



# Hunan Foster Care Program

## Families Thru International Adoption

**Spring 2008**

**By Melissa Haywood**

### *Chinese Dragon Boat Festival*

Dragon Boat Festival is celebrated on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month in China. In 2008, celebrations will be from June 6 through June 9. This celebration began as an occasion for driving off evil spirits and pestilence and for finding peace in one's life. Dragon Boat Festival is highlighted by the dragon boat races.

Dragon Boat races are the most exciting part of the festival, drawing crowds of spectators. Dragon Boats are generally brightly painted and decorated canoes. Ranging anywhere from 40 to 100 feet in length, their heads are shaped like open-mouthed dragons, while the sterns end with a scaly tail. Depending on the length, up to 80 rowers can power the boat. Competing teams drive their boats forward rowing to the rhythm of pounding drums. A drummer and flag-catcher stand at the front of the boat. Before a dragon boat enters competition, it must be "brought to life" by painting the eyes in a sacred ceremony. Races can have any number of boats competing, with the winner being the first team to grab a flag at the end of the course. Annual races take place all over China, Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan, and other overseas Chinese communities. Many cities in the United States and all over the world will hold their own dragon boat races.

### *Countdown to the Olympics*

The Olympic Flame was lit in Olympia, Greece according to tradition on March 24, 2008. From March 24-29, the Torch Relay will travel across Greece, ending at the Panathinaiko Stadium, the site of the first modern Olympic Games in 1896. After the handover ceremony in the stadium, the Olympic Flame arrived in Beijing on March 31, 2008. In Beijing, a ceremony was held for the arrival of the flame into China, and a Beijing 2008 Olympic torch relay will commence.

One of the highlights of this leg will be the attempt to bring the Olympic Flame to the highest peak in the world: Mt. Qomolangma. During the arrival ceremony for the flame into China on March 31, 2008, one of the lanterns with the Olympic Flame will be kept aside. The torchbearer team will then attempt to take the Flame to the highest peak on a day in May that presents the best climatic conditions for the ascent.





## *From Hunan to Home*



### ***Journey to Amanda Longo***

*By: Katharine Longo*

My husband, David and I were married in May of 2000. Both of us had waited a long time to meet the special someone with whom we could share our lives. Soon after our marriage, we found that we were not able to have a biological child; which was devastating to us, as we both loved children and really wanted a family of our own. We began the process of adoption through the domestic avenue for about 16 months. Then after attending a local seminar and speaking to several families on international adoption, combined with the frustration of not being further along in the domestic adoption process, we changed our "path and vision" to focus on a little girl from China. Our passion to adopt a child from China really came alive after speaking with two close friends who had already brought their girls home. After learning the ins and outs of their separate journeys, we were already in love with the little unknown girl that would someday be ours.

After a lot of paperwork and a much longer wait than anticipated, we were finally matched with a little 15-month-old girl named Fan Yi Dan from Changsha, in the Hunan Province of China. Even after seeing her adorable little face in the e-mail from our agency, we could not truly believe she would be ours. I had spent months getting her room ready, buying her clothes and toys and "child proofing" our home. Now we had to get ready to actually fly to China, meet her and bring her home with us!

We traveled with 7 other families from our agency, and it is a trip that neither of us will ever forget! We were so pleased to know that Yi Dan (Amanda) had been with a foster family after being in the orphanage for only a month, knowing that she had been given personal, one on one care. We had sent a package to her with a colorful photo album of us, her new home, along with a blanket, a little pink doll and a bear. On our fourth day in China, it was finally time for us to go to the Civil Affairs office in Changsha to meet our little one. Words can't describe all of the emotions going through us as we got on the bus and left our hotel that morning.



## *From Hunan to Home continued*

We were told that we would arrive first and then after about fifteen minutes, the nannies would arrive with the babies. David and I were the first couple into the waiting room and there was already a child waiting there with her two nannies. We looked closer and realized that the little girl sitting quietly in one of the nanny's laps was our Amanda! My tears started to flow when I realized she was holding our photos and the little pink bear we had sent her in the mail. Soon, after all the babies had arrived, we were the first to be officially matched, and we got to hold her for the first time. There were small tears of fear and confusion on her little face and tears of joy and hope on ours.



She seemed to easily bond with us almost from the very start. Later that same day, she was laughing with us and feeding us her Cheerios! She was obviously very well taken care of and such a happy and healthy child from the beginning. We were so happy that she had been able to be with a foster family who genuinely loved her and took such great care of her for the first 15 months of her life. We are so grateful that, through the FTIA program, she was able to have such a wonderful beginning. I really feel that is why, to this day, she has continued to be so healthy and has so easily adapted to her new life with us. We are truly blessed to have her in our lives and can't thank the foster parents enough for their commitment to caring for our little girl through the FTIA program. It's programs like these that make these little ones lives so much richer in circumstances beyond their control.





## *Changsha Story*



### ***A Great Neighbor***

Fan Gang was born on January 4, 2006. He came to his foster family in 2007. His foster mother is a very loving woman who has had great influence on Fan Gang. From his foster mother, Fan Gang learns how to care for the sick and how to get along well with others. He is a good neighbor in his community. Everyone in the neighborhood loves him very much. Fan Gang's happy face and laughter have brought them so much joy.



## Changsha Story

### Mom's Good Helper

*Fan Xiao Wen is a very smart girl. She has such a good memory that she can remember the names and occupations of all her family members and even neighbors. One day, a neighbor came and wanted to borrow their crutches for his sick father. Xiao Wen's foster mother thought hard, but could not remember where she had put the crutches. After a while, she found Xiao Wen standing behind her with the crutches in her hand. Xiao Wen said, "Mom, don't you remember? You put the crutches in the closet under the stairs." "Yes," her foster mother said. "Thank you! You are my good helper."*





*From Hengshan*



## A Good Friend

She Ke Ren, with our Hengshan Program, is a boy with a congenital cleft lip and palate. He is almost two years old, but doesn't speak very much. He is a very sharing child. When family and friends come and bring him some cookies or candies, he like to have his foster mother throw a little party and invite all of his friends in the neighborhood to enjoy the cookies and candies with him. He likes to share all that he loves with his friends. He is a good friend.





## *Continuing Needs*

### **Zhanjiang Foster Care Program**

As of March 1, 2008, FTIA is no longer sponsoring a foster care program in Zhanjiang. Pearl River Outreach has now taken over the program. If you would like more information or to continue donating to this program, you can visit [www.pearlriveroutreach.org](http://www.pearlriveroutreach.org). We appreciate all that you have done for this program and have full confidence that the training and development of this orphanage will continue.

### **Changsha Foster Care Program**

As of March 28, 2008, there have been 514 total children fostered in our Changsha program. There are currently 38 children being fostered now. Out of all 469 children adopted from our program, 311 have been adopted to American families, 26 to Canadian families, 18 to Swedish and Norwegian, 15 to Australian, and many more to other countries. We have had 177 families fostering these children. At the end of March, the total amount donated to our Hunan program was \$6,279.

### **Hengshan Foster Care Program**

As of March 28, 2008, 34 children have been fostered in our Hengshan program. There are currently 6 children being fostered now. Of the 27 children adopted, 8 have been to US families and 11 to French families. No donations have been given to our Hengshan Foster Care Program in 2008.

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FTIA can now accept online donations thru Pay Pal for our China Foster Care Programs! You do not have to have a Pay Pal account to use this option. Please go to <http://www.ftia.org/FosterCareDonationButton.asp> and click on the PayPal button. Complete the requested information on your name and credit card, enter the amount of your donation, and click the "Submit" button to complete your payment. This is a secure online site and your information will not be shared with anyone outside FTIA.

