



## Danding Story Dec 2010

### Danding's story - Meeting "Mi Fan Ma Ma" in Pudong

by Danding Li  
12.12.2010

In the winter afternoon, I just couldn't reject the sweet smell of the afternoon tea. So I pushed the glass door of Radisson Hotel Pudong Century Park next door to the Thumb Plaza. A warm Latte in the hand, I was attracted by some cabins around the swimming pool outside the café. Having a closer look, it's the Christmas market built up by the hotel. In one of the cabins decorated with lovely cartoon patterns, I met Julie Martens, a warm-hearted woman from England, also a "Rice Mommy" who often brings rice to orphans in Anhui.

12 years ago, Julie and her husband Tony came to China. Nature-loving and outgoing, Julie decided soon to settle down in the green and foreigner-friendly Pudong. Since long, she regards Pudong as her second hometown. In spite of her HR job, she's devoted herself to the charities for orphans in poverty-stricken areas in at that time. Each Spring Festival, she will collect all kinds of boxes, decorating carefully, and send to orphanages in different cities as presents for children. 2009, this event was passed on to Lao Wang's Orphanage in Fuyang, Anhui. The kindness that Lao Wang and his wife rebuilt the factory to adopt 232 sick or handicapped orphans moved her so much. In this trip, an orphan held her clothes, whispering, "We want rice..." Julie suddenly understood: what she can do most is to meet the basic needs of children and let them feel be loved and cared. Then a charity organization called "Mi Fan Ma Ma (Rice Mommies)" was quickly set up. Supported by Hilton Hotel and other sister organizations, 25 mamas from all walks of life and all over the world came up to be a powerful group of volunteers who sends rice, toys and full of love to orphans every month.

Soon, the children were so expecting to see rice mamas. In Lao Wang's orphanage many kids were abandoned by their parents because of congenital diseases. Compared with other orphans, this special group needs more help from us. With the efforts made by Julie and other mothers, they've arranged 5 disabled orphans come to Shanghai and accept operation or medical assistance. Their future becomes clearer since now. There were even 6 lucky kids who got the chance to visit the Expo 2010 Shanghai passing by. Besides, mothers managed to hold 2 concerts, Lao Wang and some of the children were also invited to attend. They helped these "flowers" living in poor addition to absorb nutrients from the beauty of life and let them know

that they could have more choices of their destiny if only they study hard and never give up. Maybe someday in the future, they will understand fully, what kind of presents "Mi Fan Ma Ma" ever gave them.

The journey of "Rice Mommies" just started. In less than 2 years, we've witnessed so many movable moments: When Xiao Die recovered from her serious heart condition, happy smile comforted mamas. When Xing Xing passed away at the age of just 3 months, sadness shocked down mamas. When more and more volunteers join this love family, warmth is delivered hand by hand. Different with other folk charity organizations, every single RMB and every bag of rice collected by "Mi Fan Ma Ma" goes directly to those orphans for their needs.

"We dream, we believe, we achieve." Julie told me about their motto. Her husband Tony who was taking care of Xiao Xiao, the sick orphan who will soon get another operation on eyes, nodded and smiled: "Many Papas are also quite active, we are preparing to set up "Mi Fan Ba Ba(Rice Daddies)" to support Julie and "Mi Fan Ma Ma" go on this meaningful deeds." We are sincerely looking forward to seeing more friends with loving care with join them. The torches of love, lit from the hot spot---Pudong, will be spread far and wide to every corner of the global village.