

EHA CANADA JANUARY 2012

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This letter comes to thank you for your faithful support over the past year. Your tax receipt is enclosed. I would also like to tell you of our visit to India for which many of you prayed. Every trip to India is an adventure. Kaleidoscopic images, brilliant colors, cascading emotions, pungent aromas, sounds both melodious and cacophonous - a feast (or a shock) for every sense. You are subject to overwhelming situations, impossible traffic and teeming crowds. You feel pulled in every direction, stretched in every way. Life in all its rawness is lived out on the streets. But there is a hidden India; there are diamonds in the rough. You have to seek them out, though sometimes they come upon you unawares.

“Thank you, Uncle”

At a luggage carousel at the Raipur airport, a young mother was balancing her toddler on her hip and so I helped her with her bags. She smiled up at me and said. “Thank you, uncle”. This is the grace, the charm, the gentleness of India, the courtesy, the deference to elders – it made my day.

Champa Hospital – an oasis of care - We got on our way, negotiated a chaotic traffic scene in Raipur and inched our way towards Champa. The pot holed Indian roads are chock a block full of every type of vehicle – buses bursting with people, three wheelers spewing diesel fumes, two wheelers with whole families precariously perched, bullock carts languidly rumbling by, tractors piled high with bales of cotton, trucks tipping over with over laden goods - all merrily honking along. You might pass a herd of goats, a flock of geese, stray dogs basking in the sun in the middle of the road, a posse of water buffaloes serenely crossing the highway, defying the traffic, ubiquitous cows nonchalantly chewing the cud and chickens scurrying out of danger. If you are lucky, you might spot stately camels, elephants laboriously stomping along and men riding horses or donkeys – all using the highway and why not? - India is a democracy and more than a democracy. Finally we arrived at the hospital and in stark contrast to the comedy and mayhem outside –we found an oasis. An oasis with well tended grounds, beautiful flowers and lush trees, but also a spiritual oasis exuding an atmosphere of quiet, of care and of selfless service. A place where the staff gathers every morning to sing praises to God, hear from His word and seek His blessing for the sick in their charge. I was reminded of these words from a well-known hymn:

“And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of thy peace.”

In the Upper Room

From the hospital we went to a village church. A few years ago, Mr. S. Hansraj had a chance encounter on a train with one of the Champa doctors. This conversation triggered a series of events culminating in the young man coming to faith. Soon the rest of his family was baptized and they started a house church, fittingly, in the upper room of their house. We ducked under the lintel of the door and walked up a narrow flight of

stairs into a sparse upper room to join an overflowing congregation seated on the floor, singing praises to Jesus. I spoke on the love of God the Father. A bit of heaven in an unlikely spot on earth.



**Abe and Leela
with the
Hansraj family
in the upper
room.**

Not to be served, but to serve

Back at the hospital, we had a delicious meal with Samuel and Elizabeth a young doctor couple. They told us that they had just moved from Mussoorie. Mussoorie is a much sought after location because of its Himalayan charm, its pristine beauty, its equable climate and its genteel culture. The



EHA hospital here has new buildings and modern equipment. Samuel and Elizabeth liked their colleagues and, in fact, enjoyed the unhurried pace of work. Their children were attending a world class International school. Things were going well. But they were restless. They had felt called to serve in turbulent North India and this was too tame. So they moved to Champa- in the hinterland, poorly serviced by road and with few amenities. The hospital, built in the 1920s by Mennonite missionaries from the US and Canada was crumbling with leaking roofs and dusty moldy rooms. The little equipment they have is out dated and they need more staff. But we did not hear a word of complaint from them. They had come to serve and they did this cheerfully. They were both on call 24/7. So much for life/work balance.

“They’ve learned to do with so little”

We went further south to the village of Muranpur. The taxi driver grumbled about the roads that were not really roads - and charged us a premium for he feared for his struts and brakes and tires. Gladys and Shadrach Peters run a school, a vocational training institute and a hostel for poor children. EHA Canada provided funds to build the hostel. The children sleep on the floor on mats, have only one extra set of clothes and their trunks contained precious little of this world’s goods. Gladys told us, “They have learned to do with so little”. And yet when we quizzed these eager children about their ambitions, they perked up and reamed off a number of professions – nurse, doctor, teacher, policeman...” The project is rightly named “Neerkshe” which means, “hope”.



Dedication of the Hostel Building funded by EHA Canada.

Hostel children with the Cappello family.



EHA's India

And so, amid the chaos, the milling crowds, the challenging smells and the suffocating smog, among people with tragically preventable illnesses and abject poverty, hope springs up. We saw make shift schools, vocational training institutes in sheds, expert and compassionate medical care given in decrepit buildings and heard church planters giving effusive reports of people coming to faith – all in a society that seems to be coming apart at the seams. We witnessed how servants of the poor were making a difference to desperate lives. This is the other India – the hidden India far from the five star hotels, the gleaming malls, the gracious villas and corporate offices of glass and steel.

This is the India where hope springs eternal as we claim the promise of YHWH, **“Yes, I know what plans I have in mind for you, plans for peace, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope”**: (Jer. 29.11) This is EHA's India. **This is the India to which you contribute.** With a favorable exchange rate (about Rs. 50 for one Canadian dollar), our low overheads and the judiciously meager expectations and requirements of those you help, your dollar goes a long way. **Thank you.**

Completed projects in 2011

- Water Tower for Jagdeeshpur
- Equipment for Makunda Hospital

Current EHA Canada projects

- Community Rehabilitation Project, Raxaul
- Shalom AIDS hospital in Delhi
- Anugrah project in Herbertpur
- Palliative Care project in Lalitpur
- Capacity Building for Duncan Nursing School
- Medical Equipment for Duncan Hospital
- Roshini Development project in Raxaul
- Prem Jyoti Malto Health project
- Hostel for children at the Neerekshe
- Gerri Carroll Feeding center
- Missionary Upholders' Trust –Retreat Center

New Projects

- Equipment and Renovations in Champa
- Capacity Building - Nursing School at Chhatarpur

For details on the hospitals/community health projects please visit our website. www.eha-health.org

VOLUNTEERING IN INDIA

Saskatoon based nurses, Karen Chan and Tamara, Adams, joined Abe and Leela Ninan on their missions trip. They volunteered in EHA hospitals. Here is Tamara's report:

My time in India was one of excitement, adventure and beauty. I worked at CIHSR (Christian Institute of Health Sciences and Research) in Nagaland in the remote North East. CIHSR aims to develop leaders and provide quality health care. The hard working team and their faith-based practice impressed me. I was immersed in the Christian ethos that is actively cultivated in the hospital. The day begins with worship, sharing the Word and intercession. There are also Bible studies throughout the week. The care that the staff provides combines sound practice and integrity. My fondest memories consist of working alongside the nursing team, helping people for whom this hospital was the only source of health care. I found it beautiful that the family is very involved in the whole medical process. We in Canada can learn from this.

I also taught at the Nursing College. The instructors work long hours. They foster a healthy learning environment and students are instructed in sound medical and nursing practice and are encouraged to ask questions. I offered scenario based maternity situations and had the students' problem solve. They did extremely well.

I was very impressed with the Christian culture fostered by the staff, the expert care they provide and the high level of nursing education. I feel blessed to have had this opportunity to serve in India and I hope to be back to volunteer with EHA.



