

September 2012



India Rural Evangelical Fellowship

PO Box 65
White Lake,
WI 54491-0065

IREF Info Line:
p 847.220.IREF (4733)
f 847.680.4270

Visit us on the web:
www.irefusa.org

Send us an email:
info@irefusa.org

Hope is alive! Lives are being transformed here at India Rural Evangelical Fellowship (IREF). Children who would otherwise be destined to a life of poverty are being given the tools to change that pattern. They're being given a foundation of faith and a mind of knowledge, inside and outside the classroom. They're getting an education that is a crucial component in breaking the cycle of poverty that has afflicted their families for generations.

No longer must they be resigned to their place on the bottom of the social ladder. They're being empowered by the education they receive. They're being given hope for a new pattern, for aspirations they never knew were possible.

But they're not alone.

IREF's mission of cultural change extends to those all around them – in the rural villages and overlooked places here in southern India. The presence of Christ changes lives, and IREF is doing all it can to bring that spirit of Christ to as many people as possible. Armed with a message of equality, love and hope, IREF is changing lives outside the school system as well.

While the population of the India is just over 1.2 billion, 40%



IREF's 1st Annual Golf Outing August 18 was the first annual IREF golf outing at the Antioch Golf Club in Illinois. The day was picture perfect. We thank you dear friends of IREF for coming out and enjoying the day with us. Craig Darling, IREF US Director, shared an update of the ministry with those in attendance over dinner. Pastor Brandon Smith of Village Church of Gurnee (who was on this year's pastoral team to IREF) also shared his reflections from his visit to India in January.

Thank you to all who participated and sponsored the first IREF golf outing. Stay tuned for details in coming months for next summer's event!

New Lives in Christ Most young people, who come to study at IREF are from Hindu backgrounds, and would not have heard the truth of Jesus Christ prior to setting foot on our campus. But here the spiritual atmosphere is deep with offerings of daily devotions, scripture reading, Bible messages and Gospel meetings, which transform many. Hearing the messages delivered every week at the IREF church, many students repent of their sins and accept Jesus Christ as their personal savior and Lord, and ultimately are baptized.

The 2012-13 school year has brought hundreds of new students to IREF who are hearing the Gospel for the first time in their lives. You can see the Light shining through in these kids' eyes. They are seeing the world in new and exciting ways. The Spirit is moving through IREF and lives are truly changing!

of those people are living in poverty - the walking-barefoot-and-living-in-a-mud hut-with-a-palm-branch-roof-and-dirt-floors poverty of the Majority World. They're living below the international poverty line of \$1.25 a day. This is the reality for nearly half-a-billion people here in India.

This is also the reality for every child that enters the doors of IREF. Every single one of the kids that walks through the gates of the school's campus is coming from poverty. This stipulation is a vital component of the larger mission here at IREF, and Scripture is the reason why.



Not only are we called to provide refuge for the poor, the orphans and the "fatherless," but we're also called to provide compassion, dignity and equality.

Most students come from rural villages here in southern India, where dirt floors and palm-leaf roofs are the norm. The education provided to the kids around here is crucial to that mandate. The old cliché holds true – knowledge is power! And these kids are being given something they couldn't get anywhere else... **hope for a better future, opportunity for more and most importantly, a foundation of faith.**

Stephen Crane, World Next Door
to read more of Stephen's journey to IREF visit worldnextdoor.org/tag/iref/

Last week 38 young people were baptized despite heavy rains. When asked if baptisms should be rescheduled to a later date when the weather would be more cooperative, the students asked for not a day to go to waste. They were anxious and ready to start their new lives in Christ. Praise God for the zeal of these new believers. All 38 students were from Hindu tribal backgrounds and each was given a new Christian name to representing the Hindu heritage left behind and the embracing of his/her new identity in Christ.

The seeds are being scattered far and wide, and from these seeds, the harvest is sure to grow. Please continue to keep IREF in your daily prayers as we faithfully serve the Lord in reaching the rural villages of South India with the Gospel.