

# STARTING A CLUB: ADVICE FROM STANFORD CHINA CARE'S PRESIDENT



January 10, 2011

Starting a Club:

Advice from Stanford China Care's President, William Lovering

My experience starting the Stanford China Care Club at the beginning of the 2010 school year has been one of the most rewarding tasks I've undertaken.

The club's mission is to give Stanford students the opportunity to help orphans in China and to provide a community for Bay Area families with adopted children from China. Specifically the club wants to help interested students volunteer at The China Care Home in Beijing and teach adopted Chinese children about their culture through playgroups.

Having worked in China and lived with a Chinese family, I knew China Care was a worthwhile cause. My commitment to China Care was re-enforced when I volunteered at The China Care Home in the summer of 2010 and saw firsthand the loving and caring environment that the Foundation creates for these children in need. I was also aware that large communities of families with adopted children from China live close to the Stanford campus. So for me, the most challenging part about starting the Stanford China Care Club wasn't finding like-minded people who would take ownership in the club, but overcoming the challenges set by the school.



If you're a college student thinking about starting a China Care Club, I have some advice that I hope will help get your club recognized by your University and also help you lay a solid foundation for your club's long-term growth:

My first piece of advice is to think about how your new club will differ from other existing clubs - what unmet need will your China Care Club address?

Second, make sure you have a faculty advisor and, to ensure continuity, a clear plan of succession among club members from year to year.

Third, as another way of ensuring continuity, try to get both underclassmen and upperclassmen involved in your club.

Fourth, reach out to the club presidents of other Asian-themed clubs on campus to generate interest in your new China Care club.



Fifth, don't be afraid of diving headfirst into organizing an event. Right after forming the club, we held a playgroup for adopted children from China and their families to show that our club could be successful and was really meeting an unmet need among students and the broader community.

Sixth, reach out to your local Families with Children from China chapter. We made a connection with representatives of the Northern California Chapter of Families with Children from China (FCC) to recruit families for our first event and for future events. We worked closely with FCC parents, who were very helpful at every stage of event planning. At the playgroup, we taught some simple Chinese characters using Popsicle sticks, read Chinese folktales, and decorated Chinese fans that each child got to take home. Since our first playgroup, I am thrilled to report that the Stanford China Care Club has nearly doubled in size, and many FCC parents have emailed asking how they can get involved. We have already planned two more events--a Chinese New Year celebration and a book reading by Caryn Yacowitz, author of *The Jade Stone*.

Seventh, spread the word on campus! In preparation for the event, we held an information session to get new members and designed posters and dining hall table slips advertising our playgroup.

I have had a lot of fun getting our China Care Club off the ground with the help of other dedicated club members. The club has already been, and I know will continue to be, a highlight of my college experience. Good luck to all the students out there who are planning their own China Care Clubs!