



NEWS FROM

HOINA

HOMES OF THE INDIAN NATION

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Shenanigans and Side Quests

By Enoch Warnke

India is a wild, beautiful land of epic history and vibrant culture, ripe with opportunity for adventure. As a small business entrepreneur with a personal interest in orphanages, including a vision to start my own someday, a 13-day trip to HOINA represented the perfect opportunity for me to study how it's done. While I had the trip of a lifetime exploring four different parts of southeastern India for six weeks, truthfully, HOINA was the hardest place to leave.

At my first meal, some of the older boys came over to sit with me and began getting to know me. One of the more mischievous ones, Arjun, said "Brother, eat this," pointing to an obviously spicy chili that Americans aren't supposed to be able to handle.

I picked it up with my fingers, looked him dead in the eye saying, "What, you think I won't?" and with one swift flick of the tongue took it into my mouth and began chewing while staring him down. The table erupted in surprised cheers, and I was "in." They instructed me to call each of them *thammudu*, and I was *anna* (little brother and big brother, respectively).

Perhaps my favorite memory at HOINA was joining the singing class one night, learning Sunday school-type action songs on the fly—in front of everyone watching. Embarrassing yourself in public is intimidating; yet, the reward is often worth it. The experience hasn't affected my prospects in the music industry, but embarrassing myself did help me connect with kids who live in another world who want to bond but don't know how to. Moments like these helped me to breach our language barrier and cultural differences.



Author Enoch flanked by Teja and Jaswanth (left and right, respectively)

My singing shenanigans are a close tie with the moment we unveiled the kombucha that was our chemistry experiment. Ultimately, we found that instead of growing probiotics, we had grown mold. Thus, I fielded many questions, and had a great teachable moment—on perseverance and adaptation—among other things.

Shenanigans continued

Individual recognition is so important to children; and I am shockingly bad at remembering Indian names, particularly when I have several to learn at once. The boys would ask me regularly if I knew their names, and too often I did not. When I confused one boy with another, I noticed a sadness pass over his face. A difference exists between knowing that someone has difficulty learning many foreign names, and then realizing that he remembers someone else's, but not yours. These sorts of tests for recognition and being considered memorable are a part of my experience with most people I met overseas but stood out to me at HOINA, because the children meet few new people who will spend time to get to know them personally.

The facilities at HOINA are spectacular, especially considering how far from the city they are. The food is authentic, nourishing, and plentiful. Reliable transportation, a fantastic social support system, quality education, and more make HOINA a great home. Truthfully, some human needs cannot be met with money and systems. These children, like children everywhere, yearn for one-on-one interactions, and I was happy to help fill that void in any way, often wrestling or playing other sports and games with them.

I thoroughly enjoyed learning about the history of HOINA from the campus manager Bujji, with his 30+ years of experience, telling how in streams of events enemies became friends, and threats became opportunities. Those facts should come as little surprise, given the mission of an orphanage is redemption.

A specific story of redemption begins with a HOINA boy named Jaswanth, who became enamored with a board game I had brought. Unfortunately, he liked to use a strategy that involved holding more cards in his hand than the allowed limit. He was repeatedly caught and penalized for this, including branding him as “a cheater” who needed his HOINA brothers’ attentive eyes to keep him honest. This “negative” interaction in no way alienated him from me; and by the end of my HOINA stay, he was devoted to helping



As the HOINA boys discovered while playing with Enoch Warnke, investing in companies to build profitable railroads is more complex than it sounds.



Enoch Warnke didn't spend all of his time with the HOINA boys but allowed the girls to have their fun, too! Here Meghana B., Sai Jyothi, and Bhagya pose with their hairdo handiwork.

me scrape bathroom floors, without my asking.

Similarly, I endured a mass cheating problem in a large group game we played. I understood their solidarity: who wants to break from the tribe to be the snitch? Fortunately, I saw a change of heart after several natural consequences, additional induced consequences, and the passing of the

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This newsletter is published to inform our readers of the work HOINA does among the handicapped and abandoned in India.

Send donations and address changes to:

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Shenanigans(cont.)

cheap thrill that cheating provides. After a succession of mutinies, accountability emerged as the game began to be played correctly, with the boys themselves keeping each other honest. This change of tide led to more and more interesting games, which they, themselves, came to realize. Problems turning into solutions so quickly is a rare treat.

Fortunately, as Hebrews 4:15a (NIV) reminds us: “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, ...” What seems like a problem to us is often the vehicle that God, the Father of the fatherless, actually uses to accomplish the goals He has for us.

One of my great takeaways from my India trip is that misadventures are what we call in computer gaming, “side quests.” While not the main objective, these side quests can easily add up to being more of the game, cumulatively, than the main one itself. The perspective that I oftentimes found more helpful in India with its abundance of detours was to remember that those diversions were not a detraction from the main mission. Instead, the main quest is really just a path that leads you to all the side quests. From there, realizing and seizing the different yet delightful opportunities is up to you. At HOINA a wild, beautiful, epic, and vibrant story is at play; and being a part of it is amazing.

Greetings!

April and May are the height of summer in India with temperatures in the 120+ degree Fahrenheit range. We ask an interest in your prayers that everyone would have good health and endurance in such heat.

Usually, summer is a quieter time at HOINA as school is out, and only about 25% of the children are still with us. Most

children go back to their villages and extended families, who decide how to use the summer months. Having a slower period allows the staff to take longer vacations; i.e. the typical break during the school year is limited to two or three days.

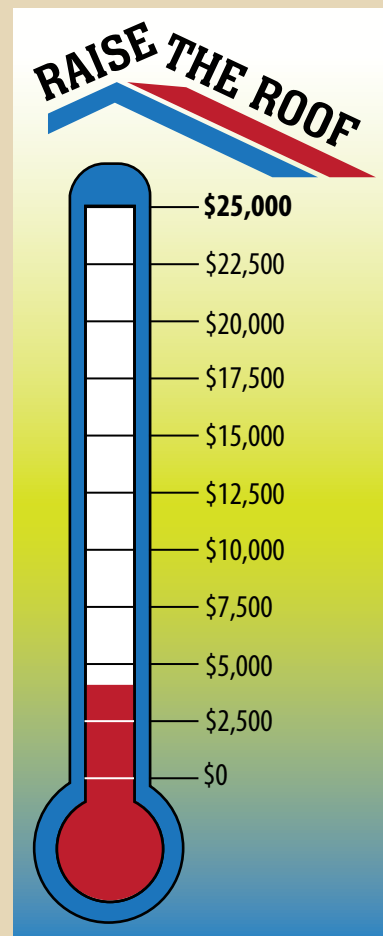
Larger, disruptive projects to the homes and campus are scheduled for these weeks. The workers begin in the early mornings, take a break in the afternoon, and then resume in the evening as the extreme heat from the sun dissipates.

The best part about the summers at HOINA is the ripening of the mango fruit. The hottest, driest season is when the mangoes thrive. Last year’s yield was so great we were able to share the fruit with our staff, their families, and many of our supporters. We anxiously await this year’s crop.

During these months, our HOINA management is actively seeking and qualifying the majority of new children for inclusion in the HOINA family. Please pray for discernment for our staff to select the children whom God has prepared to come to HOINA to begin the new school year in June. Please remember, too, our graduating students as they leave HOINA and start off on their own adventures of adulthood.



From the President
Todd Becker



Would you please help our office?

If so, send a quick note to contact@hoina.org from the email address you want us to keep on file for communication. We promise not to sell or share your information with others.

HOINA Sponsor and Contribution Coupon

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Use my gift of \$ _____ to help repair the girls' home roof.

I want to **Sponsor** a HOINA boy / girl (circle one). Here is my **first** monthly gift of \$35.

Here's my gift of \$ _____ to help fund the **general expenses** of HOINA as we care for the children.

\$ _____ for **Vehicle fund** or where most needed.

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Semi-orphaned Teen Needs Sponsor

Fourteen-year-old Lakshmi Narayana G. came to live at HOINA last summer. He still awaits a sponsor. His father was an agricultural worker, who struggled to maintain his leased farmland. He died in 2020, leaving his wife to raise Narayana and his little sister. Our HOINA graduates met Lakshmi Narayana's mother, who asked if HOINA could accept her son for a better life.

Lakshmi Narayana enjoys cricket and would like to be a police officer. If you would like to help support him to fulfill his dreams, please complete the coupon above and send it with your first monthly gift of \$35 to our office in Lee's Summit, Missouri. Of course, you may also donate online at www.hoina.org. We are so grateful to all of our donors and prayer warriors.

