different and everyone's the same". The children at HOINA are the future of India, and that gives me hope for a better world filled with more love and more light. Let's all join them in making the world a better place.



From the President
Todd Becker

The HOINA campus has a "Blessing Grove." The grove occupies a large area of land where multi-colored benches form a circle under the thick canopy of mango trees. The temperature under the trees can be up to 10 degrees cooler than the surrounding area due to the dense shade. Hence, the Blessing Grove is a beautiful, comfortable place to sit, pray, and count one's blessings.

Mango trees love hot, dry weather and bear their delicious fruit toward the end of the Indian summer in May and June. While a mango tree will begin to bear fruit after five or six years, it takes closer to 15 years to receive a full, mature yield—similar to raising a child from birth to maturity. The HOINA crop this year far exceeded our expectations. We are thankful to God for such a bountiful harvest. Our children have enjoyed delicious fruit and we have had plenty to share with the staff, trustees, and some of our local friends.



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.

Edited by Letti L. Becker Layout by Eberly Designs

Send donations and address changes to:

HOINA

PO Box 636

Brownstown, PA 17508-0636

U.S.A.

The official registration and financial information of Homes of the Indian Nation (HOINA) may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling, 1.717.787.1057. Registration does not imply endorsement.

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- Please use this gift of \$ _____ to help replace HOINA's vehicles.
- I want to Sponsor a HOINA boy / girl (circle one). Here is my **first** monthly gift of \$35.
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Summer 2023 

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Don't Forget Our Older Orphans

Like our sponsor child from our last issue, P. Sai Venkata Jyothi is now 16 after having been with HOINA since she was 11. Sometimes older children are harder to find sponsors for, so we are hoping you can donate to support her further education.

Sai Jyothi is a full orphan, having her lost her father when she was eight and her mother, when she was 11. Her uncle took custody of her after she was orphaned, but he could not provide well for her as he is only a daily laborer. She was welcomed into our home after we heard her life's story.

Would you like to sponsor this teen as she heads to junior college? Please return the coupon above with your first monthly gift of \$35 to our office in Brownstown, PA. You can always set up a recurring transaction through our website as well. www.hoina.org We appreciate your generosity!

