

Mifan Mama November Newsletter

Lots happened in November, it was another busy month, with Mifan Mama volunteers attending wine evenings, concerts, bazaars, fairs, coffee mornings and meeting lots of people and meeting up with old and new friends.

There are lots of famous quotes about women and shoes, but in November, we went shoe shopping in a **big** way!

With donations from Alphonso and Joyce, and from the InterContinental Hotel, Pudong from the sale of their recyclable shopping bags, and some other donations, Valerie, Dot, Holly and Julie G set off for the markets! Our target was Cao'an Road Market, which is not too far from Julie's and sells lots of interesting things! First stop was the felt stall to get extra supplies for the craft group to make more Christmas Ornaments, we also shopped for more stock of Christmas ornaments for the bazaar tables. We then made our way upstairs, to check out the footwear. Armed with a very detailed list from Jiangxi Orphanage, we set about shopping. As we needed 158 pairs of winter shoes and boots, you can imagine this took some time. We spent about an hour in one shop, then suddenly there was a phone call and the price went up! We left about that time, and found someone with a stronger need to sell over 100 pairs of shoes in one afternoon. Holly worked out for us that we needed at least 2 shops, one for the small sizes and one for the larger ones, so we split up and started to choose. With help from drivers and everyone else passing, we eventually managed to just about empty the place of small boots and shoes. We then visited another shop to arrange the delivery of another 50+ pairs the following day. Money was paid, sanity was questioned but as the market was closing we left, with lots and lots of shoes, and the nagging question – are they the right sizes??? The rest of the shoes arrived the next day, and they were then all put into bags with the children's names on them with some cookies and snacks, ready to be shipped to the orphanage.

On November 5th, Mifan Mama were honoured to be one of the charities chosen to benefit from a three night event held at Mi Tierra. These were evenings of wine, tapas and photographic art, and raised money for Morning Tears, Breast Cancer Network, Mifan Mama and Hand to Hold. The evening Mifan Mama attended was extremely enjoyable, with entertainment throughout the evening, and we would like to extend our thanks to Joe Samaga of Pure and Martina Beszedesova of Crown Relocations for working with Mi Tierra to make the three nights events happen. After a discussion with Joe and Martina, it has been decided that the funds raised will be used to push Shining Star forward.

The next weekend, we were guests of the Shanghai American School in Puxi, for their Concert for Hope. Last year's concert proceeds were used for medical treatment, and paid for MingShen to have cataract surgery.

This year, Jocelyn Shih and her team worked hard and we were treated to an evening of music both contemporary and classical, with well known music and new compositions being performed. Jocelyn was assisted by MCs: Mei Vern Then and Timothy Chung and Music Teacher: Mary Siew. Performances included those from Rough Diamonds, Mamahuhu (teachers' band with Alicia Lewis, Jeff Thompson, Rick Glascock, and Blake Brown) Shanghai American School Symphony Orchestra (conducted by Mary Siew) Youth, Music, Love (conducted by Sam Wu)

A silent auction was held to raise further funds for Mifan Mama, which was also very successful, the highlight being pieces of artwork which sold very well. The concert and auction raised almost 35,000 RMB!

Well done to Jocelyn and her team, and a big thank you to at Shanghai American School who worked so hard to make this happen and to all those who supported the concert.

The next weekend, Mifan Mama volunteers were on the road to Jiangxi Province, with the results of the earlier shoe shopping marathon! Holly and her daughter Cassie, Valerie, Dot, Et, Grace and Susan made the trip to Jiangxi on Saturday 19th. Leaving at the usual time of 12.00 from Shanghai, the 750km journey took until quite late, and on arriving to met Mr Zhou, the director of the orphanage, dinner was required before checking in to the hotel. Dinner was delicious with locally caught fish from the lake, and check in to the hotel and bed were next on the list!

Sunday morning Mr Zhou met the volunteers and guided the bus to the orphanage to meet the children.

The children were all lined up outside, singing and playing instruments to welcome the volunteers, it was a very touching moment for everyone on the bus. Once inside, Cassie was take off to play by Mr Zhou, and everyone else had a tour of the orphanage and got to know the children a little. Lunch was served, again with the freshly caught local fish, and after that there was an opportunity to play with the children for a while before the shoe presentation! All the children were sitting in their assembly room, waiting, and as their names were called out they went forward to receive their new winter shoes or boots. Despite a couple of worrying moments for us, when we were on the stage handing out the bags of shoes, there were in fact enough shoes to go around and the right names were on the bags (pew!).

After this it was time to leave the children behind and head back to Shanghai. Mr Zhou did however take us on a couple of detours, we visited the lake where the fish had come from, and then we went on to a local school where some of the older children study. Entering the classrooms to meet the children and using a little Chinese, Valerie took charge at the blackboard and gave a quick impromptu English lesson, which proved very popular with the children! Goodbyes were said and the bus left to make its way back to Shanghai.

It was a long but very gratifying weekend.
Dot Jenkinson

November continued with lots of volunteers attending bazaars and coffee mornings during the month. We were represented in Puxi and Pudong, at Schools and Universities, and passed the 'bazaar kit' around many times!

In between all of these activities, many of us were kept busy with a variety of tasks the biggest of which has been helping Valerie to organise this year's Boxes of Love, decorating some of the boxes for which we have already received donations, and of course putting the numbers on them all. This year's programme looks as though it will be a huge success, thanks in no small part to The Radisson Blu in Pudong, who very kindly sponsored the production of the boxes, and didn't even get cross when Julie G phoned back asking for more – twice!

At the end of the month Julie G and Bernadette attended the end of year art auction and bring and buy sale at the Shanghai Centre's Pre-School. Organised by Rachel and her team this event has the children copy a painting which is then auctioned off (mainly to their parents), this is followed by a Bring and Buy sale where the children bring along some pre-loved toys to sell on to their classmates. It was a delightful morning, and the art auction and sale raised over 1,000 RMB which was donated to Mifan Mama. We returned the next week to collect toys and other donations both from the school and from parents which will be passed on to the orphanages we help to support.

Finally a big thank you to all those who volunteered their time in November, and throughout the rest of the year. Mifan Mama would be nothing without you, and all of your time and effort is very much appreciated.

Julie G