



## First Quarter 2012 General Foster Care Update



Ten years ago, 95% of adoptions from China were non special needs children. We all had read about the need – of Chinese orphanages filled with healthy baby girls. And people around the world opened their hearts to these children.

What a difference a few years makes. Now, almost 70% of all adoptions from China are of children with special needs. In the last few years alone, the birth defect rate in China has risen dramatically. According to the National Center for Birth Defects Monitoring of China, nearly 1.2 million newborns have birth defects and congenital disabilities. That means that every thirty seconds, a new baby in China is born with a special need. This has changed the orphanage population in very real and distinct ways. Orphanage directors tell us again and again that 90-95% of the children now being abandoned in China and entering their care are children with medical needs. This brings new challenges to charities who wish to impact the lives of the children who wait.

I just returned from China a few weeks ago, and every orphanage I visited was filled with children with heart defects, cleft lip and palate, missing limbs, spinal tumors, and more. So the responsibilities of the aunties in orphanages have changed completely over the years. We all thought they had difficult jobs before, caring for 10-15 babies at a time....but they were all “healthy” babies on the whole. Now they are caring for children who have often complex medical needs.

These children require one on one care that is now even harder to deliver in an orphanage setting so foster care is more important than ever. However, the jobs of foster families have also changed as we ask them to care mostly for children with special needs.

LWB now has foster care in 18 cities in China, as we believe every child deserves to grow up in a loving home environment.

During this last trip I visited 2 new orphanages with a view to setting up new foster care programs. One orphanage was in Guizhou province and the other in Shandong province. In both areas the majority of children I was shown had special needs as detailed above. We are hoping these 2 new foster care programs will be up and running by June 2012. Just as soon as we finalize the foster families and local manager, we will load children on our website. If you are interested in sponsoring one of the children in the new programs, please do not hesitate to contact me directly, and I can tell you more about the children identified for foster care in these areas.

Every child deserves the chance to know the love of a family, and children with special needs thrive within foster care where they can be given the one to one attention that is just not possible within an orphanage setting.



These are just a few of the beautiful children we hope to get in to foster care soon.

On my trip last month, I had time to visit some of the children in our Shunyi foster care program. I visited the home in Langfang where most of the boys in this program live.

When we arrived, the boys had just woken from a midday nap so were rather quiet and subdued. However they were soon very interested in the copy reports I had brought with me and eager to tell me who was who from the photos on the reports.



Henry, Elijah and Ben



Jake and our manager, Chelsea

Jake was soon clambering up on to Chelsea's lap, where he stayed for most of the rest of our visit.

I had some small toy planes, racing motorbikes, toy cars, some building blocks, soft toys etc and bubbles for the boys.



Caleb loved throwing the planes and chasing after them. He is such a cutie and chats away all the time with a great big grin on his face. Elijah (right) preferred the racing motorbikes and building blocks.

Ben liked the building blocks, while Ryan was eager to show us his writing skills.



The next day I headed off to meet other LWB Team members in Guizhou. Our Qiandongnan program has been running for a year now, and we held a little party to thank all the foster families. It was nice to get all the foster children in one place at one time, although we also met them earlier in the day in their own homes.

We agreed to take these beautiful little girls into our program, and they will need sponsors.



We love the way that the foster parents carry the children around strapped to their backs in the most beautiful hand embroidered baby carriers.

We took presents for each child in our foster care program. Some of the older girls were delighted to receive princess dresses...



This is Emma and her foster mum. Isn't she beautiful? She has since had her cleft lip repaired during our April Cleft Exchange in Kaifeng



The families really enjoyed the party and each foster mum was given a flower and a certificate in appreciation of the care they give to the children.



The children loved the balloon toys made by our own Amy Eldridge!

It was a very rewarding day. We were so pleased to see the loving care given by the foster parents and the obvious affection between parents and children. We have seen 11 adoptions during the first year and we hope to see just as many during the coming year.

I visited two more foster care programs in Anhui during my trip. The majority of the children in both programs have a special need. Here are a few of my favorite photos...



Ricki and LWB's foster care director



Becca and Will

We are so grateful to the foster families who care for these children and hope that in the coming year we will see many of them leave our programs and be adopted.



The smiles on the children's faces say it all!

To our sponsors, **thank you so much** for supporting these children. Foster Care makes such a difference to these children's lives.

*Confidentiality Notice: This report contains confidential and privileged information regarding a foster care child through Love Without Boundaries that may not be shared with third parties or used to pre-identify this child for adoption. The CCCWA specifically does not allow pre-identification of any children for the purpose of adoption and it is Love Without Boundaries privilege to honor their requests, so we ask that no information contained in this report, including the pictures of the child be shared with other persons nor used for the purpose of identifying said child for adoption. Thank you for your support of Love Without Boundaries and thank you for your care for all the children in our programs.*

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