

NEWS - CHINA CARE JOURNAL  
**VOLUNTEERING AT  
THE CHINA CARE  
HOME-- DAY 4,  
SUMMER 2010**

July 14, 2010

*Day 4 by Jan Stokes*

I arrived in Beijing on a Tuesday evening after enduring a 13 hour plane trip from Toronto. Not close to adjusted to the time difference, I was tired and cranky. When I met Katerina, the China Care Volunteer Coordinator she was very welcoming, seemingly understanding of my general sluggishness.

Once we arrived at the China Care Home, a giant chrome sign greeted me as soon as the elevator doors opened. "China Care" was written proudly. It was an exciting moment. I have never been to China before, and I have never cared for babies before either, and now I found myself in the middle of doing both of those things. I was immensely proud.

I gently, and rather timidly, walked into one of the rooms. I was greeted with nothing less than a smile that could have lit up the sprawling playroom in which this little boy was sitting. I was completely surprised at the welcoming smile that greeted me, and a little shocked to see that it was coming from a toddler who was no older than three.

Many things happened between that Tuesday afternoon and now. I've found myself growing more and more attached to more and more of the wonderful children who live here. For instance, as soon as I finish writing this, I will be walking out of the China Care office, turning to the left, and entering a large, brightly lit room filled with toddlers. We will play with some of the countless toys that litter the floor; I will pick some of them up, carry them around, and then do it all over again. And I can't wait to do it, because as I sit here, I can hear the heart-warming shrieks and laughs that babies make.



I always seem to forget that I am helping care for kids with medical disabilities. The conditions range from cardiac abnormalities to limb underdevelopments -- most are very severe, but when I play with the children, I don't notice them. I see a room filled with bright-eyed, happy kids patiently waiting for a family to call their own.

I saw such a family today. A little girl just shy of four years old named Fang met her family today. She has become a favorite of the volunteers here at China Care. What she lacks in stature, she more than makes up for in personality. She's always the first to greet people coming into her room, then gives the warmest hugs that anyone could give, and she is always, always well behaved. She's the most peaceful, joyous, brilliant, loving young girl I've ever met. And she's found a new family now. Her family is fantastic -- she is just as lucky as the family who has the fortune of calling her daughter.

Thinking back, I remember Fang gently taking my hand and happily running me over to her room. She instructed me to sit on a chair and she opened a small box, a pair of probably size one running shoes. Out she pulled a small pink dress, two pink bows, and a photo album. It was a gift from her new adoptive family. I couldn't understand what she was saying, but I knew the words were those of excitement, and I knew she wanted me to feel the same. I did. As I am now, I was filled with a sense of joy. An intelligent, happy, wonderful little girl has a loving family, and even though I had no part in it, I feel lucky that I am part of this fantastic organization that allowed Fang to find a new life. I don't want to say that I'm a touch emotional as I write this, but I am. China Care has provided a 3-year-old girl with love, a new family, and hope. Undoubtedly, there will be many more kids like Fang who will find a new life due to the hard work and diligence of China Care.

I haven't even begun to tell you how lucky I am to be here with all of these children. It's really a life-changing experience. It will be over in another mere week, and I will be back on a 13 hour plane ride to Toronto with little more than some pictures that I can grasp hold of. But what is going to be more important than anything I can touch is the memories of the smiling children, their laughs, their songs, their joy, and the knowledge that all of these kids are well on their way to enjoying a life filled with happiness, good health, and a loving family. Thank you China Care!

