

NEWS - CHINA CARE JOURNAL
**VOLUNTEERING AT
THE CHINA CARE
HOME-- DAY 12,
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Day 12 Kaytlena Stillman

When I first arrived at The China Care Home, I didn't know what to expect. I had heard from past volunteers that their trip was an unforgettable experience and that the kids were absolutely adorable. And they were definitely right.



My first thoughts about The China Care Home were how incredible the facility is, and how well the kids are taken care of. The Home takes up a whole floor of an apartment complex, complete with beds, bathrooms, tons of toys, and all the necessary medical equipment. Each apartment is organized into groups of children with similar age groups and disabilities, so that the nurses can develop specialization in how to care for them. The attention the nurses give to the children is absolutely incredible. I really admire their unconditional love and devotion. I've even asked them to help me practice speaking Chinese, and I feel like I've improved already!

This is only my second day of volunteering, but I feel like I've known the children forever. The toddler room was my first experience. The second I walked through that door, each one of them came running up to me yelling, "Jie Jie!" which means older sister. They'll hold my hand and beg me to pick them up. Their never-ending energy is contagious! Or at least I think it is, until by the end of the day, I realize that I'm absolutely exhausted from spinning around, lifting kids up, and chasing a ball they keep throwing around, but I'm that much happier for it.

One boy I've nicknamed "monkey," will climb all over you. His legs are so strong that if you pick him up, he'll hold on to you until you have to pry him off when it's time to leave, not that you'd ever really want to. One girl who comes to mind is named Yan. She is the oldest of all the children here and certainly the most mature. She has blossomed into an amazing little lady, at the mere age of 5. She'll reprimand her friends when they refuse to eat and she'll share her toys with others. But most of all, she can't keep a smile off her face. Who would've thought that someone so joyful had just gone through the experience of having a brain tumor removed? I may be a whole 15 years older than she is, but she is my hero.

At first I was afraid to handle the infants because I was certain they were too fragile. When I become comfortable, I walked into one of the infant rooms. It wasn't long before I realized how amazing these little creatures are, and how fun they are to play with. One little girl has huge eyes and a smile that could melt your heart. I call her "Smiley" because I've never seen a baby so happy and well-behaved.

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The best thing I can take away from my experience here at The China Care Home so far is what I have learned from the children. They don't have a family and they've experienced medical disabilities that most of us will never have to go through in our lives. Yet despite all this, they are still all smiles and constant love. If anything, I've learned to appreciate my family and home, and to be thankful for the truly amazing things that China Care is doing here for these children. I am so happy I can be a part of this enormously wonderful cause.