

## MEETING THE CHILDREN

August 12, 2009

*Fiona Poon is currently volunteering at the China Care Home in Beijing. She is going into her junior year at UCLA and will be the Fundraising Co-Director of the China Care Bruins at UCLA when she returns to school. Fiona has been interested in helping children orphaned in China ever since discovering that her mother was almost abandoned when she was born prematurely in Macau. Thankfully, Fiona's grandmother did not listen to the friends and family members who urged her to abandon the fragile baby. "I cannot even imagine what would have happened otherwise!" said Fiona. Joining the China Care Bruins was the perfect way to help the children not as lucky as her mother. Read her initial impressions upon meeting the children at the China Care Home below.*



I cannot believe that over 40 toddlers and babies and nannies live on the same floor. Everybody I've had the pleasure to meet has been super friendly, each with his or her own flair and personality. On the first night when we first put on the happy slippers and met all the precious children, they were all extremely uncertain and shy about us. You would never guess yesterday or this morning that we'd barely met! Almost all the children warmed up to us yesterday; my absolute favorite is TianQj.

I have the most to say about him because he practically hogged all of my attention and time yesterday and this morning. I just got the chance to learn more about him today. He has two conditions: on the right side of his face he has a lymphatic malformation, which is not that obvious right away. But, on the left side of his face and on parts of his legs, he has what is called melanotic nevi, which is a condition where his face is black and has hair growing out of portions of it up to his left ear. He will need laser surgery, which he will get in the fall when there is space for him at the hospital.

TianQj is more rambunctious than the others, often bossing them around because he's three and bigger than most of the other children. I'm not sure how TianQj got so clingy to me but I know that I especially enjoy working with the older kids because I feel like we can actually communicate. So far we've already read books, played ring toss, a version of ring around the rosie and run around the apartment for more than an hour! Today he seems to enjoy sitting on my lap more than anything else which is a nice change because I am still exhausted from yesterday!



*TianQj (left) and friends at The China Care Home*

*Fiona has already helped her club raise more than \$5,000 to fund surgeries for our children. Through the "Bruins Big Buddies" mentorship program at her club, she has also become a friend and adviser to a young Chinese-born adopted child now living with her "forever family" in California.*