

James Orlando, USA
Feb – Mar 2008

Dear Olly and Fred,

Thank you so much for your unbelievable welcome and your powerful trust in the benevolence of humanity.. I had tried unsuccessfully to volunteer at a few places in Colombo. While I understand that with children, charities must take precautions to protect those that they serve, I was beginning to think it was impossible for someone to volunteer just because they felt it the right thing to do. Many places doubted my intentions, but not you. I will never forget that first phone call I made. Within a few minutes of dialogue, you had welcomed me to stay at the orphanage and help as I saw fit. It was not only a blessing to me, but also a reassurance that some people out there have faith.

While in Hewadiwela, I can only say that I was treated like family. Fred and Olivia welcomed me and made me feel a part of a very special place. Though admittedly I was not an ace with hammer, they were understanding and thankful for the English teaching that I did provide. It is hard to summarize all that I was given. Besides my own room and fantastic meals cooked by the remarkable Mary every night, I also was taught the guitar, given travel advice, trained in the art of cricket bowling, shown the finer arts of climbing coconut trees, and given my first succulent taste of jackfruit. For all that and all the warm, friendly evenings of games, I thank you all immensely. It was a sincere honor to be part of your community for the short time that I was.

I wish you all the best of luck. Raja, Morgan, Jagan, Sadis, Sajeeva, Nirmala, Suba, Ramish, and all the rest of my students. I hope that you continue your English studies as best you can and that you enjoy every night of your soap operas. I had a memorable time playing cricket, swimming, hiking and working with all of you. I do hope that you will contact me in the future by either email or postal letter. I wish you all the best and look forward to seeing you in the future back in Hewadiwela.

All my best,
James Orlando
2008