



# CHINA CARE CARE PACKAGE

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## Tiny Fan

By Lynn Wang, China Care Program Coordinator

Most of the children in our program have complex medical problems that require at least one surgery. But sometimes we care for tiny, premature babies like Fan, who do not need surgery, but who do need constant care and love.



When Fan arrived at The China Care Home from Henan Province last fall, she was almost two months old, but weighed only 1.6 kg (3.3 lbs.) Fan's head looked smaller than a human hand, with a circumference of only 30 cm (11.8"). Fan needed and was given round-the-clock attention. Because she was so fragile, her nannies held her in their arms to keep her warm and hated to put her down. When they did put Fan in her crib, they swaddled her with blankets to give a sense of security and to maintain her body temperature. They also tip toed around her crib lest they make any noise that would disturb her sleep.

Fan needed 8 to 10 feedings a day and a special, high-nutrient formula. Because Fan did not have much strength to suck milk, her nannies were quite patient and fed her slowly. After feeding her, they held her upright in their arms and patted her back until she burped. Sometimes she spit up milk, but these frequent and careful feedings worked, enabling her to gain weight gradually. Two months after her arrival, Fan had gained over 2 kg (4.4 lbs)!



Fan also gradually started moving instead of sleeping all the time. When lying on her back, she would wave her hands and kick her legs. Fan liked to stare at her nanny's face, hold her nanny's fingers tightly, and make a few soft sounds "oh, oh" as if she were communicating with her.

Fan's nannies took pains to help her muscles grow stronger. They would shake toys and make noises near her so she would turn her head a little to have a look. When Fan recognized a passerby, she would smile. To help Fan learn to raise her head, her nannies had her lie on her stomach and then used a toy to attract her attention. With repeated practice, Fan's neck got stronger so she could raise her head by herself.



Fan was so well cared for by her nannies that she did not have to be hospitalized while she was at The China Care Home. Compared with other children her age she stayed small, but developed normally. And when Fan left The China Care Home earlier this year to go back to the Zhengzhou Welfare Institution, she was six months and weighed 5 kg (11 lbs.)! She is now enrolled in Half the Sky's Infant Nurture Program where she will continue to be cherished.

Everyone at The China Care Home who took such good care of the once fragile Fan hopes she will find a loving and forever family soon.

## Welcome Home Tabitha Xinfang!



During the two years she was at The China Care Home, our staff grew to love a little girl named Wang Xinfang, so it was a bittersweet day when she left. Everyone was thrilled that "FangFang" had found a family to call her own, but everyone (especially her foster mom) was also sad to see her leave.

During her stay at the Home, FangFang had been through three surgeries to correct multiple birth defects. She had also grown from a tiny, six-month-old baby into a big girl of 29 months, a "defender of justice" who was quick to protect a friend when her book was being snatched away by another child.

Everyone who loved FangFang was thrilled to receive this update from her mom, and everyone who knew her was not surprised to learn that she has brought "a lot of excitement" to her family:

*Our daughter's new name is Tabitha Xinfang Runkles. She is almost three and doing very well. She has a vibrant little personality and definitely holds her own with her two big brothers! She's understanding English very well and learning to speak new words all the time. She's been to several doctors already and recently had surgery to correct her tethered spinal cord. She'll also need some more surgeries in the future, and we're working with excellent doctors to get everything taken care of. Despite her medical issues, she's mostly healthy and full of energy.*



*Some of her favorite things to do are writing and playing with her baby dolls. By "writing" I literally mean writing! She does not like to color, but likes to use a pen to meticulously write in her own little language. She loves to take care of her "babies," putting them to sleep or feeding them a bottle. When we first brought her home she was terrified of dolls and stuffed animals, but now she really enjoys them. She was also terrified of our dog, but they've become good friends now. Tabitha's very friendly and outgoing and loves to yell "BYE!!!!" at the top of her lungs whenever we're leaving somewhere. She's full of energy and has added a lot of excitement to our family.*

– The Runkles Family

Heath, Erin, Tabitha Xinfang (almost 3!), Ethan (6) and Jesse (4)



## Harvard China Care: Looking out for the children... one child at a time.

By Michelle Miller, Director of Grants

Chinese New Year brought my 2 and half year old daughter and me in touch with Chinese culture and a sense of community and purpose that was unexpected and so enjoyable!



We began the celebration of our second spring festival together by attending the Dumplings Playgroup run by Harvard China Care Club (HCC). This spirited student-run organization at Harvard College is made up of 15 dedicated undergraduates determined to help build

brighter futures for children with special needs in China and children in their community adopted from China.

The bi-monthly Saturday morning playgroups take place in a brightly lit preschool in a church near Harvard Square. Thanks to the China-themed activities and songs, the preschool turns into a little bit of China recreated in this corner of Cambridge. Thirty little girls, all adopted from various provinces of China, attend the playgroups. The HCC students organize all the activities and then supervise and play with the children, giving parents like me not only a welcome break from child care, but also the opportunity to bond.



The students are not only passionate playgroup organizers; they are also enthusiastic entrepreneurs. Since 2003, Harvard China Care Club has organized over 50 playgroups and raised enough funds to sponsor a nursery room at The China Care Home, along with numerous individual surgeries for these children.

At the Dumplings playgroups activities include festivals, night markets, lantern-making or learning about traditional music. The goal is to instill a love of Chinese language and culture and provide Chinese-American role models for the children. Judging by the enthusiasm of one 7 year old, Bo, from Guangdong, the playgroups are a wild success. Bo loves learning popular Chinese children's songs and loves hanging out with the student volunteers from Harvard. "Wow! I am learning so much Chinese," she says proudly, "I really want to improve it even more."



As for the students, they are equally enthusiastic: "I learn a lot about Chinese culture myself when I organize the activities for the playgroup," says Eden Liu, secretary of the Harvard China Care Club. Eden says she also learns what it means to be part of a larger community: "I feel like the children, their parents, and the volunteers are all part of one big, loving family."

Whether it is creating loving, extended families in the local community or saving children's lives in China, HCC is looking out for the children...one child at a time.



## Greenwich Schools Host Dance to Benefit China Care

As spring fever started kicking in, members of the China Care Clubs at Greenwich Academy and Brunswick School joined forces to host a formal dance for China Care at Round Hill Community Center. Brunswick sophomore Maxias Gonzalez-Bunster played disc jockey for the night, mixing up an array of classic and pop dance tunes. The lively event attracted nearly 75 seniors from these two prestigious schools and raised over \$1,000 for China Care.

Club presidents and seniors Kate McCarty and Parker Masselink, both long-time club members, organized the dance. Kate's brother Matthew, who started the Vanderbilt China Care Club in 2007, acted as chaperone as did another supportive older sibling and club alumni, Amanda Fuller. Amanda, whose sister Hayley is club co-president at Greenwich Academy, helped start the NYU China Care Club in 2006.

The dance was only one event in the sister-brother schools' year-long fundraising campaign, which also included sales of China Care t-shirts, and raffles with gift cards for local shops and eateries as prizes. Students from both schools are also gearing up to travel to Beijing this summer to volunteer at The China Care Home.

"We are all so excited to go to China to see the children and the impact we are able to make," says senior and Greenwich Academy club co-president Meredith Schmidt-Fellner.



Greenwich Academy Co-Presidents Haley Fuller, Kate McCarty & Meredith Schmidt-Fellner.

# New Preschool Program at The China Care Home!

Thankfully, many preschool-age children who come to The China Care Home stay only a short time – they receive life-saving medical treatment, heal quickly, and move on to one of Half the Sky's Little Sisters preschools. But some of our children have been missing out on preschool because their complex medical conditions require longer treatments and/or a longer recuperation. Last November, we started a mini Little Sisters preschool at The

China Care Home so our children wouldn't miss out on the fun activities that enhance young children's development and lift their moods. As you'll see in these photos, just like children everywhere, our children struggling to heal from their medical problems love to sing, dance, draw, "read" picture books, play games, etc., all of which they do with our talented and loving preschool teacher He Jing.



**CHINA CARE**  
Foundation



The mission of the China Care Foundation is to give special needs Chinese orphans the opportunity for a better life and to empower youth through direct humanitarian service. By providing extensive medical, social and educational programs devoted to children, China Care makes a lasting contribution to our shared future.

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