

Jiangxi Trip Report for Orphanage Project: Nanchang, Yingtan, Shangrao and Ji'an December 2011

In December of 2011, the project coordinator from Amity's office in Nanjing, Zhou Bo, traveled to Jiangxi province along with staff person Ms. Luo. They visited four of the orphanages and sent us this report.

Activities:

- Meet with Ms. Luo, the coordinator of Jiangxi orphanage project, and discuss administration and 2012 plans and goals
- Visit Nanchang, Yingtan, Shangrao and Ji'an orphanages,
- Visit children under sponsorship and gauge their progress
- Observe the working conditions for the Hugging Grandmas
- Meet with each Orphanage Director and Project Coordinator to evaluate conditions and needs

Observations and Comments

Foster care

Nanchang: Currently there are 180 children living in foster families, among which we sponsor 29 and Holt sponsors 40. The average monthly subsidy per foster family is about 600-700 RMB per child. The foster families under our sponsorship are all original families with close attachment with the foster children.



The orphanage has started to recruit new foster families for new children, but it is a challenge due to the children's disabilities and low subsidies. The six staff from the foster care administration office visit the assigned children every week and keep the records in each child's file.

Case 1- H.H. from Nanchang, a lovely deaf girl with development delay, has deep attachment with the foster family. Although she cannot speak, the foster mom can understand what she needs and what she wants to express by simple sign language. She is a polite girl with good habits. We will send them some books and VCD about learning sign language to improve their communication.

Yingtian: There are 13 foster children under sponsorship now. The orphanage also serves other foster children living in rural areas. Some children were returned to the orphanage this year due to conditions in the foster families. J., pictured here, lives in toddler's room in the orphanage; older children live in the Children with Disabilities room, where the Grandmas work. I met J. and her caregiver, who J. calls "Grandma," in the orphanage. She was polite and welcomed me. She can communicate in simple words. When I shared some candies with the children, she said "Thank you," and helped other children open their candy wrappers. She has improved in many ways.



Shangrao: There are 30 foster children under our sponsorship. Most of them have disabilities. More than 10 children are living in the orphanage.



Case 2- R.W., from Shangrao, is a boy with spinal cord syndrome who has had surgery twice before. The surgeries were not successful; he cannot control his bowel movements. His foster grandmother continues to care for him, and she is attentive to his bathroom needs everyday. The foster grandma is kind and patient; she regards R.W. as her own grandson and has close attachment with him. The orphanage has contacted the local primary school to arrange R.W.'s schooling, but the school refused to accept him due to his disability. The foster grandma taught him how to write and how to calculate at home. We still asked the

orphanage to contact the school again and try to get R.W. into school.

Ji'an: We visited 8 foster children in Ji'an during this trip. Most of foster families are experienced, having fostered several children in special needs before. The person in charge of project has changed to Mr. Zeng, who has worked in the orphanage for a few months. We met with the director and Mr. Zeng. Pictured below are two children who are much improved, thanks to the foster parents.



Amity Grandmas

During the visits, we saw the Amity Grandmas in Yingtan, Shangrao and Ji'an. Most of them work for the children with special needs in the orphanage. Shangrao Grandmas sometimes help with the children who have received the surgeries in the hospital and also in the orphanage after the surgeries. They are experienced in caring for these children and form deep attachments with them. Amity Grandmas in Yingtan and Ji'an are working in the disabilities room in the orphanage. Most of the children remaining in the orphanages now are severely mentally and physically disabled. Even though the children grow up, they still need the care on a daily basis.



The grandmas told us that they sometimes felt exhausted by the end of the day, but it is gratifying when they notice these children making improvements as a result of the therapy.

One of the Shangrao Grandmas said, “When I saw the children’s faces light up with joy when they see me or one of the other Amity Grandmas come into the room, I felt that these children are really in need of special care, so the hard work we all put in here is worthwhile indeed!”



A Ji'an Grandma told us that the children have made great progress in learning personal behaviors. They don't grab others' belongings any more. Grandmas consistently correct the children. Children who are older have learned to take care of those younger ones, and they are more independent in daily life, keeping themselves tidy and clean. They are able to greet visitors politely.

All these seem to be very ordinary things, but it is hard work indeed to teach the children these skills,

because most of them have mental or physical problems. When these children arrived at the orphanage, many of them didn't know how to eat, or how to use the toilet; some could not stretch their four limbs freely. Now, their lives have been changed.

Educational Sponsorship

We visited Nanchang Civil Affair School to meet the students under sponsorship. We talked with the teachers and students together about their current status. The teacher told us that the major of Nursing for the Aged is good for finding a job in the future, and the students have been encouraged to take up this course of study. We met with three of them, and they said they have adjusted to the change. They felt the course of Anatomy is difficult for them to learn, but they said they would try their best.





We visited the Yingtan Special Education Center, which F.J. is attending. He was in a math class when we visited. The teacher told us that he is a hardworking student, but his comprehension still needs improvement. His foster father also told us that he likes drawing at home, while the maths is weak for him.

In Shangrao Lingxi Middle School, we met R.J. and her teacher. R.J. is a very good student. The

teacher said she is in the

team of top students, and hopes that she will attend the key high school next year. R.J. studies very hard because she is in the third grade of middle school now, and she wants to enter a good high school. She is good at English. She has had one surgery, but she still needs a second surgery during the winter vacation. We hope she will recover soon and then succeed in the examination next year.



Needs

1. Living subsidies and books for the students of Nanchang

There are six students attending the college and living in the school. They applied for subsidies to buy extra books and educational materials. The application is 300RMB per student per year for each student.

2. Medical application for four children in Yingtan

Three cases of harelip and cleft palate, and one case of heart disease.

3. Education application for R.J. from Shangrao

R.J. hopes to enter the key high school next year, where tuition will be higher than her current school. If she has the opportunity to enter, we will apply for her next year.