



February Report 2011

Feb Visit to Dagang Orphanage



Julie with Kids



Tony at Dagang

Happy Chinese New Year to you all. We greet you in this the Year of the Rabbit and wish you all Joy, Love, Good Health and Happiness.

Despite the Chinese public holidays, which for some took up the whole of February, we at Mifan Mama have been very busy, which is good. Thank you to all of you for your donations.

- East Mandarin who do such a good job, always helping with anything we need printing as well as collecting donated items for us - thank you May and her Team.
- Baobei who have given us donations of clothing and toys for the orphan babies we support.
- The Australian ladies for their continued monthly support.
- SCF church in Puxi.
- Anna, Lillian and the sisters in Hong Kong
- Lucia and the staff at Refcomp
- James and his staff at The Intercontinental

- The Hilton for their monthly contribution of toiletries
- Next for the clothes they sent us in December - we are just sending them out now.
- Kathy and Paul for the tremendous 1,000 Boxes of Love they donated on behalf of customers buying jewelry and handbag at ATOS

A big **THANK YOU** to each and every one of you who support us every month and believe in what we are doing.

February has had its ups and downs. I am sad to say that HongMei, the young blind girl we have been sponsoring at blind school in Anqing, has developed Cerebellum Atrophy, which is very debilitating for her. For her comfort and care she has now left the school and returned to those who love her and will care for her in her village.

As most of our volunteers were enjoying a well earned holiday in February we did not have a lot of meetings. However behind the scenes we have been preparing for our fund raising concert on March 26th. Please note that money raised from this will help Wang Sheng who has a heart problem and is blind (to what extent we don't know until he travels to Shanghai: we are arranging this at the moment) he is under 1 year of age and is from Lao Wang's Orphanage. PLEASE SUPPORT US BY BUYING A TICKET AND ATTENDING THIS CONCERT. YES, YOU MAY THINK THE TICKET IS EXPENSIVE, BUT IT MEANS A NEW LIFE FOR THESE CHILDREN. It will be a wonderful evening: we have a wide selection of musicians for your entertainment. Lovely prizes at the silent auction and wonderful finger food from The Intercontinental Pudong and wine from Jenny. The event is black tie, so a good excuse to dress up. PLEASE MARK THIS EVENT AND ATTEND

With your donations we were able to send out two trucks this month, the first to Lao Wang with the basic foods for the children and staff. The second truck went to Jiangxi to Taiyan Village Poyanghu, Dagang Town, where there are 146 children. We sent them rice, clothing, toys and bedding. With thanks to you.

On Saturday 26th February Tony and I travelled to the above orphanage to assess the needs and meet the children. It was a wonderful warm day as we left Shanghai to travel seven and a half hours south to visit these lovely children. Jessie and Mary came with us to help with the language as our Chinese, I am uncomfortable to say, is very limited.

The journey to Dagang is lovely, travelling in the direction of the yellow mountain and beyond. The scenery is breathtakingly beautiful with the mountains and gorges and lots and lots of tunnels. Again another long journey (we never said it would be easy) - but the sky was clear, the air fresh, and the sun was warm.

Mr Zhou, director of the Orphanage, had arranged to meet us at the last toll and escort us to the nearest hotel 40km from the orphanage. As it was already 6pm after checking in, we all met up for a meal together. There were lots of vegetables and as there is a large lake nearby, the fish is very popular. This was a good time to ask a lot of questions and Mr Zhou was very open

with us and answered them. The Orphanage was opened in 2007 and there are 146 children (76 orphans and the rest of the children's parents are unable to look after them at the moment). Ages range from 4 to 17. Most children are healthy but about 10 have minor mental issues but are treated normally with the other children.

Soon it was time to have a good night's sleep (did I just say that?? I need a very soft bed and here the beds were extremely wooden and very, very hard!) even Jessie and Mary had trouble sleeping: Tony and I got none!! So we were up early and by 8am we were off to the Orphanage, we were so excited.

For the last 12km to the Orphanage the road is more like a dirt track with lots of holes and very bumpy. As we neared the Orphanage we saw a big sign over the road and a large school to our left. Then in front of us were the children lined up and playing drums to welcome us, all wearing matching smart white track suit jackets - I'm sure this is what they wear to greet visitors.

We were shown around the Orphanage and we noted that the small houses have been sponsored and that they each have four bedrooms and a shower/wash and toilet room. The rooms are very well planned, so about 16 children stay in each house, which are run by a house mummy and daddy. Each child has their picture on the wall with their name and birth date. They celebrate each child's birthday on their special day. The rooms are very clean and tidy.

We next visited the kitchen which is very like Lao Wang's but a bit larger: they also have a rice steamer and large woks in which to cook.

Then we went to see the school. This is a wonderful large building and we met the Headmaster. They have a fantastic library and the children are encouraged to use it to broaden their knowledge: they also let the local village children attend this school.

Soon it's time to give the children their goody bags: they are so excited and line up and sit at their desks in the dining room to receive them. They are so well behaved, although one little girl takes a liking to Tony and is soon punching him on the leg to get his attention.

We sat down with them, trying to communicate. Like most children they just want a hug and a little attention. One small hug goes a very long way. The girl who was punching Tony comes and gives us both one of the sweets we have given her, sharing what little she has with us. This is so precious, how those with the least want to share. A boy of 17 comes up to us and in very good English tells us his name is Jerry. There is also an older girl who tells us her name is Katie. So many of them touch our hearts. We can't wait for the next visit.

We see that what is needed here are visits by people to show the children they care and give lots of hugs. They are the fortunate ones who have a wonderful home to live in and are looked after very well. But we recognise immediately what they need and no amount of money provides this. So let's visit regularly and play and bond with these children that need us.

We have pledged to give on a regular basis: rice, flour and oil along with toiletries (from the hotels), toilet paper, toothbrushes and toothpaste. We will also test their water to make sure it is safe.

I forgot to mention that they have a small clinic and the local doctor visits to make sure the children are well and to give vaccinations when necessary. This is all run extremely confidently and professionally. We will be happy to visit the children and get to know them.

We didn't visit Lao Wang's Orphanage in February, but will be off to see the children there again in March. We did ensure that we paid the schooling fees and that your sponsored children have returned to school. Now that Mary is back, we hope to have a school update for all you sponsors.

The first weekend of March we are off to visit Egg Granny in Shanxi near Xian. She is in need of our help and we will visit and see how we can do this on a regular basis.

Mifan Mama is trying to help those orphans in need in any way we can, always remembering to attend to their basic needs first.

I can't believe it's the 4th March: only 22 days to our concert. We need your help and support - thank you !

Julie Martens

Co-Founder Mifan Mama