

Spring
2009

Agape
International

LOVE IN ACTION

Agape Kids Get High Tech

Agape now has a fully equipped computer lab thanks to the generosity of Board member, Debra Brede and several other Agape supporters. The lab has desks, chairs and twelve new PCs. The children receive computer instruction on a rotating basis during school and are being taught English, typing and graphics production.



9th Grade working on graphic design



Shiva working on his computer

Debra and Ken are both long term committed Agape supporters. Lynne worked for Debra's investment management firm, DK Brede Investments, before founding Agape. (Debra was named one of the Top 100 Women Financial Advisers (2006, 2007, 2008) by Barrons). Debra and Ken Brede are long term, committed Agape supporters. Debra and Ken, a Needham dentist, have served on Agape's board from the beginning and were Agape's most generous donors in 2008. They have traveled to India twice, most recently this past summer with their two children, Ashley and Joshua. While in India, Ken treated every Agape child in the Agape dental clinic (with his 17 year old daughter Ashley assisting) and Debra installed the computer lab..



Agape Welcomes Visitors

There's something very special about committed Agape supporters meeting the Agape children in person. Over Agape's five years of operation, we've had the privilege of welcoming many to India to do just that.

Ledingham Family

Dianne Ledingham and her two daughters, Lauren and Christie traveled with Kim and Kim's son Alex this past summer to work in the orphanages. The Ledinghams sponsor an orphanage and five individual Agape children. Their sponsored children were thrilled to meet the Ledinghams in person. Lauren Ledingham, who is a sophomore at Wellesley High School, said that "meeting the kids made them seem so much more real to me. I'd seen their pictures, but to talk to them and play with them was so much more than I expected."



The Ledinghams with their five sponsored children.



The Ashutosh family with Madurima

Ashutosh Family

Ashutosh and Sreedevi Ashutosh are originally from Hyderabad and currently live in Weston. Sree saw an article about Agape in the Weston Town Crier and she contacted us to say they'd like to help. Since then, Sree and her family have been generous supporters – both financially and with their time. Sree regularly volunteers her time to help with administrative tasks and their children, Abhi and Aneesh were featured in a previous Agape newsletter for their fundraising efforts at the Fenn School (the boys raised over \$1000 for Agape on their own initiative). The Ashutosh family spent this past summer in Hyderabad visiting family and were able to spend a full week volunteering at Agape. During this time, they were able to meet the three sisters that they sponsor, Ravali and Madurama. They also agreed to sponsor their sponsored girls' cousin, Sruthi, who has also come to live at Agape.

Agape Welcomes Visitors

Yale- Taft Family

Maia Taft has spent this year volunteering in India after graduating from Lexington High School in 2008. She deferred her start at Connecticut College for one year and we're grateful she did. Maia has been a tremendous help and has handled every task – no matter how difficult or how tedious – with grace and competence. Maia's parents, Phyllis Yale and Tucker Taft, and sister Becca were able to visit Maia in India and at the same time, see the orphanage they sponsor and their sponsored children, Anusha and Renuka.



Maia with Anantha Laxmi, Chitty, Tara, and Malleshwari



Tucker, Maia, Becca and Phyllis with new Agape friends



Maia with Lynne's daughter Sophia on her birthday

While it is clearly not possible for every Agape supporter to travel to India (and it would be difficult for us to manage if you did!), we knew you'd enjoy your vicarious visit thanks to some of these families!

Before and After: Chitty

Chitty came to us as a small girl – we don't know her exact age when she came to Agape – but our estimate is that she was four. We received a call from an NGO (Non Government Organization) working among PLHA's (people living with HIV/AIDS) that Chitty's parents had passed away and we drove twelve hours by bus to pick her up. When we held her for the first time, we thought she would probably not survive long. We worried if she was going to survive the long return journey to Hyderabad. She had severe diarrhea, a high fever and was very frail. She was also severely malnourished – her belly was extended and she had the orange hair that is characteristic of malnourished children. Chitty is HIV positive and her immune system was seriously compromised. But she made it through the first month which is often the critical period. She did nothing but eat – constantly! She became ferocious when she thought anyone was going to touch her food. As so many of our children seem to do, Chitty made a miraculous comeback. It's hard to remember the girl she was when you see her today. She is now almost 8 years old and a healthy first grader. She's been on HIV medications for several years and her CD4 count is 1310 (she was at 200 when she started ARV therapy) indicating that she is holding her own. She loves to play with the dolls and tea set in the play room.



Chitty when she first came to Agape



Chitty now four years later

Indian Youth Supports Agape

We've had the good fortune to have a number of groups in India who have become involved with Agape. There is a strong desire on the part of the Indian youth and a number of Indian corporations to give back in a tangible way.

The Rotaract Club of Hyderabad East

Rotaractors are like junior Rotarians. Many of their parents are members of Rotary International. Agape's chartered accountant, Jawahar's daughter Varunya is the current president of Rotaract and she has connected the group to Agape. Varunya says, "Agape is our favorite cause." Last year the Rotaractors threw a large Christmas party for the Agape kids and among other things, purchased a very nice sound system for the children. The Rotaractors have also visited the Agape children to play on a number of occasions.

Last August, the Rotaract Club of Hyderabad East organized a Treasure Hunt called 'Aurum' to raise funds. The treasure hunt was open to the public and anyone could participate. The Rotaractors publicized the event through social networking sites and by putting up approximately 500 posters at different points in Hyderabad. The Hunt ended up including 30 teams of 4 to 5 people each and lasted three hours. The main sponsor of the event was R.S.Brothers and the co-sponsor was Mitsubishi Raima Motors. The event was also covered by Hyderabad's local news channel TV9. Varunya says "we were pleased that we succeeded in spreading the message that everyone can help to make a difference".



Rotaractors at their fundraiser

Local Engineering Students

Another group comprised of local engineering students from Hyderabad held an all day outing of games and cultural programs for the Agape children. Some of the activities included cricket, a drawing contest, an essay contest,

Kho Kho, Carims and traditional dance & skits. They also presented the children with 50 new trunk boxes. Each Agape child has a trunk box measuring 1'x1.75' which they use to store their belongings at the Agape homes. These boxes hold their clothes, and their special treasures. Many hold the treasured letters and gifts that the children have received for holidays or from their sponsors.



Dr. Ratnam Voggu receives the new trunk boxes



Agape kids at the function

Agape International



Agape children Navya and Sai, pictured with their late mother, were rescued from a roadside slum, very similar to those pictured in Slumdog Millionaire.

Get Involved

BRING YOUR FRIENDS TO SPECIAL AGAPE SCREENING OF SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE!

We've rented an entire theater at West Newton Cinema, 1296 Washington St, West Newton on Thursday evening, May 14th at 7:00. We'll be serving light Indian appetizers (and movie food will also be available).

Tickets are \$15 each – please contact Kim at kim@agapeintl.org to reserve your tickets.

We will briefly present Agape's work at the end of the film. This is a great, entertaining and low cost way to introduce your friends to Agape.

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