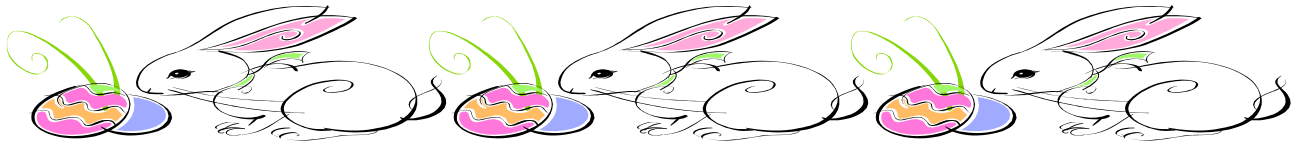


Caring for China's Children



April 2006

Hope Haven A Center Coping With Change



Hope Haven is the youngest and smallest of the three Childcare Centers. It was opened on 24 December 2001. It is situated on the ground floor of a welfare center in a city in central China. It was set up as a model baby unit caring for 40 abandoned babies. About forty percent of the children have cleft lips and palates. Sixty percent of the children have deformed hands, arms, feet, or such problems as cerebral palsy, heart problems, Down's syndrome, spina bifida, and developmental delay. Ninety percent of the children after corrective surgery are adopted overseas. Over these four years, nearly 100 children have been adopted overseas.



The center is constantly faced with changes. One of the changes includes staff turnover. As our staff members are mostly young ladies, the pattern seems

to be that after they are married, they soon get pregnant and usually go back to their home town to give birth. Most of them do not come back to the job because they need to look after their new baby. When children are adopted overseas, there are new admissions to the center. It is a challenge to the management and staff to have to constantly face and cope with all these changes.

The biggest challenge the center faced was a year ago when the older children needed more space for their activities and toilet training! The facilities at the start were not geared to cater for this big demand. Some of the staff had to move out temporarily from their dormitories to make room for the children.



However, the Center needed more space for the very active little people. During that time the Center had only one small bathroom. Even scheduling toilet training for different groups of children could not solve the problem. The dining area was also too small for the children to have their meals together. The bedrooms had also become very crowded.

The best option was to maximize the utilization of space the Center already had. As a result the idea of renovation was conceived.





Hope Haven is on the ground floor of a 4-storey building. Inside the front entrance of the Center there is a very spacious foyer that had an opening to the skylight of the roof. In winter the cold air descended from the roof and made the foyer too cold to have any activities carried out there. In summer the flies from the top floors bombarded the Center! As part of the renovation project, a ceiling was built to block off the opening in the foyer to take care of these problems. The space was used to build an extra bedroom for the children. The bedroom also opens up to an adjoining room and that has been converted into a second bathroom for the children.



Another major renovation was converting the drying room into a family room for children and staff. There was one room that was used for drying nappies in winter months and rainy days in summer. The space was considered a bit wasteful when a dryer could do the job. Now the laundry is equipped with a commercial dryer and children can play and watch TV in the family room. The more important reason for converting the drying room into a family room is to give a taste of family life to the children.



The renovation has turned the Center into a very warm and friendly place. Thank God we had an adoptive parents association in USA funding the entire renovation project.



Volunteers came from USA and Shanghai to help paint the walls. Many visitors who came went away with the same comment. "This is not like an orphanage. It is more like a kindergarten." Our facilities and furnishings are custom-made to give the children a happy start to their lives before adoption. We praise God that we have achieved that goal.

At the time of writing this article, the children's age group has yet again changed from last year. Now, over half of the children in the center are under 1 year old! But, we're glad to say that the center has no problem in adapting to this change. We constantly have to face these changes. Aren't we glad to say that the love of God for us never changes.

To support the work and for further details and information about opportunities, please contact
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