

NEWS » CHINA CARE JOURNAL
**VOLUNTEERING AT
THE CHINA CARE
HOME-- DAY 13,
SUMMER 2010**

July 24, 2010

Day 13 by Melissa Wong

I have been looking forward to traveling back to China ever since I could remember and China Care Foundation gave me the chance to do just that this summer. Being a Chinese Canadian adopted from China when I was a few months old, this trip is my first time back to my birth country.



This trip offered so much, from sightseeing to some of the most prominent Chinese landmarks to spending valuable time with the China Care orphans who are pre and post surgery. In a heartbeat, I applied to take part in this great opportunity and felt so lucky to be accepted.

Boarding a plane for my ten-day trip was probably the most nerve-wracking and exciting thing I've ever done. Thirteen hours later I touched down in Beijing and Katerina from China Care was there waiting for me. After a good night's rest, the eight China Care volunteers, including myself, were introduced to the facility. I do not know how to speak Mandarin so I was very nervous about the language barrier. The nurses and staff here made me feel very comfortable even though I felt out of my element. I was happy to find that the children and staff were so friendly, because they made the volunteering run smoothly.



Every day we spend about six hours a day with the children, but it only took me one day to fall in love with them. They so loving and determined that it's hard to say goodbye to them at the end of the day, not to mention at the end of this trip. Specifically two of the children I spend a lot of time with are Lon and Miao.

Lon had surgery to remove a tumor, so currently his one ear is larger than the other. With his ear size difference, his balance is off, but he can stand up straight. I enjoy playing, holding, and helping him stand and walk. He is full of laughs and becomes quickly attached to people who give him attention. I knew he was destined to be one of my favorites on the first day, because the first time we met he wouldn't let me go.

Miao is a bundle of energy running around in her cute pig sandals. I first met her when she ran up to me and gave me a huge hug. She suffered from spina bifida, but thanks to China Care has had surgery to correct it. She gestures and shouts the same phrases to me to either follow her, pick her up, or wave good-bye. Just a few minutes with her always brightens my day.

Today we took the toddlers to the park and I'd never seen them so excited! They ran up the stairs and slid down the slide more times than I could count. These children really know how to embrace the little joys of life. They inspire me every day with their carefree, happy lifestyle despite the challenging medical obstacles they face.

So far traveling to China and spending time with the children at China Care has been unreal. My only fear is that this week will go by too fast and soon I'll be traveling back home. I hope to someday travel back to China because I have definitely taken away what I came here for: an experience I will never forget.