



Holistic Ministry at IREF and Beyond



Last month the medical mission team visited the IREF campus to provide medical care for students and local villagers. The team was a healthy mixture of first-time visitors and returning team members. Eric O'Banion, a pediatrician from Indiana, was grateful for the opportunity to return to IREF for his third medical mission.

"I keep coming back to IREF because of the kids. I see how IREF pulls kids out of poverty and gives them opportunities they otherwise would not have. 'Give a person a fish and they're fed for a day. Teach them to fish and they're fed for a lifetime.' IREF understands the importance of hands-on training for the nursing students, and it is a privilege for me to train and teach them through clinics."

Toby Klint, a nurse practitioner from Sawyer Michigan, was a first-time visitor to IREF. Toby noticed that the

medical team worked well together.

"The Lord brought together a bunch of unique individuals who became a tight family. The bonds created on this trip will last longer than this life." And in great poverty, Toby saw God at work in the village clinics, "During the village clinics, I was greatly encouraged seeing God at work. Caring for the person right in front of us overshadowed the backdrop of intense oppression that could otherwise be quite discouraging."

This year's clinic included triage, pharmacy, nail polishing, and skin treatment for scabies. Between annual check-ups for IREF's students and village clinics, the team treated nearly 1,000 patients! The medical clinics are a great example of IREF's holistic approach to ministry.



India Rural Evangelical Fellowship

PO Box 1332
Park Ridge, IL
60068-7332

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

More than an Architect

Jeff Ring didn't want to come to India. Like many people, he had a small list of countries he simply didn't want to visit, but 27 years ago, all that changed. When Kids Around the World came to IREF to build the playground, Jeff came too—rather begrudgingly. He expected to visit once and never again, but in January 2024, he stepped onto IREF's campus for the sixth time.

Each time he comes, he's put to work—repairing the playground, dorms, the infirmary, and other buildings. As an architect, this is the perfect trip. When he's on campus, he can usually be found with a set of tools, ensuring IREF's buildings will last for years to come.



Today's students don't know the hesitant Jeff who came all those years ago. Instead, he's known as Jeff Uncle. As students return from class, it's a delight to hear them call out his name, waving wildly. And Jeff returns the love just as quickly—a true picture of a proud uncle.



For him, IREF is not a place of coincidence. Just as the Lord brought him 27 years ago, He also brings each child through our gates. While Jeff is at IREF, he spends as many moments as he can loving on the kids, hearing their stories, and taking pictures as they giggle at their kind Jeff Uncle. Loving the kids is priority number one. Getting to build spaces that continue to provide safety to some of India's most vulnerable children is just icing on the cake.

We are so grateful for partners like Jeff who use the gifts God has given them to make this a place of safety for children in rural India, but more than that, we're grateful for the ways Jeff has loved generations of students at IREF.



One year ago we introduced you to Moksha. In her 2022 photo, Moksha has a quiet, beautiful smile—one that doesn't draw too much attention to herself. Yet, today, she radiates a kind of joy that can only come from Jesus.



Like many students on campus, Moksha carries a heavy story, filled with tragedy after tragedy. Her father took his own life when she was two years old, and her mother moved to another area, leaving her with her grandparents. To make things more difficult, her grandmother died and

her grandfather is an alcoholic. Moksha has known so much pain in her family, and when she first came to IREF, this pain was obvious.

But God is in the business of restoring and redeeming our stories. At IREF, Moksha heard about Jesus for the first time. She was immediately drawn to His love, His forgiveness, and His grace. As the enemy tried to set the course of Moksha's life, the Lord had a different plan.

Her entire family are devoted Hindus, worshipping the

god of prosperity. Moksha, though, is worshipping the one true God! This January, following the Youth Conference, Moksha made the bold choice to be baptized. When we asked her if she's told her mom about this, she quietly shook her head, her smile fading a bit.

In the U.S., we cheer wildly when anyone is baptized. In India, baptism is more layered than we could ever imagine. It's a public declaration of Moksha's faith, but it also means being ostracized by her family, village, and country. Students do not take the decision to be baptized lightly, and when they do, our celebration is filled with prayers for strength, endurance, and protection.

We are so proud of Moksha and the many other students who chose to be baptized after the youth conference. Would you join us in praying for them as they seek to follow Jesus in a nation that does everything it can to stop them.



IREF TOGETHER

Save the date for IREF together—Saturday, April 13 at 10 AM central time. This event is the perfect way to gather people in your home to learn about IREF and see what God is doing on campus and beyond our walls. This year, we're championing our incredible teachers who do more than simply educate our students. They care for them holistically and help form them into the men and women they are today. We're so excited to see what God will do, and we hope you can join us.

Prayer Requests

- **Students' Exams:** Please join us in praying for students as they prepare for exams in March. These exams are especially important for those in 10th grade, as the exam results will determine whether they can go on to junior college.
- **Rest and Recovery for the Rebba Family:** The Rebba family has experienced a marathon of hosting teams for over a month. Please pray for rest and recovery as they settle back into life and ministry at IREF.

Stay Connected

Do you struggle to find us on social media? Due to persecution in India, our Facebook and Instagram pages are private. Join our group or follow us for updates and ways you can pray for the ministry and events occurring in India. Scan the QR code to the right to stay connected.

