



Letter from the President

The Patel family spends Christmas with us, leaving lasting memories and two new bathrooms!

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Letter from the President

December was a great month! Many of you used the opportunity to share Rising Star Outreach with your friends and family by sending them gifts from our Christmas List. This list is great because it provides essentials like rice and fruit for the children, capital for microbusinesses, and extras like uniforms for the soccer teams. It all adds up to help us extend the blessings of Rising Star to many more people. We got several emails from recipients thanking us for making their Christmas one that made a difference in the world and helped to bring "good will to men." Thank you!!

The other exciting news in December was the opening of the Chris & Jessica Harrison Volunteer Guest House. This beautiful new home on our campus is a little different from the other homes. This home is for all the visitors that come to Rising Star to give of themselves to volunteer. Their help enables us to provide meaningful help to the children as we tutor them in English, and a valuable connection to the patients in the leprosy colonies.



Christening the home as its first volunteer group was the Patel family from Laguna Beach, California. 39 members of the family spent a week during their Christmas vacation, foregoing all the normal Christmas festivities at home, and instead traveling half-way around the world to serve people affected by leprosy. They brought true holiday joy and cheer to the families served by Rising Star.

As their Christmas gift to the Bharathapuram Colony, the

Patel families built two new bathrooms. Bathrooms, a Christmas gift?? This is a colony that has seen their only place for this purpose, disappear. The land across the road, which previously has been used by the colonists as their "outdoor bathroom", was purchased by a developer and turned into a subdivision. Aaaaah! Life gets tough fairly quickly when you no longer have a place to use the bathroom! It was especially challenging for the crippled patients who have lost feet or legs and cannot travel long distances each time they need to use the bathroom.

It turned out to be a Merry Christmas for all as the new bathrooms were completed! While not very glitzy, it was a



valuable Christmas gift, one that went a long ways to bless the lives of some of God's forgotten children. The project created a Christmas that will long be remembered by both patients and volunteers as a special one.

The children got to spend the Christmas holidays with their parents and family, but now are all headed back to Rising Star to start the second semester. They are excited, and we're definitely excited to have them return with all their energy and enthusiasm! We can all tell that 2010's going to be an awesome year at Rising Star!

Becky Douglas

Notes From The Field *Ron & Joyce Hanson*

December saw a momentous thing occur: The first of the three buildings we have been building on campus was 95% completed--enough so that the 39 members of the Patel family were able to inaugurate it with their visit before Christmas. There were a few minor hitches, but for the most part it worked well as a volunteer hostel that will house hundreds of volunteers in the years to come. It was so fun to watch the faces of the Patels as they examined their living quarters for the few days they would be with us. I think they were very pleasantly surprised!

On Christmas Eve day the parents and family members of the children were fed a wonderful lunch. They also had time to visit with the teachers to get the end of term reports. One exciting thing was that the 4th standard boys, coached by the new house father, had almost a perfect record of pass scores. That was an accomplishment! Math is a struggle for most of the children.

Ron and Joyce returned home to family gatherings, and while being so happy to be home, we realized again that the 170 students we left in India traveled with us in our hearts. We will be back to India, very soon.



Volunteer Program **The Summer 2010** **Volunteer Session dates are:**

Session 1: May 24-June 11 -
Regular Session

Session 2: June 14-June 19 -
Special Session for Families

Session 3: June 21-July 5 -
Regular Session

Session 4: July 12-July 30 -
Regular Session

Session 5: August 2-August 9 -
Special Session for Dental and Medical professionals and their families

Session 6: August 11-August 27 -
Regular Session

We need your help! Spots are filling up quickly for our summer volunteer sessions, so please fill out an application at:

risingstaroutreach.org/volunteerinindia

Meet The Dennings

Butterflies flutter in my stomach as I attempt to prepare quesadillas for my four



little hungry children (ages 7, 5, 4, and 3). I'm almost shaking with anticipation. I realize that this is one of those moments that alters the course of your life. "Two roads diverge," which one will we be taking?

We had been waiting for two days for 'the call.' Every time the phone rang my heart would skip a beat- maybe this is it. Now it had finally come, and my husband, Greg, is talking out on the porch



(where there is better reception and less 'kid' noise), while I await eagerly inside to hear the news of our possible new adventure.

Just two months ago, in September, we had moved to Georgia from the Dominican Republic, where we had orchestrated a literacy project. We had heard how great the DR was while living in Costa Rica two years previously.

Natives of Utah, we had an extended layover in Atlanta on our way to the DR, and had been impressed with the area. So when it was time to head back to the U.S., we were inspired to move to the Peach State, eager to see what course our life would take next.

It was soon after our relocation that we were directed to Becky Douglas, President of Rising Star Outreach. From our first conversation, we knew

this opportunity was right up our alley—living abroad and humanitarian work—we couldn't imagine a more perfect scenario.

Now at our home in Kennesaw, GA, I try to concentrate on the quesadillas, but my mind continues to wander and wonder. I can't wait any longer, so I peek out the porch window. I can tell by Greg's tone that the news is good and that we're going, but I go back to my quesadillas and play innocent.

Greg returns a few moments later, and celebrates with a whoop. "We're in! We're moving to India!" He envelops me in his arms and lifts me into the air. I'm almost stunned, I can't believe it's for real. Then the excitement wells up inside and overflows in an ear to ear grin.

The Dennings personal adventures can be followed at:

www.discovershareinspire.com

Hello from India!

Steele & Sarah Hendershot

What a memorable and exciting Christmas we had in India this year! First, the Patel family arrived five days before Christmas and we were able to get to know them and feel of their humanitarian spirit and the love they have for the people of India. Then the day before Christmas, we put on a Christmas celebration program for the children and their families that we will never forget!

First, Radhika (the new principle at the Peery Matriculation School) put on a show with her traditional Indian dancing which was picture perfect! The children



then took to the stage and danced several traditional Indian dances starting with the kindergarten students and finishing with the older students. Next, several of the Patel family girls entertained us all with a rendition of Jai Ho, from the popular movie "Slumdog Millionaire" which was very well done and a great surprise. Sarah then directed a reenactment of The Nativity, while the "Girls Choir" sang beautiful Christmas songs like "Silent Night".

The mix of Traditional and Bollywood style dancing followed by The Nativity was something we will always remember. This was truly the best Christmas Pageant ever!

Having the Patel family here doing service all week was a great way to see the true Spirit of Christmas in action. The Patels didn't leave until 6pm Christmas Eve. and our oldest son Cole was a little concerned that we would not have time for our regular family Christmas Eve traditions before going to bed that night, but as we walked home from the volunteer house to our home, we talked about all the neat experiences that occurred during the week and I think he realized that this is what Christ-



mas is all about. Part of the reason he came to this understanding was because we had just spent the last hour or so listening to the Patel family share their experiences which they recorded in their journals during the week. Many of the family members were in tears as we talked about how much we have as Americans and how much more we can do to help others and become better people. One of the stories was especially touching. One of the Patel family groups had just finished doing medical work for the day at a leprosy colony and decided to go for a walk through a village nearby. As they were walking, they passed a poor old lady and

noticed she wanted them to come closer. They naturally thought that maybe she wanted one of their water bottles, so they gave her one. But to their surprise she took the water bottle and went to the side of her hut and filled it up and brought it back to them full of water! They were very touched that someone who has so little wanted to offer them something that she thought they needed!

The story was a reminder to us that true happiness comes from serving and helping others whether you're wealthy or poor.

Happy New Year from India!

Child Spotlight

This little boy is in need of a sponsor. Would you consider sponsoring him, or one of the other children still in need? Your love and support means the world to these kids!

Michael X.

Birthday: 11/18/01

Michael traveled all the way from Delhi to join the Rising Star Outreach family. Michael and his older sister Mary are wonderful additions to Rising Star Outreach. On parents day Michael's aunt and uncle come to see and support him considering his parents live far away and they are both excited to spend time with their families. Michael is very smart, inquisitive, and his quiet curiosity matches his calm disposition. Michael is an excellent listener and works well within a group setting. Michael is very polite and is often heard saying "please" and "thank you" to staff and volunteers.

