



## Families With Children from China Summer Newsletter 2009 Austin, Texas

### *Letter from the Prez....*

Giggling children splash paint over the folds of a paper fan while a dragon boat full of paddlers races by in the distance... quiet, soft weeping fills the Utopia Theater as FCC parents experience *Long Wait for Home*, a documentary about birth parents in China... shrieks of delight pierce the air as a terra cotta warrior statue "comes to life" and shakes the hand of a small wide-eyed child in front of him...

These are a few of the images and sounds of FCC Austin this spring. With three events in three months, we achieved some of our goals for this year that include having more of a presence in the Asian community, sponsoring more educational programs for parents, and hosting more culture-related and community-building events as well. Whoo hoo!

The response has been unbelievably positive and we feel your appreciation for our efforts. Let me assure you, this is just the beginning. We are currently planning and preparing several exciting projects including an "Adoption and schools" seminar in August and an outdoor Moon Festival celebration complete with lanterns and water in September.

As I walked through the butterfly pavilion on the Houston trip with other FCC families either ahead of or behind me on the pathway, the joy in the air was palpable. Watching beautiful butterflies land on little Chinese-American heads and hands affirmed that this is so the right way to be heading.

*Becky Harding*  
President, FCC Austin

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### AT A GLANCE: Upcoming FCC Austin Events

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# Upcoming Events

## “Adoption and Schools” Seminar

**Date:** Friday, August 21, 2009

**When:** 7 pm - 9 pm

**Where:** Asian-American Cultural Center

11713 Jollyville Road Austin 78759

**Cost at Door:** Free to FCC members - \$7 per person for non-members

**Registration:** Email [BJH0902@aol.com](mailto:BJH0902@aol.com) to reserve your seat.

**Presenters:** Deanne Brown and Becky Harding

Join FCC members and teachers Deanne Brown and Becky Harding for an evening of information and discussion about parental navigation of the educational system. As former teachers, the presenters will bring their unique perspectives to the conversation.

Topics will include, but are not limited to:

- \* what the ideal school environment should look and feel like to parents and students,
- \* how to build a relationship with your child's teacher,
- \* how to give your child the tools s/he needs to address possible adoption issues,
- \* and how to be a positive advocate for social change.

**Deanne Brown** taught English in grades 10, 11, and 12 in Virginia for 5 years, then spent several years in youth ministry with high school and middle school aged kids. Later she returned to teaching when she moved to Austin, teaching 5th grade at Pease Elementary for 7 years while preparing to adopt her two daughters, Grace and Sarah. Since the summer of 2004, she has been a stay-at-home mom for her husband Russ, the girls, and several cats.

**Becky Harding** taught high school theatre, speech, debate, and English in Ohio for ten years. She then spent three years teaching in New York and south Florida before beginning a career as a middle school theatre arts educator at Covington and Clint Small middle schools. A former Austin ISD Teacher of the Year, she retired in 2002 to be a stay at home parent to her two daughters from China. She currently serves as president of FCC Austin.



# Moon Festival Update

## from Stacey Cone



**Sunday, Sept. 27**  
**4:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.**

**Brushy Creek Lake Park**  
**3300 Brushy Creek Rd.**  
**Cedar Park, TX 78613**

Shang Dynasty: At Moon Festival time, the Chinese often retell the legend of Chang E, a woman who, like the "man in the moon," has eternal life and inhabits the moon. There are many variations of the Chang E legend, but the most common tells how a long unbearable drought prompted the Emperor of Heaven to send the handsome Hou Yi to earth.

Hou Yi saves the earth by shooting down excessive suns from the sky. The lovely Chang E meets Hou Yi one day near a river and the two fall in love. Hoping to keep their love alive forever, Hou Yi searches for, and finds, the elixir of life. But before he and Chang E can drink it together, he is killed. In her grief, Chang E drinks the elixir herself, becoming immortal. Instead of living in heaven, however, she chooses to live on the moon, nearer to the resting place of her beloved dead Hou Yi.

This year FCC Austin will return to Brushy Creek Lake Park in Cedar Park (near Parmer Road) to celebrate the Moon Festival. We hope you'll come observe the second most important holiday of the Chinese calendar with us in September.

Moon Festival is about the end of summer and the beginning of the harvest season, but more importantly, it's about family and friends and celebrating the season together. You are part of our FCC family, and we'd like nothing more than to share this special holiday with you.

In China, family members and friends typically gather outside after dark carrying brightly lit lanterns. They sit on blankets, eat moon cakes, and tell family stories while admiring the moon.

This year, in an attempt to bring even more traditional elements to the FCC Austin festivities, we will be celebrating outdoors under the harvest moon. Because so many of our FCC families have babies and toddlers who don't stay up after dark, we will have our celebration from late afternoon until just after sunset. We've reserved a Pavilion at the park so our families can start celebrating around 4:30 with a picnic brought from home. We'll also have mooncakes on hand (at the Pavilion) for everyone and possibly lion dancers will be performing.

Children are invited to visit our crafts tables to paint fans and parasols and make lanterns to carry in the evening parade.

Before sunset, everybody can play together in the park. The playgrounds are nice, and the water playscape for kids is free! You may want to bring bathing suits, towels, and/or a spare set of dry clothes for everybody who is likely to get wet and want a change. For anyone interested in getting some exercise, about three miles of nature trails ring the 38-acre lake and crisscross the park.

At sundown, we'll close our celebration when we gather back at the Pavilion to retell the story of Chang E, the moon lady, and watch our children parade together down to the water, their way lit by lanterns and the light of the harvest moon.

## Christmas International House Hosts Needed

*By Kathi Thomas*

Christmas International House students will be coming to Austin Dec. 19–Jan. 2 and we need host homes. You can host for one week or both. CIH students are international students who are going to colleges and universities in the US. It is expensive to travel home and very difficult to get visas renewed to re-enter, so many stay here.

These students tend to be the “cream of the crop”— some of the finest young people you will ever want to meet. They are from countries all over the world and are studying here. They join the CIH program to make friends with an American family. We look at this as a peacemaking mission. When our students return to their home country, hopefully they will be able to look their fellow country folk in the eye and tell them about the great experience they had with a Texas family. These contacts sometimes last for years. It is not uncommon for families to keep in contact with students for years after they’ve visited through CIH. We are just now getting in applications, so we don’t know the home countries of this year’s students yet, but in the past, we’ve had students from South Africa, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, South Korea, Japan, China, France and Ecuador. The majority of our students are from Asia (since that is where the majority of international students in the US originate.)

If you would like to host, or to know more about this program, feel free to contact Kathi Thomas, coordinator of the program at, [texkathi@gmail.com](mailto:texkathi@gmail.com). You may read more about the program at <http://www.christmasih.org/Host-HostHandbook.htm>.

As a host family, your responsibilities are fairly simple: provide a place to sleep, provide breakfast (it can be “do it yourself” or you can cook for them each day, as you please), get them to and from the meeting point each day, and include them in your family activities. We will have several days when the students will stay home to bond with our families. In Austin, our meeting point days will be at Hastings Communication Services, at 825 W. 11th St., but you may arrange carpools with some of the other hosts, so that every family doesn’t need to drive in each day. The activities (such as the ranch night at Hal & Betty Meyer’s Jack Mountain Ranch) are open to hosts and their families, and we encourage you to attend, but you are not required to do so.

Please give this some consideration. Your family will have a special experience, sharing your holidays with “a stranger in a strange land” and you may find a life-long friend.



**Cameron**

### PHILIP HAYDEN FOUNDATION UPDATE

Our sponsor child, Cameron, has been adopted! Let’s all celebrate that he now has a family to call his own.

The remainder of our sponsorship dollars will now benefit our new sponsor child: Leonard. He is 2 ½ years old with osteomalacia (commonly known as rickets), a softening of the bones. Treatment for osteomalacia involves replenishing low levels of vitamin D and calcium, and treating any underlying disorders that may be causing the deficiencies. For more on Philip Hayden Foundation or Leonard, visit [chinaorphans.org](http://chinaorphans.org)



## CHARITY HIGHLIGHT: **China Care Foundation** *by Kristi Quadrato*

Ever wonder how your membership fees are used? They are “paid forward” to many charitable organizations so FCC-Austin families can collectively impact a cause much bigger than ourselves.

In 1995, an 11-year old boy from Connecticut made a huge journey westward to live with a Chinese family. While he was there, he learned more about the Chinese people, their language, and their culture. Little did he know at the time, that single year was the beginning of something much bigger than anyone could’ve ever imagined. During a return visit to China at 16 years of age, Matt Dalio decided that he was going to make a difference in the lives of the orphans who profoundly touched his heart. Asking for donations from friends and neighbors, he singlehandedly raised money to improve life for orphans in China. And so began the China Care Foundation in 2000, a non-faith-based nonprofit organization that would offer a brighter future to orphaned children with special needs.

China Care’s mission is “...to give special needs Chinese orphans the opportunity for a better life and to empower youth through direct humanitarian service. By providing extensive medical, social, and educational programs devoted to children, China Care makes a lasting contribution to our shared future.”

**SAVING LIVES** In partnership with Half the Sky Foundation (“HTS”), China Care currently works with more than 40 orphanages in 19 provinces that refer children to The HTS China Care Home. This new state-of-the-art, interim-care facility located in Beijing can care for 75 children at any given time. It is here where each child receives not only medical care to prepare them for surgery, but love, nurturing and emotional support also needed while they are alone and hurting. They receive this same individual attention from China Care’s staff during their post-surgical recuperation until their treatment plan is complete. It’s this level of tender loving care that no doubt greatly impacts the child’s ultimate physical and emotional outcome.

Since its founding, China Care has provided for over 600 corrective surgeries. Surgeries range from simple cleft lip repair to correcting hearts distressed with multiple life-threatening defects. That is over 600 little lives that otherwise may’ve gone on to linger – or die – in orphanages poorly equipped and inappropriately staffed to handle their special needs. Of those treated under China Care’s programs, nearly 200 have been adopted - - indisputable evidence that the future of every child under China Care’s charge is no doubt shining brighter because of the medical and recovery care they received.

**BUILDING FUTURES** China Care has partnered with Half the Sky ([halfthesky.org](http://halfthesky.org)) in early 2009, to provide enrichment and education opportunities to children they’ve medically treated. Half the Sky’s focus and energies are spent on providing family-style care, education, and enrichment for children living in orphanages. For China Care’s children who have received a clean bill of health, Half the Sky’s programs lovingly serve these children by continuing TLC and enrichment after their return to their referring orphanages. For those whose continued special needs preclude them from adoption, Half the Sky warmly welcomes them into their family-style care programs and education programs by placing them with a “forever” foster family, parenting the child until they reach adulthood.

**EMPOWERING YOUTH** An ever important part of China Care’s mission is to provide humanitarian service opportunities to youth so they can make a direct impact to the world around them. Some are given a chance to volunteer in China Care’s Beijing facility during the summer. Even more are given the opportunity to join China Care Clubs, over 40 of which have been established across the United States.

The University of Texas - Austin has had a China Care Club for five years. The events most visible to our FCC membership families are the free semi-monthly playgroups available to our children. About 20 college-aged volunteers spend two hours away from their rigorous studies, exams and research to interact with our children through crafts, games and culturally-based activities. These events have become a bright spot for many of our families. Cheryl Dragel, an FCC-Austin mom, says “My daughter - now five - started going (to playgroup) when she was 3 1/2 years old and looks forward to having fun with the college kids. (They) are always really welcoming (and) it’s especially neat to have my daughter around a large number of Asian students. That is something she doesn’t get anywhere else. And the best part is that they are ALL ABOUT FUN!!!” While these playgroups are designed for children ten years and younger, UT China Care Club now offers an occasional gathering for “tween” adoptees during the academic school year.

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**CHINA CARE** *continued from page 5*

When asked why she is involved with China Care Club, incoming club president Vicki Wang explains that she's been with the club for 2 ½ years because "...of the kids that I meet. (They) would always make me happy when I was having a hard and stressful week. I always look forward to seeing them." She further says that all the volunteers treasure the consistent interaction they get with our children and the ongoing connections that result. That just isn't available in other volunteer situations where contact with kids is a one-time occurrence. The playgroups are simply a win-win for everybody: FCC parents, China Care Club volunteers, and our children. Cheryl Dragel highly encourages other FCC families to attend if they can - it's a resource that is really not available in any other form.

Another service focus of UT's China Care Club is fund raising for Chinese orphans in need of life-changing surgeries. Various fund raisers - as well as a large year-end dinner banquet - resulted in the club collecting over \$8,000 last year for this purpose. They were able to provide for the surgeries of four Chinese orphans: one urgent life-saving surgery and three cleft palate corrections. Some of the funds also were used to purchase supplies for education homes within China. For this coming school year, Vicki Wang says they hope to raise over \$10,000.

**FORGE ON** China Care's website includes a quote from Ralph Waldo Emerson: *"Do not go where the path may lead; go instead where there is no path and leave a trail."* China Care Foundation has taken that to heart as evidenced by the growth and impact of an organization born out of an unsuspecting boy's year abroad. China Care has literally changed the lives of hundreds of orphan, and has an even further-reaching indirect impact on countless others. To that we collectively say: "Forge on, China Care - continue to make new trails in new places so countless more Chinese orphans can find their path to a brighter future."

For more information on China Care and how you can help, visit [www.chinacare.org](http://www.chinacare.org)

## Xiaoman Kniseley: Page for a Day



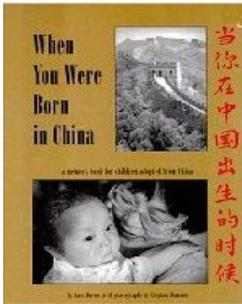
In 1978, Congress passed a joint Congressional Resolution designating the first week of May as Asian American Heritage Week. The significance of this timeframe is related to the arrival of the first Japanese immigrants in the United States on May 7, 1843, as well as the May 10, 1869 completion of the transcontinental railroad, worked on by many Chinese laborers.

This year saw the introduction of Texas House Resolution 1759, authored by Button, Vo, McCall, Hochberg, Howard, and Charlie, recognizing May 2009 as Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month in the State of Texas. Present to usher in this resolution was 8 year old Xiaoman Kniseley, an honorary Page for a day in the Texas House of Representatives.

Xiaoman was sponsored by Representative Angie Chen Button who read in the resolution. One of Xiaoman's duties included banging the gavel for the resolution at Representative Craig Eiland's direction, and she conceded this was her favorite part of the day. In addition to being present for the resolution, Xiaoman attended a special breakfast provided for the dignitaries in attendance that day. She also got to explore the voting process and sit at Representative Button's desk on the House floor.

Outside of the House of Representatives, Xiaoman's interests include Kung-Fu. So far, she has earned her green belt. Xiaoman, adopted at 15 months from ChangDe in the Hunan Province of China, has two older brothers, Joe (25) and Dan (23). In addition, the Kniseley family is eagerly awaiting the arrival of an exchange student from Beijing in August. He will be residing with the family for his entire senior year.

For more information on Asian-Pacific Heritage Month, visit <http://asianpacificheritage.gov>.



# When You were Born in China Book Review

By Angela Meek

When You Were Born in China has been on my bookshelf for about 7 years, unopened and unperused. The book was one of the acquisitions I made during my pre-adoption process. I've kept it on the top shelf out of the reach of little hands until it was "time" to read it. The book itself is a skinny forty-two pages, in a large 8 1/2" x 11" hardcover format, and has a documentary feel to it. The black-and-white photo format and the dress seem somewhat out of date, even though the original publication date was 1997.

Both author, Sara Dorow, and photographer, Stephen Wunrow, have extensive experience with the Asian community and adoption process. Wunrow is an adoptive parent himself and Dorow has lived in Asia for twenty or so years, with experience managing the East Asia adoption process. This familiarity is evident in the photos and storytelling.

There is a reason why this book should remain a top shelf book until you are ready to read it with your child. When You Were born in China touts itself as "a memory book for children adopted from China." The book is written as a narrative and speaks directly to the adoptee. The first four pages are the warm up -- explaining to the child that they probably know part of their adoption story, but they state that what the child might not know "is what happened before all that." This book explains, in plain language, that China is an older country with magnificent heritage, but concedes that a large portion of the population is poor. It alludes to the country's overpopulation and does address the one child policy. In addition, the book suggests several possible reasons why a family or birthmom might not be able to keep their child in China.

The positive elements in this book include the consistently favorable language and view used to present China, the adoption process as a whole, and how special/unique each adoptee is. The book also briefly addresses children who spent time in China foster care, as well as those children with medical needs. The photographs clearly portray the adoption process that is familiar to most of us.

The negative elements in the book are somewhat subjective. The book makes several broad statements that are obviously made with the best intentions, but that may or may not be true (i.e. "your birth family wished with all their hearts that they could keep you with them, care for you, and get to know you. They were heartbroken that they couldn't, and were very sad to say good-bye.") These are quite loving statements to make and are probably true in many cases, but it is possible this may not be true in all cases. There are several similar, broad-reaching statements in the book, which may affect your decision to buy it.

The biggest controversy with the book is the fact that it does present the one-child policy and the concept of abandonment, although the word "abandonment" is never used. Many may struggle with the necessity of sharing these ideas with their adopted child. It can be difficult for adoptive parents to determine when and how to provide this information to their child.

Presenting this book to an adopted child is a very personal decision. Some parents may choose never to provide this information, waiting for their child to learn about the information themselves as an adult. For the parents who want to have this discussion with their children, the big question is "when." I personally don't believe this book is for children who have limited vocabulary or who are overly sensitive about their adoption status. They need to have vocabulary skills so that the ideas in the book can be discussed freely; they need to be comfortable with the fact that they are adopted; and they need to have a strong sense that they belong in their forever family.

My child is six. She knows she is adopted, that she has a birth mother who carried her in her tummy, and she knows her adoption story from referral process to now. We sat down on a weekend and read this book together when we had plenty of time for discussion. While we were reading the book, we looked at her referral papers with the medical exam/photo, which we had not done prior to this. In addition, I was able to share her personal story (where and how she was found as well as photos from the location), which we had not discussed before. As I suspected, she was ready to hear about it and we had a really good discussion. I have no doubt it will come up again and again in conversation as she's ready to absorb more of it, but that will be on her schedule and in her own time as it always has been.

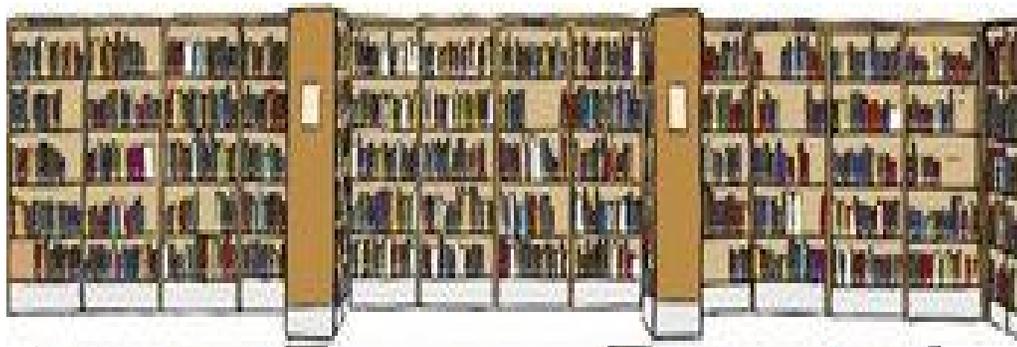
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**Book Review** *continued from page 7*

At the end of the story, I asked my daughter what she thought about the book and what she learned. She told me that "China is big and old, and people don't have lots of TVs, toys, or computers. They can only have one baby because there are lots of rules there." Pretty spot-on based on the language of the book. I asked her how she felt about what it said. "It's a little bit sad," she told me. I probed more on the whys and she said "Because the babies can't stay with their families forever." True. This reality makes me a little bit sad even as an adult grappling with these events. But after her recap I received an impromptu hug and the gushing comment that she's so glad I'm her mommy and that she gets to stay with me forever. I used this as an opportunity to reiterate that I will always be her mom no matter what -- whether we grow old and die, whether she goes off to travel the world or gets married. For us, sharing the experience of reading this book in the manner and timing that we did was just another growth opportunity for my child.

I will again emphasize here that not every child will be ready for this information at age six. Some may be eight or eleven or fourteen before this topic can be broached. It is a tough discussion to be had -- the thought that any one of us could be "abandoned," left behind, left alone. Quite frankly most people struggle with this concept throughout their whole lives, whether adopted or not. It's not a conversation that should be rushed or glossed over lightly. If you choose to read this book with your child, do it when you have time and can give it your full attention. When you are ready to talk to your child about the one child rule and this intimate part of their personal story, this book is a great tool.

[When You Were Born in China](#) is hardcover and retails for around \$16.00 new.



## We are looking for a librarian

Interested in viewing Dr. Changfu Chang's documentaries? He generously gave FCC - Austin his entire collection of films which are titled *Love Without Boundaries*, *My Unforgotten Daughter*, *The Willow Trees*, *Embracing World Cultures: The Legacy of Pearl S. Buck and International Adoption*, *Peer in the Distance*, and *Long Wait for Home*. (For more information about these films go to [www.lovewithoutboundaries.org/lwfh/index.html](http://www.lovewithoutboundaries.org/lwfh/index.html) )

At the recent FCC - Austin officers meeting, we enthusiastically decided to create a loaner library to make these films, and any others we may gather, available to our membership. We need someone to be in charge of this project. Here is your chance to get involved in a small way with your FCC chapter! Organizational skills would be encouraged but not necessarily required. We'll take someone with the interest any day. Contact Becky Harding ( [bjh0902@aol.com](mailto:bjh0902@aol.com) ) if this sounds like the volunteer position for you. **Note:** If you have some materials you would like to pass on to our library, please contact Becky as well.

# In the Spotlight: The Harwood Family

by Dianne Harwood

A funny thing happened on the way to adopting our second daughter from China: she turned into a boy...

My husband and I waited about a year after bringing home our first daughter from China, Alison Yini, before starting the paper chase for our second child. We had always planned on having two children, and we just assumed they would both be girls. I grew up in a large family; having three sisters, I just couldn't imagine my darling baby girl not having a sister. The fact that we were applying to adopt from China made it that much more likely that we would be referred a girl.

We knew the wait was going to be longer than the "excruciating" six months we waited for our referral for Allie. By the time our paperwork was logged-in in March 2007, the wait was up to 17 months. Of course, we had no idea how long the wait would get.

Fast-forward one year; by then we had become acquainted with several families that had adopted children with special needs, and we had met with a couple of different medical specialists to discuss the special needs we felt were within our comfort zone. When it came time to complete our special needs application, we agonized over whether to limit our possibilities to a girl, or whether to be open to either gender. In the end, we said we wanted a girl. Allie, on the other hand, was fairly sure she was going to have a brother, not a sister.

When we started looking at the shared list, John and I, unbeknownst to each other, were drawn to the brief description of the same two-year-old **boy**. When we received his file from our agency, our first question was, "Why hasn't some family snatched up this child already?" We sent his medical information to our pediatric orthopedist and our pediatrician, and both said that based on the available information, this little boy looked quite healthy. We discussed and debated. A boy? In the end, our hearts told us this was the right child for our family.

Once we had made the decision, other families with boys from China started coming out of the woodwork. I knew, of course, of a current FCC officer who had recently come home with a baby boy and a former FCC officer who had two adorable sons from China. At the FCC Chinese New Year gala, I found out about two other families who had come home with sons in the past year. And recently, I was approached by another family that lives quite near us, who is waiting for travel approval to go get their precious son.

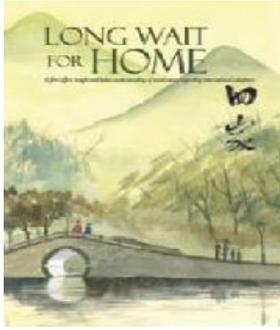
Before we accepted the referral for our Joshua Xiaozi, I didn't realize how many Chinese boys were finding families internationally—at least seven in the Austin area alone within the last few years!

It has taken some adjustment getting used to a boy. The energy in our house has hit a whole new level, and we've discovered a world of toys we knew nothing about. Joshua has proved to be extremely bright (his grasp of English already amazes me), loving, and adaptable. He's all boy—preferring to play with cars, trucks, and trains, he's equally happy putting on princess shoes and having a tea party with his big sister.

It's harder to locate resources for my son than for my daughter. Our adoption playgroup, which I started two years ago so my daughter and the other children in the group would have their own community of friends with similar stories, is comprised of ALL girls. Even in this group, where the families are a rainbow of colors, cultures, and ethnicities, the newest addition to my family doesn't quite fit in. (Although there is an older boy who drops in occasionally, and a very little one who will soon be ready to play with the bigger kids.) Most of the China adoption children's books feature baby girls; understandable, of course, because for so many years, the overwhelming majority of Chinese children coming home to American families were very young girls. But now, as more and more boys find homes in the US (many via special needs referrals which are increasing due to the more than three year wait for a child through traditional programs), I hope that we as a community will remember to use inclusive language and create resources and materials for our boys.

I realize there will be challenges as Joshua grows up—the same confusion, grief, and anger over having been abandoned by his birth family that most adoptees face. I wonder how we will explain that while sons are traditionally prized in China, his family made the choice to give him up. I worry for him, hope he will grow up to be strong, self-confident, and compassionate—the same hopes I have for my daughter.

Now that Joshua has been with us for four months, I can't imagine our lives without him. And I really can't imagine another girl in our lives. One little princess and one big princess are enough for our house, for now anyway.



# Long Wait for Home Event Recap

by Becky Harding

Mr. Xiang, with tears in his eyes, looks directly at the camera in the film, *Long Wait for Home* and speaks to the daughter he knew only briefly and says, "We hope you are happy. We love you dearly." This powerful moment opens a window to the world of the Chinese birth parents.

Dr. Changfu Chang came to Austin for the May 16 screening of his film, *Long Wait for Home*. As a part of our commitment to the greater adoption community, FCC - Austin co-sponsored this event with Adoption Knowledge Affiliates and The University of Texas School of Social Work with John Marostica and Dr. Rowena Fong playing instrumental roles in helping create this extraordinary event. Approximately seventy people participated in this emotional and educational offering.

After the film, FCC members, AKA members, and area therapists lead discussions in three breakout rooms exploring some of the complexities of the issues surrounding the relinquishment of the children featured in the film. Obviously, some of the questions raised by the film were difficult to answer, yet Dr. Chang enthusiastically and thoroughly answered all of the questions to the best of his ability. While he didn't intentionally set out on this path, Dr. Chang has become a liaison between China and the world of international adoption. His unique perspective and ability to move in both arenas makes him a valuable friend to the adoption community as his films explore some of the many issues regarding our children and their past.

The discussions after the film could have continued well into the evening. Clearly, we have a lot to talk about regarding our children's past. We hope to have Dr. Chang back in Austin to continue these conversations.

In his role as filmmaker and liaison to the adoption community, Dr. Chang has some compelling insights about the search for Chinese birth parents. He has written the article "Thoughts on the Search for the Birth Parents" that explores some of these ideas. Too lengthy to print here, it is available on our web site under "resources." If you have questions or comments, he welcomes email communication at [Changfu.Chang@millersville.edu](mailto:Changfu.Chang@millersville.edu).



## FIELD TRIP FOLLOW-UP: **TERRA COTTA WARRIORS IN HOUSTON**

by Kellena Page

On June 6th, almost 60 Austin FCC members and their friends and families chartered a roomy bus and took a road trip to the Houston Museum of Natural Science to see the exhibit, **Terra Cotta Warriors: Guardians of China's First Emperor**. Special thanks goes to the wonderful people at the museum, who gave us a deep discount on the tickets.

Our visit started with a picnic in beautiful Hermann Park next to the museum, where children and their parents cooled off by wading in the nearby lake. The Terra Cotta Warrior exhibit was next. It is truly awe inspiring to see what seemingly impossible masterpieces we humans are capable of creating. Each soldier was rendered in exquisite and unique detail down to his fingernails, facial characteristics, hairstyle, and uniform. Truly magnificent. The exhibit included one soldier that the children were allowed to touch. Imagine the squeals of surprise followed by laughter every time that soldier (actually, a man in costume) grabbed back when touched.

Next on the agenda was a visit to the Cockrell Butterfly Center and Brown Hall of Entomology, which were equally fascinating. We all learned amazing things about the world of bugs. Personally, I would have been happy never knowing how truly giant the average cockroach can get. Fortunately, that vision was erased as soon as we entered the butterfly center and I saw a brightly colored butterfly land on my daughter's little hand.

The final stop was a visit to the Burke Baker Planetarium. Several movies were offered at different times so families got to choose which one to see. My family learned about Mars while others attended a movie on asteroids. My husband learned that a dark theater with seats that recline way back is the perfect place for a nap. (We were all pretty pooped by then.)

All in all, the trip could not have gone better and it was a wonderful opportunity for our FCC community members to connect.

In case you want to see the Terra Cotta Warriors exhibit and missed our trip in June, it will be at the Houston Museum of Natural Science until October 18, 2009. Go to <http://www.hmns.org/> for more details.



# Dragon Boat Festival Fun

by Angela Meek

Austin's annual **Duanwu Jie** or Dragon Boat Festival, held on April 25th at Festival Beach, was a free, come and go event, open to the public.

The festival is sponsored by the Asian American Community Partnership and the Asian American Cultural Center (<http://www.asianamericanc.com>). Teams from Samsung, Dell, 3M, the Travis County Sheriff's Office, the Austin Police Department, HEB, UT Austin, and from out of town competed in the 11th annual race.

Opening ceremony attendees included Executive VP of Dell, Larry Tu; State Representative, Mark Strama; and Deputy Consul General of PRC, Zhou Ding. A variety of booths offered small hands-on crafts for the kids; books, clothes, and other trinkets for purchase; and a variety of foods such as fresh fruit Popsicles®, fried rice, egg rolls, dumplings, and **zong-zi** (rice wrapped in bamboo leaves). Food was cooked fresh on the spot and was very reasonably priced at \$1 to \$3 per item. Families could circulate among the booths; sit in the center stage area to watch performances by local groups such as April Rain, Natyala Ladies, and Austin Youth Chamber; or wander over to the lake and watch the various heats of the boat races. The FCC hot sales item of the year was a bamboo umbrella that could be decorated. It sold out early and still had walk-up traffic asking for more.

The 2009 Dragon Boat trophy belongs to Team T.O.R.A - a combo team of members from four outrigger clubs (Austin OCC, Texas OCC, Hokulele OCC, and Hoewa'a OCC).



Interested in a playgroup, mom's night out, a book group, or adoption resources? Or just want to keep updated on our events? Visit our web site at [www.main.org/fccaustin/](http://www.main.org/fccaustin/)

In case you want to see the Terra Cotta Warriors exhibit and missed our trip in June, it will be at the Houston Museum of Natural Science until October 18, 2009. Go to <http://www.hmns.org/> for more details.

Check out the article on culture keeping titled, "What's My Heritage?" by Martha Nichols, in the summer 2009 edition of *Brain, Child* magazine. Just go to <http://brainchildmag.com/> to read it on line.

*Mei* magazine is a special publication serving the needs of the Asian adoptee community. According to their materials, "**Mei** means *beautiful* in Mandarin Chinese." This quarterly, glossy publication is a wholesome and age-appropriate magazine with a special emphasis on issues specific to female Chinese adoptees ages 7 to 14." Check out their web site at [www.meimagazine.com](http://www.meimagazine.com)

# This -n- That

Amy Mok and the Asian-American Cultural Center will host their annual Moon Festival celebration on Saturday, September 12 from 10 am to 3 pm. Food, entertainment, and vendors will be featured at this free event open to the public. Go to [www.asianamericanc.com](http://www.asianamericanc.com) for more information about the event and the center in general.

It's never too late to join or renew your FCC membership and you can even do this on line at our web site (see above address). FCC Austin members have enjoyed financial discounts for the Dr. Chang event and the trip to Houston. We think membership should have its benefits and we plan to keep them coming.

**Do you have photos, articles, reviews, resources, ideas or thoughts to submit to the newsletter?**

**Feel free to email them to the newsletter editor, Angela Meek, at [ammeek@att.net](mailto:ammeek@att.net).**

**We'd love to hear from you!**

## 2009 Austin FCC Board of Directors

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# Make Your Voice Count: Speaking Out Against New Warner Brothers Film

by Stacey Cone

If you haven't yet heard, then we feel it is important to let you know—on July 24th Warner Brothers is releasing a horror/slasher movie called "Orphan." As you can probably at least partly surmise from the film's title, the movie is about a newly adopted older child who turns out to be a homicidal maniac that terrorizes her new family with bloodthirsty rampages. The movie poster shows a nine-year-old black-haired girl in ponytails with a dark, disturbing look on her face, and a tagline reading, "There is something wrong with Esther." Until recently the movie trailer, drawing on a line from the film itself, said, "It must be hard to love an adopted child as much as your own."

In recent weeks, a surge of protests nationwide from the adoption community, including FCC groups across America, prompted Warner Brothers to change its marketing materials and drop the offensive movie line from its trailer. Adam Pertman, Executive Director of the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute, a leading adoption organization, pointed out that getting the trailer changed, if nothing else, was important because the trailer's fallacious and destructive message about adopted children was being broadly transmitted even to people who would never see the film.

Anger and outrage over the film prompted thousands of people to join Facebook groups, sign petitions, and participate in letter writing campaigns in opposition to the movie's message. Our own FCC Austin President Becky Harding added our organization's voice to that collective effort, cogently arguing in a recent letter to Warner Brothers that while our adoptive community members recognize Warner Brothers' right to make "Orphan," our organization denounces the company's irresponsibility in creating a movie that intentionally and flagrantly preys on longstanding fears and misperceptions about adopted children.

Harding, like many others speaking out against the film, objected to Warner Brothers callously contributing to erroneous but enduring social stigmas about older adopted children, in particular, adding to the difficulties that this all-too-vulnerable population confronts and must cope with all the time. Margot Logan of Orlando, FL on a Facebook protest group site, put it simply: "If a child was called a homicidal maniac simply because of race, ethnicity, or social class, it would be considered politically incorrect. Why is this any different?"

Adoption community leaders say that it has been a long time since a movie caused this much angst and worry in the adoption, foster care, and orphan care communities, but while many groups among these communities continue to be hopeful that the film will be withdrawn before its release, others acknowledge that Warner Brothers is unlikely to can a multi-million dollar film. Chances are far greater that the production company will try to recover its investment and profit on it by releasing the film on the 24<sup>th</sup> as planned.

If you would like to join others in signing an online petition against the film's release, go to <http://www.petitionspot.com/petitions/OrphanMovie> or express objection to the movie by contacting your local theaters or writing directly to the companies involved in the film's production and release. The addresses are in the breakout box below.

Note: Becky Harding's letter to Warner Bros. may be found at the FCC Austin web site under resources.

Warner Bros.  
4000 Warner Blvd.  
Burbank, CA 91522  
818-954-6000

Silver Pictures  
4000 Warner Blvd. 90  
Burbank, CA 91522-0001  
818-954-4490

Time Warner Inc.  
One Time Warner Center  
New York, NY 10019-8016  
212-484-8000

## Positive Adoption Language

*The way we talk—and the words we choose—say a lot about what we think and value. When we use positive adoption language, we say that adoption is a way to build a family just as birth is. Both are important, but one is not more important than the other.*

Choose the following positive adoption language instead of the negative talk that helps perpetuate the myth that adoption is second best. By using positive adoption language, you'll reflect the true nature of adoption, free of innuendo.

Positive language	Negative language
Birth parent	Real parent
Biological parent	Natural parent
Birth child	Own child
My child	Adopted child; Own child
Born to unmarried parents	Illegitimate
Terminate parental rights	Give up
Make an adoption plan	Give away
To parent	To keep
Waiting child	Adoptable child; available child
Biological or birthfather	Real father
Making contact with	Reunion
Parent	Adoptive parent
Intercountry adoption	Foreign adoption
Adoption triad	Adoption triangle
Permission to sign a release	Disc
Search	Track down parents
Child placed for adoption	An unwanted child
Court termination	Child taken away
Child with special needs	Handicapped child
Child from abroad	Foreign child
Was adopted	Is adopted

Words not only convey facts, they also evoke feelings. When a TV movie talks about a "custody battle" between "real parents" and "other parents," society gets the wrong impression that only birthparents are real parents and that adoptive parents aren't real parents. Members of society may also wrongly conclude that all adoptions are "battles." Positive adoption language can stop the spread of misconceptions such as these. By using positive adoption language, we educate others about adoption. We choose emotionally "correct" words over emotionally-laden words. We speak and write in positive adoption language with the hopes of impacting others so that this language will someday become the norm.

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