



Hydertales

Missing Home While
Making this Home



University of
Hyderabad 2016

IN THIS ISSUE

Life in Hyderabad.

After the initial shock and discomfort one experiences upon moving to a new country, there are two states of being which seem to become rather constant: missing home and making Hyderabad home. No longer is everyone a stranger, nor are the customs so unfamiliar. Every day allows for further settlement into the no-longer-new environment, bringing with it new opportunities for growth, laughter, and learning.

This issue of Hydertales features some photos and short words regarding our experiences and growth thus far, as well as introductions to the remainder of our group.

The photos to the right are as follows (from top to bottom, people in photos listed in order from left to right): Tate, Hela, Jessie, and Marina in Darjeeling | Jessie, Carlo, and Tate on a Sunday Climbers trip | Jessie, Jonah, Hela, Tate, and Carlo at Hyderabad Trails | Jessie, Tate, Carlo, Marina, Hela, and Jonah at Hyderabad Trails | Tate, Carlo, Jessie, Jonah, and Erich enjoying a cooking class in Hyderabad with one of the host moms |

Hello, Again!

Dear Friends,

We miss you, but we're doing well here. Grateful to be soaking in every experience, and extra-grateful to get to do it together.

Most sincerely,

Hyderabaddies



Homestay Experience

by Jonah Zimmerman

My wonderful host family consists of my host mother Rajya Rama who is a professor at the University of Hyderabad, my host father Krishna Prasad and my host brother Pratyush! I asked my host parents a few questions about their experiences hosting students:

How long have the both of you been hosting students?

Rama: Since 2013.

And how many students have you hosted so far?

Prasad: You're the sixth. I think. Sixth or seventh. Seventh maybe.

What made you originally decide on hosting students?

P: To have company for my son Pratyush. They would be the same age group, so they would understand each other.

R: Yeah, the idea is that my son would have company, and also we get to interact with the students and learn more about America, especially American youth.

What do you find most enjoyable about hosting students?

R: Their company! Their company and presence, their interactions with me, and some of the kids are still in



touch with me. In fact, the first one I hosted Melanie, very recently she sent me greetings in Telugu! There's a bond that develops. Maybe their stay is just for a few months, but you get to have a bond with each of them after living with them. And some of them take interest in the Indian food, Indian cooking, Indian culture, so they continue to interact with me even now after a period of time. Overall, it would be the interactions.

How did you first hear about the opportunity to host students?

P: Maduri (who works for CIEE) worked with me for a project in 2008, and she was one of my students who eventually became a family friend, and she had been asking me even before that to host an international student. I was a bit apprehensive how I will be able to accommodate them and all that. But Melanie came, and it all went quite well, I enjoyed the company, so I thought, "Yeah I should continue doing this."

Have students come back to visit after their initial stay?

R: No, nobody has come back yet, but Melanie keeps writing to me, saying she would like to come back. She is still in touch, actually all of them are in touch one way or another, but due to my time constraints, I don't frequent Facebook, but all of them keep in touch on the Facebook.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Name: Jonah Zimmerman
Attends: Grinnell College in Grinnell, IA
Studying: Computer Science
Favorite Yoga



Pose: The one where you lay down on the mat after you're done

What brought him to India? I wanted to have a cultural experience that was intensely different from what I'm accustomed to.

Study Abroad Goals: The goal I most want to accomplish is to move beyond being somewhat of a tourist of Hyderabad, and actually feel like an inhabitant, learning the city, its languages, its cool spots, and its intense, consistently busy, sometimes crazy beauty.

HCHW

Otherwise known as Hyderabad Council on Human Welfare, HCHW was one of a number of places our CIEE students were able to volunteer at throughout the semester. Students had the opportunity to work with children in school, creating and implementing various lesson plans to help teach English and develop other skills. Here are some photos of those experiences!



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Name: Jessie Ackerman

Attends: Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas

Studying: Education and International Studies with a concentration on Asia

Favorite Yoga Pose: Cobra

What brought her to India? I have been to India before and fell in love with the country almost immediately. The past two years I have taken several classes on the history, religions, and philosophies of India. The more I learn about India the more I fall in love with the country. India is an extremely diverse country both religiously, linguistically, and culturally. It has an amazing history starting with one of the oldest known civilizations. There simply is no other history as interesting as Indian history. So when it came time to picking a place to study abroad I could not pass up on an opportunity to come back to India.

Study Abroad Goals: I really want to improve on my Hindi. Hopefully by the end of the semester I will be able to hold conversation.



Water you gonna do?

People generally seemed to be rather curious about the water situation and how we would be affected while living in India for an entire semester. Here are some accounts from a few of our students in regards to how the water has affected them thus far.

Jessie and Hela playing in the water at a beach in Pondicherry.



Jonah Zimmerman

My first shower here was a surprisingly memorable experience. I am fortunate enough to be staying with such an amazing and accommodating host family during my time in Hyderabad, but when I first met them and interacted with them, I was really nervous; I didn't know if they liked me, if I was being a good guest, if I was engaging with them enough, or too much. So, when I first got the opportunity to take a shower, I step into my bathroom and see that there is a showerhead with a large plastic bucket and a drain underneath it, but no real marked out area for where I should shower, which slightly confused me since there was a toilet in the same room. My mindset in that moment wasn't at its best considering the intense jetlag I was having, and the five-hour midday nap I had taken earlier certainly wasn't helping my feeling of disorientation. I didn't want to ask my host parents about it, fearing I would be looking like some kind of idiot, so of course I jump to what at the time seemed like the most reasonable solution: take a shower in the bucket and try to make sure water didn't end up all over the floor. I had varying degrees of success with this task, and ended up trying to carefully dump all the water that had accumulated in the bucket into the small drain, all the while thinking about how ridiculous this scene must have looked. Afterwards, I asked my host mother if that was what I was supposed to do, which led to both of us laughing at the silly predicament I put myself in. When you're in a new place doing new things, learning to laugh at yourself is invaluable!

Hela Watson

Contrary to the typical aversion towards Hyderabad's heavy rains, I have taken comfort in the routine showers of monsoon season. My two homes, New Orleans and Dublin, are hosts to wet environments where rain is a daily norm. Summers and falls in tropical New Orleans have a similar cyclical monsoon pattern to Hyderabad—torrential showers and flooding in the late afternoon following a humid day with skies of menacing thunderclouds. My other home is in Ireland, a country which owes its emerald land to incessant rainfall. While the rain is not quite as ferocious in Dublin, there is consistently moisture in the air. Thus, the monsoon season in India has not phased me, but eased me. I accept getting drenched and even adore the downpour's ability to remind me of my beloved homes.

Tate Maki Waller

When I began reading different travel blogs and books about India, every text I read warned against drinking the tap water here. I read that maybe, eventually I would be able to brush my teeth without filtered water. Well, I recently decided to take the plunge and begin brushing my teeth with the tap water and so far, my stomach has proved it is up to the task. While this may not seem like a big deal at all, it feels like an important step for me. It feels like a big step towards calling this new place my home. Brushing my teeth with the water has made me feel less like a tourist and more like a resident of this new place.

Carlo Jerome Juntilla

"Don't drink the water, you'll definitely get sick and have to come home." This was something I heard almost everyday from when I first announced I was coming to India, to the day I stepped onto the plane. I remember being offered my first water bottle in India and checking the seal to make sure it wasn't tampered with. My paranoia was real and it was completely irrational. Prior to leaving, I had a preconceived notion that I wouldn't have another clean drink of water for 6 months. I had mentally prepared myself for drinking soda and juice and steering clear of ice cubes for the duration of my trip. I remember feeling like my first offering of drinking water was essentially a death sentence and having to politely say no. I had realized that in this heat, I had to drink water sooner or later and after having my first sip of water I had waited patiently for my imminent spiral into sickness but not getting any symptoms. After a few more thirsty moments and encounters with scary water, I noticed that nothing was going to happen. Though the warnings from friends and family were all well intentioned, they were nonsense. Water is sacred in India. It symbolizes life, rejuvenation and renewal. To think that water could be seen as deadly is not only ludicrous, but in ways disrespectful. So to all the naysayers that were worried about my severe dehydration or typhoid, cheers to drinking water in India!

What is TICULP?

CIEE offers a variety of TICULP classes which aim to further educate study abroad students on Indian cultural traditions. This semester, our students were given the opportunity to take a Henna class, a Tabla class, a Bollywood dance class, and of course yoga.

What is Henna?

Henna, also known as Mehndi, comes from the plant known as *Lawsonia inermis*. It is most famously known for its use in traditional Indian wedding ceremonies, and can be seen on both the bride and groom. Henna is still used by locals and tourists alike in India, as well as by people across the globe, and is a beautiful expression of body art.



Pictured above is an example of a student's artwork in Henna class.

What is Tabla?

A tabla is a traditional Indian instrument! They are actually a pair of hand drums, which the musician plays by hitting different parts of the hand onto the drum in various rhythms to create music. Four of our students enrolled in the tabla class this fall 2016 semester.



Pictured above are the four students with their Tabla professor in the center.

What is Bollywood?

Bollywood actually refers to Indian style films. Many Bollywood films feature numerous dance numbers, and the style of dance seen in these numbers is known as Bollywood dance.



Pictured above are our two Bollywood dance stars giving an impromptu performance for their fans at our Thanksgiving dinner.

What is Yoga?

Yoga is a spiritual experience, and an exercise of the mind, body, and soul. A Hindu tradition, yoga has become widely practiced across the globe. Primarily, it involves learning how to control the breathing and lots of meditation, though it also builds immense physical and strength and flexibility as well.



Pictured above are students with the yoga master.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Name: Marina Rojas

Attends: Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington

Studying: Sociology and Criminal Justice

Favorite Yoga Pose: All of them, duh!

What brought her to India? I felt like I would find countless opportunities for growth and reflection in India. I wanted to experience living in a culture that forced me to confront realities that simply do not exist in the States, and to be uncomfortable so often that I was forced to address it, rather than turn away from it.

Study Abroad Goals: I would really love to be more confident in myself after this experience. I struggle a lot with that, and I hope that the obstacles and opportunities I encounter here on this trip will help me on my journey. I hope that throughout my time here in Hyderabad, I will be able to build relationships and form genuine connections with the people that I meet.

Additionally, it would be wonderful to explore the NGO volunteer options extended to us through CIEE, because I would love to work with NGOs in the future as well. Particularly with children in the education field.

Thank you for reading!

CIEE Hyderabad Fall 2016