

A voice of hope for children...

# IFH NEWS



In this newsletter, you will find:

- Info on the Mercy Home
- Update for child sponsors
- News from Jeeva Nivas, home for HIV positive children
- Info on the primary school in Aranganur
- An easy way to make monthly donations to IFH

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### *Dear friends,*

It is almost the end of another year—a year that has been particularly difficult for many. However, this is also the time of year when we can help each other the most; indeed, when people are in despair, our little light can shine the brightest! To this end, I hope that the news in this letter will lift your spirits because **you**, our supporters, have helped so many children—many so desperate that even the smallest outreach has been a giant boost! Thank you so much for all your support and prayers this year.

**Carol Collins, President**

### *Mercy Home - a home for girls - INDIA*

The area north of Chennai (Madras) is filled with many slum pockets. Approximately 30,000 people live in this area, and eighty five percent of them are immigrants who have come to the area looking for employment. Most have no permanent housing but, instead, live on the pavement or in small huts roofed with tin, asbestos sheets, or plastic paper. These people often earn their livelihood as rickshaw drivers, flower vendors, fish cart drivers...and as beggars or, worse yet, pickpockets. The rate of alcoholism is also very high in this area.

These dire circumstances harshly affect young girls who are seen by their families as a burden. These girls often have little choice but to beg and, as they grow older, to undertake more desperate occupations. Fortunately, the **Mercy Home** has become a local haven for young girls who have been rescued from begging in the streets, railways stations, and bus stands. These girls—ranging in age from six to 15—reside at the Home where Franciscan Sisters of St. Joseph care for them, give them an education, and provide a loving place to live and grow! As such, Mercy Home is a beacon of hope for these girls, lifting them out of the gutters of the slum and into a clean home where they can learn, live and be happy.

IFH donors started helping these girls a year ago and the impact has been tremendous; however, additional funds are needed to continue our support! With your help, these girls will receive new shoes, mats, soaps and towels, notebooks, school supplies, and other household items that they desperately need.

***If you are interested in helping the girls at the Mercy Home, please make a donation using the enclosed envelope!***



## JEEVA NIVAS - House of Life - INDIA

Jeeva Nivas is booming with life and laughter! In early November we welcomed two more children to our home. We now have 23 HIV positive kids, 7 girls and 16 boys, all of whom are also AIDS orphans. Our youngest child is only four years old and the oldest is 16. Of course this means a little more chaos but also more fun. The kids are really leaving their sad past behind them and embracing a more promising and hopeful future.

The kids spend most of their time at school making friends, playing games, and studying (usually in that order). We have nine children attending Kolping, a Catholic English medium school; four boys at St. Joseph's, a Catholic Tamil medium school; and two girls attend the Girl's Government School. We also have five children attending our own school staffed by two full-time teachers. Some of these children need a lot of personal attention and there are also some who arrived here mid-year and must wait until the next school year to transfer to an outside school.

The Indian school system is very different than the American one. Even in the private schools, there are as many as 45 children in one classroom with one teacher. A child really must be self-motivated to participate in class and to do his work. After considering this, we still feel it is important to send these children to schools in our area so that they can learn more about the outside world, develop friendships, and learn how to adjust to difficult situations. To supplement their education, we study with the children every evening in small groups comprising 2 or 3 children with a tutor who can help them with homework. Only with a solid education will these children have any chance of living a normal and self-sufficient life as they will be unable to do manual labor (as many people do, usually after dropping out of school).

I am so proud of these kids and the enormous obstacles they have already faced and successfully conquered in their young and promising lives! If you could meet them personally, you would be as inspired as I am each and every day! Let me introduce you to two of these very special children:

- Suresh is fifteen years old and studies in the X standard at Kolping. His mother was a teacher and his father a driver before both perished from AIDS several years ago. When the administration and parents at Suresh's old school learned about the cause of his parents' death, Suresh was teased, tormented, and ultimately forced to withdraw. He came to us four years ago and is now so happy to pursue his future. Suresh will be taking the X standard public examination (a very important exam), and he is planning to go to a university and study computer animation.
- Yuvasri is eleven years old and studies in the V standard at Kolping. Her parents died a few years ago and her aunt (the oldest of ten children) initially took responsibility for her; however, her other aunts and uncles believe that Yuvasri's disease has put a "curse" on the family, and they are so fearful Yuvasri will spread the disease to their own children, that they refuse to see her. Yuvasri was so frustrated when she first started at an English medium school (she cried almost every night), but we knew she was clever and would catch up quickly--and she has! Now, despite all of her hardships, Yuvasri wants to grow up and become a teacher so she can help other poor children.



***If you are interested in helping Suresh, Yuvasri, and the other children at Jeeva Nivas, please send us your donation in the enclosed envelope! Every donation helps make the lives of these special children more bearable and will ultimately help them achieve their dreams of self-sufficient adults!***

## *Sponsorship keeps children out of the workforce - INDIA*

IFH has been sponsoring children through partnership with the Sharana Social and Development Organization (“Sharana”) for over eight years now. We chose to partner with Sharana because they:

- target villages and families receiving no other aid from non-profit organizations;
- target families who already have one child in the work force;
- provide counseling for families to make the child education a family priority; and
- cost-effectively provide the basic materials needed for a child’s education.

IFH is now sponsoring 88 children in the villages of Puducherry. Each year, sponsored children receive two sets of uniforms, notebooks, school bags, guide books, and other necessities for school. Children also receive raincoats or flip-flops at the beginning of monsoon season (which, for the majority of Indian school children who walk to school, are essential).

This summer, 42 of the sponsored children attended Sharana camps in the nearby hill stations. Sharana started these summer camps several years ago because they discovered that children were joining the workforce during the summer break and then could not return to school because their families became dependent upon the additional income. However, the camps remind the families that the children are children and need a childhood, while also exposing the children to different parts of India and enabling the children learn new skills and make new friends.

The first camp was held in Ooty (400 kilometers from Puducherry in the Nilgiris Mountains) which is a cool and beautiful area with hills filled with tea bushes and forests hosting a wonderful variety of animals. This Ooty camp was held for the children who had just completed their X standard public examination. (Children prepare for this examination intensely throughout the year, often attending classes seven days a week.) The Ooty camp gave the children a much needed rest, a chance to put their exam in perspective, and time to think about their own future. Two other camps were held in Nenmeli Village, CHENGALPET. Here children learned many arts and crafts, played several sports, and visited a tribal welfare center as well as the historic Mammallapuram temples.

Twice each year IFH’s sponsored children write their U.S. sponsors and describe their progress in school or the details of holiday celebrations. U.S. sponsors are invited to write back but, of course, are not required; just knowing that someone in the U.S. cares about their education is enough support to propel a child forward in their educational goals. If you sponsor a child, you will find a letter enclosed...enjoy!

Last but not least, this is also a good time to renew your sponsorship and your commitment to the welfare of your sponsored child. Please note that the cost of an annual sponsorship has increased to \$125 as prices in India have skyrocketed over the past year—but, at less than eleven dollars per month, this increased amount is still all that is needed to provided for the educational needs of your sponsored child for another year! Similarly, if you are interested in sponsoring a child (or sponsoring another child), your contributions and support will be most welcome! It only costs \$125 a year but makes a huge difference in the life of each and every child. Just send us your sponsorship using the enclosed envelope, and for new sponsorships we will assign you a child as soon as possible!



## *A school in need gets help from IFH donors - INDIA*

Several months ago, in partnership with the Sharana Social and Development Organization, we identified a small, primary school in an agricultural area that was in need of assistance. The village is called Aranganur and is about 20 kilometers outside Pudicherry. The people in the village are agricultural workers, working land that belongs to someone else. Most are uneducated and, regrettably, do not consider an education a priority for their children. Social workers from Sharana, however, regularly meet with the children and their families to discuss the importance of education to their future and the future of their community. The Aranganur Government Primary School has 120 students L.K.G. (age 4) to V standard, and the school usually distributes school uniforms, notebooks and textbooks to all students. However, due to political issues, this school did not receive uniforms for the children this year, and many of the children wear old uniforms or have no uniforms to wear, and what clothes these children do have are often old and worn out because they usually have only have 2 sets of personal clothes that they wear all of the time for school, play, work, and sleep.

After visiting this school several months ago, I made an appeal to you, the supporters of IFH, to please help these children in this difficult situation, and you responded generously! On November 3, IFH was able to distribute one new uniform and one backpack to each child at the school. All 120 children were gathered in one large classroom for the distribution, and the excitement in the air as the children received their new uniform and backpack was something special to behold! Best of all, though, is that—with the help of Sharana—we identified a struggling community that needed support for education, and we were able to make an investment in the future of these children and their village.

(FYI, in December IFH will be distributing basis school supplies that are typically exhausted by mid-year.)



International  
**IFH** Foundation  
for **HOPE**™

Making a difference in the life of a child half a world away.

## *“The Easy Way to Donate to IFH” by Col. (Ret.) Don Rettberg*

### **Personal Experience**

My wife and I have found that making monthly deductions from our checking account is a much easier and more efficient way of managing our finances and paying our bills. For example, we pay insurance, utility, telephone, and fitness center bills, as well as certain charitable donations, using automatic deductions from our checking account. We recently added the International Foundation for Hope (IFH) to that list of monthly deductions. That single simple action did two things: first, it saved me from writing a check to IFH if and when I happened to think about it; and second, the smaller monthly amounts (versus a much larger annual payment) has actually made it easier for us to increase the amount of money we can donate each year to the great work of IFH.

### **The Mechanics**

Our checking account is with Bank of America which has an easy procedure that allowed us to go on-line and establish a recurring “on-line bill payment” to do the following: (1) take a specified amount out of our checking account each month; (2) create a check for that amount made out to IFH; and (3) mail that check to IFH....it’s that easy!

### **Other Banks**

Since not everyone banks with Bank of America, I checked with three other banks to see about setting up recurring bill payments from a personal checking account to IFH, and all three said it required nothing more than having the IFH mailing address and specifying the amount of the deduction. Moreover, neither Washington Mutual nor Compass Bank charge any fees for the service, while Wells Fargo indicated that they could waive their fee if a certain minimum balance is kept in the checking account. Of course, the best advice for potential donors wanting to make donations using an “on-line bill payment” system is to call your bank and ask about it.

### **The Specifics**

Please consider making a monthly donation to IFH; the only info you need is:

**International Foundation for Hope  
P. O. Box 28491  
Austin, TX 78755-8491**

After setting up your monthly donation, just let IFH know which specific program(s) you want to support and if you want to receive a monthly acknowledgement of your contribution. Otherwise feel free to permit IFH to add your monthly donations to their general fund (supporting all programs) and, in lieu of monthly statements, IFH will just send you a year-end acknowledgement of your total donations for the entire calendar year (useful for tax purposes).

***IFH is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization and, thus, your donation may be 100% tax deductible; please consult your account or financial planner for more details.***

### **Conclusion**

On behalf of our entire board of directors, thank you for your interest in the work being done by IFH in support of improving the lives of some very needy children who are many, many miles (and a couple of oceans) away. Carol Collins, our most dedicated president, works with some of these children every day at Jeeva Nivas (House of Life) and has seen firsthand what a powerful difference these simple donations have already made! Thank you also for taking the time to consider this monthly option for making future donations to IFH, and I hope you will take a few minutes and review our programs by going to [www.ifoundhope.org](http://www.ifoundhope.org). We can do nothing without your financial and prayerful support!

