

WHAT'S NEW

Metrowest Teens Work With Agape Orphans

A team of Metrowest teens from the Vineyard church in Framingham, MA traveled to India this summer to spend almost two weeks working with Agape. The fourteen teens (Hayley Weinhold, Gloria Chase, Hannah Chase, Chrissy Wilkins, Chris Campbell, Danielle Campbell, Victoria Crosby, Ana Keith, Kevin Stark, Dan Cressman, Alex Harcovitz, Stephanie Zakrzewski, Alicia Stoveland and Jeremy Power) and six adults (Shawn and Jenna Stepp, Susan Norcross, Tim Barrette, Patsun Chiang and Jonathan Cressman) spent the majority of their time working and playing with the Agape orphans. Prior to their arrival, we had a tremendous influx of kids – we added forty new children in less than a month. Many of the new children arrive traumatized – in most cases, their last surviving parent has recently died – and they are alone and afraid. The availability of twenty “temporary staff” to provide hands on attention and love was invaluable. We will share some of the teens’ stories (in their own words) about their experience and the Agape kids they met over the next couple of newsletters.

Hayley Weinhold, Ashland HS Senior

Before I went to India, I wasn't sure if I would like it. But, my heart was stolen by these precious children and there is no other place I would choose for it to be! The trip has changed my life and I can't wait to go back. I think about the kids all the time.



Hayley holds Khajal, age 5. Khajal is HIV positive

I am certain that there is no better place for these kids to be. They are given all they need – as much food as they want, daily showers, toothbrushes, and medicine. Lynne, Ratnam and the staff love these children like their own. We visited a slum to do a medical clinic and Lynne said a couple of kids from the orphanage were from that exact slum; it was heartbreaking. It was a huge trash dump where families had fashioned a tent out of garbage. To know that the Agape kids are now safe and cared for made me want to cry from joy, but to know there are still children living like that fills me with sorrow.



“Kevin makes the kids laugh by performing skits.”

Kevin Stark, Natick HS Senior

While at the orphanage, I was deeply impacted by the beauty and individuality of each one of the kids there. Bhadraji is athletic, funny and bright. His smile is one of the best things ever! Also, when he played khobadi, he was the best tackler on the team (better than me!). When I saw him playing that game, and thinking about it now, I am sad because he deserves a father to say “that’s my boy” when he dominates. I am grateful that Lynne and Ratnam and the staff are there to laugh at his jokes and be proud of his achievements. That is so huge.

Srinu was just a cute kid. He clung to me the majority of the time. Looking into his eyes, you could see that he needed a father to hold him and a mother to love him. So I held him, a lot. He didn't smile much, but that's just the way he is. When I heard he was HIV positive, I was crushed. I pray that he becomes a fighter of this disease and never gives in to it. It was great to love him as much as I could, hold him, and given him the sense of security that a child needs.

“What the world needs now is love, sweet love.”

- Burt Bachrach