



China Foster Care Programs

Families Thru International Adoption

Summer 2006

A Good Start to 2006!

Happy year of the Dog! I hope everyone had a wonderful start to 2006. This first 2006 issue of the Hunan Foster Care Program Newsletter is a little overdue. It has been a busy new year for us!

2006 marks the fifth year that the FTIA Hunan Foster Care Program has been in existence. Initially, in 2001 the program began with placing 25 children from Changsha First Social Welfare Institute in foster care homes so that they could receive one-on-one attention from the foster parents as well as more nutritional food.

The program quickly grew and in the second year we were able to double the number of children the program sponsored. Our foster care program has continued to grow with each successive year and has expanded to currently serving 70 children at a time. Over the past five years the FTIA Hunan Foster Care Program has cared for nearly 500 children!

We could never do this without the wonderful support we have had from families and organizations who have generously donated to the program - some have donated continuously from the very beginning.

The FTIA Hunan Foster Care Program has had a great start to 2006 with our first quarter donations being up about \$1200 from last year's first quarter.

By Nikki Bilderback

This is exciting news since we have expanded the program. We are hoping to see increases in donations for all quarters in 2006!

FTIA is also working on a second foster care program, this time in Guangdong Province. I look forward to sharing more news on this exciting new program as it develops.

Some Fun Stuff

How to Know If You're Born on the Year of the Dog: If you were born on 1922, 1934, 1946, 1958, 1970, 1982, 1994 and 2006.

The Traits and Characteristics of a Dog:

Loyal, honest, trustworthy, good listeners, know how to keep secrets, very principled, always want to do something or improve on something, are not materialistic.

The Signs Dogs are Compatible With:

Dogs are said to be compatible with a Tiger, Horse or Rabbit.

Fields Where Dogs Excel: They are excellent in business and will make good leaders.

*From www.about.com



Year of the Dog



湖南 *Hunan News*

So Happy and Proud to be a Foster Mother

A 30-member expert team from Beijing Children Health Care Institute made a visit to our foster program on November 21, 2005. During this one-week long visit, the experts conducted a thorough examination and test on the babies' physical and intelligent development. Experts were pleased and satisfied with the outcome of the examination. The development of all babies was on target for their ages. And all the babies were very strong, active, and smart.



Xiao Yun shortly after entering foster care

The healthy status of the babies was a big encouragement to all the foster mothers. They were so happy to learn that the babies were all doing very well. Xiao Yun's foster mother said that it was not an easy job all the time, but it was definitely worth doing. She was so happy that she has brought up a healthy and smart baby.

Xiao Yun's foster mother said that she wasn't very confident about her old ways of taking care of babies. Through the training provided by FTIA, she has increased her knowledge of child-rearing. She has also done some additional learning by reading books and finding other sources to learn new ways to take care of babies. She said her hard work has paid off. The expert told her that she did a wonderful job and Xiao Yun was ahead of children of the same age both physically and mentally.



Happy with her foster parents

Xiao Yun's foster mother is very proud of Xiao Yun. She said that Xiao Yun is the star of the neighborhood. "Whenever I take her out, people gather around and talk to



Healthy Xiao Yun

her. She is never afraid of people; instead she is always excited to see people. She claps her hands, kicks her legs, and giggles." The expert was very impressed with her personality.

Other than the tests and examinations, the experts also gave a lot of customized suggestions and instructions on baby care based on each baby's specific situation. All foster mothers felt that the suggestions and instructions were very helpful. It made them more confident to take better care of the babies in the future.

One mom said, "A healthy and happy baby is the best reward to us. We are so honored to take care of them. We will try our best to bring them up healthy and happy."



From Hunan to Home

Olivia Yang Li (He Yang Li)

We are Minna (33 years old) and Pasi Hartikainen (35 years old) from Kitee, Finland. Kitee is a small town in North Karelia. We have three children. Jenna and Oona are our biological children. Jenna is ten years and Oona is seven years old. We got Olivia last summer (25.7.2005) from Changsha in Hunan Province, China.



We are so happy and thankful to have all our children.

We wanted to adopt because we can't have any more biological children and we wanted more children. Olivia was 1 year and 4 months when we get her. And at the very first moment she was our own child. First Olivia looks to Pasi for her security. Daddy's lap is a good place to be. She accepts both parents, but dad was important at first.

Olivia is healthy, active and determined little girl. She eats very well. Olivia likes to be held in someone's lap, but she also likes to play by herself. Olivia has settled in very well. She understands many words: mama, daddy, Jenna, Oona, rabbit, and flower. Jenna and Oona are very happy to have their new little sister. They have very good time together. Sometimes there are also quarrels and crying and shouting.

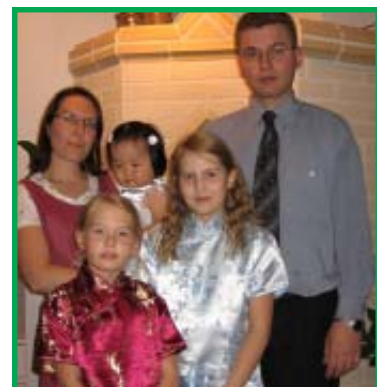
Nights are quit restless. Olivia wakes up many times and she checks to make sure we are with her. Sometimes nights are easier and sometimes difficult. We don't know why she is restless. Lap time and closeness make Olivia feel better. The first month she was crying and missing her foster mama and papa. She was crying "mama". It made us feel so bad, but we think that it was better for Olivia to live in a foster family than an orphanage. But it was so difficult to se her sorrow!

Olivia is such a lovely little girl. We love her very very much . We want to tell her about her adoption and her life in China when she can understand things. We talk about China almost every day. We hope that we can go back to China when Olivia is older.

Minna and Pasi Hartikainen



Three Lovely Sisters



Greetings from Finland!



Lily Xue Ping Morey (He Xue Ping)



We were blessed with our daughter, Lily Xue Ping Morey, 14 months ago – almost to the day. Looking back, it seems as though she’s been a part of our lives forever. I don’t know how the responsible parties in China decide which child goes to which family, but there seems to be some magic involved. We had read of the “red string” that connects a child with her parents and have come to firmly believe in it. Our little girl could not have been a better fit for our family.



Lily and Mom - Seconds after meeting

Before traveling to China, we received Lily’s dossier in which were included some pictures of and background information on our daughter to be. Among the statements that we read was that Lily could be naughty. She once tore up a newspaper and when reprimanded, gave a mischievous little grin. We’ve come to recognize that grin quite well now.

We first met Lily at the Changsha Bureau of Civil Affairs. Lily immediately bonded with my wife Sherrie. Lily initially looked very nervous and scared but was easily comforted when Sherrie took her in her arms. We were able to meet and talk with Lily’s nanny from the orphanage, who confirmed Lily’s mischievous nature and told us that Lily is a very smart little girl.

Days later, when we returned to the Bureau of Civil Affairs, Lily’s nanny approached her. Lily refused to go to her nanny and clung even harder to Sherrie. The nanny good naturedly exclaimed “Look, she loves her new mother more than she loves me!”

It took Lily about a full year to become really comfortable with me. For the first twelve months, Lily preferred that Mommy handle everything from diaper changes to putting her to bed. Now, Lily and I enjoy a wonderful relationship in which we read stories, play soccer, and end most evenings with her asking me if she can have a horsie-back ride in the morning.

Our six year old daughter, Maggie, loves being a big sister more than we could have imagined. The two girls get along just as siblings should. Playing dress up, drawing pictures, reading stories, and, of course, annoying one another. Maggie was able to join us on our trip to China and fell in love with her sister from the first moment. The two girls recently celebrated Halloween together by trick-or-treating in identical Indian girl costumes.



Halloween picture with friends

When we came home from China last year, we were able to get in touch with your organization and confirm Lily’s participation in the Hunan Foster Care Program. Thanks to you, we now have pictures of Lily and some history from the months before we met her. Thank you for helping care for our little girl.

Mike Morey
Littleton, MA



Emily Mayer (Zhang Xiao Kai)

After many hours of travel, three days of sightseeing in Beijing, and already missing our 2 ½ year old staying with grandparents in Wisconsin, we anxiously awaited the arrival of our second precious daughter from China. Tears welled in our eyes once again in anticipation of Emily's arrival. Our agency escort, the daughter of the foster mom, and the director of Changsha Social Welfare Institute who was holding our baby Emily walked through the door of our hotel room.



5 months old

Emily was just 9 months and 2 days old that Thursday, September 4th, 2003. I remember repeating the words, "She's so beautiful!" She had more hair than any of the babies in our travel group. I remember how she only let out one little whimper as I took her in my arms, snuggled her close and swayed as we discussed her daily routine with the director. Within five minutes she was fast asleep in my arms. While she slept we discovered her outfit was on backwards. We thought that was sweet!

Our trip lasted about 14 days from start to finish and it was memorable. Emily has been home now for just over 2 years and that seems like a short time, but when we look at her growth and how much she has learned, it seems like she has been here longer.

Emily continues to be active and good-natured and wants to do whatever her big sister is doing. She loves to socialize. She began talking in full (7-9 word) sentences at 19 months of age. When out shopping, visiting family, or in the park you will find Emily conversing with adults more than children. She has a story to tell all the time. During her play-time you might find her pretending to campy, reading books to her stuffy buddies (Funshine Bear for sure), playing dress up, riding her scooter or trike, or watching Dora.

To this day, Emily loves to look at her photo albums of when she was a baby and especially the ones from China, but she LOVES to hear the story of when Mommy and Daddy flew to China to adopt baby Emily. She has heard it so often that at 2 ½ years old she can tell the story herself. She will always state, "My favorite part is when Grace (big sister) gave me my FIRST bottle when we got home."

Every day we thank God for our precious daughters who came to us from China. We pray for their birthparents and Emily's foster family and thank them for the difficult choices they made as well as all the love they've shown and given to our family. We are truly blessed!

Tom, Suzanne, Grace and Emily Mayer



Enjoying the day



Beautiful Emily



Marie Jing Sa Sophie (He Jing Sa)



Foster Care Photo



Big Smile!



A Happy Family

In each issue of the Hunan Foster Care Program newsletter I would like to share stories and pictures of children who have been adopted and were in our program. If you have adopted a child who was fostered in our program, please feel free to send me stories about your adoption experience or about how your child is doing now that they are home. I will try to feature 2-3 stories and pictures in each newsletter. The *From Home to Hunan* section is really a sharing place for families!

Contact Information

FTIA has been keeping track of the contact information for all families who adopted a child through our Foster Care Program. If you have moved since you requested the photos of your child, or if you've added an email address or changed your email, please let me know and I will update your file. Once in awhile I will get in contact with families to ask for stories or photos, or just to let you know the new newsletter is up. I would like to keep in contact with as many of you as possible. Please send me an email to let me know of changes, or if you just want to check that the information we have is current, you can email me too. My email address is nbilderback@ftia.org. Thank you!



Continuing Needs

Our 1st quarter total for 2006 donations is \$4,077.00. We are excited to report that is a \$1200 increase from our 2005 1st quarter total; however we need more help to cover the costs of caring for so many children. For our first quarter the care of the children in foster homes totaled \$11,681.00 with administrative costs totaling \$1,819.00. FTIA will always cover all the administrative costs of the program, however to make sure that our Hunan Program remains successful and to ensure a great start to our Zhanjiang Program, we will need more help from our generous donors.

We are very appreciative of the families who have chosen to donate to this wonderful program and hope the next three quarters will show increases from last year as well!

2006 marks the 5th year the Hunan Program has been in existence. In our first year we were able to place 25 children in foster families. We have since grown to seventy foster families, enabling us to provide foster care for seventy children at any given time. To date we have served over 400 children with the Hunan Foster Care Program. We hope to serve hundreds more children in China at the most critical time of their life – the first year.

Please remember that monies donated to the Hunan Foster Care Program are completely separate from other adoption related expenses. Also note that 100% of all monies donated to foster care go directly to the care of the children as FTIA covers all administrative costs for the program.

A Quilt of Wishes

Teresa Werner, an adoptive parent, has written a beautiful tale about adoption. Her book is called *A Quilt of Wishes*. A portion of the proceeds from her book sales will benefit the FTIA Hunan Foster Program. You can learn more about the book and order it from the website www.aquiltowishes.com. I want to thank Teresa for such a wonderful story and helping out the foster program!

