

# VOLUNTEERING AT THE CHINA CARE HOME - MAX FRUMKES - DAY 5



July 20, 2011

When I first arrived in Beijing, I didn't know what to expect. I had heard great things from friends who have participated in the China Care volunteer program before me, but I was still apprehensive. I had never traveled alone, let alone to a country on the other side of the world. I also have never worked with children in the way I'd be working with them here. So when I say that the China Care Home in Beijing is nothing less than a home, I truly mean it.

The first day in the Home was an overwhelming experience. There were children in every room I looked into. Some were babies, some toddlers, and even a few older children. I didn't know what to do. When I stated just that, I was told "Play with them." So I started to play. I began in one room, and then moved to another and another after that, until finally I had played with nearly all the children in the home. Each of the children was completely different. Some children were wary of me, others were open. Some were fussy while others seemed to be perpetually happy. I even got a few of the babies to giggle.

In my time playing with the kids, I completely forgot my anxieties. I was no longer absorbed by the fact that I was in a foreign country, whose language I didn't know. I was now completely consumed with the need to be with these kids. Every morning I come in excited to volunteer; I am greeted with the smiles not only of the children, but also of the staff as well.



The China Care facility is definitely a home, not just a medical halfway house. There is truly no better way to describe it. The children are cared for with the utmost love and compassion. Each child is played with and nurtured, receiving the emotional care to go along with the physical care they receive. I even feel it is a home for me as well. I feel welcomed every day I volunteer here, by both the children and the staff. Despite my inability to understand what the nannies are saying, we still have laughs with each other and help one another. The China Care Home is a place where everybody involved feels completely at ease.



It is truly going to be hard for me to say goodbye to everyone here, and not just because I literally do not know how to say it. I have fallen so in love with these children that I cannot imagine leaving them. This Home is a home for me, and it will be impossible for me to say goodbye.

*Max just started a China Care Club at Horace Greeley High School and he is making the most of his time in Beijing.*