

FALL

2007

Agape
International

LOVE IN ACTION

What's New

Agape Volunteers: US Youth Working in India



Elizabeth and Natasha with Deepika and her three year old brother Deepak, who is HIV positive.

Agape has been very fortunate to have several young adults willing to make a longer term volunteer commitment to Agape in India. **Natasha Utter** and **Elizabeth Glenn** spent eight months beginning in October 2006 living and working with the Agape children. Both young women lived in Agape Orphanage #3 and taught English medium students at the Agape school. Elizabeth and Natasha took advantage of their “gap” year between high school and college to work with Agape. Similarly, **Dan Cressman** has also spent a year in India following high school graduation. Dan has also lived and worked with the kids, in addition to helping Lynne and Ratnam with other orphanage management tasks. Dan headed home in August – he will be missed as are Natasha and Elizabeth!

This summer, several other teens traveled to India to work with Agape, including **Emily Richarde**, **Katrina Quirk**, **Maia Yale-Taft** and a Wellesley Vineyard team led by **Ron Campbell** including **Chris**, **Emily**, **Danielle**, and **Mitchell Campbell** and **Jon Cryan**. Emily, Katrina, Maia and Chris all spent four weeks or more working with Agape.

The commitment and hearts of all of these youth are truly inspirational. We hope to feature several of their stories in this and future newsletters and at this year's annual dinner on October 13th.

Elizabeth Glenn, age 18, Boston University

The following is from an email update that Elizabeth sent in March of this year:

Natasha and I just returned from a week at Second Hostel (one of the homes for HIV positive children). We see most of the kids from that hostel every day at school, and we drop by the hostel to say hi to the other little kids, but it was so much fun to really live there. It has a nice rhythm. We slept on the floor of the girls' room, so we were in bed by 9:15 every night and up at an equally early hour.

Yesumani, the large joyful cook, sleeps on the floor of that room too. She has established herself as the

mother of everyone at the hostel, and she took good care of us. We called her Amma (Mother). The staff at Second Hostel don't speak any English, but we were warmly welcomed into their community.



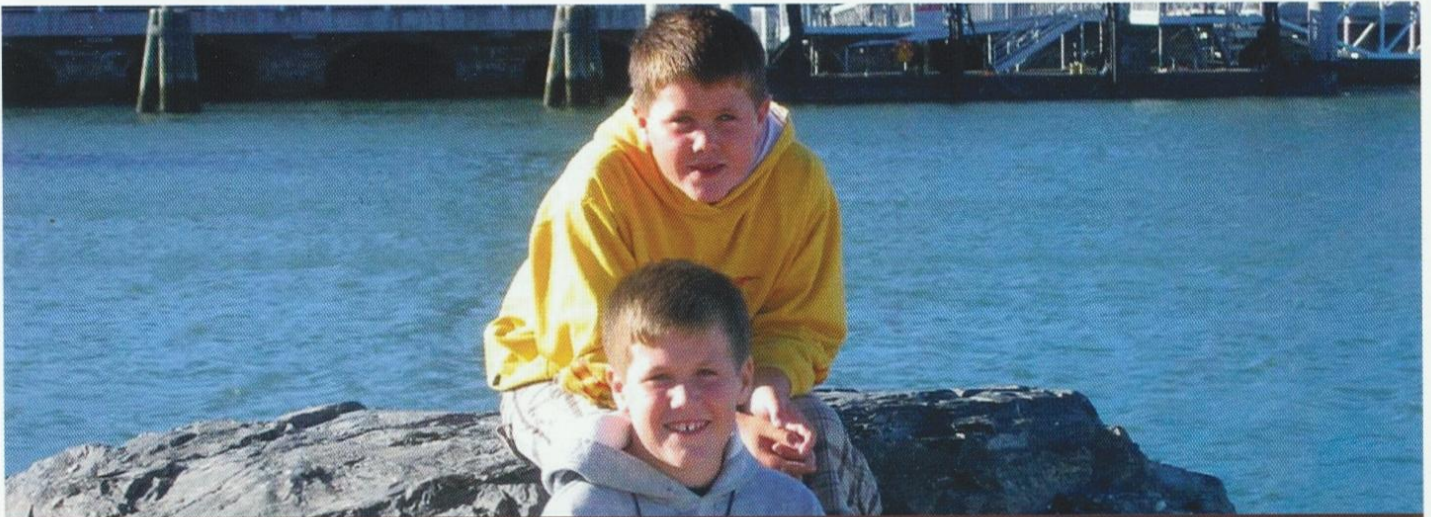
Elizabeth with sisters Manasa & Yamini .

I think that my Telugu (the local language in Hyderabad) improved that week too, partly through my many conversations with Murali – a little boy who is quite a talker after he warms up. He is fascinated by so many things, and he's told me long enthusiastic stories about snakes that he's seen and people he has watched out on the road. I also really enjoyed talking (in English) with the students in my class – Lavanya, Shanker and Bhanu. I really like my kids, and I'm so glad that I can now really talk with them and learn what's on their minds.

Deepak – the severely malnourished 3 year old boy who came in a few weeks ago – is looking a lot better these days. He walks around a lot (he couldn't walk when he first came) and smiles when we come home from school. We have fun feeding each other grapes and playing hide-and-seek. He is still cranky at times, and whenever he sees food, he screams for it, even if he doesn't end up eating it. I guess he's just afraid he might not get another chance.

The kids at Second Hostel are always singing, always piling into our laps – I'm going back today for another week. I like life there.

Love,
Elizabeth



Ian and Matthew MacDonald



Merry Christmas Family,

We love presents and we can't wait for Santa to come to our house!

But we also know that there are children in the world who want and need presents more than we do and that's why we are sending you this letter.

This year, Matthew and Ian have decided to sponsor a little boy who is in an orphanage in India. His name is Parvej and he is living in the orphanage because both his parents died of AIDS. Unfortunately Parvej is HIV positive. It costs approximately \$650 a year to provide him with food, shelter, and medicine.

The orphanage that is caring for Parvej is called Agape International. Agape was founded by a woman from Massachusetts and is dedicated to caring for orphans and families devastated by AIDS. You can read more about Agape by going to their website: www.agapeintl.org. We met the founders recently and can tell you that they are amazing people and we believe deeply in the work they are doing.

If you were planning to give us presents for Christmas, we would like to ask that you consider making a donation on our behalf to Agape instead (it's tax deductible). Make a check out to Agape International and we'll send it along for you.

Thanks so much and we'll keep you posted on our friend and the work Agape is doing for the AIDS orphans in India.

Hugs and kisses from,
Ian and Matthew

Ian and Matthew MacDonald, ages 11 and 9, Dover, MA

Cheryl MacDonald and her son Ian also attended last year's Fall Dinner. Ian picked out Parvej, an HIV positive boy, to sponsor. Unlike most of the kid's pictures at the sponsor table, Parvej looked "sad" said Ian, "he looked like he needed someone to help him." At their own initiative, Ian and his brother Matthew decided to send a letter to friends and family at Christmas asking for donations to Agape instead of toys for themselves. I cried when I read the letter, which is included here. Their letter also raised over \$1000 for Agape!

Agape International



Long term Agape volunteer
Dan Cressman with Monika,
an HIV positive Agape child.

GET INVOLVED

Join Us at Our Third Annual Fall Dinner October 13th

Join us and many of the incredible volunteers featured in this newsletter at our third annual Fall Dinner, Saturday, October 13th, Regis College, Weston. We'll hear briefly from some of these volunteers and also from Lynne Voggu, our Executive Director, about what is happening with our orphanages, newly finished medical facility and our school. As always, we'll also have a terrific silent auction featuring fun items from India and a great dinner and cocktails. Contact Kim at kim@agapeintl.org to RSVP or for more details!

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