



January Report 2011



Lao Wang orphanage visit

After getting off the plane, having spent the Christmas holidays with our family in the UK despite the snow delaying us, we arrived home to an amazing house full of our friends from the Intercontinental Hotel and Terry. They were there to present washing machines, water heaters and air conditioners purchased with the money raised by their staff after their November trip to visit Lao Wang and his Orphans. What a welcome back to China. We would deliver these items for them on our January trip.

December rolled into January. Over the Christmas holidays our amazing volunteers in China got the 2011 Boxes of Love project under way. A special thank you to Stephan, Katja, Dot, Julie (not me), Dawn and all of you who worked to give over 5,000 Orphan Children in China a present for the Chinese New Year. I can report that we have sent over 5,400 Boxes in all to 47 different locations. You know what this means: our target for 2012 is 10,000 Boxes of Love ! We will be sending out a full report on this project.

As mentioned in the November report, we now have our warehouse/shop. Thanks to Jessie, Terry and their girls for their hard work during the holidays. When I left for the UK it was a bare shell, with a very uneven floor, and no electricity. Now we have a wonderful space to work in, to sort what is donated and then to distribute the items to those Orphans who are in need.

We have a small kitchen area and Terry has made sure that the toilet facilities are wheel chair friendly. We have two cupboards, electricity and flooring. We still need counters and shelving

and more cupboards: if you have these items and don't need them, we can put them to good use. Thank you to Santa Fe and Bridge Relocations for donating used boxes. We need packing boxes: please fold down and donate to us if you are thinking of putting them out for rubbish.

Sometimes we are given furniture or other items and told that we can sell them to raise funds. At the moment we are not able to, as we need a licence but hope that we can develop part of our shop to do this in the future. We would never sell anything unless told that we can and would never sell anything that is useful to those in need. We raise funds doing bazaars, summer fetes, coffee mornings and concerts. We have our next big fundraiser on 26 March 2011 at the Shanghai Centre. We hope you will come to this Concert and support us to raise funds for medical expenses for Orphans that we help in China.

Thank you to Phyllis for her caring hands making wonderful scarves that she has let us sell at the bazaars and those she has knitted for us to give to the children.

Thank you to the Expat crafts ladies who made beautiful Christmas stockings for us to sell at the bazaars.

Thank you to Alex for the wonderful 'adopt a gingerbread orphan'. She made over 60 of them and presented them so wonderfully at the Dulwich bazaar. Needless to say no-one could resist them and we sold them all. What a wonderful idea - we hope to develop this further in the future to help in our fund raising.

Thank you to our volunteer Julie and her wonderful needlecraft. She gave us lovely Christmas runners and stockings to sell. We hope to start a craft group to make things to sell at the summer bazaars. Please contact us if you would like to join.

Thank you to James and the Hilton Hotel and Kim for collecting donations to buy 300 pillows for the children. James had them specially made in a smaller size just right for the children. We were so happy to take them to the children on your behalf - they were very happy with them. Thank you also to Kim for purchasing towels which we also distributed to them.

This month we were contacted by Olivier from Tape a l'oeil. His amazing company has donated new children's clothing including wonderful coats and spring clothing. We will be distributing some of these to a new orphanage in Jingangxi province in February: watch out for photos.

Big girl Faith has also benefited from some of these clothes. She is growing so fast now although still far behind children of her age, but she is slowly developing and loves her time in the baby walker: she is getting more adventurous. Although she loves to stand when aided, she still as yet can't sit up on her own, but she is getting there. She is very happy with us at home. We hope to get her eye surgery sorted out during February. We took her to one hospital for the surgery, but they were not able to do it because of her age. With her hearing she has a little sound - low frequency in the one ear, so doctors will work with us on this and we will try a hearing aid. How can we thank Dr George and Dr Ying Ko of the Shanghai United Family Hospital

and all their staff for their care towards our children and the tremendous help and support they give us.

The January trip to Lao Wang's Orphanage was very exciting. We took a bus with staff from the Intercontinental Hotel and from SAP, along with our Mifan Mama volunteers. There were two aims of the trip: the first was to deliver the air conditioners, washing machines and water heaters that the staff of the hotel had donated. Michael had also arranged to have the installers meet us at the orphanage on the Sunday to install everything. The second and most important, apart from the truck load of food delivery, was giving out the Boxes of Love to the children for 2011 Chinese New Year.

A big thank you to George from SAP who did all of the organising of the bus and hotel bookings, dinner arrangements for Saturday night and Sunday at the orphanage and also was a wonderful MC for the bus.

During the trip, we were due to bring back Anna and Yifan, her translator and now friend. They had left Shanghai by train the previous Wednesday, despite snow and freezing cold, to spend a few days at the Orphanage. Anna, who is a photographer, wanted to gather material for a book she is producing, the proceeds of which will go to the Mifan Mama Orphans Education Fund. We hope you will all buy this book when it comes out as I think it will be a wonderful gift and also reminder of your time in China, whilst helping orphans to go to school. They braved the very worst weather to experience what the children and their carers do every day. Thank you Anna and Yifan.

After worrying whether we would be able to make the journey as the conditions were quite bad leading up to our departure, the weather cleared and although it was cold we decided to go ahead with the trip. We had two places for the loading of the truck: firstly our house for the Boxes of Love, rice, flour, oil, soya beans, nappies, milk formula and baby food. Then on to our shop to collect items given by the Hotels and other donated goods needed by Lao Wang's Orphanage. (We don't take things that are not needed, as others will receive these items).

After collecting everyone from three different locations, we started out for Hefei, where we would spend Saturday night. It is always a very long trip, but it is a good time to make friends and to get to know everyone and to share provisions brought. It is always exciting to see how people from different countries enjoy different things to eat and we get to try things that we wouldn't normally do.

After an enjoyable dinner at a local Hefei restaurant we arrived at the hotel and met up with more volunteers from Mifan Mama who had travelled by car.

The next morning, although a bit grey and overcast, it was dry. It is always good to see the smiling faces of the children as you step down from the bus and this was no different. Except there also to greet us were Anna and Yifan, looking very cold and tired. They had had a busy

few days experiencing the orphanage routine and getting to know as many children and their carers as they could.

We unloaded the truck and delivered the Boxes of Love and goody bags to the dining room where we could give them out. Then we all got stuck in unloading the provisions off the truck. The company installing the water heaters and air conditioners were there and as soon as the items were off loaded they began the job of installing.

The children were very excited. Anna told us that they had had a visit from Red Cross volunteers the day before. (I expect these are the cancer survivors that we met up with last Chinese New Year). We were also told that Lao Wang was expecting a visit from another group very shortly. So after unloading we proceeded to the dining room to hand out the Boxes of Love, red envelopes and goody bags to all the children and the staff. We put 10rmb in an envelope for the children and 100rmb in an envelope for the carers, this is their tradition and we want to show them that we care about Chinese traditions. Everyone was very excited to receive his or her box and red envelope.

We then visited the sick children and babies in the beds. Of course our attention first went to baby Hope (mentioned in the December report). Unfortunately the black pigmentation is now spreading to her face - all we could do was give her lots of love and cuddles. Then it was on to visit other children. We have identified two babies that we would like to help. One is a little baby boy who can't see and probably has a heart problem similar to Faith, and the other is a baby girl who has a liver problem. We hope to bring them to Shanghai to the United Family Hospital for check ups and diagnosis and then we can help.

We checked up on Baby Christopher who is now back being looked after by Wang Swing, one of Lao Wang's daughters and I'm happy to report that he looks big and strong. We went to see baby Adam, who was born with a cleft palate and no eyes. He is now 7 months old, he loves to be cuddled and is getting big and strong with the love and care that the lady looking after him gives. The first and most important thing these children need is to be held, loved and cared for.

There is so much work to be done for these children medically, but we can only help one child at a time. If you feel you would like to volunteer and be part of a team helping these sick children, please contact us, as we need your help.

Soon it was time to board the bus back to Shanghai and start preparing ourselves for the February Trip and see that their needs are met.

These are the thoughts from two who travelled with us:

Hi I'm Chocolate from SAP:

The short stop in Lao Wang orphanage really fuels my feelings. The moment we arrived and the moment departed are memorable as we can see how much they need us. Apart from happiness

playing with the kids, I felt my value realised when helping them and accompanying them. They are innocent and naughty by nature, I hope they will always be and grow up healthy. For another, I think our benevolent people should emphasis on their morality education because this is the easiest way for intelligent-challenged or physical-challenged children to live their life to fullest. Their society is special because it is full of love and is always spreading love to the people around them. I love this trip; it makes me more aware of the people in desperate needs. I will involve more in volunteer activities in future. Thanks!

This is George, Jackie Meuse's assistant. Being in Lao Wang's orphanage yesterday was really a great journey for me, the kids helped me a lot, actually, they let me know that what we are doing is the greatest work in the world!!! Moreover, I feel that I need to work harder for the orphans. I love this journey!!!

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## **We have lots of Wishes on our Wish List for 2011:**

- > To help more children who need operations.
- > To reach out to more Orphans who are lacking basic needs and help them
- > To open a foster home in Shanghai for the small Orphans who are blind or partially sighted. We have been inspired by Faith, Adam and Lily (another blind orphan girl that we fostered) as well as Hong Mei. How different her life would have been if she had been given help at an early age. One to one care, as each child is different and has various stages of development. To love and show them how to be independent, to feel secure and to be able to live as normal a life as possible and then when old enough, to be able to go to the amazing government blind schools that we have here in China, to grown in learning. We are developing a business plan and a plan of action: if you would like to become involved in this project in any way please contact us.

We dream - we believe - we achieve ..... but only with your help.

Happy Chinese New Year to you all. In the year of the rabbit let's go forward and achieve more, and help more, for those that need our help.

Julie Martens

Co-Founder Mifan Mama

