

Jiangxi Trip Report for Orphanage Project

3 Project Sites in Jiangxi province

Participants: Ms. Zhou Bo and Ms. Luo Xiaowang, the coordinator of Jiangxi orphanage project

Schedule:

Dec.6 Travel from Nanjing to Nanchang
Dec.7 Visit Yichun
Dec.8 Visit Pingxiang
Dec.9 Travel from Pingxiang back to Nanjing

Activities:

- Met with Ms. Luo, the coordinator of the Jiangxi orphanage project, to discuss details of project administration and implementation, as well as the orphanage visit schedule for 2011;
- Visited the orphanages of Nanchang, Yichun, and Pingxiang to check on project implementation and get a general update on the current situation;
- Visited some children under our sponsorship and learned what can be done to further improve their situations;
- Observed Amity Grandmas at work;
- Discussed working conditions and new needs with Orphanage Directors and Project Coordinators.

Observations and Comments:

- Foster Care:

Most of the foster children were living happily with their family members: cared for, loved, and well-integrated into their communities. We could see the harmonious atmosphere in the Qingshan community of Pingxiang where neighbors familiar with the foster children and their families were happy to share their experiences with the three foster children living in their community (one of the children pictured sitting on the middle auntie's lap). Obviously, the children were receiving good care and rehabilitation from both their families and the surrounding community, and we were glad to see them improving both in body and in mind.



Regarding the administration of the project: every orphanage has staff who are responsible for visiting foster families and keeping records of these visits. The Nanchang foster care office has begun to use the database which Amity introduced at the Nov. 2010 training conference in Chengdu. We hope that using the database will help our partner orphanages improve their case management and project administration.

We still need to resolve the challenges faced by older children who have lived with their foster families for many years. Some have received an education and may be able to find employment, but others will always need their families' care due to severe disabilities which make independent living impossible. We should provide more support for foster families with these dependent children.

Hong JC, shown in the photo at right, is a good home-schooled student whose teacher comes to her house every day. For fun, she writes to several pen pals. We were happy to see that she had become livelier and more relaxed around others. JC herself said that she had new confidence in herself and her dream of becoming a psychologist, but that she still worries about her future.



➤ Amity Grandmas:

During our site visits, we had the opportunity to check in with the Amity Grandmas working with special-needs children in Yichun and Pingxiang. On top of providing general care and love, the Grandmas also play games, sing songs, and do rehabilitation exercises with the children. The



children have grown very attached to the Grandmas, and the Grandmas regard the children as their own grandchildren. Grandma Luo Xinping, shown on the left at the Pingxiang orphanage, told us, "I used to be a kindergarten teacher so I like working with children. The orphanage children need more patience due to their disabilities, but they are so cute, and I feel young again whenever I play with them." The Grandmas said that working with the children made them feel both useful and fulfilled.

➤ Updates from Each Orphanage:

Nanchang:

The cerebral palsy rehabilitation center at the Nanchang Social Welfare Institute (SWI), staffed by professional therapists, doctors, and caregivers, serves all orphanages in Jiangxi province. Some of Amity's foster children were sent to the center for a period of physiotherapy. During my visit, I heard that three foster children from Yichun were undergoing three months of treatment and therapy at the center.

The Nanchang foster care office is staffed by six people with backgrounds in social work, therapy, and childcare. Each staff member is assigned several individual cases to record and monitor. Currently, Holt International and Altrusa/Amity fund foster care for the children at Nanchang. Each family under Altrusa sponsorship receives 480-550 RMB per month for every child they foster. As all of Altrusa's foster children have one or more disabilities, we have ensured that each of our foster families is kind, experienced, and loving.

(Photo: Two of our foster children)



Yichun:



The Yichun Social Welfare Institute's new building was completed in October 2010, and all the children who still live at the Institute are now moved in. The new facilities are all quite good, but Yichun's

director is concerned about the dwindling number of children in residence: the Yichun SWI is currently responsible for 30 children, but since over 10 of those are in foster care, only a few more than 10 children are now living in the new building. We insisted that the foster children under our sponsorship remain with their foster families.

Three older foster children will be sent back to the orphanage because mainstream schools cannot accommodate their special needs. They will be educated instead at the new SWI, where there is a special education teacher on staff, and a classroom with good equipment.

New Address of Yichun Social Welfare Institution:

Zip Code: 336000 Yichun Yuanzhou District Social Welfare Institution Tel: 0795-7089293

Pingxiang:

The Pingxiang Anyuan District Social Welfare Institute was recently promoted to a city-level body, and is now known as the Pingxiang Social Welfare Institute. Three new directors were assigned to the Pingxiang SWI this year: Ms. Zhong, the head director; and Ms. Xie and Ms. Shi, deputy directors in charge of the Children's Division.

We were happy to see DX, an older orphan, on this visit as she was helping out with the children in the children's room. DX said that she was grateful for Altrusa's support of her surgery and other medical treatment. Thanks to her prosthetic limb, she is now able to walk around by herself. (Left to right: DX and Deputy Director Xie)



Needs:

1. Vocational training for DX at the Pingxiang SWI, who wishes to train in cosmetology. She told us that she is both interested in cosmetology for its own sake, and also because she heard that it would be easy to find a job once certified. DX is a sensible girl who is eager to learn and who has the confidence to find a job outside of the orphanage.
2. A home school teacher for foster child Hong YH at the Nanchang SWI. YH is gifted at drawing, but is unable to attend school due to his disability. His foster mother and brother are currently helping him learn Chinese and math.



Reported by Zhou Bo in Dec.2010