

Harita Baxi, '07

Jaipur, Rajasthan



A new family: My brother, Parth, along with Anjana Aunty and Bhagyshree

This past summer, my brother Parth and I spent six weeks volunteering at the Ananda Marga Children's Home (Orphanage) and the Ananda Marga Primary School located in Jaipur, Rajasthan. The Ananda Marga Children's Home (Orphanage) and the Ananda Marga Primary School are located in one building on the outskirts of the city of Jaipur. There are currently 12 young orphaned girls who live there, and roughly 30 children who attend primary school there from Monday thru Saturday. The young girls are taught to care for themselves. They wake up at 5 in the morning to pray, get ready, cook, and attend school (for those who are lucky enough). At the moment, the orphans rely solely on donations from the community, who can only afford so much themselves.



Selflessness: These sanyassis, or missionary workers, embody this word as they give to these young orphaned girls, and treat each one as their own

The Ananda Marga philosophy, literally meaning the “path of bliss,” is characterized by its emphasis on service to humanity, irregardless of caste, wealth, or religion. One of its many social services is that of instituting and overseeing Children’s Homes, which are actually orphanages. Although education is highly valued in this philosophy, there are simply not enough funds to formally educate every child. Ironically, education is the key to overcoming their impoverished lifestyles.



Primary School students: Shakshi, Sunil, Muskan

I specifically traveled to India to teach English and Mathematics to the young orphaned girls. However, through the extensive presence that I had in their lives, my relationship with these children surpassed that between a teacher and her students. As the children felt more comfortable around me, I was exposed to the harsh reality of their lifestyles. The personal time I have spent with these young girls has inspired me. They have shown me that the absence of even the most important, irreplaceable component of their lives, their parents, has not slowed them down. They have goals. They have dreams. They have potential.



*(Top): Early mornings: These girls were always up and ready to learn
(Bottom): Thirst for knowledge: They would work until they could write no more, always begging for more*