

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.

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



Elizabeth with sisters Manasa & Yamini.