

## Mifan Mama October Newsletter

Well its been a hectic past 2/3 months, with birthdays, leave trips and house moves, but Julie and Tony have now completed their move to Nanjing and are settled there, Julie has of course started Mifan Mama Nanjing, and already has projects and volunteers organised! Here in Shanghai we have also seen changes, not only Julie's move, but our long association with Lao Wang's Orphanage is changing.

The local Government have now stepped in to assist Lao Wang and his family and provided a new building for the children to move into, they are due to move before Spring Festival we believe. This is a wonderful development for all the children, who will benefit from the issue of their registration document and the availability of a constant supply of everything they need for basic life, they will not be dependent on others to provide them with daily food, clothing and toiletries. It is our strong hope that once the move is completed and all the paperwork has been completed, some of the children will eventually become eligible for adoption.

The new building will have everything the children and their carers need and we have provided some water filters to help ensure that they have a constant supply of clean water there too. Heating and cooling units sent to the old orphanage will be moved across to make sure that the children are as comfortable as possible in the new home too.

In addition all the children have been issued a hukou, entitling them to education, medical care and all the other benefits attached to their registration. Through our good relationship with Lao Wang and his family, Julie and Tony have established a good relationship with the local government there and remain in contact with the orphanage and the children. We are very welcome there and plan to visit them before Chinese New Year.

The older children, several of whom are attending high school, vocational college and university will still be supported by their sponsors and Mifan Mama and we will make sure that we continue to pay their tuition, books and a living allowance to enable them to continue their studies. It is very important to all of us that those who are in education should not have their studies interrupted by changes at the Orphanage. Although circumstances for the children at Lao Wang's have been difficult, as it is for so many orphans and poor children throughout Asia, their plight has been eloquently highlighted by Anna Willett in her wonderful work *In a Chinese Orphanage*. Sales of the book and prints have helped with Mifan Mama's education programme and will continue to do so well into 2012/2013.

In addition to our support for Lao Wang's and Jiangxi Orphanages we are looking at several other projects around China who need our support, and we are carrying out needs assessment visits over the coming months to see who is most in need of our help and who can most benefit from the generosity of our supporters.

There is also a facility in Bo'ai, near Nanjing, which is home to 85 deaf children aged 3 to 8 years, who are not orphaned, but live there all year round. They visit their families for Chinese New Year only. Their families pay towards their stay there, and they don't have too much in the way of basic daily needs. We are trying to get a programme together of volunteers who want to visit and play with the children, help their teachers learn English to pass on, and support them in that way. If you would be interested, please let us know on [volunteer@mifanmama.com](mailto:volunteer@mifanmama.com)

They are also looking for sponsors for a uniform to enable all the children to dress equally whilst they are at the home, so if you are or know a clothing supplier and would be willing to supply around 85 small track suits - please send us an e-mail!

We are also currently fundraising for our Shining Star project, which will see us open a foster home for blind orphans in the Shanghai area.

We are fundraising and looking for premises, where house parents and 8-10 children could live. Sadly it seems that blind orphans are not always taught by their carers, and are unable to develop to their full potential. There is a lack of training, resources, and the children suffer because of this. We want to help the children by bringing them to Shining Star, where they can be taught basic life skills, how to feed themselves, wash, dress etc. Once they can do this and move around independently, the orphanage who care for them can apply for a place at a Government run school for the Blind, where they can receive a full education and take their place in society. A large part of the work of Shining Star will be an awareness programme, to communicate to those working with children that in many cases help is available for children with eye problems, and sight can be saved.

### SCIS Food Festival

Saturday 22nd October was a beautiful sunny day in HongQiao, we were doubly lucky as not only was the weather great, but we were at the SCIS Food Festival at their HongQiao Campus! It was a great day out, with many performances from SCIS students and students from other facilities reflecting their culture and backgrounds. We saw a Korean Dance performance and a Drum performance, demonstrations of martial arts and lots more (just ask Valerie about the Zumba!). Valerie, Julie G and her sister-in-law Maureen, and Siobahn were all in attendance at the Mifan Mama table, along with Miranda Li from the InterContinental Hotel, Pudong, who had great fun with some of the children, helping them to decorate InterContinental's ecological shopping bags. We all sampled some of the delicacies on offer as well as chatting to lots of people about Mifan Mama, the weather and all kinds of other things. It was great to catch up with friends old and new after the summer vacation, the music and atmosphere and the smells of cooking made for a great day out for everyone who attended.

SCIS's support for Mifan Mama is wonderful, and we are very grateful to them for all their hard work on our behalf. Last year's fundraising by so many of the students, staff and PAFA (Parents and Friends Association) is continuing, and Mifan Mama were the recipients of the proceeds of the day's raffle, which owing to lots of hard sales work by the SCIS volunteers, raised a total of 11,370 RMB.

BIG thank you to all at SCIS, the students, staff and PAFA who made the whole day possible, special thanks to Ricardo Meza from the SCIS faculty and Yan Cheng from PAFA.

### Boxes of Love

October saw the official launch of Mifan Mama's Boxes of Love campaign, with Valerie working hard as project manager for this year. We have been extremely fortunate in having the support of the Radisson Blu in Pudong, who have sponsored the production of this year's boxes, which is wonderful for us - we hope to double our last year's numbers and achieve distribution of 10,000 boxes around China in early January this year.

If you would like more information on boxes of love, please contact us - we need as many boxes filled as we possibly can! We will also need help with filling and checking boxes before they are distributed. If you can help by volunteering your time, or filling some boxes, or donating the money for us to fill them and send them out for you, please e-mail us! [volunteer@mifanmama.com](mailto:volunteer@mifanmama.com) The value of the contents of each box should be around 30-40 RMB, but what price a smile? The box of love shows the children that they are not forgotten at the most important Chinese Holiday of the year.

A big thank you to Mr Gerhard Fasching of the Radisson Blu for sponsoring the boxes this year, and to him and Lily Yao for working with Mifan Mama to support this project.

