

Rainbow Children's Home, India

**Thank you! The Military Order of the Collar Charitable Foundation
has helped care for children in need**

Project overview

Vizianagaram is a district in Andhra Pradesh, India. Most people here work long hours in subsistence farming, earning less than £1 a day. It is hard to make ends meet and providing basics like food for your family is a daily struggle.

For people with leprosy, life is even harder. Once diagnosed, many are kicked out of their homes and communities.

Abandoned, rejected and with nowhere to go, they flee to leprosy colonies. This is the only place they can find acceptance. But poverty is a harsh reality in the colonies. Many families can't afford school fees and children are left at home while parents are working or begging. Some children join their families to beg for food and are vulnerable to abuse out on the streets.

Thanks to you, 55 children affected by leprosy have been able to stay at The Rainbow Children's Home. Your support has meant these children have had care, education, nutrition, medicine and lots of fun, too!

All the children have places in local elementary, high schools and colleges. Many of the older children are training as nurses and engineers. They will all be independent, able to stand on their own feet and look after families of their own one day. What an amazing difference to a life of begging and poverty! When they go back to their families during school holidays, their parents are so proud of their achievements. They all tell us to make sure you know how grateful they are for the wonderful gift of education.

The impact of Covid

As of 5 July 2022, India had 43 million cases with 525,000 deaths. You may remember how India had a deadly second wave last year, with daily new cases peaking at 391,232 on 8 May 2021.

Andhra Pradesh was in lockdown for several months across the year. In line with Government orders, all children who had a family were escorted back home safely. Because residents could no longer work or beg during lockdown, food shortages for the children were a very real worry.

We gave each family food supplies for a month, including rice, dhal, salt, spices, chickpeas and peanuts. We also provided hygiene items including soap, sanitisers and face masks to protect them from Covid. Special travel permits meant the team could deliver vegetables and check that the children were ok throughout the lockdown.





Fresh vegetables were taken into leprosy colonies to prevent starvation

As for classes, these all moved online. Our staff worked hard and organised extra online tuition to help children in their studies. During the lockdown, the team kept in contact with the children via phone to check on their welfare.

The children have now all returned to the home. Where lessons are still online, they have access to laptops and mobile phones so they can follow their lessons. We have also appointed tutors to help the children with their studies and homework in the evenings.

Because of Covid, the home introduced a WASH program, emphasising the importance of thorough, regular hand washing. The children follow all necessary precautions such as social distancing, the use of face masks and frequent hand washing with soap. Despite these precautions, nine girls and two boys tested positive for Covid. They were placed in quarantine and have since made a full recovery.



Online school classes during lockdown

It was a tough year for all our children, particularly for those who had to return to parents or grandparents in leprosy colonies under Government orders.

Returning to normal

Staff are doing everything they can to make sure life gets back to normal. We love celebrating birthdays with a special dinner, a cake and new clothes. And when school and tuition sessions are finished, evenings are filled with games and television.

The children were especially excited to take part in Sports Day, which was cancelled in 2020.

There was also a Christmas party and a picnic once lockdown was lifted.





Sports Day



Annual picnic

Your grant has helped provide a safe, loving environment for these 55 children. This is their second home. Your support has meant these children can go to school, receive three meals a day and get the medical care they need.

It's wonderful to see how much the children want to learn – and their hard work pays off!

They would never have had these opportunities without grants made from Trusts like yours.

Santu is training as a mechanic

Santu has a radiant smile that lights up the room. That's not surprising because he is filled with hope and optimism for his future. It's a far cry from when he first arrived at Rainbow Children's Home as a seven-year-old boy. Before that, he lived with his mother and aunt in a leprosy colony. Life was hard and he often had to beg by the roadside.



He quickly made friends at Rainbow and for the first time in his life, attended school regularly. He visits his mother during the school holidays and loves telling her about what he's been doing.

In his senior year, staff told him about vocational training. He's always been interested in cars and was intrigued to learn of a Diesel Mechanics course. He promptly enrolled in the two-year course.

As a result of the Covid pandemic, all learning in his first year was online. Thankfully, lessons have now returned to face-to-face instruction, and he is preparing for his final exams.

He says he would not be where he is now without the love and care of the Rainbow family. "I can't thank them enough; whatever I say won't be enough. I am incredibly grateful to all who looked after me since I came here," he said. "I want to support my family and give back to Rainbow in every way I can."

Thank you! You are helping these children to break the cycle of poverty and become independent adults.