



PO Box 751
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look after orphans ... in their distress ... James 1:27

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An update from Executive Director Jan Swensen

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Our Children are Graduating

Ten and a half years ago 75 destitute little children came to Angels' Place. They had little schooling, poor nutrition, few clothes and no possessions. Those kids have grown up. They look good and healthy. They have studied in a private school where they have learned many subjects that will help them make their way as mature adults. Eight year olds are now 18 and 19. We have prayed over them, worried over them, and now we must watch them graduate from our little sanctuary that is Angels' Place.

We have great news about the school performances of many of our kids, but, as expected, not all of our students love school and do not wish to continue their education. Schools in India only go through tenth grade. If a student wants to continue beyond he or she must pass the state exam which about half achieve.

Eight of ours, six boys and two girls, have passed all classes through class twelve and are eligible to attend college. Three already attend college. The other five hope to enroll soon. Additionally, another three boys and a girl have completed all but one course needed to pass class twelve, and, when they pass the re-test, they plan to either join the army or continue their education.

Of course, not all of our children will go on to college. We have tried as hard as possible to prepare them all for adulthood, either with advanced schooling or in a vocation. We are delighted to see so many go on to college, but for those who do not we counsel on employable skills and on skills of where and how to seek employment. In India, the government does the most hiring of youngsters, so we especially counsel them on securing work in the public sector.

Four of our girls have reached the conclusion of their education and have elected to leave to seek their way outside our campus. Tinneimawi, the very first child to come to us, Awarnei, Nengkho and Niangnunvung have all grown up. They have been with us for ten years. We and their sponsors will miss them, and we worry and pray for them. It is their time to guide their own lives. These four did not want to go further in school, but they have all succeeded. They are young women who have learned life skills including cooking, sewing, cleaning, washing, and they all speak English, all skills that will enable them to support themselves. To quote one of them who wrote to her sponsors: "Thank you for supporting me when I came to Angels' Place. I was 7 years old then. Now I am 17. I am not good in studies. That's why I left Angels' Place. But I have learned English, tailoring and God's love during my stay. These will see me through in life. Do not worry about me. I am safe and sound. I am now big enough to take care of myself. Maybe I will soon settle down in life. Who knows! Once again thank you very much for your selfless support all these years." As she thanks her sponsors, we also thank them. Their investments in these girls have produced precious results. We are sad to see them leave, but thank God that they have grown up so well. This is an inevitable result of our work. We must learn to get used to this every year. As these four leave they have created space for four young, new girls from our long waiting list to come to us. The new girls will have numbers 240 through 243. That's how many children have come to Angels' Place.



Thuamneihching, one of our new graduates who will join the Indian army in order to further her education in college. She came to us over ten years ago after losing both parents and after fleeing for her life when her village and home were burned by a rival tribe. She has done very well at Angels' Place.

Four New Girls

We have four new girls at our home. They are (left to right) Chinlunmawi, Lianlalnem, Niangmalsawm and Neininloi. They all need the love, care, education, nourishment and nurture we give at Angels' Place. We look forward to seeing them grow and progress in the coming months.



Breaking News

Violent protests have erupted in Churachandpur near Angels' Place resulting in at least nine deaths and destruction of property. Our children are safe, but the government has closed the roads and stores resulting in difficulty in getting our necessary supplies of food. We will update this news by email and on our web site. If you wish to receive the breaking news please email us at info@jamesconnection.org; put "ADD ME" in the subject line and specify in your message your name so we can add you to our growing email list. This helps to keep you informed while saving money which is better used for helping our kids.



Celebrating Ten Years of Angels' Place



What a spectacular dedication and celebration we had at Angels' Place this past March. We finally finished the large multi-purpose building, and we marked the ten year anniversary since we first admitted children to our orphanage in Churachandpur, India.

560 people jammed into our new auditorium/gymnasium to hear our kids sing and perform. Four singing groups showed their talents. They started with the senior chorus singing "Welcome, welcome" and folk songs, one of which was in Swahili, then continued with the junior chorus, solos and concluded with the chamber choir of the 20 best

singers. In between songs the girls performed traditional dances and songs telling the history of Manipur, and the boys break danced, cart wheeled and flipped like gymnasts.

The whole event went so well that the audience begged for an encore of the senior and chamber groups. The kids got it all together with only three days of rehearsal under the talented leadership of Sarah Burnell, our outstanding music teacher and choir director from Montreal, Canada.

We describe the new building as large because it is and it holds so many rooms and has so many functions. The first floor has half of the girls' dormitory, bathing facilities, the dining hall, kitchen, infirmary, storage rooms and the new cook's residence. The second floor holds the other half of the girls' dormitory, more bathing facilities, a suite of rooms with kitchenette for visitors, a music studio, library and study areas. The third floor holds a large auditorium with a stage and dressing/rehearsal space and porches on three sides. The auditorium will double as a play room that is big enough to be called a gymnasium. We dedicated it all with many prayers of thanksgiving.

The kids love it. They now have space to play when the monsoons come and a place to study other than their beds and a crowded library.

We have been greatly blessed with contributions from all over the US to help us pay for the new construction. Attendees expressed awe at how far we have come. "Miraculous" was a word frequently used.

Celebration Extends to the United States

While we celebrated in India we also celebrated in America with a donor appreciation dinner in Pittsburgh. 160 workers and supporters of the James Connection were treated not only to dinner but vast displays of the art and compositions by the kids plus their pictures and biographies. The displays took up numerous rooms allowing the donors to browse among the displays. The entertainment included the Sojourners from Ohio Valley University and videos of four singing groups from Angels' Place. Our own Robin Boysel and her team put together a wonderful celebration of the blessings this work has received.



Success Story: Somi

Ching Mal Sawm just turned 18. Her friends call her Somi (So Me). She has accomplished much in her young life. When she was just eight living with an aunt she demonstrated a quick intelligence that was not nurtured at the poor state schools. Her aunt heard about Angels' Place and its emphasis on education, so she packed up Somi and traveled the 300 kilometers from Assam to Churachandpur to apply for admission of Somi to Angels' Place. Since then Somi has excelled at school and at Angels' Place. She has taken on many responsibilities to help the staff at the orphanage. She does office work, cooks and cares for visitors and

supervises and teaches youngsters. She has learned how to operate all of the six sewing machines and teaches others how to use them and has assumed the duties of supervising the children working on them to make their own clothes. She has often

lobbied the staff to acquire more machines for the kids to use and frequently makes other suggestions to the staff. She is always thinking of ways to make Angels' Place nicer. She plays badminton, sings in the choir and performs the cultural dances of her tribe and heritage.

Because of her lack of financial support she lost a year of school before she came to Angels' Place. Her aunt could not even afford pencils and paper. But once given the opportunity to go to a good school, she has seized it. She has good grades and easily passed the state required examination to allow her to go on to classes 11 and 12. She has been admitted to Rayburn College where she will complete class 12 next year. This will qualify her to be admitted to a university. She knows what she wants to do then. She wants to go to college at Tata Institute in Mumbai to secure a masters degree in social work. When asked why she wants to do this she replied "to help people." She speaks such good English and is so charming, you would love to sit and talk to her. She is just as sweet as she looks. She elected to become a Christian in October 2009. The staff at Angels' Place is very proud of her.

Success Story: Tawn Sang Khum

The first thing you notice about Tawn Sang

Khum is that at about six feet he is easily the tallest boy at Angels' Place. He has grown up strong and healthy. He has very good posture and presents as an athletic young man who has turned 19. His looks are not deceiving. He is one the best soccer players for the varsity team and also plays volley ball. Tawn has taken good advantage of the academic opportunities at Angels' Place. He is smart. He passed the state examination to go on from class ten to class eleven and then class twelve at Rayburn College. (Only about 50% in the state pass this exam.) He has excelled at Rayburn and has passed all exams required for his graduation from class twelve.

Tawn also has enrolled in the National Cadet Corps that is comparable to our high school ROTC. He has excelled at that as well so much that he was chosen as the only boy in Churachandpur Corps to march in the 2014 Indian Republic Day parade in New Delhi. This was a terrific honor, and the local newspapers published his picture for the occasion.

Tawn knows what he wants to do after his coming graduation. He will join the Indian army and make that his career. If you ask him why he has chosen this career, he will tell you he wants to serve his country. The Indian army will be lucky to have him.

