

YiChun Social Welfare Institute Visit

Visit by Peggy Gurrard

Nov.19.12

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Group Photo

November 19, 2012

From left to right – Ms. Yuan (in charge of Children's Services), Mr. Wang Shengli (Director) , Peggy Gurrard (Amity) Ms. Zhou Bo (Amity), Ms. Luo (Amity), Ms. Chen, (in charge of the caregivers and the clinic and the Amity projects)



Director Wang Shengli, new since February 2012, came from the Civil Affairs government office. He graduated from civil affairs college in Nanchang with major in administration. He is very energetic and seems caring. His staff say he has been working long hours since he came. He says he grew up without a father so knows what it's like to not have one of his parents and it's even worse for the orphans that have no parents. He says he is anxious to learn and by working together as a team he and his staff will improve the care of the children. Ms. Yuan is also new, arriving approximately February 2012 and is in charge of children's services. Her husband is a businessman and they are a prominent family in Yichun. She and her husband have helped to promote the needs of the orphanage in the business community.



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Financial Challenges at YiChun

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There are currently 64 children at YiChun SWI.

Our seven sponsored children are the only ones they have in foster care. Two children are at boarding school and the rest are all in the orphanage. Most of the children are disabled, about half with cerebral palsy. It's very hard for them to find foster families for disabled children, especially those that are severely disabled. Director Wang believes foster care is a good thing and would like to have more children in foster care, and says that is "his next step" but so far they haven't been able to find families even though they have advertised

Some of the children have mild disabilities that would be acceptable to foster families. .

There have not been any international adoptions this year from YiChun SWI despite sending in the papers in for several. 14 of their special needs kids were taken to the "Journey of Hope" event in late September where they could be seen and evaluated by a foreign adoption agencies to promote their adoption.

Yichun SWI receives RMB1000 per month for each child (RMB600 from the central government and RMB400 from the local government). This is to cover everything the child needs including school and supplies, clothes and medical supplies. They pay RMB1200 to the foster families and even at this have a hard time finding any. They also have a hard time getting experienced staff (caregivers), especially since the salaries are low. Only 8 of their 31 staff (for both children and elderly and disabled adults) are paid by the government which includes the directors, doctor and teacher. They must find "other resources" to pay the other 23 staff and they try to "raise the money from society".



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Infant Nurseries

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Caregiver named Liu Huizhen holding a baby (pink hat) who has heart disease. We gave her a letter and photos from an adoptive family.



Child in the pink walker has heart disease and hydrocephalus

"There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children" ~ Nelson Mandela



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Children's Activities Room

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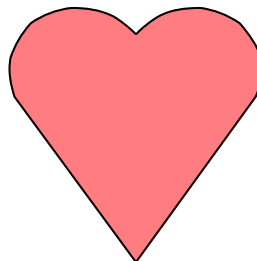
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The "children's activity room" where two of our Grannies were working with some of the disabled children. The first Hugging Granny is Peng Xiaolian who was enjoying some photos we brought of an adopted Yichun girl. The other granny in the same room is Huang Ruilian. With her is YQY (in dark "leather" coat) is a boy we paid to have IV treatments for a brain problem. He is now much better, is now able to understand what is said to him and can speak some. Granny Chen focuses on him and also on the boy with the green hood who is learning to walk.



This little cutie (picture on the right) is especially close to Granny Peng. Earlier attempts to take a photo of her had her hugging in closely to Granny Peng and not wanting to smile for the camera—she finally rewarded us with a huge smile.



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Above:

Granny Chen Xiaoping, a retired accountant (pink coat) working with children in the special ed room. She also helps the other kids (who are able to attend school) with their homework.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Director Wang also cares about the special needs children and has been working to improve their situation (some can't attend local schools). He went to the special education department and got them to give him a special education teacher, however, she can only come on the weekends when she's not teaching her other classes. They also have some volunteers come from the nearby Yichun College. He attended the training Amity held in May on the psychology of the special needs children. He understands that it takes a lot of patience to teach them and a much longer time for them to learn basic skills and that the overall goal for these children is different.

There were only four children there when I visited because some of the children are able to attend outside kindergarten. Three of these four were previously sponsored by us in foster care. Grannies teach them activities of daily living so they can dress and care for themselves. They are teaching the girl in the red coat to knit and she is improving overall, she can now hold a basic conversation.



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Two rooms with bunk beds that are for the older special needs kids and each room had it's own bathroom. At least one bathroom had a clothes washer and they teach the kids to wash their own clothes. On the wall in the second room are awards earned by one of their special education students who is now at a deaf boarding school and does a lot of sports and entered a writing competition. From the second sleeping room you can look through a series of glass walls to the baby rooms.



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SECOND KINDERGARTEN

The first classroom we went into was waiting for us and recited a welcome speech in unison, including YJL (black jacket w/ yellow stripes) and YKF, who is on YJL's left.

The teacher is reported to be very experienced and a good teacher and she showed us their exercise books. When they first started at the kindergarten they were not able to write but now can write some and also do addition, recognize shapes and obey the kindergarten rules.. The teacher says the other students are friendly towards them. Amity staff could notice the improvement in these two.

YMP (front right with her teacher in grey) attends the class below. Initially they had her come out of the room for some photos but by then she was upset and didn't participate in the song with hand movements (which the teacher – also reported to be good and experienced – was doing enthusiastically). She knows Ms. Yuan who tried to comfort her. The lady in white is the kindergarten director.



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FIRST KINDERGARTEN

6 of our 7 foster kids attend kindergarten but have moved to two different kindergartens (3 at each of two schools) because they are better and closer to the foster families.

Five of our foster children have their papers in for international adoption.

Three of our foster children (and three other orphanage children) were at the first kindergarten that we visited. YQN in the green jacket and YKS in the red coat, pictured with their foster mother who is a kindergarten teacher and also the director of the kindergarten. In the next room was YJY, in pink, who is in the same foster family (they can have three children because there is the foster mom and dad and then also her parents who are the foster mom for one or two, otherwise Amity limits the number of foster children in one family to two. They also have a 20 year old daughter who helps). YJY was very studiously writing Chinese characters in her exercise book which is what that class was doing at the time and every time I peeked back in the classroom that's what she was still doing. The orphanage staff say she has no hearing. They say she is good at paper cutting and also at dancing. The two kids next to her are also orphanage kids (both with heart disease) but not in foster care.

There is a school bus that picks up all of the children.

The usual cost for this kindergarten is RMB1200 per semester (RMB2400 per year) but they are giving the orphanage kids a slight discount so it's only RMB1000 per semester. The government does not pay for kindergarten, just grades 1 thru 9.



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FOSTER HOME APARTMENT #1

Three family members live in the same home, including a Grandma as a foster parent. This allows them to foster more than two children. YMP and the Grandma share a bedroom and bed and the other two kids share a small bed and bedroom. The foster dad is the brother of Ms. Yuan's husband. When Ms. Yuan first began her position at the orphanage this in-law family agreed to foster to support her work. The foster mom was lonely and missing her grown children and interested in fostering but initially the foster dad wasn't, however, he is now very attached to the children and even gets up with them in the middle of the night such as when they need to go to the bathroom.



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FOSTER HOME APARTMENT #2

YAQ is in foster care. She has severe cerebral palsy and low IQ. She can't speak and only understands some basic words and really can't show emotion or attachment to the foster mom which is discouraging to her. Foster Mom has told the orphanage staff that soon YAQ will be too big for her to lift and care for so she may need to return to the orphanage. This is an experienced foster mother and in the past she has fostered two children at a time. She is now also caring for her grandson who is almost two so just has one foster child. She would be willing to foster another child when YAQ goes back to the orphanage.

