



What's that in your hand?

In Exodus 4:2, the Lord asks Moses a rather obvious question—What's that in your hand? Did the Lord not know? Could He not see the shepherd's staff in Moses' hand? Of course He did. But did Moses?

In 2012, Karen Gray was seeking more ways to serve in ministry, but she had no idea what that could look like. As an insurance agent from Michigan, she wondered what she had to offer. What was in her hand?



After she heard IREF's former director share about the ministry at her church, she couldn't ignore that still small voice that called her to learn more. During a series of divinely appointed conversations, she finally told Craig she liked to cook.

"I have no idea why I said that," Karen remembered. "I didn't even know lay people could come to IREF. It was just the first thing that came to my head."

It was decided: Karen was going to India as the team cook.

She first traveled in 2013 with the medical team and balanced her time prepping patients and prepping meals. And in nearly 10 years, she's served our teams over 500 meals. More than that, though, Karen has invested deeply in the girls who cook with her. Some years, their common language is low, and they all struggle to communicate. Other times, they develop a shorthand in the kitchen as each girl works closely with Karen, dying to learn a little more from her.



Today, Karen is the hands and feet of Jesus in a way she never could have imagined in 2012. Many of the girls come from broken families or don't experience tender, compassionate love from their parents. In her own way, Karen cares for the girls she teaches and works with. Every time one of the house girls graduates or moves on from IREF, their goodbye is filled with tears and sorrow—a true mark of the love shared between them.

This woman who once wondered what she could possibly offer has now impacted the lives of students for almost 10 years. What's in her hand? A whole lot of love, ample patience, and at least one pan of cheesecake.



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

SAVE THE DATE for IREF's 12th annual Illinois Golf Outing on Saturday, August 10, 2024 at Bonnie Brook Golf Course. Save 20% with the early bird discount until July 1. Last year, the Golf Outing sold out, so don't miss your chance to join us!

Register today at irefusa.org/golf.





Susanna's village is known for a few things: the lack of discipline, the lack of education, and the number of children who have to work. After her father died when she was only two years old, it seemed like Susanna would have to experience at least two of those three. Yet, between the help of her extended family and her mom's work as a tailor, Susanna has been able to go to school.



The first school she went to was in their village, and it lived up to its reputation. No discipline. Poor education. Susanna's mom wanted more for her daughter, so when a former student told her about IREF, she jumped at the chance to send her. She knew Susanna would be safe and receive a good education here.

In her village, most people do cement or field work, and because of poverty, many children are among them. But Susanna is different. Her mother sees the long-term benefit of education, and because of this, they both hope she can study at IREF until she graduates from college. Someday, she hopes to be a doctor, so she studies hard, and in her free time, she and her friends play throwball.

Unlike many of the children in her village, Susanna gets to be a kid with needed structure and routine in her life. She gets to receive a great education and grow in her relationship with Jesus. Along with her mom, we too hope Susanna will stay at IREF until she graduates.

You can champion a student like Susanna.



Often, people read stories of IREF students and think to themselves, "No child should have to go through this." Maybe you've thought this or wondered what you can do to help. We can't change the challenges

children face, but *you can* champion, encourage, and walk alongside them by sponsoring them!

Sponsoring a student at IREF also gives you the opportunity to develop a personal relationship with a student on campus. Three times a year, you'll receive updates from him or her, and you'll have the opportunity to send a few of your own.

So far this year, 73 generous individuals have stepped up to care for a child. **Today, only 139 children need a sponsor!** If you would like to sponsor a child for \$35/month, visit irefusa.org/sponsor.



Often, students' roads to graduation is full of challenges. It's easy for them to feel alone, but when you join their story, everything changes. Sponsoring a student reminds them that their not alone or forgotten. They have people all over the world who are cheering them on!



We have a special video for our child sponsors! Please scan the QR code to watch an update from John Rebba.

Prayer Requests

- Pray for nursing students, college students, and 10th grade students as they prepare to take their exams.
- Pray for persecuted Christians across India, especially pastors. Physical attacks on Christians have doubled in the past few years. Pray that God would strengthen believers and give them grace to endure (Romans 5:3).
- Pray for the 58 young adults who have been baptized in 2024. The students will be returning to their villages. Pray, as Paul says in Ephesians 3:17, that "Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith" and "that you would be rooted and established in love..."

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.

