

## CHINA CARE JOURNAL BY FLORA BARKER

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Entering The China Care Home for the first time was quite daunting; I had never been to Beijing and I'm not too familiar with the language. However, the Home not only welcomes the children with open arms, but welcomed me too. I arrived to shouts of Jie Jie (big sister) and was greeted by so many smiling children; it was hard to believe any of them were ill at all.



The care provided by the Home's nannies is immediately obvious. All of these children have virtually nothing to call their own, they don't even have their health, and the nannies are there for them giving them constant love throughout what has to be the most trying times of their lives.

Each day at the Home brings new surprises; new children arrive, children are sent to the hospital for check-ups and some are discharged. It is sad to see the children leave, but we say goodbye with the knowledge that they are healthy and will continue on to have the opportunity to live an amazing life.

One of the first children I met here at the home was a four-year-old boy named FuSong. He was always smiling, even when he was clearly in a great deal of pain. He was always happy just to sit quietly and watch the world go by, though when he felt like it he could run circles around the nannies. FuSong was abandoned in northern China suffering from two rare congenital bladder abnormalities.

FuSong's operation to repair his congenital deformity means that he has to remain lying down for two months, and then two more operations. I was lucky enough to go and visit him in hospital, which was an amazing experience. I was able to see full circle how China Care helps these children even when they are not at The China Care Home. The caregiver who was with FuSong had been by his side, day and night, for seven days. This is the kind of dedication I would expect from a mother to her child. This is the relationship that the children have with their caregivers here at China Care.

Back at the Home, I spend my time mainly with the toddlers- -they have by far the most energy and need someone to constantly run around with them, play games and sing to them. Many of the children are in casts to correct their club feet. This means that they are slower at moving around, though it in no way hinders them. As soon as I walk into the room they ask me to pick them up. It's often a contest to see who can be held the longest!

I came to China with a love of medicine and an end goal of becoming a doctor; I came to gain vital experience in my future career. I know I will leave with more, a love of the country and of the children I shared my time with. China Care has given me something I will take with me back home, an experience that I know will shape the rest of my life.