

Fall  
2009

**Agape**  
International

LOVE IN ACTION

# What's New

## A New School Year

As Agape has continued to grow, so has our Agape school. We currently have over 200 school age children who attend the Agape school. The school has developed a strong reputation in the area and we regularly have children/parents who are not affected by AIDs who want to attend the school. This year, one of Lynne and Ratnam's key areas of focus is investment in the Agape school which is, of course, an important factor in the Agape children's future.

## New School Building

As part of that investment, we are moving to a brand new school building that is being built to suit for Agape. The building has 28 classrooms (room to grow!) as well as a library, a computer lab, and a science lab. Lynne and Ratnam found the new building by driving around the area surrounding our orphanages. The building is located within walking distance of two of our orphanages. We will rent the school building (we continue to rent all our children's homes and our current school because the cost of buying land/property in the Hyderabad area is surprisingly prohibitive). We continue to hope for donors who will be willing to buy a building or contribute to our Building Purchase Fund – this would give us more stability and ability to invest in our building facilities.



New school building in final stages of construction

## Agape Teacher Staffing

Agape currently employs 15 local Indian teachers, most of whom are B.Ed's (Bachelors of Education certified). We also have had a number of volunteers from the US who have taught a class through the school year. We are fortunate to currently have Angie Robey from Idaho, a 25 year old volunteer who is teaching the 3rd Class English Medium. We are also privileged to have Emily Richarde, who taught at Agape's school in 2008 (see some of Emily's reflections on the next page) with us for the year. She is mentoring our Indian teachers and working to introduce new learning approaches in the classroom. The school is led by a newly hired headmistress, Mrs.



Mrs. Vasantha (middle) with American volunteers

Vasantha, who has 20 plus years of teaching and administrative experience in India. She most recently served as a headmistress at a local private school for six years. She is a wonderful addition to the Agape team bringing discipline and organization combined with a great willingness to try new things (an unusual combination!).



# Meet Our Agape Family

## A New School Year Cont.

### Agape School Structure

The school structure reflects an Indian model and is slightly different than what we have in the US. There are 10 classes (vs. grades); 1st level class is equivalent to 1st grade and children start at age 6 or so. We also have two kindergarten classes – LKG (lower kindergarten) and UKG (upper kindergarten). For most classes, we have either “Telegu medium” (classes are taught in the local language) or “English medium”. Children entering 1st or 2nd class at Agape are automatically started as English medium students. There are also two Bridge classes for kids who haven’t attended school before or are behind grade level. The children are then mainstreamed into their appropriate class from Bridge. The Indian government is currently supporting the Bridge program at Agape and other educational institutions to encourage literacy.

After the 10th class, our young adults (average age 16) will then attend two years of Intermediate college (rough equivalent of junior college). Upon completion of Intermediate college, Indian students can then attend a Degree college for 3 years to complete their BS/BA.

We currently have two Intermediate college age Agape kids – both of whom successfully applied and are attending strong area schools (see Sudhakar’s profile on the next page). Students must apply to Intermediate college and the cost is determined by their academic ranking (they must take a standard test administered by the government to graduate 10th or 12th class and then that score is used to determine fees. The strong students pay less...great incentive to study!)

We are estimating the average tuition cost of Intermediate college at \$500-\$750 per year and full cost to be \$1,000+ (including room, board, books and other supplies if they live at Agape). The cost will be much higher if they do not live at Agape. (\$1,000 for just room and board alone). Degree college will be \$1500 per year or more. Thank you to those generous donors who contributed to our college fund last year and are making it possible to give our children a wonderful education.

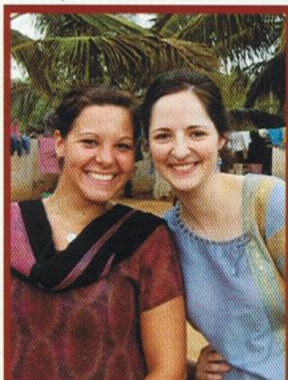


Agape kids proudly show off their new school bags.

### Lollipops and Tooth Fairies: A Volunteer's Reflections on Teaching at Agape

By Emily RiCharde

When you mix together children who are longing for love with the need to educate them plus a foreign country, the outcome will always be an adventure. Many of the conundrums I seemed to always find myself in were a result of the cultural differences between student and teacher (like the time I held up a peace sign with my fingers not realizing that it was their symbol for needing to use the restroom).



Emily (on the right) with another volunteer Angie

At Agape, I taught a class of first and second graders who both challenged and surprised me. One day, Annapurna, a lovely little second grader, lost a tooth and brought it to me at the front of the classroom. Before I spoke, my mind quickly raced over the tooth fairy and how it would be nearly impossible to find this little girl’s pillow to put money under. And should I really start giving out money? And what happens when I leave? I hurriedly arrived at a solution and proclaimed, “In America, we give lollipops when you loose your teeth!” So, I handed her a lollipop, patted her on the cheek, and sent her cheerfully on her way. Much to my surprise, about ten minutes later, Naidu walked up to me with a grin ear to ear and a bloody tooth in his hand, accompanied by a chorus of students shouting, “Miss Emily, he pulled it! He pulled it!” Unable to send him away empty handed for all of his hard work, I burst into laughter and gave him a lollipop, which of course, was followed by a stern talk with the rest of the class about how there will no longer be a tooth-lollipop trade in my classroom. As you can probably guess, I have a plethora of stories of how I got myself into a pickle and I cherish each and every one of them. Teaching has always been a joy for me, but I have never enjoyed myself as much, or been as challenged as much as when I was teaching at Agape.



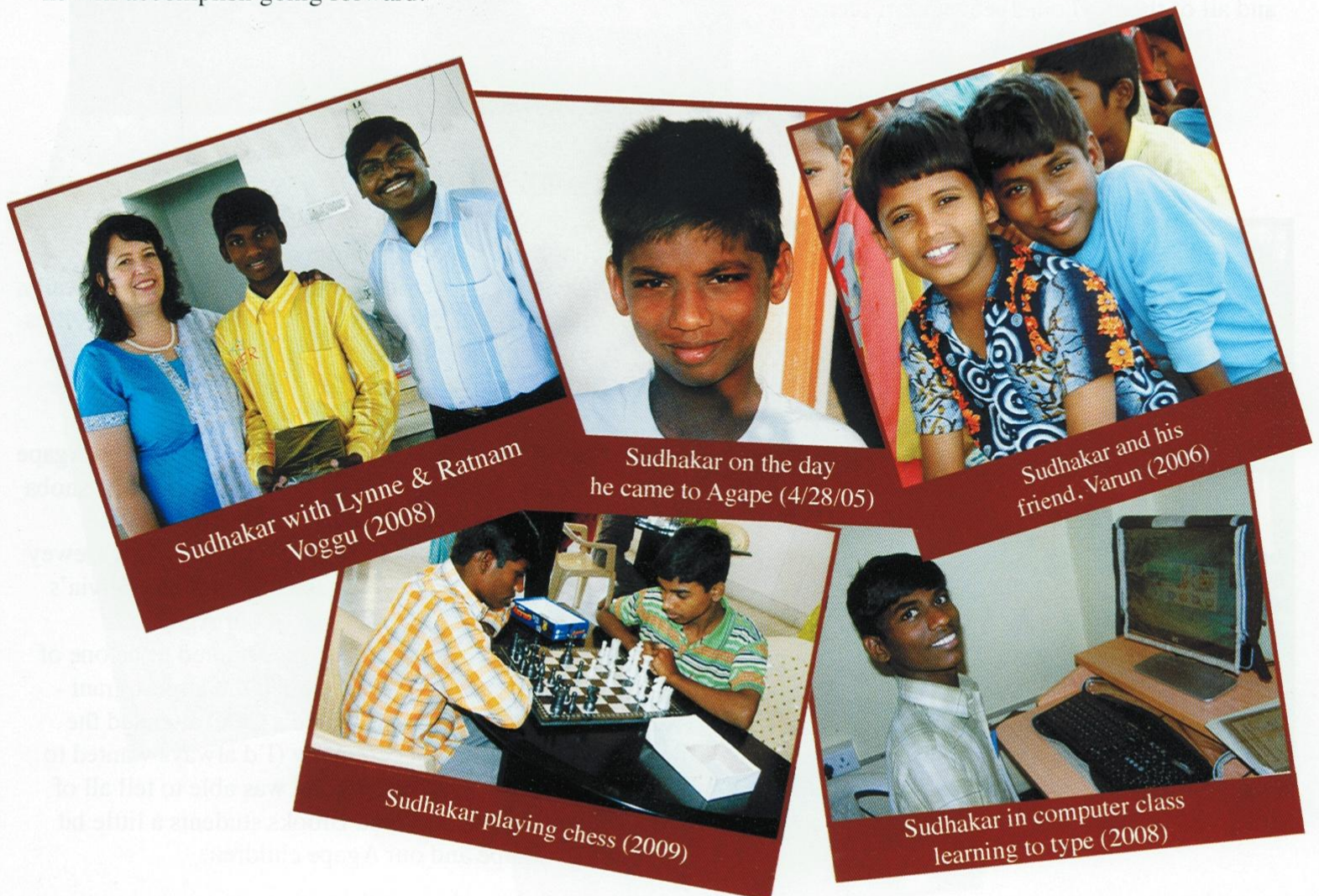
# Meet Our Agape Family

## Sudhakar

Sudhakar joined our Agape family in 2005 when he was 12. His father had died and his mother was HIV positive and quite ill when he came to live with us.

Now 16, Sudhakar has blossomed into an accomplished student during his four years at Agape. He recently earned first rank on his SSC exam (government exam required to pass high school). He is one of Agape's two current (intermediate) college students. He is studying for a MPC (math, physics and chemistry) degree at Sri Chaitanya, the top private college in the state for those pursuing engineering or medical degrees.

Sudhakar is one of only forty students at his college who come from a Telegu medium background. All of his classes are now taught in English. Despite the language challenge, Sudhakar was recently recognized in a general assembly for his high marks – he was number one in his class on his weekly exam. Sudhakar hopes to become a software engineer. “Then I can go abroad to work and send money back to Agape” says Sudhakar. We are so proud of all he has already accomplished and look forward to all he will accomplish going forward.



Sudhakar with Lynne & Ratnam Voggu (2008)

Sudhakar on the day he came to Agape (4/28/05)

Sudhakar and his friend, Varun (2006)

Sudhakar playing chess (2009)

Sudhakar in computer class learning to type (2008)



## MA Area Schools Get Involved in Helping Agape

### Medfield's Dale Street School

Ms. Hayes' fourth grade class wanted to raise money for children in need, while helping the environment at the same time. The students recycled Dunkin Donuts cups from teachers' morning coffee and planted flower and vegetable seeds in them. When the seeds sprouted, they sold the seedlings to fellow students, teachers, and parents to raise money. The students are thrilled that they were able to raise \$100 and hope this money will help the children of Agape. A big thank you to Ms. Hayes', her students, and all of those who helped support them.



Mrs. Hayes 4th grade class, Dale Street School, Medfield

### Nashoba Brooks

As part of an innovative curriculum, Nashoba Brooks School in Concord MA introduced a group of students to the world of philanthropy and specifically, grant making. Students invited a number of charities to apply for grants. The students then worked with Crossroads Community Foundation to evaluate the grant applications, to select organizations, and to determine funding of up to \$1,500 per project. Agape was nominated by Olivia Dewey, one of the Nashoba Brooks School Youth in Philanthropy students. Olivia's father, Paul Dewey and his company Dewey Media helped produce Agape's videos and Olivia's family sponsors Aparna, one of our Agape girls. Agape International was honored to be one of the recipients (we were awarded the largest grant - \$1,750!) Kim Ogden, Agape's COO attended the check presentation ceremony (I'd always wanted to be handed a giant check) and was able to tell all of the assembled Nashoba Brooks students a little bit about Agape and our Agape children.



Kim Ogden COO at the check presentation ceremony at Nashoba Brooks



## Elite Government Training Institute Opens Its Doors to Agape

The IAS (Indian Administrative Services) training facility invited 70 of the Agape children to visit for the day. A job with the IAS is perhaps the most coveted job in India – graduates from this training facility will go on to positions of considerable power and control within the Indian government.

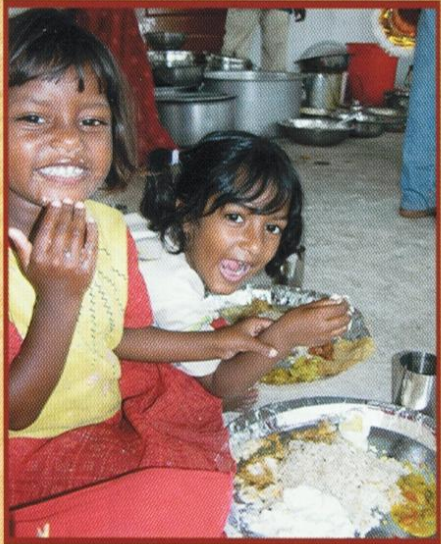
The kids enjoyed presentations from some of the cadets who encouraged them that “they can be whatever they want with hard work.” The full day of activities also included lunch and playing in the IAS game room (chess, ping pong).

The graduating cadet class also raised \$2000 for Agape. Lynne and Ratnam were presented the check during the cadet graduation.





# Agape International



## Get Involved

### Host a Gathering to Help Agape!

The Agape kids love a good "function" (party)!

Why don't you host a big one or a small one to tell your friends about Agape?

You could

- invite a group for tea
- invite a group for cocktails
- invite a group to write letters to the kids
- invite a group to bring and wrap gifts for the kids

Contact Kim at [kim@agapeintl.org](mailto:kim@agapeintl.org) for resources and help planning your get together!

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