

## CARA'S STORY



August 15, 2008

At our annual fundraiser in June 2008, China Care called a couple onstage to thank them for their particularly exceptional support. The couple, Debi and Jay Shaw, made an extremely generous donation two years earlier at our 2006 benefit specifically to pay for one little girl's costly life-saving surgery. As the Shaws humbly accepted founder Matt Dalio's gratitude, they did not realize that China Care had arranged for them to meet the girl whose life they had saved. The Shaws erupted into tears of joy as Cara and her adoptive family from Ohio appeared onstage to greet them.

Cara, who suffered from severe scoliosis, was abandoned in Taiyuan city when she was roughly eight years old. She was taken to an orphanage where she stayed until she was placed in a foster home funded by China Care. "Her diagnosis in China was that there is not much we can do about it," explained China Care's Executive Director Brent Johnson. "She was going to die because of pressures on internal organs from her upper body."



The Shaws had wanted to meet Cara ever since making the contribution. "It was the opportunity to help somebody who we thought was quite possibly not going to get the help that she needed," explained Jay of their reason for donating.

While awaiting funding for her life-saving surgery, Cara lived in China with her foster family which included a foster brother named Johnny. When a family from Ohio came to China to adopt Johnny, they also met Cara, who by this time was 13 years old. The joy of taking Johnny home was coupled with the realization that Cara was not only going to die from her disease, but she was once again being left by a "family" member. When they got home, they shared Cara's story with their friends and neighbors in Ohio, which included Diane and Joe Korpics.



"They told us that if she wasn't adopted by the time she was 14 she'd be forced to go into an adult institution for the rest of her life," remembers Diane. A few weeks later, Diane and Joe, who had two biological daughters of their own, started the adoption process to make Cara part of their family.

Meanwhile, in a fortuitous chain of events, a volunteer who met Cara in China sent additional funds for her surgery, Cara's foster sponsor paid for her travel to the United States, where the surgery took place, and many of the doctors performed Cara's operation pro bono. With most of Cara's medical bill covered, China Care had money left over from the Shaws' donation. The Shaws generously gave permission to use the excess for other children in need. So far, their kindness has benefitted at least five more China Care children.

After months of rehabilitation, Cara, who now uses a wheelchair to get around, moved to Ohio as an official member of the Korpics family. The prospect of meeting the Shaws in June triggered a great deal of emotion from Diane Korpics. "She wasn't our daughter at the time," Korpics managed to get out through a flood of tears, "and they saved her life!"

Today, Cara flashes an infectious smile and playful attitude. According to her parents, she is constantly on the move, shooting hoops with Johnny (who now lives around the corner) hitting tennis balls in the driveway or toiling over jigsaw puzzles. "She bonds easily and she loves easily, which is amazing considering the history," Diane Korpics described affectionately. "And, she's very easy to love."