

Caring for China's Children

JUNE 2002



Hope Haven

It was wonderful recently to be given a little insight 'behind the scenes' to see how marvelously the Lord weaves His tapestry and brings people and resources together. We were visited in April by Billie and Jayd, home supporters of Debbie J. who worked as a nurse for six months during the early stages of 'Hope Haven'. Billie shared how the Lord had connected her with people she had never met before but

who were moved to contact her and give some much needed items for care of the babies at 'Hope Haven'. For example, Billie put out a plea for Vitamins on a Christian co-op bulletin board and within two days a pharmacist ordered approximately 100 bottles ready for Billie to bring out to China. A Christian quilting guild in Virginia heard about the work and sent handmade quilts for next winter. Another group in Maryland sent several boxes of needed items. Zoe and Maria's home churches and many others have also similarly given very



generously and we just marvel at the way we see Him mobilizing His Body to reach out and touch 'helpless babies'.

Hephzibah



In early May, adoptions took place of two of our older children, from 'Hephzibah' Angelika, (5 years old) was at long last adopted after waiting several years. She had been with us since February 19, 1998 (9 months old). From a local foster family, Rebecca (6 years old) was adopted having been with her foster parents for 2yrs. Both of these adoptions were very special because each of these 'young ladies' had been praying for a family of their own. It was extremely moving to see the reality of their prayers being answered and to see that truly our heavenly Father listens to the heart cries of the children. On the day when Angelika was adopted, it was difficult for Timothy (age 6), Michael (age 5), Irene (nearly 6), Peter (age 4) and Paul (age 3) who, in their years together at 'Hephzibah' have become like siblings. We are hopeful and would value your prayers, that in time, each of these children will also have a family they can call their own.

During the time of Rebecca's adoption, it was very special to hear her foster mother share about Rebecca's life in their home. Unabashed in the presence of a local official, she shared that the day would always begin with a time of prayer and that Rebecca loved to pray for others, including the sick. She also shared how she had encouraged Rebecca to 'pray earnestly day by day for her own family.' She then proceeded to open her bag and bring out an envelope from which she drew out a sheet of paper with handwritten Chinese script. She explained that it was a letter which she had written for Rebecca and which she wanted Rebecca to keep for future reference. She then began to read out the contents which were translated so that the adoptive parents could also understand. Rebecca was exhorted to remember her Heavenly Father in all things, to read His word, to remember to pray for Chinese people and to honor and obey her new parents. It was very humbling and moving to hear such an earnest encouragement from a local lady who had previously experienced trials for her faith. Her courage, love for Him and desire to inspire a young treasure like Rebecca was extremely moving. We also observed that throughout all this time the Chinese official was listening intently!

Wonderfully, the adoptive parents shared how they had been moved by Him to adopt Rebecca. They felt specifically guided in all their

arrangements and had seen His hand providing to make the adoption possible. Truly for Rebecca, we were evidencing the process of how, 'God sets the lonely in families'. (Psalm 68:6)

Farewell to Margaret: We were very sad to say farewell to Margaret T who had faithfully and tirelessly served as our Child Care Supervisor at 'Hephzibah' over the last four years. Our normal custom is that whenever a member of staff leaves we gather all the staff together, local Chinese and the small overseas team, to give thanks to God and to join hearts and voices in prayer for the one leaving. On this particular occasion were so moved when following on from the prayers of some of the staff, we suddenly heard Irene (age 5) spontaneously adding her heart-felt prayer for Margaret, followed immediately by Michael (age 5). After Michael finished Rebecca (age 6) flowed on in song with, 'Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so...'

'From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger'.

Psalm 8:2



Margaret & Kylee

Shekinah Shalom

Liz J has spent the last nine months working as a child care volunteer at Shekinah Shalom. As a reflection on her time here she writes:



When I arrived at Shekinah Shalom in September 2001 it was a day I could only have dreamed of. Lara D, one of our Occupational Therapists had recently begun to visit the older children at the state run Main Welfare Center. Lara was providing much needed therapy and interaction for abandoned children with special needs. I started to work with five of the younger children there doing craft and painting with them once a week. It was a challenging time as the children were not used to such excitement and concentration was limited to five minutes!

As time went on, we saw God's hand open the door further enabling us to run a program four afternoons each week. XQ, one of our local Chinese Occupational Therapist assistants, has been a real asset and has proven to have a mother's heart for the children. The program has been varied, including writing, brain games, fine motor play and of course the much loved painting, craft and play dough.

I can testify that our Father makes up for our lack in every area and has continually guided us when we have needed wisdom and healing with

these children. There have been days when the atmosphere is heavy and the children are disturbed. However, we have been very encouraged to see the children growing confident and to hear squeals of delight when we arrive in the afternoons. They are learning how to respond to love and we pray that the seeds which are being sown will bear fruit in their lives. One day recently DHS asked, 'are we going to pray today?' I promptly said, 'yes' and had to fight back my tears as they said, 'I know Jesus is my friend'.

It has been a privilege to have a part in these children's lives. They are 'princes' in God's eyes and so very precious.

'He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; he seats them with princes, with the princes of their people'. Psalm 113:8-9

Liz J

7 children attend nursery school

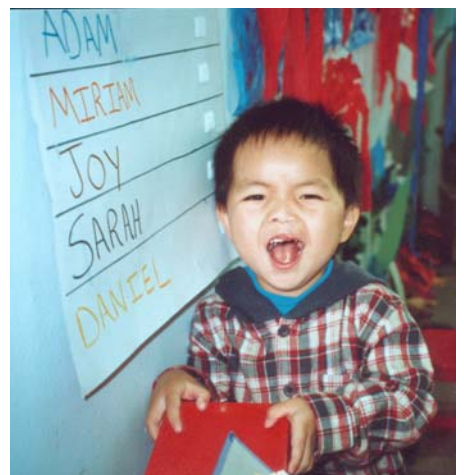
For some time we had been hoping that we would be able to place some of our three to six year old children in a local kindergarten. This group includes Joy and Miriam who previously received surgery for spina bifida and David who has cerebral palsy. Contact was made with the 'Little Sunshine Kindergarten' in the nearby city. The staff there agreed at first to Joshua and Adam's attendance, but they were reluctant to accept any of our children with special needs. However, this all changed during one bright sunny Saturday morning in April when we were visited by the entire staff of the kindergarten who were visibly moved as they spent time with each group of children from the tiniest babies to the pre-school group. By the time the tour

came to an end all previous resistance to accepting Joy, Miriam and David had evaporated and on the Monday morning two days later seven children were merrily on their way to attend kindergarten.

It is so special to see their exuberance and delight as they step each day into the mini-bus and go off to school. They love waving happily, grinning from ear to ear as they go and their enthusiasm continues to spill out in chatter and song during their journeys home again at the end of the afternoons.

The head teacher has shared with us how pleased she is to welcome our children and that the other teachers and children regard our children with special needs as 'just like children with normal needs'. She is even giving free places to Miriam and Joy (apart from our needing to cover the cost for their meals). We are very excited to see how this door has opened for more contact in the local community as this is one way for a change to start occurring in the way people regard children who have disabilities.

Liz M



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