

Volunteering for HEAL



Guide and Application Form

Thank you for enquiring about being a volunteer for HEAL. We hope that this document will answer most of your questions. Please see also our website www.healcharity.org for more general information about our work. If any questions remain, please email us at healsecretary@heal.co.uk or telephone the Volunteer Secretary, Dr. Aparna Gumma (Email :adgumma@yahoo.co.uk)

Why volunteer for HEAL?

Volunteering for HEAL gives you the chance to meet and work with some of the children which HEAL helps. If you are a sponsor, you will be able to meet the child whom you support. Your presence, knowledge and skills – whatever they may be – will bring new ideas, learning and experiences to children who have to live without parents. You will be furthering the good work of HEAL, the children can't wait to welcome you, and it's likely to be a life-changing experience for you!



The procedure for getting a placement

1. Please complete the application form at the end of this document and return it to us by post together with your DBS Certificate (original document only: no photocopies) Previously known as Criminal Records Bureau certificate if you have one which is less than 12 months old .The DBS (CRB) make a charge of £26 and they also charge admin fee of £12 +VAT, for this service.
2. Once we've checked your application and DBS form, you'll receive an email from our secretary in India to agree the dates of your visit.
3. We will then ask you to pay the accommodation and transport fee, which must be paid in full before you set off for India.
4. You will need to take medical advice about inoculations. Your GP's surgery should be able to give you all the necessary advice. Some inoculations are free.
5. You should take out a travel insurance policy.
6. You will need a visa from the Indian Embassy in order to enter the country. You should apply for a six-month Tourist Visa at least a month before your visit begins. Please see <http://in.vfsglobal.co.uk> , If necessary, you can get a visa more quickly by going to the Embassy's offices in person.

7. Go there and enjoy the experience!
8. On your return, we'll ask you to let us know how it went and write a 500-word summary of your visit and send us some photos .We are always looking for ways to improve.

9. Heal Paradise Village

Paradise Village is combining state-of-the-art ecological and environmentally-friendly design, and will become home to a thousand children from underprivileged and impoverished backgrounds in Andhra Pradesh and beyond. **This is an eco-friendly children's village.** The Village complex will also include a vocational training centre, pre-school cottages, a health centre and an institute for the visually challenged.

For details please visit <http://healparadise.org>

Your main stay will be at Heal Paradise, Thotapalli, Agiripalli Mandal, Krishna District, Andhra Pradesh, India, and PIN: 521211. Telephone Number: +917032885520.

Facts about HEAL Village, Guntur

Where is it?

HEAL's children's village is at Chowdavaram, 13km southwest of Guntur in Andhra Pradesh. Click on this link to have a look on Google Maps:

[HEAL Children's Village](http://maps.google.co.uk/maps?f=q&source=s_q&hl=en&geocode=&q=guntur&sll=53.800651,-4.064941&sspn=14.327693,27.641602&ie=UTF8&hq=&hnear=Guntur+City,+Guntur,+Andhra+Pradesh,+India&ll=16.24976,80.323191&spn=0.005675,0.013733&t=h&z=17) ... or copy and paste this link into your internet browser:
http://maps.google.co.uk/maps?f=q&source=s_q&hl=en&geocode=&q=guntur&sll=53.800651,-4.064941&sspn=14.327693,27.641602&ie=UTF8&hq=&hnear=Guntur+City,+Guntur,+Andhra+Pradesh,+India&ll=16.24976,80.323191&spn=0.005675,0.013733&t=h&z=17

To see more, change to 'map' and zoom out.

How do I get there?

The nearest airport is at Vijayawada, which can be reached by internal flight from any of India's international airports, the closest being Hyderabad. We will collect you from Vijayawada airport.

What is there at the site?

The site contains the HEAL children's village, a clinic, a boy's hostel and the Bala Kuteer school. The school is not part of HEAL, but all our children are educated there, and spend a lot of their time there, along with several hundred day-pupils from nearby villages. Your accommodation will be in the school area, which is set in lush gardens in a quiet rural district. There are a few very small shops near to the site, but otherwise, it is quite isolated. It will be possible to travel into Guntur

occasionally, by arrangement with the management. You will have access to the telephone, broadband internet and Skype. There is a Wi-Fi router, so please bring a laptop if you wish to. You will be loaned an Indian SIM card (pay-as-you-go) for your mobile phone, if you wish. This is much cheaper than using your existing number. Under Indian law, the SIM card must be returned before you go home.

What's it like living there?

Firstly, expect a big welcome from everyone at HEAL. The children are always excited when a visitor comes, and it's a part of Indian culture that visitors should be treated like gods. All your food and drink will be provided – lots of it! – but there's no meat and no alcohol available. It's a good idea to eat with the HEAL children in the village dining room whenever you can – they love the attention. You'll have a room with shower and toilet, but you might be asked to share your room with another volunteer. Laundry facilities are limited: you can hand-wash your clothes and they will dry in about an hour, or you can pay a small fee for the dhobi wallah to do it for you. Almost everyone speaks some English and they are friendly and eager to help. Indian men and women do not mix much, and have strict traditions of chastity and of modesty in dressing, especially for women, and you are expected to observe these.

HEAL TIME TABLE	
5:00 am	Raising Bell
5:00 - 5:30	Toilet & Brushing
5:30 - 6:00	YOGA
6:00 - 7:30	STUDY
7:30 - 8:30	Bath & Personal Work
8:30 - 9:00	Breakfast
9:00 - 9:30	Dining Hall & Campus Cleaning
9:30 - 12:50	SCHOOL
12:50 - 1:20	LUNCH
1:20 - 4:30	SCHOOL
4:30 - 5:30	GAMES/GARDENING/TIFFIN
5:30 - 6:00	Bath & Personal work
6:00 - 7:30	STUDY
7:30 - 8:00	DINNER
8:00 - 9:30	STUDY
10:00 p.m.	BED TIME

What will I be doing?

This depends on your skills, interests and experience, and the needs of the children, but typically volunteers assist in the classroom (especially in English lessons), and help with games, sports, art, singing, story-reading, drama and so on. The children have a long and structured day which you are not expected to follow, and you will be able to negotiate which activities you get involved in. The Bala Kuteer school will certainly ask for your help, but it is worth remembering that it is before and after the school's day-pupils are not there. As regards English lessons in the school, even if you are not a trained teacher, you are an expert in spoken English, and both the students and the teachers will value your help with pronunciation and comprehension. Always ensure that a teacher remains in class with you, to preserve discipline. Please think about the kind of activities you would like to become involved in, or can offer, and add them to your application form.

What should I bring?

Story books suitable for reading to, or by, school-age children; story CDs, CDs of children's songs, a guitar or other musical instrument to sing to; conjuring tricks,

simple jokes, art materials, easy board games, materials for any activities you plan to do with the children. Please ask for advice if in doubt. DVDs purchased in the UK will only be playable if marked 'All Regions'.

What's the accommodation charge?

We ask all our volunteers to pay a **fixed weekly charge of £150 to stay** at the children's village. Some of this money is used to cover the costs of your stay, and the remainder will be treated as a donation which will help us to continue to provide shelter, support, education and health care to disadvantaged children in India. HEAL is committed to ensuring that your donations are not wasted on administrative costs, and we achieve this because we have no administrative office and no paid administrative staff.

Comments from previous volunteers

Emily Sherlock volunteered at the Children's Village in 2007, and said:



"I was thoroughly well looked after by the teachers and, most of all, the House Mothers. They were so kind and considerate and almost did too much for us! All of our meals were cooked and served for us and the food was delicious. There is absolutely no worry about going hungry because they will feed you extremely well!

The children were lovely. So full of smiles and they really appreciated us being there. They were so happy for us just to say hello to them and they are such grateful children.

The school is very well set up and the teachers seem well prepared. We spent a lot of our time with the Kindergarten children teaching them nursery rhymes and songs. The most worthwhile thing about being there was probably just communicating with the children and giving them something different in their lives. They seem to work so hard and so it was great just to relax with them."

Top tip: "Because the school is situated out of town and it's not easy to leave the campus, make sure you've got plenty to occupy yourself with during your free time"

Flora Curzan also volunteered at the Children's Village in 2007, and said:

"My weeks spent in the Heal Village were some of the most memorable of my life. The pupils of both schools work so hard, and spend such a lot of time studying, that for quite a lot of the time we found

it hard to help. We found that if we tried to become involved in their academic classes, they would all stand up to greet us, and become distracted. We also felt that their way of learning was so different from ours that if we tried to teach academic classes, it probably wouldn't help them, as our ideas wouldn't correspond with their teachers', or their monthly tests. We helped the IT teacher in a few of his lessons, as the computers were still quite new to him, and so in this case our experience of computers could be useful to everyone.

But apart from this, our role became much more pastoral as the time went on and we found music was a great way to bridge the language barrier. We brought a few songs along with us to perform and

teach to the children, ("my heart will go on" being a particular favourite of theirs!) and in exchange, they taught us some of their songs and dances. We taught a few larger classes music in the main hall, and also taught the nursery children a few English songs and nursery rhymes, and recorded these onto tape for future use. We prepared a game of pass-the-parcel, which we played with the nursery children. On Sundays, art classes took place in the main hall, and we brought along pencils and rubbers, and though we didn't teach these classes, the children seemed keen to involve us in



every way, showing us their work, teaching us, encouraging us to show our work to the teacher. At the end our stay, we gave the remaining pens and pencils we had to the children.

A few times a day there was recreation, the longest being in the afternoon. In these hours we found we could really become involved with the children. On several occasions we brought out balloons, a bouncy ball, and a frisbee we brought from home and played games with everyone. The children were keen to involve us in all their games, sandcastle building, badminton, and skipping.

They treated us so beautifully, and we just hope we gave enough back. We were so lucky to spend some time learning from and helping out in the village."

Andhra Pradesh Guide



Andhra Pradesh is a state in south eastern India. The capital is Vijayawada.

Climate

Andhra Pradesh stays hot all year round. The summer (March to June) temperatures vary from 20C to 40C, while in winter (October to February) it is between 13C and 32C. This is the best time to visit. The heaviest of the Monsoon rains usually fall between July and September.

Language & Religion

Telugu is the official language of Andhra Pradesh. Hindi, the official language of all India is spoken to a much lesser extent. English is mostly restricted to the cities; however, even in remote areas you can usually find someone who can say/understand a few words of English.

In Andhra Pradesh, Hinduism is the most popular religion, and other religions practised include Islam, Christianity and Buddhism.

Hierarchy in Indian Society

India is one of the most diverse countries in the world. It is a sophisticated, modern, industrial leader, yet at the same time is home to many traditional tribes and millions of poor people. The social class or 'caste' system in India has created a culture which emphasises established hierarchies. Hierarchies are evident in all professional, personal and family relationships, and Indian people are always conscious of social order and their status relative to other people. The caste system limits social mobility and, traditionally, people are born, marry into, and die within one caste. One consequence of this is that there are large disparities in the distribution of wealth, which creates a wide gap that separates the few wealthy from the many poor.

Eating and Drinking

Rice is the staple food and is eaten with almost every meal along with a variety of vegetable and meat curries. Fresh fruit is also widely available.

Traditionally, Indian people eat with their fingers, and you are likely to come across situations where cutlery is not available. Make sure that you eat with your right hand only, as the left hand is associated with washing after using the toilet.

There are a number of religious dietary restrictions in India. Hindus do not eat beef, and many are vegetarians. Muslims do not eat pork or drink alcohol, and Sikhs do not

eat beef. Vegetarians are very well catered for in India. If you are served a non-vegetarian meal, it is likely to be lamb, goat, chicken or fish.

Bottled soft drinks, including water, are available almost everywhere. Travellers to India are likely to get ill if they drink the tap water. Stick to bottled water, and also make sure that you use bottled water to brush your teeth. It is also safer to avoid fruit (unless it has been peeled), and salad, as this may have been washed in tap water. Strict Muslims and most Hindus, especially women, do not drink any alcohol.

Dress

In order to avoid offence and unwanted attention, it is best to dress modestly and conservatively. Loose fitting long trousers/skirts and long sleeves are best, but make sure you at least cover your knees and shoulders, and this applies to men and women.

It is especially important to cover your arms and legs in religious places such as temples. Covering up can also help you to avoid bites from mosquitoes and other insects.

Cultural Etiquette: some Do's and Don'ts

Do be aware that traditionally, men and women do not touch when meeting or saying goodbye. For example, men may shake hands with other men, but not with women. If in doubt, wait for the other person to extend their hand first.

Don't use your left hand for giving, receiving, eating or shaking hands, as the left hand is associated with washing after using the toilet.

Don't engage in public displays of affection with a member of the opposite sex. Indian men will often hold hands or hug, but this is a sign of friendship rather than sexuality.

Do take your shoes off before you enter someone's home.

Don't point your feet at others or touch them with your feet or shoes. This may be seen as an insult as feet are considered to be unclean.

Health

The most common complaint from travellers to India is diarrhoea and/or sickness. This is most commonly caused by contamination from dirty water, but can also just be a sign of the body adjusting to a different climate and food. Most people find that it passes within a few days; however it can occasionally be an indication of something more serious, such as dysentery.

Andhra Pradesh is a low-risk area for malaria; however it is important that you seek advice from your GP about malaria medication and vaccinations.

Money

The unit of currency in India is the Rupee, most commonly abbreviated to Rs. It is not possible to buy Rupees until you arrive in India.

Goods and services are much cheaper in India than they are in Britain. During your stay at the Children's Village, you will need little money as your food and accommodation will have been paid for in advance. However, you might want to exchange a small amount for shopping or snacks.

You can change money at most banks, and you can find ATM machines in towns and cities. Credit cards are accepted in some large shops.

Code of Conduct for HEAL Volunteers

Whilst volunteering for HEAL, you are expected to:

- Treat all people fairly, and with respect and dignity.
- Seek to understand and respect Indian culture. This involves respecting and being tolerant to the customs, culture and religious beliefs of the local people.
- Respect the local community in which you are placed with regards to the consumption of alcohol.
- Be aware of and respect the different attitudes towards etiquette and sexual relationships in the area in which you are placed.
- Dress appropriately at all times with regard to the culture you are living in.
- Endeavour to maintain a positive mental attitude throughout your placement.
- Abide by all the rules of the project at which you are working.
- Respect the accommodation and facilities allocated to you and pay for any damage that you might cause.
- Stay at the accommodation allocated to you. You are not allowed to make your own accommodation arrangements for logistical and security reasons.
- Keep the staff at the project informed of your movements during the entirety of your placement.
- Refrain from any conduct which might harm the reputation of HEAL.

Application Form for placement As a Volunteer for HEAL



Full Name

Date of Birth

Home Address

Telephone number(s)

Email Address

If a student, the name and address of your University or College

Current employment

Do you have a DBS Disclosure Certificate issued in the past 12 months? YES / NO

Please state your reasons for wanting to be a volunteer worker in the children's village.

Please list the kind of activities you would like to become involved in, or can offer.

Please state what are you hoping to achieve during your stay at HEAL?

Preferred dates of your visit

When attending a HEAL project, I agree to abide
by the Code of Conduct for Volunteers (signed)..... date

Please post this page and your DBS certificate, if you have one, to Dr Aparna Gumma
Westwood Clinic, Wicken Way, Peterborough PE3 7JW.