

Half the Sky



Volume II, Issue 3

Summer, 2001

www.halftthesky.org

Seeing the Programs in Action

By Karin Evans, Board Member, Half the Sky

On June 4 and 5, Half the Sky held a workshop in the Hefei Children's Welfare Institution. Men and women from a number of China's welfare institutions, including Chuzhou, Yangdong, Jiangmen, Shanghai, Changshu, Changzhou, Hefei, Chongqing, and Chengdu, came together to learn more about Half the Sky Foundation's Little Sisters Preschools and Baby Sisters Infant Nurture Programs—with an eye to implementing the programs in their own institutions.

Before this workshop, I had seen Half the Sky's work only from this side of the ocean—talking with others who had been to China and worked on the projects, hearing about the children in the programs. That long-distance view was enough to convince me I wanted to help in any way that I could. But during the workshop, I got to see the programs at work.

In Hefei, in a playroom filled with dolls and dress-up clothes, a small play structure and a miniature kitchen set up, I watched three toddlers at work bathing a doll. One turned the doll over; the other tenderly washed its back. The third gave it some vigorous scrubbing. Earlier in Changzhou, I watched a four-year-old put tapes in the boombox and sway to the mu-

sic, while a small blind boy pushed a doll stroller through the room. Last year at this time, the blind boy lay on the floor, unengaged. He couldn't walk. There was no music.

There are many ways to measure progress, and the individual write-ups on the children who are in the Little Sisters Preschool programs report tremendous gains in the children's self confidence, as well as their physical and mental growth. The teachers can point to case after case of breakthroughs, of dramatic changes in their small students. But there's also a looser way to assess the programs: Just walk into a room and sense the spirit—and that goes for the adults as well as the children.

To open the workshop, two of Half the Sky's partners in China, Madame Miao Xia of the China Population Welfare Foundation, and Mr. Yang Xuehui, of the China Social Welfare Association, talked about their roles in establishing Half the Sky's programs, help that has been invaluable in making our programs happen so quickly and so well. The Half the Sky program is like hybrid corn, Miao Xia, Vice President and Secretary General of the China Population Welfare Foundation, commented, "The very best traits of diverse people come together to create something strong and wonderful."

Continued on page 12



Half the Sky Foundation was created in 1998 by adoptive families of Chinese children in order to establish preschools and infant nurture centers inside China's orphanages. In 2000, we established two early childhood centers in two Chinese provinces. Our goal in 2001-2002 is to create eight new centers. Half the Sky's work is supported by donations and volunteers. Enjoy our newsletter and please help our efforts however you can.



WHAT'S INSIDE

- | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|----|------------------------------------|
| 2 | Dreaming About Tomorrow | 8 | A Gift to the Children of Yangdong |
| 3 | The Half the Sky Poster | 9 | How to Join a Work Crew |
| 4 | A Teacher's Notebook | 10 | For the Love of Wen Fu |
| 6 | The Homefront--Volunteer News | 11 | From Market to Dinner Table |
| 7 | Ohio Families Walk for Hope | 14 | A Half the Sky T-Shirt |

Dreaming About Tomorrow. . .

By Jenny Bowen, Executive Director, Half the Sky

A while back I was talking with one of the older girls who's spent her life at an orphanage where Half the Sky has set up a Little Sisters Preschool. This sixteen year-old was extraordinarily articulate and straightforward. She told me, quite plainly, that she had no options for the future.

"Sure, I would love to find a family. But I'm too old to be adopted. And for girls like me there is nothing. My education will soon be over and then that will be the end of it."

My first impulse was to reply, "But you're so young! You're bright and charming and strong. A whole life is ahead of you. It's ridiculous to say that you have no hopes!" But part of me knew she simply spoke the truth. As things stand right now, an orphaned girl in China has little to look forward to when she graduates into the big world beyond. Only a tiny minority go on to higher education. They lack the sort of family connections and *guanxi* that might open doors to good jobs and the embrace of the community outside.

It's not fair. Girls like this one have beaten all the odds. Despite the lack of family support and the reluctance of local schools to accommodate orphanage children, she's worked hard to succeed in school. By all rights, her outlook should be full of promise.

Back when I made my first orphanage tour for Half the Sky, one orphanage vice-director told me something that I found more than a little unsettling. He said that orphanage

kids are not welcome in their community schools (often true) and that the reason was because they "completely lack motivation." We do everything for them here at the institution," he said, with great authority. "We cook for them and clean up after them. They want for nothing. They're lazy and spoiled and don't care to work hard at school or at anything else."

If someone whose job it is to care for orphans, someone who sees them all through the long days of their childhoods, has this little understanding of the special needs of institutionalized children, how can others be expected to "get it?"

But think about this: Doesn't that older girl, raised in the SWI, have something unique

One of the older girls who's spent her life in an orphanage, told me quite plainly, that she had no options for the future. "For girls like me, there is nothing."

and wonderful to offer the little sisters of our Half the Sky community? She understands the children in our preschools in a way that few others can. Why don't we help her get a good education, then train her in our special curriculum?

What if we set up a Big Sisters program for older children in conjunction with our Little

Sisters preschools and Baby Sisters infant nurture program? A girl who studies hard and who also learns English will be sponsored by HTS to attend her local normal school (like a junior college that specializes in training teachers). After she completes her normal school education, if she does well, we then sponsor her in a year of study in the U.S. at one of the colleges that gives training in the same Reggio Emilia approach that HTS uses. When she returns, she undergoes our training, then comes to work at the HTS center in her home institution. She owes us two years. If, after that, she wants to move on, she has a great resume and plenty of options. And her little sisters back at the orphanage have had a wonderful teacher who understands them like no other.

And here's a terrific side-benefit: What if, while that Big Sister is studying in the U.S., she lives in one of our homes? She becomes a big sister to our own Chinese daughters, another bridge to the culture of their birth, to their great family in China.

As Half the Sky begins to grow and to expand its services to the children of other institutions in other provinces, let's consider how we might involve and enrich the days of all of the children whose lives we touch. It seems to me that we have a great opportunity as long as doors and hearts remain open. Why not do all we can?

And why not create a volunteer corps, composed of adoptive parents and friends, that

Continued on page 15

Half the Sky

Volume II, Issue 3
Summer, 2001



Half the Sky Foundation
541 Vistamont Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94708 USA

(510)525-2077
FAX: 525-7677

www.halfthesky.org
EMAIL: info@halfthesky.org

The mission of Half the Sky Foundation is to enrich the lives and enhance the outcome for the babies and young children in China who wait to be adopted, and for those who will spend their childhoods in orphanages. We are establishing early childhood education and infant nurture programs in Chinese welfare institutions to provide the children stimulation, individual attention, and an active learning environment.

Half the Sky was incorporated in California in 1998. The foundation is a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation under Section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code. Donations are tax-deductible.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dana Johnson, MD, PhD . Carolyn Pope Edwards, EdD . Kay Johnson, PhD
Joan Spano . Joe Spano . Vicki McClay . David Howard .
Richard Bowen . Tracy Samuels . Zhang Zhirong
Karin Evans . Patricia Ng, MD . Jim Gradoville . Ellen Sloan
Jenny Bowen, Executive Director

Newsletter Editor: Karin Evans

The Half the Sky Poster



Half the Sky's little girl has been turned into a beautiful full color poster by artist Valerie Sokolova. Copies—suitable for framing—are available now. This fine art poster will make a great gift, a lovely wall hanging for a child's room.

Sokolova, born in the Ukraine, immigrated to the United States in 1993 from Belarus. She studied design and illustration at the Belarus Academy of Arts and graduated in 1986. She has illustrated more than 30 children's books in Russian and continues to illustrate children's books in the U.S. Some of her first picture books in English include *The Elves and the Shoemaker*, *Eek, Squeek and Leek*, *The Magic of Merlin*, and *Christmas Treasury*. She also has done illustrations for Simon & Schuster, Golden Books, "The New York Times," *Time Magazine for Kids*, *Angel Magazine*, and Disney. She lives in Brooklyn with her husband and daughter and a family of wild cats in the garden.

The poster measures 24 by 18 inches and costs \$25. Numbered copies, signed by the artist, are available for \$50 each. The shipping and handling charge is \$3 per order (\$6, international), no matter how many posters you order at once. All proceeds benefit Half the Sky and are tax-deductible.. To order, see the form on page 15.

A Teacher's Notebook

Following the Children's Interests

By Wen Zhao, Program Director, *Half the Sky*

The Reggio Emilia idea of letting children's work grow out of a process rather than any pre-determined ideas about product has led to some dramatic and exciting projects in our Little Sisters classrooms. During the last training at Hefei Children's Welfare Institution, for instance, teachers had great success working on several mini-projects that grew out of the children's curiosity.

First, the teachers spent time just observing the children. They noticed that one group was interested in moving vehicles; another group showed curiosity about cooking food. So the teachers divided into groups and held brainstorming sessions to see what materials and approaches might work for projects involving these two subjects.

The first challenge for the group that dubbed their project "What is a vehicle?" was to change the desk-chair classroom into a more child-friendly setup, so the teachers rearranged the class into different play-learning centers.

They also made a dramatic play area using a big cardboard box made into a car shape, using classroom chairs for the seats. This was the first time the teachers had come up with a dramatic play idea. What a change from the traditional concept of teaching!

Each day during the project, the teachers provided various opportunities for the children to look at books of moving vehicles, or to go out to observe the cars, buses, and trucks passing by. They even asked drivers to allow



Above: Each day the teachers took the children out to look at vehicles... They even stopped cars, asked drivers to see the insides of certain vehicles and touch the different parts.

Below: A popular addition to the classroom was this cardboard car, complete with school-chair seats and steering wheel.



the children to see the insides of some of the vehicles and to touch different parts.

The children then drew pictures of the vehicles they had seen and made some models with recycled materials. When some of the children still were uncertain about a detail, one of the teachers took them out and looked at the vehicles again. She held one child's hands and let him feel the different parts. The teachers documented each step of the process.

Finally, they took the group for a city bus ride, letting the children buy the tickets. The children's loud, excited, proud voices as they talked about the ride indicated to the teachers that this was probably the most successful learning experience for teachers and children alike.

Afterward, the children were all familiar enough with the various vehicles to draw them. When we look at the very detailed and vivid pictures they drew, who could have believed that barely two weeks earlier, they barely knew about vehicles.

The final drawings showed not only distinct windows, doors, and wheels, but even indicated that the headlights were "on" and people were riding inside.

One of the children drew herself inside the bus along with other people and said, "I am sitting inside and there are many people on the bus." Another child drew some people, and said, "They are buying the tickets."

From field trips to drawings to creative role-play, this project took us all a very long way! ☘



Children got a hands-on look at a number of different vehicles, from passenger cars to carts.



“When we look at the very detailed and vivid pictures the children drew, who could have believed that just two weeks earlier, they barely knew about vehicles, didn’t know how to draw them, and didn’t even know what parts they could have.”

The Homefront--Volunteer News

HTS is fortunate to have volunteer fundraising coordinators across the US, in Canada and in Europe and Asia. In each issue, Jennifer Loane, our eastern US coordinator will try to give an overview of fundraising activities, new ideas, ways to get involved.

By Jennifer Loane, National Volunteer Coordinator, Half the Sky

Each time I gather up the news from volunteers across the country, I am impressed once again with the dedication of our supporters. All contributions, no matter how small, are so generously given and gratefully received. While some people may be able to make major, ongoing commitments to Half the Sky's work, much of the support comes from small grassroots efforts, many of them quite spontaneous. Here's a sampling of recent efforts.

An adoption travel group annual reunion was an occasion for Jaelyn Jeffrey and Ted Craft of Weston, Connecticut, to raise money for Half the Sky (Jaelyn volunteered on our China Work Crews in both 2000 and 2001.) In past years, everyone chipped in to help the family hosting the reunion to cover costs, but instead, this year's host asked that everyone contribute to HTS. They raised \$650! The family who will host next year's reunion say they plan to continue the tradition.

Four volunteers in the Washington, DC area who worked to build the Hefei preschool last summer continue their unflagging support. Elizabeth Mohre, Sandy Lachter, Elsie Hull, and Ellen Mignoni are spearheading a fundraising effort among the families in their playgroup, asking all to consider a donation to HTS in their daughters' names. They've also held a successful multifamily garage sale despite hot, humid weather. In fact, they joked that they hadn't been so hot since last summer in Hefei! They got their daughters involved in the project, making brownies and cupcakes to sell, and the girls enjoyed being

part of the effort. And, they raised \$2,385 for Half the Sky!

For Mother's Day, HTS volunteer, Nancy Humphrey, sponsored a HTS Nanny in her mother's name as a gift, and reports that her mother was clearly "bowed over by the donation in her name." Nancy also sent her idea to the Post-Adopt-China email list, and a number of other families made Mother's Day donations as well.

For booklovers, one volunteer suggests a book fair. Waldenbooks, for instance, will sponsor a book fair at any event and give 20% of the proceeds to the charity of your choice. Or, to encourage in-store sales, they will offer a 10% discount on all books purchased and give 10% to a designated charity. Contact your local book store for more details.

Artful giving: A talented volunteer from Redondo Beach, California, who makes jewelry as a hobby, has decided to donate her profits to Half the Sky. Her customers receive a wonderful piece of jewelry, and children in China receive a wonderful gift as well.

An elementary school teacher wrote in to say that she is planning to request donations to HTS in lieu of holiday or teacher appreciation gifts.

Walking and running for Half the Sky. The Families with Children from China chapter in Southeastern Virginia is planning a walk-a-

thon to benefit Half the Sky, and a group in Minnesota is planning a road race. (See opposite page for news of the Ohio group's walk-a-thon.)

Tag sales. In Fairfield, Connecticut, a family recently helped the 8th grade confirmation class at Our Lady of the Assumption School sponsor a tag sale. The kids did an outstanding job and we commend their efforts. And FCC-Southern California, one of HTS' first and most generous supporters, also held a highly successful tag sale, raising \$1,200 for the cause!

Finally, a not-too-taxing idea from Half the Sky supporters Jack and Mary Purdy of Santa Fe, New Mexico, who say they plan to donate their upcoming tax rebate check in its entirety to HTS and suggested that others may want to do the same.

Corporate sponsorship is another vehicle through which HTS can receive funds. A volunteer in Illinois is working to obtain corporate sponsorship from a company in Peoria that has many businesses in China. Perhaps you're aware of a company in your area with strong ties to China that might be willing to support HTS.

Also, if anyone knows of a corporation that might be willing to donate new playground equipment, developmental toys, or children's furniture to the preschools, please let us know at info@halfthesky.org. A substantial donation of computer equipment is also needed, to link the teachers in Half the Sky centers up with each other, so they can compare notes and help each other with programs and solutions.

If you have other fundraising ideas, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator in your area. We'd be happy to help in any way we can. To announce an upcoming event in the newsletter, send a brief notice to karinevans@halfthesky.org.

For help in coordinating a Walk-a-Thon for Half the Sky, check with our coordinator, Ginny Smith of the Central Ohio Chapter of FCC at togsmith@infnet.com.

Volunteer Connections

If you'd be interested in joining HTS' volunteer effort to raise the funds we need to serve more children, please contact the HTS Volunteer Coordinator nearest you: If you don't use email, please call or write HTS for contact information.

Eastern States

AL, CT, DC, DE, FL, GA, MA, MD, ME, NC, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, SC, VA, VT, WV
Contact: Jennifer Loane
jloane@homecomingbooks.com

North Central States

IA, IL, IN, MI, MN, ND, NE, OH, SD, WI
Contact: Laurie Kaufman
lekaufman@home.com

South Central States

AR, CO, KS, LA, MO, MS, NM, TX
Contact: Eva Smith
els97@flash.net

Western States

AK, AZ, CA, HI, ID, MT, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY
Contact: Suellen Grenko
sgrenko@peoplepc.com

Ohio Families Walk for Hope

Saturday morning, June 30, was a landmark day for Central Ohio Families with Children from China. We held our first annual Walk for Hope and raised more than \$5,000 for Half the Sky Foundation for the great programs that they are implementing for the children in orphanages all over China.

It was a very special event: a perfect, sunny day in Columbus, 150 happy participants, and a sense of purpose in the air. It was a joyous sight to see moms, dads, grandparents, relatives and friends strolling the paths with wagons, strollers, bicycles and big smiles. After the walk, folks browsed the adoption



information booths since our purpose for the event was twofold: to raise money for the children, and to encourage adoption from China. The kids (and parents) enjoyed the juggler and the clowns. The Columbus Zoo brought out some fabulously exotic animals. And our Walk for Hope was aired by both Channel 4 and Channel 10 in their Saturday morning and evening newscasts!

This walk became reality because of the energy and enthusiasm of a group of people in Ohio who believe that we have a moral imperative to advocate for and support the children remaining in orphanages in China. They are, after all, the little sisters of our beloved daughters. Not only was this the most rewarding project I have ever worked on, but it was a whole lot of fun! We have set ourselves a standard of excellence, and next year I know that we will be even bigger and better!

If I can help anyone plan your own walk, please email me at togsmith@infinet.com. I will be glad to share the knowledge. ☸
—Ginny Smith, President, Central Ohio Families with Children from China (COFCC)



from my 8th Birthday Party

Dear half the sky here is \$150 from India

福 留 主
Fu Qian Meyers and my friends

India Fu Qian Meyers decided to devote her 8th birthday celebration to Half the Sky, asking for contributions instead of presents. She sent a donation of \$150. India, the daughter of Ronnie and Larry Meyers, lives in Portland, Oregon.

A VERY SPECIAL BIRTHDAY GIFT

A Gift to the Children of Yangdong

“Our desire was to give back to China and Yangdong Social Welfare Institute, in particular, for taking care of our beautiful daughter, Lindsay,” says Louise Zweben of San Francisco, whose family has chosen to underwrite the Little Sisters Preschool for the Yangdong SWI in Guangdong Province.

In 1997, Louise, who is Scottish by birth, and Monte Zweben, a former New Yorker who runs a software company called Blue Martini, were married. They took a wedding trip that included a stop in the Shenzhen district, China’s new free trade zone. “We never thought that four years later almost to the day, we’d be back in China meeting our daughter,” says Louise. “Lindsay came from Yangdong SWI, but we never got to visit the orphanage. Instead, Lindsay was brought to us and we met Director Li very briefly at the hotel in Guangzhou. The first thing Lindsay ever did with us was to smile, she is such a smiler!

“Lindsay has just been thriving, blossoming,” says Zweben. “Now she’s a normal, almost two year-old, and a happy, happy child. We just felt so blessed with having her that we wanted to find a way to contribute, to give something back to the Chinese children. I had a little problem with just throwing money at charity, not knowing how it would be used.

“Our priority was to have a real, tangible impact on the children themselves. We searched for a solution for quite some time and then Bee Brown (of the ACCEPT agency in Northern California) and Norman Niu (of U.S. Asian Affairs in Monterey Park, California) suggested we work with Half the Sky. The timing was perfect.”

This past spring Zweben traveled back to China with Half the Sky’s executive director Jenny Bowen.” We traveled together to Yangdong, and I got to meet the people who took care of Lindsay when she was younger. Director Li, her staff and the local representatives were so welcoming.

“The Yangdong orphanage had just that March been relocated to a brand new building and Director Li was very proud of her conference room with a wall full of photos sent by adoptive families. She couldn’t have been more hospitable. I also gave her photographs from other Yangdong families in our group and she was delighted. She definitely remembered all the children. The orphanage staff clearly cared so much for the babies there, but were also very limited in their resources and what they could do.

“The orphanage is clean but sterile and devoid of toys and playroom. We managed to also visit the old orphanage where Lindsay spent her first eight months, and that was pretty gut wrenching. This was about a mile away, the top level of a three-story building. It was pretty dilapidated and sad looking.

“The reason for our trip was to scope out the requirements of a Half the Sky center in the new Yangdong facility,” says Louise. “There is an extra room, which would make an ideal Baby Sisters Infant Nurture center, and there is a large outdoor area, which would make an ideal playground and garden.

“The week after our visit, Director Li attended the Half the Sky workshop in Hefei and saw what HTS had done in other orphanages,” says Zweben. “She appears to be truly committed to this program.” The plan is to build a com-



Monte, Louise and Lindsay Zweben

bination of mostly an infant nurture center, combined with a small preschool. Yangdong has very few older kids.

“Clearly there are a lot of families out there who want to do something,” says Zweben. The Zweben’s extremely generous contribution will fund a fall building project at Yangdong, and when the Half the Sky volunteers gather together to put the dream into action, Zweben says she wants to be there.

“Hopefully, I can go back there in November with Lindsay to help build it.” ☘



Left: Yangdong director Li ShiFeng and Louise Zweben. Right: Infants wait at Yangdong.



How to Join a Half the Sky Work Crew

As you read this newsletter, crews are at work in several children's institutions, painting walls, assembling furniture, setting up play structures. In the fall, other crews will start work at other institutions.

It takes two weeks to create a Half the Sky center. This is entirely a volunteer effort. Not only do you get to do all the work, you have to pay for it! You are responsible for getting yourself to China.

Roundtrip airfare to China can range from \$600 to \$2,000, depending on carrier, starting point, when reservations are made, etc. A rough estimate of expenses within China for two weeks comes to \$1,400 for a single volunteer; \$1,850 per couple, with full payment due in advance.

Children of all ages are welcome.

There is no charge for children under 12 unless there is to be in-country air travel. We also offer optional child care at a cost of \$10 per child per day.

We are told that all of your travel expenses, because you are helping Half the Sky, are fully tax-deductible. If your application is accepted and you are invited to join a China work crew, payment for in-China expenses will be due within 30 days of notification. If you wish to join a work crew, you must commit to being with us for the entire two weeks.

Based on the experience of other crews, that fortnight will create a profound change in your world outlook. Virtually no work crew volunteers leave without tears and wishes that it wasn't over already. The work is very hands-on, dusty and sweaty--the hardest work you'll ever wish wasn't coming to an end so soon. We guarantee that you will feel exhausted, fulfilled, and very, very good about yourself.



The work crews are being coordinated by Vicki McClay and David Howard, co-chairs of Half the Sky's Building Committee, who headed up the crews in Hefei and Changzhou in July, 2000.

Because we must limit the size of each crew to no more than ten adults, we ask that you submit your applications for the fall work crews as soon as possible.

For applications and further information, contact:

DavidHoward@Halfthesky.org or
VickiMcClay@halfthesky.org.

See you in China! ☘



On Sponsoring a Half the Sky Center

Of course, most families don't have the wherewithal to sponsor an entire Half the Sky center as Louise and Monte Zweben have done. But it's entirely possible for a group of families whose children have come from a particular orphanage to work together to raise funds to sponsor a center. Here's how the process works: Half the Sky will research and secure government approvals, do a site survey, and plan how to best install classrooms, infant room, common area, outdoor or indoor playground, etc. We will provide all supplies and equipment, build all furniture to specification. The outdoor playgrounds will be built in Finland. We will work with the orphanage director to hire qualified preschool teachers and to select local retired women for the infant nurture program. We train both teachers and infant Nannies. Your group raises startup costs, perhaps in partnership with a corporate sponsor that HTS will try to help you find. Startup costs range from \$20,000 to \$40,000, depending on the number of children and the institution's needs. Operation costs can run from \$20,000 to \$37,000 per year; we need to know that we can support operation for a new center for at least two years.

Your families can come to the institution for two weeks and help to build the indoor portion of the center. Your group will receive regular progress reports on all of the children in the program. We are working on some materials that can help your group with fundraising efforts. If your family or group is interested in sponsoring a center, please contact us at info@halfthesky.org or call 510/525-2077.

For the Love of WenFu

By Debbie Simmons, *Half the Sky China Work Crew, 2000*

This story is about several strangers who all fell in love with the same tiny boy, and who are now working together to better his life.

The first adults were his birth parents who were surely overjoyed to welcome this happy bundle into their Hefei home more than three years ago. However, when he was only a few months old, tragedy struck. An older sister was evidently playing with a lighter and caught his baby blanket on fire. The infant was seriously burned on his lower legs and one of his hands, and was rushed to a well-known army hospital. Supposedly the family was told he would not survive, and they didn't return.

But miraculously, the boy did survive and underwent some reconstructive surgery. After more than a year in the hospital, he was taken to the Hefei Welfare Institute. The staff named him Yang Wen Fu and soon fell in love with the little boy whose laughter was contagious.

About the same time as Wen Fu was born, *Half the Sky* was also born. And in the summer of 2000, Jenny Bowen led two teams of volunteers to China to prepare the first schools for the fall openings. I was fortunate to be a part of last July's volunteer adventures in Changzhou. While I painted the walls, the faces of the beautiful children who live there, from toddlers to school-age teens, were etched in my heart.

During my time in Changzhou, I received an email from a close friend in Texas offering to help any special needs children. Brenda Eckles, an adoptive mom, is founder of International Adoptive Families, an agency that has successfully brought children to the U. S. on medical visas for needed treatment. I had watched one boy learn to walk and in the process, find a forever family. IAF had already been in touch, donating the air-conditioners for both the Changzhou and Hefei centers.

A few weeks later, Jenny e-mailed me that a little boy named Wen Fu was the perfect candidate for such help. The burns had cost him a hand and both his feet. One leg was

fused with scar tissue and he had severe scarring on his scalp and ear. But given some specialized, long-term medical treatment, his mobility and quality of life could be vastly improved.

Numerous people offered help. First, several people joined forces to provide a special wheelchair. Carol, another Texas volunteer, sold wooden combs purchased in Changzhou to pay for the shipping of the chair. Wheels for the World, a Joni-Erickson Tada agency, donated several pediatric chairs



Welcome to Dallas: Wen Fu with Li DaoXin, of Hefei Children's Welfare Institute.

for Wen Fu and other children, and Wen Zhao, *Half the Sky's* Program Director, who lives in Nebraska, personally delivered Wen Fu's chair in October. Brenda, meanwhile, worked tirelessly on the needed paperwork, selecting a host family in the U.S., setting up medical appointments, inviting a representative of the orphanage to travel with Wen Fu, and underwriting their trip. Mina Bacigalupi, a nurse from Oregon who had volunteered in Hefei as one of last year's Nanny trainers, offered her help, too. George, an adoptive father in New York whose daughter had also been burned, called and provided assistance.

Finally, hundreds of prayers were answered as Wen Fu and Li DaoXin, head of nursing at Hefei, stepped off the flight on a Monday afternoon in April at the Dallas-Ft. Worth airport. Within 24 hours Wen Fu was evaluated by a team of specialists at Scottish Rite Hospital and told there was great hope to improve his mobility and reduce the scar-

ring. The first of a series of surgeries is now scheduled for August 15th. Afterwards, with therapy and prosthetics, he's expected to walk. Later, a craniofacial surgeon at another hospital will donate his skill for the scarring on Wen Fu's scalp.

Brenda, who has since become Wen Fu's foster mom, reports that he has been lovingly nicknamed "The Little Emperor" by her three children. He quickly scoots around on his knees, going up and down stairs in a flash. Chicken is his favorite food, and he carries a harmonica around in his pocket, which he gladly plays for anyone who will listen. As a HTS alumnus, he proudly names his colors and counts in Chinese. Wen Fu attends preschool daily and has acquired a number of English words such as "Mama," "potty," "dog," "more," and "hey, you." He recently told Jennifer, a local translator, "I am happy in my family." And to prove it, he lines everybody up each night for a goodnight kiss. ☸

Note: We're including the story of Wen Fu because we thought readers might like to know what happened to that little boy with the wide smile, pictured in the "Tree House Project" in our last issue. It's also a good opportunity to clarify Half the Sky's role in medical needs cases. While HTS helped the Dallas group with some details in obtaining medical help for Wen Fu, HTS had no direct involvement in his travel or treatment. Working in China's orphanages as we do, HTS board members, volunteers, teachers, and China representatives often see children in need of medical attention beyond what the orphanage, or even local resources, can provide.

It's, of course, always a temptation to overstep our mission and offer what help we can; but our goal is to develop preschool and infant nurture programs in orphanages in China, and sponsoring any medical care is beyond our mission. However, for those special cases within our programs that are brought to our attention, we'll facilitate obtaining medical care through other organizations when we can. If any readers out there are aware of other groups who might in the future be willing to help children who have special medical needs, offering treatment either in China or abroad, please contact Half the Sky board member, Dr. Patricia Ng at PatriciaNg@halfthesky.org.

Project: “From Market to Dinner Table”



After observing that some children were really involved in playing with toy dishes, but were having a difficult time using them appropriately, the teachers and program director Wen Zhao realized that the children had very little information about shopping, how food reached the table, or how it should be served. So they decided to follow the students' interests and create a project--part of an ongoing series of projects involving food.

Knowing that first-hand materials and experiences are the best way for young children to learn, the teachers took the children to a day market. At the market, the children each picked one vegetable to buy, watched the farmers weigh the produce, and paid for the vegetable themselves. “It was very interesting seeing these children learn to bargain with the help of their teachers,” says Wen Zhao. “During this activity, the children used their math knowledge and language skills,” she adds. “They learned about the relationships between people (seller and buyer) the relationship between money and merchandise (you have to pay for the things you want), about weighing produce (and calculating the price based on the weight), and about cultural and moral norms--it's not okay to take things without paying, but it's okay to bargain for a lower price.”

Back at school, the class set up a market stall and a dramatic play area, and practiced shopping, selling, and bargaining some more!

The teachers then encouraged the children to invite their friends from neighboring classrooms for a “dinner party!” The children made invitations and decorated them with their own drawings. Some children made additional “food” from play dough, while others set up the tables and chairs. Two children volunteered to greet guests at the front door. They greeted the guests with proud voices the teacher had never heard them use before: “Please come in and join us for dinner!” ☘



After the market experience, the children came home, discussed their purchases, and opened their own store....



SEEING THE PROGRAMS

Continued from page 1

The directors of Changzhou and Hefei, homes to Half the Sky's first preschools and infant nurture programs, told the staff from the other institutions how the programs had worked for them so far. Vice-Director Zhang YunYun from Changzhou said that at first she wondered whether children in an institution would be responsive to such modern ideas as the Reggio Emilia program in the preschool. But when she saw the children at play in the mirrored triangle one day, it dawned on her why it all made sense. "The children were seeing themselves from many different points of view, and that was what the program enabled them to do, too."

Zhang YuXia, the Hefei assistant director, said that the programs were bringing changes not only to the children but to the adults involved as well. And she said she was very moved by the American volunteers who come to build the centers. "They sweat, they have paint all over them. "Love," she concluded, "has no boundaries. Love is international."

The Nanny supervisor at Hefei, Li Daoxin said the Nannies liked their work so much they were volunteering to work six days a week, instead of five. "They just didn't want to be away from the babies," she said, and held up colorful small wool vests the Nannies had knit for the babies in their spare time. She told of the changes in the children, of one little boy with weak muscles who'd had some special attention and had just been adopted that day. The day before, Children's Day in China, two families had come in to adopt children. "All the Nannies were crying. It shows that they really develop deep attachment." But as children leave, of course, more come.

This summer Half the Sky volunteers will expand Hefei's infant nurture program. "Our children develop so well with this project," said the Hefei director. "But we need more Nannies. There is a whole line of babies on the porch." And indeed there were. Scooting about in roller chairs, or sitting in a line of canvas chairs, looking like retirees in deck chairs. They seemed placid, resigned. I kept seeing my daughter's little face in theirs, knowing what a difference a hug and a bounce on someone's knee could make.

Several teachers in the Little Sisters Preschool at Hefei spoke about their experiences. One teacher pointed out that beyond nurturing the children's spirits and engaging their minds, the teachers were helping them help each other, helping them make the family they have for now—and maybe all the family they'll ever have—a richer experience.

A second teacher talked about using art to help the children express themselves. "Gradually the children will discover that the world is a wonderful world and they will stand up for their interests," she said.



The talks were followed by visits to the classroom and Nanny room to see the programs in action. Visitors got to watch the Nannies playing with the children on a rug, rocking them, showing them playthings. One little year-old girl being paid special attention had just arrived at the orphanage. In the classroom, Half the Sky's Program Director,

Wen Zhao, explained some of the class projects and how they are documented on the walls, showed some of the art work, and encouraged visitors to leaf through the children's memory books, further documentation and a tangible record of each child's progress.

Afterward, the director from the institution at Changshu said she was deeply moved by Half the Sky's work. "It's not run by multinationals. It's from families. And from the programs we can see that it all comes from their love. I really admire the directors of Hefei and Changzhou," she continued, "They have found the key to open up the hearts of children. I find the new method so interesting. I am sure it will bring happiness to all our children, reduce the gap between our children and the children who have families." Chen Fenrong, director of the Jiangmen SWI, said she looked forward to the HTS program opening this fall in her institution because her children need special attention. "The community schools don't welcome them," she said.

On the last afternoon in Hefei, a group of toddlers, dressed in bright green frog costumes, put on a little show about springtime. They happily hopped through their performance in the auditorium—charmingly labeled as the "multisided purpose room"—took their bows, laughed and carried on. No one could have told the difference between this lively little group and the kids in my daughter's northern California preschool.



Other images have also stuck in my mind: The rows of babies in cribs, staring at the ceiling, patiently awaiting their futures. Along a sidewalk outside the classroom building, a group of disabled children moving along, one being pushed in a wheelchair, a few with cerebral palsy making their own way, slowly. The one who haunts me most is the 11-year-old girl with the bent legs, who scoots about in a crouched-down position, moving each foot with her hands. She has the sweetest, open smile. She hasn't been able to go to school yet, probably because of her disability, but next year she'll be in the expanded preschool that Half the Sky volunteers will build this summer.



As I am writing this, volunteers are getting ready for this summer's trip to China, to build a Nanny room at Changzhou, and to expand the preschool and Nanny programs at Hefei, and then move on to Chuzhou to create a Little Sisters Preschool and a Baby Sisters program. In the fall, work at Yangdong will start, and there'll be building projects beginning at Jiangmen, as well. Right now, Zhang ZhiRong, HTS's China Representative, is handling a million details, and Jenny Bowen's living room is filled with playthings, all waiting to be boxed and carted to China by HTS volunteers.



There's much work to do, of course, more places to reach, ways to improve what we're already doing, always children, more children, needing more kindness and help. But I came away with a great feeling of hope and gratitude. Perhaps my best memory is this one: During a visit to the playroom, I caught a glimpse of one of our wonderful Chinese partners, Madame Miao Xia, on the floor, a child in her lap, and nearby one of her colleagues, Dr. Huang, carrying a little girl around in his arms. "These are such good children," he said. "They just don't have homes." The world began to seem like a small—and hopeful—place, brought together by the adopted children so many of us are fortunate enough to know and love—and by the grownups on both sides of the ocean who are offering help to the brothers and sisters who remain.



There is so much to be done and just one way to do it, with grateful hearts, all our energy, and lots of help from our friends. ☸

A Half the Sky T-Shirt

Outfit the family and the grandparents and your friends and neighbors too



On the front: The HTS logo in black and red.



On the back: Half the Sky Foundation in red Chinese characters.

Half the Sky T-Shirts are available in sizes for children (XS, S, M) and adults (S, M, L, XL, XXL). The shirts are white Hanes Beefy T's, the best 100 percent cotton t-shirts available. Children's sizes are \$12, adults \$15. All proceeds benefit Half the Sky. To order, see the form on page 15.

To Our Supporters Outside the U.S.

We hope you're enjoying this edition of Half the Sky Foundation's quarterly newsletter. Due to the requirements regarding sending newsletters out of the country, if you would like to receive HTS newsletters in the future, it will be necessary for us to request a small annual subscription fee of \$15 USD to cover the out-of-country costs of mailing. We appreciate your understanding.

*Please sent foreign subscription requests to
Half the Sky Foundation
541 Vistamont Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94708*

or fax credit card info to (510) 525-7677

Share Your Thoughts

As our Half the Sky community grows, we've heard from many of you who'd like to share your stories of adopting your daughters, talking about the topics of interest to us all, journeying back to China, or learning more about our daughters' first homeland.

In the next newsletter, we'd like to start a "Half the Sky Community Page"--filled with the voices of our readers and supporters. If you have a story you'd like to tell, a question you'd like to pose, a subject you'd like to explore, please write to KarinEvans@halfthesky.org. Submissions are best at around 500 words. We welcome photographs, essays, letters, and random thoughts. Materials cannot be returned and we can't promise publication, but we look forward to hearing from you and expanding our Half the Sky community.

Would you like the HTS newsletter sent to family or friends? Please let us know by writing to newsletters@halfthesky.org

DREAMING ABOUT TOMORROW...

Continued from page 2

goes even beyond the construction of new HTS centers? It could be a sort of enrichment corps—offering week-long, month-long, summer-long, even year-long training in special subjects. I know from my communications with many of you that there is a wealth of talent in our community. Let's create a skills bank, a catalog of opportunities that we can some day offer the children of China's welfare institutions. Children of all ages. We can offer language workshops, art workshops, music, carpentry, computers, gardening ...there must be a thousand possibilities.

daughters will lead HTS' corps of volunteers, sharing their special skills with their little sisters in China.

If you think that, sometime, you might want to join such an effort, begin by dropping us a note, tell us a bit about yourself and your family. And please do share your own ideas and dreams for the children who wait. Please don't expect a reply; we are just a tiny group of volunteers who are in constant overload. But we'll add your information to our database. And when our resources permit, we'll move on to the next step.

age to take the first small steps. As always, remember that you and your caring support make it all possible. If you haven't gotten around to sending in your contribution yet this year, now's a great time.

As you read this, we will have just returned from creating three new HTS centers in China. We're planning for (and dreaming about) three more in the fall. Another two in the spring.

Without you, our dreams will remain simply that...dreams.

And one day, perhaps, when they are teenagers and young women, our own Chinese

We are just beginning to see the power of our dreams if we can simply muster the cour-

It's you who makes them real.☞

Yes, I'll help provide early childhood education and caring 'Nannys' for little children who wait in the orphanages of China. Here's my tax-deductible contribution to Half the Sky:

Enclosed is my gift of: \$50 \$100 \$300 \$600 \$1000 \$_____

I want to be a HTS Guardian. Here is my \$3,000 Promise--I will commit to a monthly pledge of \$83 per month (or \$1,000 per year) for 3 years.

I want to be a HTS Nanny Sponsor. I will commit to a monthly pledge of \$50 per month (or \$600 per year) for at least one year.

I want to be a HTS Child Sponsor. I will commit to a monthly pledge of \$25 per month (or \$300 per year) for at least one year. I understand that no sponsorships are available right now, but that I will be assigned a child when she becomes available.

If Half the Sky is successful in raising sufficient funds to build additional new centers in 2001-2002, I am interested in joining a China work crew.

Please send me t-shirts and/or posters:

Number of t-shirts:

Child XS _____ S _____ M _____ @\$12.00 \$_____

Adult S _____ M _____ L _____ @@15.00 \$_____

ADD SHIPPING AND HANDLING: \$4 FOR 1 SHIRT, \$5 FOR 2, \$6 FOR 3 OR MORE

DOUBLE THE ABOVE S+H CHARGES FOR INTERNATIONAL ORDERS

Number of Posters:

_____ @\$25 \$_____

_____ @\$50 (signed by the artist and numbered) \$_____

ADD SHIPPING AND HANDLING: \$3 PER ORDER

DOUBLE THE ABOVE S+H CHARGES FOR INTERNATIONAL ORDERS

Payment Method--Check One: Total Enclosed: \$_____

Check Credit Card

Card # _____ Exp. _____



Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State/Prov. _____ Zip/PC _____

Country _____ Phone _____

We accept Visa, MasterCard and American Express

Mail to 541 Vistamont Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94708
or Fax to (510) 525-7677

Signature _____



Helping her hold up half the sky....



半邊天基金會

Half the Sky Foundation

541 Vistamont Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94708

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BERKELEY CA
PERMIT NO. 1360