

November 2023



# QUÉ PASA

What's Happening

A Publication of International Children's Care  
P.O. Box 820610 Vancouver, WA 98682-0013

(360) 573-0429 • (800) 422-7729  
VISIT OUR WEBSITE [ForHisKids.org](http://ForHisKids.org)

## BLESSINGS RETURNED



Karunakar, a former ICC child in India, revisits DEWS Sweet Home to share his testimony with the children.

**“Dhanyavaad” (Hindi)**  
**“Asante” (Swahili)**  
**“Gracias” (Spanish)**

From our children and staff, thank you for your generous support!

**“This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.” (2 Cor. 9:12 NIV)**

Last month, we mentioned Karunakar, whose life was forever changed after coming to DEWS Sweet Home Children's Village in India. You may recall that Karunakar completed his bachelor's degree in nursing and soon after spent many months back at Sweet Home, tending to

the children's medical needs. We are now delighted to share Karunakar's story with you that it may be a blessing and testimony of what your love and support can do.



### Karunakar's Story

“I came from a very poor background. From my childhood I didn't get my father and mother's love. Because my father was a drinker, he used to quarrel with my mother. My mother left me. From then, my grandmother cared (for me) and she is a good believer in (Jesus). My grandmother and church pastor [brought] me (to Sweet Home).

After I joined, my entire life was changed with the blessings of God. I learned so many things spiritually, mentally and physically,” Karunakar recalls.

Karunakar often visits Sweet Home even now. Whenever he comes, he brings sweets for the children, provides special meals, and leads worship services giving his testimony to encourage the children to utilize the great opportunities Sweet Home has to offer.

**“Now I am very happy,” says Karunakar. “It's all because of my Heavenly Father, sponsors, Sweet Home, and my ICC family. With my whole heart, I thank ICC for giving me shelter, food, clothing, and life.”**

### Joshua's Story

Joshua is another member of the ICC family whose life was drastically changed after entering Sweet Home.

He shares, “I was born in a small village in southern India. My two older brothers and I lived in a small, thatched roof house. This roof had to be changed after

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# BLESSINGS RETURNED

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Karunakar, age 10 (left) and Joshua, age 9 (right) at DEWS Sweet Home Children's Village in India.

heavy rains to avoid heavy leakage. My mother left for work early each morning in a nearby rice field. Without a husband, she fervently tried to provide enough food and clothes for her three growing boys. Our days were filled with idle hours, trying to find food. Our nights were often cold and wet from the heavy rains. Our village did not have proper roads or sanitation."

In their village at the time, education typically ended at the fourth grade. Joshua remembers his older brothers being gone for days at a time, trying to find work to support the family.

"One day my mother heard about ICC's Sweet Home Children's Village where children could have enough food to eat, learn at a school with good resources and be dry at night. She was pressured by her aging parents and friends to refuse this idea since I was the youngest at home, being about 5 years of age.

"She decided to sacrifice her reputation with the villagers and send me to the children's village. The distance from my hometown is nearly 140 km (about 90 miles) to Sweet Home Children's



Village. She knew she wouldn't see me very often, and that I would be alone in a new place and that it would be hard. But she loved me and knew she couldn't provide for my basic needs. She was tired of seeing me shivering, hungry and without purpose. Her sacrifice that day has allowed me to be what I am today.

"I immediately found almost 50 brothers and sisters. I was taught lovingly by the staff to help catch me up to my age group in school and then enrolled in the local church school, Flaiz. My friends back in my village dropped out of school, got into drinking and smoking and other bad habits. Sweet Home helped me learn to refrain from those bad habits and bad language. The most important thing I learned about was the love of Jesus by learning chapters from the Bible. I was taught many life skills to help me become a responsible adult. My house parents cared for me in a way that made me want to make them proud. We learned to dress properly, keep our house and personal area clean, garden and cook."

A key lesson learned for Joshua was

the importance of the Sabbath.

"When I came near college graduation, one of my ICC brothers and I realized that a few of our final government exams were scheduled on Saturday. When we asked to take them on another day, we were told we would have to wait until the next year and hope they wouldn't be offered on a Saturday. It was tough for us to watch our fellow classmates go write those exams and graduate. We waited nearly 6 years to take the last exam that finally was scheduled for a Friday, not a Sabbath. God is good, and honors those who honor Him!"

Joshua is now teaching at a Seventh-day Adventist school in upper India where his students learn the same life skills and hope and trust in the Lord that he learned at Sweet Home.

"I have gotten married to a wonderful person, named Mamta Pani, and I believe God is leading our lives.

**May God bless each of you this season. Thank you for all you do to support "His Kids"!**



Joshua, a former Sweet Home child, is now teaching at a Seventh-day Adventist school and is married to Mamta Pani.

# Ukrainian Refugee Update



Ukrainian refugees pictured with ICC Romania's village administrator, Simona (middle). The ICC family was able to assist refugees after the Russian invasion that took place in early 2022. On September 27, the last refugee left the ICC campus.

**Editor's Note: On February 26, 2022, world attention focused on Russia as it invaded its neighbor, Ukraine. Women, children, and the elderly fled from the advancing army as able-bodied men were called into military service to help protect their country. Following is an edited excerpt from Simona, ICC Romania's village administrator, who tells of the experience the ICC family had with Ukrainian refugees.**

Never would we have thought it possible to have war so close to Romania's border. This was a good reason for the Romanian people to show their compassion and good organization from the border to the heart of the country where special places were prepared for Ukrainian refugees. People were met at the border by organisations, churches and individuals who offered hot drinks, food, beds, transport, all free of charge and who led the refugees to safe shelters, private homes,

schools, and churches that opened their doors for this purpose. This is how the ICC family came up with the desire to make available the social houses that were empty since the last children left for high school and university in Bucharest in 2017.

Once the idea was born, volunteers prepared the accommodations, and on March 14, a pregnant mother with 7 other children arrived at our children's village campus. They arrived at night, after 9 p.m., from a city about 500 km away (about 300 miles). They feared the unknown future that awaited them. Stressful and difficult days followed because communication could only be done with the help of translation applications on the internet. They only spoke Ukrainian. The adjustment was also difficult for them, coming from a different culture and in a foreign country without being able to communicate easily.

Days, weeks, and months followed in which we learned how to help them, how to register the

children in school, and how to apply for documents and residence permits in Romania. For the children everything was easier. They were happy when they could go to school, and they were happy when they received the care they needed from the ICC family and the government authorities who got involved. But the adults found it difficult to integrate and accept their status as refugees and assisted persons.

On June 20, fourteen more people arrived, and we were able to accommodate them as well.

Some of the refugees stayed for a year and a half. They felt this place was home and left with tears in their eyes.

We made friends with these people. They trusted us. We solved their problems of any kind. We shared with them fruit from the yard and vegetables from the garden. We were a family with them. We had a beautiful, productive time which helped us, too.

Most of all, we saw their satisfaction and trust in the ICC family, which did not let them lack food, clothing, medicine, and other things they needed.

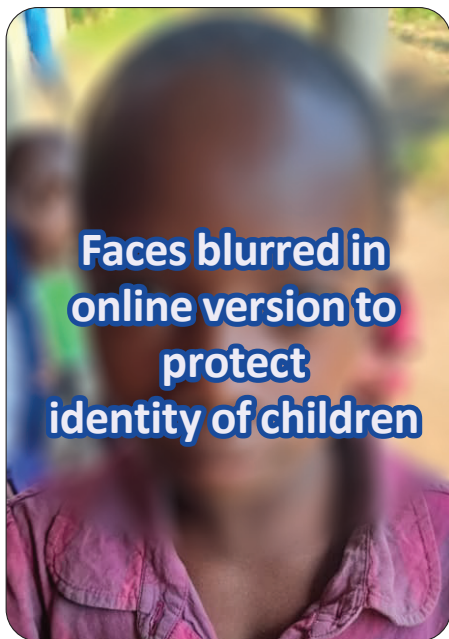
The last refugees left the ICC campus on September 27.

We thank God for this opportunity and thank those who have been involved in supporting the refugee project.



# Join Us In Recognizing **World Orphans Day**

**YOU can help spread the word!**



of their own, these children experienced a tragedy that tore them from their family, from their home (if they had one), and from all they had ever known.

There are no good stories of how a child becomes an orphan. It's because of generous ICC family members like you that ICC children have a haven to call home and the hope for a brighter future.

The Adventist church has designated Sabbath, November 18 as World Orphans and Vulnerable Children's Day.

**Would you be willing to share information about the needs of orphans and the joy that you've experienced by being involved with orphan care through ICC?**

The QR code and link will take you to ideas and resources you can use to promote this day

within your church, family, or friend group. The materials are not date sensitive. If it's better for you or your church to share on Sabbath, November 11, that will work as well. Thank you for all you do to care for "His Kids!"

Access the QR Code below or use the link to find out how you can help.

[ForHisKids.org/World-Orphan-Day-2023](http://ForHisKids.org/World-Orphan-Day-2023)



Monday, November 13, is **World Orphans Day**. This day is set aside to focus on the plight of orphans around the world and to encourage people to get involved.

As a valued member of the ICC family, you have a heart of love and compassion for orphans and vulnerable children. You realize and understand that, by no fault



## THANKSGIVING APPEAL

**Matching Funds Available!**

Just in time for the holidays, your extra gift can be doubled as part of the Christmas Hope Matching Challenge. Funds are available now!

Use the response insert or mark your donation:

**"Christmas Hope Matching Challenge"**

**This Thanksgiving, the children continue to be thankful for YOU!**



*A Legacy of Love*

*P*roviding for the future through planned giving

You can leave a lasting legacy in the life of an orphan child.

Contact Rick Bowes today for more details.

(800) 422-7729

[RickBowes@ForHisKids.org](mailto:RickBowes@ForHisKids.org)