

Renewing

Understanding the context of mission today

REACH
Renewing, Engaging
and Advocating Churches

Session 1

It Takes a Village: A Story from India

Kahala Cannon

Can you hear the sounds? The sounds of children playing, the song “Happy” by Pharrell Williams coming from an open window on the second floor of the Guest House, and the wisp of the “waffle” as hospital staff members are engaged in a competitive game of Badminton. Can you hear the sounds? The sound of cheers as others are engaged in a game of Cricket, conversations as people are gathered in a group to share their experiences of the day, and laughter from the nursing students as they gather in front of their hostel. Can you hear the sounds? The sounds of people yelling, “go, go” during one of the many games being played at a hospital gathering. And...squirt, squirt, squirt...the sound that comes from me spraying mosquito repellent! Or gulp, gulp, gulp as I accidentally swallow water during my swimming lessons with Sophie and Avinash.

Everyone that enters through the gates and onto the campus of Christian Hospital Mungeli (CHM) can attest to the uniqueness of the small community that is present here. One in which people are united together as a family, not only in saving lives, but also in providing a foundation for the development of life skills and economic stability for young people through education. A community that is rich in hospitality and big on inviting you to join the everyday family type of atmosphere at CHM. There is no time to waste; you must jump right into the family on day one!

However, what has especially touched my spirit is witnessing a community that consistently comes out in support of a patient that has been admitted to the hospital or undergone surgery. As I approach the crowd with a comforting smile, I am joyfully overwhelmed at the number of people which comprise the patient’s support system. It consists not only of their family members, but also of individuals from the village in which the



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It Takes a Village: A Story from India *(continued)*

patient lives. The entire village will come out and devote themselves to the care and support of one of their neighbors and the family at this critical time. Often, I have seen an entire community rally around and embrace, comfort, and wipe the tears from the eyes of a worried spouse or family member.

It is an experience to see the community dedicated to the care of their loved one in cooperation with the team at CHM. They are present at the hospital every day until the patient is discharged. As the patient prepares to return home, a spirit of joy fills the ward as family members bow in a nonverbal expression of gratitude towards the staff.

Daily you will find a large number of patient support groups lining the entryway of the hospital, sitting along the wall outside of the Operation Theatre (OT) anxiously awaiting the completion of surgery, gathered around the aviary basking in the peacefulness that comes from watching the birds and fish, and standing or sitting bedside. At night, you will find both, family members and neighbors alike, making pallets and sleeping by or near the patient's bedside. Or walk into the ward and be surprised by the array of colors as members have brought items such as a favorite pillow and beddings to personalize their loved ones beds to make their stay more pleasant and with a touch of home.

As I walk around campus and reflect on the many individuals that are being used as the hands and feet of Christ to touch the lives of others, I am reminded of the following poem, "Without You, We Are Nothing." These are words that poured from the heart of Ms. Pankajani Tandi, a fourth year student at the School of Nursing, Christian Hospital Mungeli. This poem was written as an expression of her sincere gratitude for everyone at the family of CHM that had a role in enriching her life and the personal and professional lives of her fellow nursing school colleagues. Can you hear the sounds?"