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BACKGROUND

Hello! My name is Caleb and I celebrated my 6th birthday in August 2002. I was abandoned as a baby and apart from a short stint in foster care, I have grown up in a Caring For China's Children orphanage most of my life - since I was six month old. So I am very much part of the big family here and I know many of the ay'is (Chinese word for aunties) who take care of me and my little friends.

I started attending kindergarten with several of my friends in October 2001 and have been doing fine even though studying is not my forte!

MEDICAL / HEALTH CONDITION

From the photo you wouldn't have guessed that I was born with cleft lip and palate, would you? And you might wonder why I was abandoned.

Well, I have had several operations when I was around two to three years old. I am now a healthy and normal boy with very little memory of what I looked like or how it felt when I was a cleft baby.

Most babies born with cleft lip and palate have difficulty with feeding. I suppose it is not uncommon to see cleft babies being abandoned for a variety of reasons. Perhaps my parents despaired at the difficulty or possibility of my survival; perhaps they were under great pressure to produce a perfect-looking child as they're only allowed to have one child; or perhaps they're afraid that I have other medical conditions and the cost of medical treatment is beyond their affordability. Perhaps they don't even realize that there's a possibility of corrective surgery we'll never know for sure.

PHYSICAL CONDITION

I am a very active boy and I enjoy participating fully in all the physical activities that boys of my age are attracted to, like outdoor games, swings, exercise bars, trampoline and other things in the playground.

SPEECH

Up to about a year ago, my a'yis were rather concerned about my speech development, or rather, speech clarity. I had a raspy voice and was advised by the visiting speech therapist a'yi from USA to learn to speak instead of shouting and yelling so much. I guess that was my way of splurging excessive energy. I have improved a lot this year and communicate quite well with my friends, a'yis and teachers in a gentler manner.



MEALS

Most of the week from Mondays to Fridays I have three main meals at school. My schoolmates and I usually arrive in time for breakfast and we would have the evening meal before going home. In addition we also have snacks, fruit and drinks in between lessons. I have a good appetite and am not picky at all about my food. I do like fizzy drinks though; as it's not that often that we get such treats.

SLEEP

I sleep in a large room with about 25 other friends. I have my own bed and I generally sleep and rise early. I can be easily disturbed by noise though. Some of my roommates are children with special needs, and I have been particularly assigned to take care of Ivy, who does test my patience sometimes. I help her get ready for bedtime like brushing her teeth and I remind her to go to the toilet and all that before she sleeps.

PERSONALITY

My a'yis will tell you I am a bright and affectionate little boy who bubbles with energy and all the qualities of an extrovert. I just enjoy being with people and am always ready to ask questions to satisfy my curiosity and to keep a conversation going, like I would be the first to greet my school friends' parents and grannies when I see them at school.

I get really excited when I am taken out to town or some unfamiliar place that sounds nice. Being one of the oldest children, I have also had more opportunities to experience new places and events than many of my friends with special needs. Recently I attended the wedding ceremony of one of the a'yis. It was such fun to watch all that was going on in a contemporary Chinese wedding. At the same time I helped myself to the feast of sweets and snacks. I even came back to my home with my pockets full of sweets for those who didn't get to go. I do have a soft and caring heart after all.

Because I am such an active boy, I find it hard to sit for any length of time longer than 10 minutes. My concentration span for studies is easily interrupted with the slightest distraction and I would be the first to leave the desk to investigate the source of 'disturbance'. It doesn't help either when I am told that I am a naughty boy because I would just behave much worse. I thrive on positive appraisal and correction.

Actually if lead in the right direction, I will grow to be a young man of integrity and others-centered sensitivity, and compassion too. I enjoy dramatic stories and my heart goes out to characters like Jonah, Daniel and Jesus. I once told my a'yis that I would like to be a story-teller when I grow up so that I can tell these wonderful stories to others.

NEEDS

Over the years I have said goodbyes to quite a number of my good friends who get adopted. I would miss them for a while and wonder when it would be my turn. Perhaps this seemingly long wait will help me develop patience and character. Please pray that I will also have a teachable heart and enjoy my studies more. I just find homework so tedious. I am grateful that my a'yis love me and want to see me reach my full potential. They work very hard to take care of us, so please pray for them too.

THANKS

Thank you so much for sponsoring me. I hope that one-day you'll be able to share my joy when I have a new home or a foster family with my own mummy and daddy. God bless you!