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**GETTING TO KNOW
JIANG**

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John Speed Meyers, a junior at Tufts University, has a passion for China and a determination to make a difference in the world. An International Relations major, he immersed himself in an intensive language program to learn Mandarin and spent a semester studying abroad at Zhejiang University in Hangzhou, China. Through China Care, he sought a greater understanding of the Chinese people and their country and hoped the experience would give him a better perspective of their society. In his story below, Meyers explains how his time spent in Beijing with China Care also taught him the importance of family.



He towers over the other babies, using his size advantage to boss around the other babies. If another baby has temporarily claimed a toy he desires, Jiang understands the power of a good bop on the head in order to reclaim his treasured toy. Or, if he prefers to stay in one part of the room instead of moving, he can deftly use his bodyweight to strain against you with all his might. In brief, Jiang is one smart baby, albeit a little big for his own good!



Jiang came to China Care in order to undergo surgery for hydrocephalus. After a successful surgery in the early summer, he has spent the last two months recuperating at one of China Care's children's homes where I have had the chance to spend time with him.

He has been slowly developing verbal skills over the past few months and has even recently mastered basic commands. "Bao", pick me up, and "zuo", sit down, are now constantly on the tip of his tongue, allowing him to affect the behavior of any adult within hearing distance. Because he knows I have a weak spot for him, his cries of "gege", older brother, have become a panacea for all his ills, prompting me to provide whatever comfort he wants.

More astounding than his budding verbal skills are his ball-throwing capabilities. Having already perfected the "no-look" pass, he is currently developing a mean fast ball. There's one hitch: he often uses the other babies as targets and coaxes me into a mild game of pass only to transform the game into target practice! Even the ayis, or staff, cannot escape his antics, as Jiang does not hesitate to launch a ball at unsuspecting ayis. I should stop this behavior, and I would, but the sheer joy this two year-old gets from such a harmless game is pure magic! The smile that erupts on this child's face is the kind of event that could make even the Grinch's heart grow four sizes.



Though he seems so much bigger than the other babies in size, on a trip with him to the doctor, I realized that he is still just a little boy. Jiang sat happily in the back seat

of the car with me, staring over my shoulder at the passing scenery, on our way to a routine vaccination. He remained in good spirits when we entered the clinic, but as soon as he approached the nurse holding a syringe, he used his full lung capacity to let us know he was scared. While other babies, who were much smaller than Jiang, had merely whimpered after the shot, Jiang erupted into full hysterics before the nurse even administered the vaccine. Piercing cries continued for the next five minutes and in the din of that time I realized the enormity of China Care's mission. No parent was going to rush to the aid of Jiang. We were his support. It was our comfort that would stop the crying.