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LIFE LESSONS FROM LITTLE FIGHTERS

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Lanka Jayasiriwardena is a graduate student majoring in accounting at McGill University in Canada. She has contributed to her China Care club's fundraising efforts and thought volunteering at our China Care Home in Beijing would be an eye opening experience. She was able to have that experience this summer and is now back at school sharing what she learned with her club. Read more as she reflects on her time in Beijing.



From the moment I set foot in the China Care home, I was able to see how much the children were loved and nurtured. The residence itself is accommodatingly spacious and charming and the staff, who greeted us with open arms, is beyond wonderful. With more than enough space to play in, music constantly playing and loving nannies to interact with, the children are full of joy and carefree. After just the first

day, I could already feel that I was getting attached to the little ones and knew that by volunteering my time, it would open my eyes to another world.

I really enjoyed spending time with the children, especially a little boy named YanCun. This little guy has two medical conditions: anal atresia, which means the opening of his anus was either missing or obstructed, and urethrostenosis, which is a narrow urethra. (He already had surgery to correct the anal atresia and uses a catheter for the urethrostenosis.) He is about two and a half years old and despite his special needs, is the most joyful child that I have ever seen. YanCun is very friendly, clever and has a smile that could light up any room. He loves being the center of attention and enjoys entertaining the nannies as well as his friends.

One of the cutest moments I recall of him was when we were taking pictures and he became mesmerized by the camera. Seconds later, he wanted to do the same and began pretending to "take a picture" using one of his toys as a camera. He then decided to transform this same toy into a phone and went to the other room pretending to take a phone call. He is such an adorable boy, and will contort his face (for comedy's sake) in various ways so that everyone can laugh. He amusingly repeats what the nannies say and likes assisting them whenever the situation demands it. YanCun also has a sensitive side and is extremely polite and caring with the other children. I've noticed that he does not like to see others cry and will always try to entertain them to keep them from being sad.



Lanka and YanCun

Through my time spent playing with the children they definitely touched my heart, because they are such strong little fighters. They can teach us all a valuable life lesson.