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refusal possessed hope and determination. This is a woman, as human as you and I; that wanted to sacrifice everything to fill the lives of the poor with love. When she was refused, Mother Theresa simply tried again. The letters composed after starting the mission expressed great emptiness and struggle. Before reading, "Come Be My Light" I, like the rest of the world, was under the impression Mother Theresa's work was natural and easy. It was far from easy.

The team I was a part of had the opportunity to witness the Mission that Mother Theresa established. Before entering the orphanage, I prepared myself to see rooms of abandoned children and expected to experience something sad. As I walked through the doors of The Mission I was blown away. The walls were covered in bright mural paintings. The volunteers were dancing with the children to children's music. The amount of love and number of smiles overwhelmed me. What I saw before me was something bigger than I had ever imagined and can't be described in words.

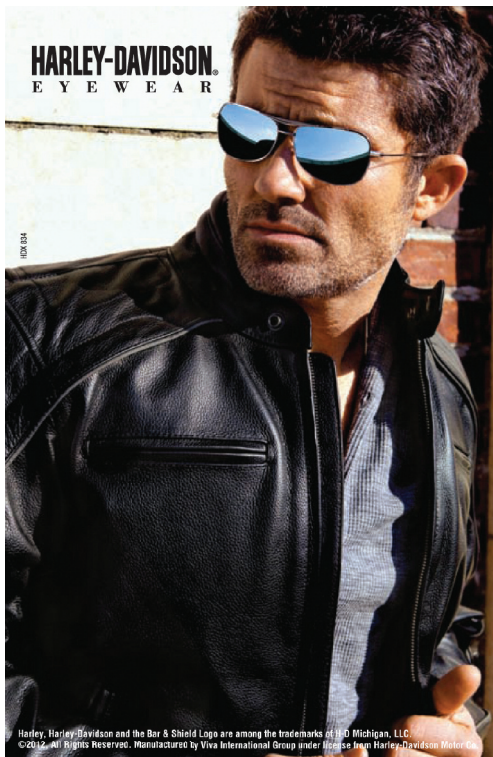
Witnessing Mother Theresa's Mission gave me the confidence needed to understand it isn't about how many times we fall. As we work toward our goals it is easy to get discouraged and settle for something less. But, getting back up is the only way we achieve great things. It also taught me if we fill our hearts with love as we work toward our goals, they become much greater than anything we could ever imagine. After two years of discouragement and years of sacrifices, Mother Theresa's work established 600 missions, schools and shelters in 120 countries.

My team consisted of three physicians, four nurses, two dentists, two health educators, two students, and several non-medical per-

sonnel. How quickly 20 strangers from across the nation developed a bond much like a family. It was quite remarkable. Each of us played a unique role in our clinics and without each individual contribution our mission would not have been successful. We educated, checked vitals, and addressed complaints of over 300 patients daily during the first four days of clinic. Paulo Coelho wrote in *The Alchemist*, "When we love, we always strive to become better than we are. When we strive to become better than we are, everything around us becomes better too." Our IMR team embraced the Indian lifestyle throughout the initial days in India. The community's influence, as well as Mother Theresa's, caused us to become better people in just a few short days. The growth that happened during our time in India contributed to the most extraordinary aspect of the trip. On the last day of clinic in the small town of Churkunda, India, the lives of 675 people became better too. We set the IMR record of patients educated and treated in one day.

The people of India possess a beautiful appreciation for life and the endless ability to love. Filling our hearts with love as we worked tirelessly during clinic allowed us to create something incredible. Although I speak positively about my time in India, it was far from challenge free. The greatest accomplishments in life come with the greatest demands. As long as we embrace the people around us that help us move the luggage off our heads, stay focused on our destination, and ignore the fears and stresses, we can lift up our eyes to see the beautiful things life has to offer. We can make the world around us better.

■ by Taryn L. Sonnenfeld



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