

# Half the Sky



Half the Sky  
Foundation  
半边天基金会

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Spring 2006

## SPRING PROGRESS REPORT - 2006

### A Little Sister Goes to Primary School

By Wen Zhao

*Preschool Program Director, Half the Sky*

*"The airplane she made could fly way up high and far away."*

As you can tell from her beaming face in the photo to the right, former Little Sister RuoJun is thriving in primary school at the Xi Pu Experimental School in Chengdu.

RuoJun's schoolmates tell us: "RuoJun is very competent, smart, and good at drawing. She is also good at making scientific experiments work. The airplane she made could fly way up high and far away."

RuoJun's foster parents write: "RuoJun is a very good child. She loves to learn and to study. She likes to read lots of books and loves to play games that involve mental challenges. She loves to draw and has won a third place for her drawing in a Chengdu City children's drawing competition."

RuoJun's teachers at the Xi Pu Experimental School in Chengdu sent her report card with every subject checked "excellent," and explained that "excellent" is the highest grade in China: "RuoJun is a student who loves to use her brain and always likes to solve problems. She is very responsible about her work. She is very creative, especially in her drawings."

When RuoJun arrived at our Chengdu preschool in 2002, there was no sign of the artistic, airplane-designing student she would become. In her first progress report her teachers wrote: "RuoJun is full of fear and insecurity...She always sits in the corner of the classroom. When other children are not kind to her, she can only cry in a feeble voice. She does not say anything and does not make any eye contact with the teacher."

Like so many of the brave children in our programs, RuoJun started venturing out of the protective shell she had created for herself little by little: "Gradually, she started making eye contact with the teachers. However, she would only give the teacher a little eye contact and then would shyly smile and turn her head away."

Eventually, aided by patient teachers liberal with praise and with hugs, RuoJun became "confident and active." She rode a bike with training wheels, completed art projects with zest, and became fully engaged in imaginative play. RuoJun's teachers took the time to listen to her "doll talk," understanding that for RuoJun communicating through her doll felt safer than communicating



Above: RuoJun today with schoolmate and teacher. Below: RuoJun in 2002 when she entered the Little Sisters Preschool.

Right: RuoJun with her HTS preschool teacher



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*Jenny Bowen and friend*

By Jenny Bowen  
*Executive Director, Half the Sky*

It happens to me more and more. I walk into one of our thriving Half the Sky pre-schools or infant nurture centers or visit the foster village or talk to some of our Big Sisters, and I find myself wondering... "Do the people that made this happen really have any idea what is happening here? Do people really understand how much they have given?"

I walk into a place where our programs have not yet begun and I think, "I wish people could see how it is now and know, as I know with certainty, what will happen a few months

# How Far We've Come

from now." I am ever more aware of how privileged we are at Half the Sky to truly see the before and after, to know in such a concrete way the value that our work brings to children's lives.

Our annual progress report issue is our attempt to share with you, our supporters, a small taste of the journey that we are all taking together. You'll see in this issue stories of some children that were judged to have no future and you can celebrate with them their great successes. You'll meet two little girls who, without Half the Sky, would never have been considered for adoption. You'll meet 24 special-needs preschoolers who've found their "forever families" right in their own community.

And it doesn't end there. This year we will create four more permanent foster villages for children with special needs. We will create six new preschools and four new

infant nurture programs. We will welcome almost 100 new children into our Big Sisters Project.

And, as the only foreign NGO invited by the Chinese government to help children orphaned by AIDS in Henan Province, we will develop and launch four new programs to address the specific needs of these children who have waited so long for help.

I know it must seem a world away at times. But the work we all do together is immediate and very, very real to the children whose lives we touch. I hope that this, sixth annual Progress Report Issue of the newsletter, brings the work closer to you.

Welcome—from wherever in the world you join us. Together, we have come so far, but, of course, we have far to go.



*Below, from left to right: Special needs babies waiting for a chance; A little one meets her HTS nanny for the first time; In my nanny's arms, life is good*



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## Half the Sky Volume VII, Issue 1 Spring, 2006

The mission of Half the Sky Foundation is to enrich the lives and enhance the prospects for the babies and children in China who wait to be adopted, and for those who will spend their childhoods in orphanages. We establish early childhood education, personalized learning and infant nurture programs in China's 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. HTS Foundation of Canada received charitable registration status in 2004. Donations to both organizations are tax-deductible.

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Edited by Patricia King, Communications Director, Half the Sky

# A Little Sister Goes to Primary School

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directly with her teachers.

By the end of two years RuoJun was ready for school, one of 124 graduates of our Little Sisters Preschools who are now students in Chinese primary schools. I recently completed a survey about those children and found that most, like RuoJun, are thriving. Our former Little Sisters are pioneers who are demolishing stereotypes about institutionalized children. They are proving every day they attend school that institutionalized children do not have to lag behind their peers academically and socially.

At Half the Sky, we have learned over and over again that once institutionalized children receive the nurturing they need, they blossom.

In this newsletter, you will read about many transformations, including a child diagnosed with brain development delay and infantile autism who has started eating and opening up her arms asking to be held, a child once thought to be severely retarded who is taking ballet, riding her bike, and making strides in improving her ability to speak and understand. We are proud of all of the children in our programs who, like RuoJun, take risks to reconnect with the world around them. They are our heroes.

Because we have by now witnessed so many heroic transformations, we stress to all our teachers that no matter how delayed and depressed and angry children appear, and no matter how many times frightened children reject them, they should never give up hope. For these children, where there is nurturing, there is hope.

Wherever the children in our programs go after they leave us—to primary school in China, to schools in their new homes all over the world, we wish for them a life filled with the nurturing they have deserved from the moment of their birth.



## RuoJun's Progress Reports



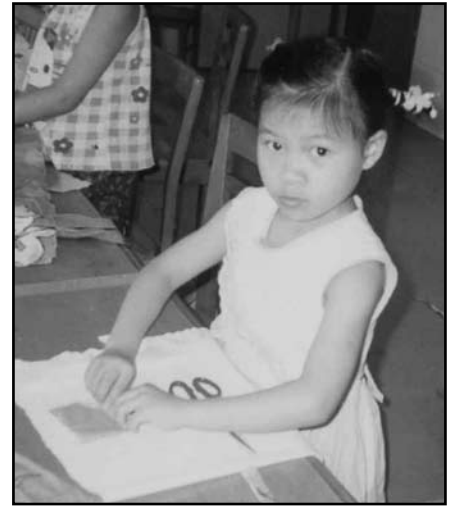
### Summer 2003/A House of Sand

RuoJun can do detailed things in a good order and then combine them using logical thinking. When building a house in the sand, she inserted plastic rods into the ground and then put in some tree leaves. She then took a look at her "door" and said, "This is the door. We can go through it. I should build a road leading to the home." Then she built a road with sand.

She found a wooden board, put the sand on the board and said: "Look, teacher, this is the road." Teacher: "Your road is only this long?" RuoJun: I just showed you a part of it." Teacher: "Oh, let's go to see your long road. RuoJun led me to see the road and said; "I will get the car so that we can drive home."

### Fall 2003/Doll Talk

RuoJun was so happy when the Teacher told her she could take her doll on field trips. She took her doll on every field trip. Along the way she would talk to the teacher about her doll, saying that her doll could talk, et. Most of RuoJun's reports about her dolls were imaginary, but I was able to learn more about her through her doll talk. Through her doll she had more chance to communicate with the teacher, and she became more open.



### Spring 2003/Cutting & Pasting

During a cutting and pasting activity, RuoJun took a big piece of cloth and cut it, but the cloth slipped aside every time she tried to cut it.

Because the children were busy, RuoJun went to the teacher and said: "Teacher, please help me hold the cloth. It runs away." When the children heard her, two of them put down the scissors in their hands and came over to help RuoJun. RuoJun was very happy and asked little sister Ma Nanhou: "Can you hold this side for me?" Then she said very happily: "You all came to help. It's going to be easier. So she went around and cut the cloth from different angles. The children cooperated very well and worked very harmoniously.

### Summer 2004/Active & Social

RuoJun has many friends. We often hear RuoJun's negotiating with other children. After the negotiations we can hear the children cheer after they reach agreement.





*Janice Cotton and daughter Kathryn*

## **BABY SISTERS NEWS**

By Janice N. Cotton

*Infant Nurture Program Director, Half the Sky*

I have just finished visiting with the nannies and children on a cool fall day at the Hefei Social Welfare Institution. It is dusk and I am standing outside the infant building watching people of all ages come and go. Older people who live in the institution are taking an evening stroll. Some are sitting in chairs talking with each other or playing a card game. School age children are laughing and playing on the playground built by Half the Sky. Others are talking as they hurry down the sidewalk to their dormitory. Institution personnel are scurrying from building to building because today is a very important day.

One of their own, a young orphan who grew up to be a doctor, is having a wedding celebration in the institution that evening. I realize that what I am seeing is much like what I would see in a community in the United States. People are going about their everyday lives filled with pleasurable social moments and work, with a special occasion thrown in here and there to celebrate landmarks in life's passage. The residents in Hefei are in a sense a family.

The children and nannies in each of our Baby Sisters Infant Nurture Programs are in a sense a family too. We hope that each will go to a permanent home through adoption, but for a time, they are in a family-like structure because of our program. They have a caring and loving "mother" who is their nanny, a "sister" or "brother" who snatches their toys and laughs with them at a nanny's silly, but fun game, and "aunts" who know their names and care about them.

By April 2006 we will have family struc-

tures/Infant nurture programs in 27 institutions. My how we have grown! About 3100 children in these 27 Half the Sky infant programs have daily interaction with their sisters, brothers, mothers and aunts.

During the past year I have been Infant nurture program Director we have taken beginning steps to create a family among the nanny supervisors at each of our Infant Nurture Programs. In the spring 2005 newsletter I reported that we were hiring and training nanny supervisors for each institution. In April 2005 these women jumped into their jobs with enthusiasm and a strong commitment to do whatever they can to improve the skills of the nannies and the lives of the children. They are leading the nannies by coaching them on appropriate practices and praising exemplary practices. They are eager to grow professionally so they can further enhance their knowledge and skills and transfer them to the nannies.



The 489 nannies in these 27 programs are eager to learn of new and better ways they can nurture children's development. We support their growth by sending them professional material that can be used in their programs. Our family of nannies will be having a reunion in June to exchange ideas, learn from each other, and enjoy each other's company. There will be lots of conversation and opportunities for them to learn from each other and from other professionals. What a dedicated and committed group of women we have working in our institutions!

Two field supervisors and I work with our nanny supervisor family continuously to help monitor the quality of our programs. China-based Li Daoxin and Jeronia Muntaner visit our programs often. We use a standard visitation form to assess program criteria we know are essential for a successful program. These criteria are grouped into broad categories. For example, some of the criteria assess the nanny's work with her children. Others look at how the environment is set up and maintained to support development. We recognize and praise the institution personnel when we consistently see essential practices in their work and offer suggestions on how to strengthen practices that could use improvement. We want each of our programs to provide the best care and education possible for the 3100 children who are now our privilege to serve.

This year, we will continue to strengthen the family ties in the institutions and among the institutions. Each nanny supervisor will soon have a computer so she can easily communicate with other nanny supervisors and with Half the Sky's staff. This will allow greater sharing of best practices and enable them to assist each other in solving problems they encounter. At last year's nanny supervisor conference we talked a great deal about what we would like the Infant Nurture Program to look like in 10 years. We brainstormed and after much discussion and writing we came up with this vision statement:

We will have high quality programs across the country staffed with loving, committed, and knowledgeable nannies who help all children grow in every area of development. Every child will know they are loved and have greater opportunities because of

participation in the Infant nurture program.

We are making progress in reaching this vision and will continue to support our families in this effort. You'll learn more about our growing family on the next page, which includes encouraging reports about four Baby Sisters in Lianyungang and excerpts from our nanny supervisors' recent reports. The reports will help you understand how hard our family of nannies is working to give loving care to the babies and how gratified they are by the babies' progress.

## Progress Reports from Lianyungang

JiXiang has learned to recognize me. He smiles when he sees me. He likes me to massage his body. I put a toy in his hand and he can play for a while. JiXiang's physical condition is not very good and he catches illnesses easily. So I help him do appropriate exercise, such as lying on his stomach, turning over, and sitting. Now, he can raise his head high for a long time when lying on his tummy. He laughs when I play with him.



XinMei suffers from serious cerebral palsy so her limbs were stiff and her muscles were tight. I stayed with her, I talked to her, massaged all parts of her body, and patted her stiff limbs gently. After a period of time, she began to respond. Now as long as I talk to her and massage her at the same time, she will smile happily. If I stop massaging her and talking to her she will cry loudly. She likes me to massage her frequently and always stay with her.



ChunNiu can distinguish dozens of children's name. Every time I say a child's name, she will run to the child and point to her. She is happiest when there is an extra snack. I give her cookies, and she passes them one by one to the other children. She can imitate the gestures of some animals; she puts her hands on the two sides of her mouth and imitates a kitten's meows. Whenever a child is unhappy, she will give the child toys and touch her head, just like what adults do.



ChenXing has learned to stand, sit and even walk on his own though he cannot yet walk steadily. He is still not willing to speak much, but when he sees there is some delicious food or snacks in his nanny's hands, he will say "mom" and the pronunciation is quite clear.

## Helping New Babies Feel The Love of This World...

**Chenzhou** nanny supervisor Zhou Dan included this powerful mandate for Half the Sky nannies in her recent report: *Help new babies feel the love of this world with your hands, your eyes, and your voice.*

Excerpts from other nanny supervisor reports:

### Lianyungang

Nannies spend some time each day staying with the children hugging and touching them. They talk to the babies for at least 30 minutes every day. Nannies understand what the children's crying means and try to satisfy their needs. The children are very interested in looking at the nannies' faces.

### Luoyang

Nannies often talk with and touch babies. Nannies call the babies' names again and again. Nannies show the babies colorful toys. Nannies place the babies on their stomachs to strengthen their necks. Nannies distinguish among the different cries of babies and handle them by feeding them, touching with tenderness, soothing the babies, letting them express their sadness, hugging them, and giving them water.

### Hefei

We talk to children as much as possible, even newborn babies. When talking to children, we talk with a soft voice and in short sentences. We speak slowly. We tell stories to elder children and sing songs for younger babies. We take children to the open air and tell them about nature. The children get a beautiful education by learning language. Nannies talk to children when feeding them. When children try to speak, nannies immediately give them encouragement and praise.

### Gaoyou

We hold meetings to emphasize the importance of language. We ask nannies to talk often with children during activities. They should tell the children what they are doing and the color and shape of toys they are using. They should encourage children when they make progress. Nannies sing songs for the children and play music. Nannies say hello to the children and say goodbye when leaving.

# Family Life At The Gaoyou Foster Village

**You Kuo, 7. Zhang ChunXiang & Wang QiZhong's oldest son:**

*"Please take a seat, Mom, and have some rest."*

When Half the Sky began its work providing nurturing care to children in Chinese institutions we always shared photos of the children, nannies, and preschool teachers at our centers. But we never dreamed that one day we would be showing you these wonderful family photos. We didn't foresee the day that loving Chinese parents would make a commitment to take care of institutionalized children with special needs for their entire childhoods.

Yet here are the heartwarming family photos and reports from our Gaoyou Foster Village Project. You see parents waving good-bye to their children at school and joyously reuniting with them at the end of the day. You see parents and their children happily playing hide and seek and the goofy eagle and chicken game, and hear about parents lovingly enticing their ailing daughter to eat.

This year we are adding four more permanent foster villages for orphaned children with special needs, in Shenzhen, Nanning, and Guangzhou. Three more places where institutionalized children will experience the love our Foster Project Local Supervisor Li FengZhan found among 6 families and 24 children in Gaoyou:

After living in this family for nine months, You Kuo has fallen deeply in love with the whole family and he does his best to take good care of his parents and younger sisters and brothers. You Kuo is very sensible, and is very considerate of his family. He always remembers to turn off the light and shut off the tap to save water and electricity.

This September You Kuo was old enough to go to school. He went to Pei Lei kindergarten for pre-school classes. His parents go to the kindergarten to pick him up every day. You Kuo was concerned that his parents were too tired. He always brings his mother a chair after they get home.

One day he said to his mom: "Every day you have to go to my kindergarten to pick me up after working for a whole day. You must be tired. Please take a seat, Mom, and have some rest."

His mom was so touched by his words that she hugged him tightly and said: "My son is growing up and has become a considerate child."



*Hide & Seek*



*Family birthday*

*"The parents from the six families have already cultivated a deep love for their children," she writes, "which is not weakened by their children's physical defects. On the contrary, they show more concern for these children. The parents have designed special diet plans for the children. They play various games to cultivate their interests. These children are growing healthily and happily in families that are full of care and love."*



*The Chicken & Eagle Game*

**Yang WanZhu, 3, daughter of Wei LiHua & Li JianQin:**

*"Our daughter has made huge progress and she is very lovely."*

Yang WanZhu has been diagnosed with brain development delay and infantile autism. When she entered the family last September Yang WanZhu was very thin. She only weighed 8 kg, was very introverted, and didn't have any facial expression. She didn't want to communicate with anyone and she did not respond to others. She always sat in the corner, facing the wall, half lifting her arms in the air with two hands held in fists and kept silent for a long time. She had teeth, but wasn't able to chew. She could only swallow fluids or sweet paste. She would not touch salty food or food with a lot of fiber.

WanZhu's parents were very worried about her, and used every possible means to entice her to eat more. When it was meal time, they would take little WanZhu to the table and show her a full table with a delicious meal and let her smell the flavors. Every day they held her in their arms when she was sleeping and touched her tenderly.

After one month of attentive care, WanZhu started eating a few vegetables and bit of nutritious soup. WanZhu's parents now believe that love changes everything.

Now she even eats some soft snacks. She always ask for snacks from her elder sisters, and toys from other children in the preschool. When she sees her mom and dad she opens up her arms and asks to be held.

WanZhu's weight has also gone up from 8 kg to 10 kg. WanZhu's parents are very happy when people mention her improvement and they will say: "Our daughter has made huge progress and she is very lovely."



*Trying to sit still for Family Portraits*



*The family bicycle*



*Shopping with Mom*



*Push me!*



*Teacher visiting children at home*



*Saying good-bye in the morning...*



*...And the joyous reunion at day's end*

***If seeing these happy families warms your heart as much as it does ours....why not consider sponsoring a family yourself? See page 11 to find out how.***

# FeiFei Finds Her Forever Home



We've reported on former Chuzhou Little Sister Fu YuanFei (FeiFei) in previous newsletters because she is a remarkable example of the transformations that can occur when children are given the nurturing they need.

When FeiFei entered our program in 2001, she was two years old, pale, weak, and could not sit up by herself. Our staff in Chuzhou was told that she suffered from brain disease. Her teachers were very worried: "We were afraid she wouldn't live through this quarter," they wrote in her first progress report.

With a heavy heart and enduring patience, our teachers set to work. After six weeks, FeiFei reached her first milestone by sitting up straight. A month later her teachers were thrilled to report that she walked for the first time! Slowly, over time, the "introverted, irritable" FeiFei became an outgoing, friendly girl fond of music and dance: "FeiFei now looks so healthy and lovely. After a year of effort she has become active and lovely instead of being considered brain-disabled."

By the time the Valk family traveled from The Netherlands to adopt FeiFei she was flourishing. FeiFei's Mom Hetty learned when they visited the Chuzhou SWI that FeiFei was well loved by the staff: "Our guide told us that



FeiFei was very special to all the staff and we felt the warmth. The director spoke some kind words and she received a special gift, a bottle of earth from the land of her birth."

Once home FeiFei became known as "Yuan." Yuan learned Dutch at lightning speed and when she didn't know a word she created her own--like "fireworks of water" for "fountain." Physically her lopsided gait disappeared and she became strong enough to ski. She was also clear about her needs: "Yuan has a very strong mind of her own. She knows what she wants and is able to explain it."

The Valk family wanted to learn about her early life so they search for "Half the Moon" (a mistaken Dutch translation). Eventually they found a photo on our website of Pre-school Program Director Wen Zhao hugging Yuan. From Wen, the family learned just how miraculous a gift Yuan was: "Our Yuan could not sit, crawl, walk or speak before her second year. She was in her bed all day with no hope, no future, and she was certainly not adoptable. For days we were so deeply moved by all the new information that when we looked at our girl our eyes would tear up."

Now, at 6.5, "Yuan speaks Dutch without an accent; even the "horrible" R is perfect. She rides her bicycle, plays computer games, needs an agenda to keep track of her play-dates, and practices all day long for her career as a singer. She is fond of (pink) clothes and can't wait for the time when shoes with high heels and makeup are allowed. She fights over toys with her brother Roan and argues who has to feed the rabbits and cats. She refuses to clean up the mess when all her toys are scattered, always asks to stay up longer and hates the fact that she has to brush her teeth. Is there more to wish for happy parents? We don't think so."

*Above, Yuan (FeiFei) at home in the Netherlands; Below FeiFei's early days as a Little Sister.*



# BaoBao - New Feet, New Smiles



BaoBao is the little girl we met when we opened our new center at the Xinyang CWI – a little girl who had mysteriously lost both her feet. Last year we told you about BaoBao's trip to Beijing where, thanks to the generosity of a special sponsor who is paying for BaoBao's medical care, a team of experts fitted her for artificial feet and she stood up for the first time. Recently BaoBao again traveled to Beijing to be fitted for another pair of artificial feet for her growing body. As you'll learn from her progress reports, BaoBao is growing in other ways as well:

## Winter 2004-2005

When BaoBao entered the Little Sisters program, she was full of fear



of the surroundings. If other children talked to her, touched her face in a friendly way, or touched her toys with interest she would cry to refuse them. She did not communicate with teachers or other children. She just sat in the toy car looking around vacantly.

## Summer 2005

BaoBao has improved in language. She can accurately express her wishes. She can sing some songs and likes to lead the songs. She communicates more with the other children and they often play games and toys together. After being fitted with her artificial feet, BaoBao can walk without any support. When she sees the other children running, she will try to run for a few steps. However, when going upstairs and downstairs, she is very afraid and will stoop down to climb the stairs with her hands on the floor.

## Fall 2005

BaoBao used to draw only some simple lines. Now she is able to draw circles and the profiles of apples. BaoBao tells other children what she has drawn and sings children's songs when reading books. BaoBao is also able to tell different colors like red, yellow and green. BaoBao's hands and legs are nimbler than before. She is able to take off or put on clothes for dolls. Also she bathes them. She walks much more stably than before. She is never scared of walking up and down stairs. She is even learning to ride a bike.

## Winter 2005-2006

In language skills, BaoBao loves to talk and is smiling more and more. Her thinking is more active. She can discuss with her friend JinJin how to play a game. She tries to be friendly with other children.

She knows how to protect her artificial feet from getting wet. BaoBao can walk steadily and easily with her artificial feet. When she sees the other children jumping in the classroom she also tries to jump while holding on to the chair. Now BaoBao can put on and take off her artificial feet all by herself.





Emily Clarke and friend

## NOTES FROM THE FUNDRAISING TRAIL

By Emily Clarke  
Director of Development, Half the Sky

As I sit to write this column, the sights and sounds of Hong Kong are fresh in my mind. Last week, I left the bustling city just before it welcomed the Year of the Dog with lights and fireworks on the harbor, and wishing trees and mandarin oranges everywhere you look. I had come to Hong Kong in part for a special event sponsored by FinanceAsia Magazine ([www.FinanceAsia.com](http://www.FinanceAsia.com)), where members of the city's banking industry came together for its annual awards presentation. FinanceAsia selected Half the Sky as the charitable beneficiary of the evening's auction, and Jenny Bowen was there to share our story and our plans for a center to be opened in Nanning, Guangxi Province this May. At the end of the evening, attendees had contributed more than \$100,000--more than enough to cover all of our start-up costs for a large new HTS center and foster village!

This evening was a wonderful illustration of the growing breadth of our base of support, and how important every donor and every type of donation is to our success. The donations that night came from raffle tickets, from auction purchases (of items generously donated by several celebrities), and from major corporate commitments.

Half the Sky continues to thrive because of the outstanding generosity of ordinary people. Even while we welcomed our largest corporate sponsorship to date in 2005, we received more than 90% of our contributions from individual donors, the majority of whom are the thousands of adoptive parents who helped create Half the Sky when it was still only a dream. As we expand, the funding we receive from outside the adoptive community, while we believe it will always be a small piece, becomes increasingly important to the health and security of our organization. We want to extend our thanks to FinanceAsia, to Goldman Sachs, to Crea, to Radio Flyer, to JPMorgan Chase Foundation, to BHP Billiton, to GMR Gymnastics, to Ogilvy China, to Pratt & Whitney Canada, to Haworth Asia and to all of the other corporations, large and small, which provided funding or equipment to support our centers over the past year.

Meanwhile, I cannot stress enough that you are the key to our ability to reach new supporters, individual and corporate alike. As just one example, thousands of companies match their employees' charitable contributions. Doubling your support of Half the Sky could be as simple as submitting a matching gift claim at work! To learn if your company matches gifts, visit the database here: <http://www.matchinggifts.com/htsf/>.

Perhaps the biggest challenge in obtaining corporate support is getting the attention of the people who make the funding decisions. Where

we have been successful, it has often been because an individual supporter of HTS introduced our work to a colleague or friend responsible for making corporate donations. If you can introduce us to your employer or another corporation you know well, please write to me at [Emily@halfthesky.org](mailto:Emily@halfthesky.org). I'd love to work with you!

And just as most of our support comes from individual donors, most of my time is spent, not in Hong Kong with corporations, but in the U.S. Here I communicate regularly with our supporters in person as I travel to make presentations and to meet our donors. Again, I need your help to best plan my travels. The focus of my work is generating major support to fund our programs and centers. If you see potential for such support in your community, either from a group or from individuals, and you would like to host an event or otherwise help with introductions, please drop me a note at [Emily@halfthesky.org](mailto:Emily@halfthesky.org).



Jane & Paul Pasin of Radio Flyer and just some of their wonderful gift

### Help Secure Their Future While Planning Yours...

Our own family's financial security is something most of us keep in mind nearly every day. Likewise, we at Half the Sky strive each day to strengthen and solidify the security of our programs and their funding, so that we never have to walk away from the thousands of children we are working to help. Though we all dream of a time when there will no longer be a need for Half the Sky's programs, for now, that is only a dream.

Personal financial planning can and often does go hand in hand with charitable investments, especially when making estate gifts or a major commitment to a charity's programming or its endowment. If you or a loved on are in the process of setting up a will or trust or otherwise working on long-term financial planning, we hope you will think about Half the Sky and about how your financial and charitable goals might come together.

For more information about including Half the Sky in your planning, contact Emily Clarke at 1-717-642-9994 or [Emily@halfthesky.org](mailto:Emily@halfthesky.org).

## You can help create new “forever families” like this one



*HTS will open four new foster villages this year.  
Your gift can help create a family like this*

The foster parents in this photo have committed to raise these four young children with special needs until they are adults. They have a stable and loving marriage. They have raised the one child that China allows. And now they have more love to give. As we begin to open more permanent foster villages for special needs orphans, we have been delighted to find that there are many, many eager parents like this couple.

These are children whom, for various reasons, the government believes should not be placed for adoption. Now they will grow up in loving permanent families (still close to institutional services) instead of inside an institution. They attend HTS preschool and then move on to a primary school in their neighborhood. They will grow up a part of their community and have every opportunity to live normal, happy lives.

You can help make it happen by sponsoring a HTS foster family. The cost is \$3,000 per year. You will receive quarterly reports and photographs. Please contact [Emily@halfthesky.org](mailto:Emily@halfthesky.org) if you'd like to give orphaned special needs children like these the best possible future.

## Xie Xie!

Our thanks to the authors, artists, and small businesses who contribute a portion of their profits to Half the Sky. To learn more about these generous friends of Half the Sky please go to our website, <http://www.halfthesky.org/06News/businesscontributors.htm>. Here are our newest small business friends:

babysoy offers babywear basics made of soybean fiber [www.babysoyusa.com](http://www.babysoyusa.com)

MyAdoptionWebsite.com invites you to create an adoption journey website

PrecariBeads.com offers custom-designed beads

Life Book Writing Guide is workbook for parents who want to organize and write the story of their children's early lives [Chinalifebooks@yahoo.com](mailto:Chinalifebooks@yahoo.com)

Colors of China introduces Chinese language and culture to young children and their grownups in a contemporary and refreshing way [www.momobooks.com](http://www.momobooks.com)

Joy of SoCal spreads the sun, surf and variety of California by offering fun jewelry and hair ornaments at beach prices [www.joyofsocal.com](http://www.joyofsocal.com)

Asia for Kids offers After School Chinese Mandarin Language course teaching conversational Chinese through real life situations in China. Call 1-800-765-5885 or visit [www.asiaforkids.com](http://www.asiaforkids.com) and please mention HTS.

Adopting From China: A Video Survival Guide (VHS & DVD) shows the entire process of adopting a child from China [www.adoptingfromchina.com](http://www.adoptingfromchina.com)

Archi-T specializes in architectural T-shirts & architectural-themed custom gifts. [www.cafepress.com/archi\\_t](http://www.cafepress.com/archi_t).

Gotcha Day CD by Ann Pence features 8 songs that tell the Chinese adoption story from varying perspectives. [www.annpencemusic.com](http://www.annpencemusic.com)

“Children From The Back” artist V. Porter can incorporate your children/grandchildren into a custom oil painting of up to 8 children “from the back.” [www.vickiaisner.com](http://www.vickiaisner.com)

### CHILDREN'S CULTURE CONNECTION DESTINATION: CHINA

Half the Sky is the grateful recipient of the proceeds from Children's Culture Connection's first fundraiser, “Destination: CHINA.” During Destination: CHINA, which took place last fall at Azia Restaurant in Minneapolis, adopted Chinese children and their families were taken on a vicarious journey to Hong Kong, Yangshuo, Kashgar, Inner Mongolia, and the Buddhist island of Putuoshan. The food, décor, souvenir gifts, and silent auction items (ranging from Mongolian-inspired horseback riding lessons to Putuoshan's monk-inspired lounging pajamas) reflected the spirit of these exotic locations. Guests were also treated to a fashion show featuring couture ensembles inspired by each location.

Children's Culture Connection also sells a series of stories designed to take young readers on educational adventures around the world. The books are \$15 and half of the proceeds are donated to the buyer's children's charity of choice. Founded by fashion designer Dina Fesler, CCC's goal is to “educate, entertain, and inspire internationally adopted children through creative fundraising events” that spotlight their countries of origin. For more information or to order a book go to: [www.childrenscultureconnection.com](http://www.childrenscultureconnection.com)





Carla Seidel & her daughter Hope

## U.S. Volunteer News

By Carla Seidel  
US Volunteer Coordinator, *Half the Sky*

We are pleased to announce a special event to benefit HTS. The Nunes family is moving from Florida to Washington. Kate, Ron and Elizabeth (age 6) are an adventurous family and decided to make this move by bicycling across the USA. They want to make their trip more meaningful by supporting Half the Sky. The Nunes family will begin their trip on April 1st. They plan to travel approximately 5200 miles through 16 states: FL, AL, MS, LA, TN, KY, IL, MO, KS, NE, IA, SD, ND, MT, OR and WA. Volunteers can help with this event in various ways:

\* Donate online at <http://www.firstgiving.com/nunesfamily>. While you're there, check the fundraising thermometer to see how the family is doing toward its \$15,000 goal, and write the Nunes' a note of encouragement.

\* Children can help by filling containers with coins and other donations at their school, church, scouts, etc. (A penny jar form is available on our website.)

\* Be a Host Family. Provide a hot meal; a play date for Elizabeth; provide a hot shower, a place to spend the night or a place for the Nunes family to pitch their tent; provide gen-

eral information about local areas, or even ride along for part of the trip.

\* Contact local media about this event. A press release is available on our website.

\* FCC chapters and other organizations can collect donations/sponsors at events.

For more information about how you can help with this event, please contact us at [volunteer@halfthesky.org](mailto:volunteer@halfthesky.org). To monitor the progress of the Nunes family during their trip and to learn more about their adventure, please visit the Nunes Family website: <http://nunesfamily2006.crazyguyonabike.com>.



The Nunes Family

With so many people making scrapbooks these days, South Central States volunteer coordinator Susana Beck has an idea about how to use scrapbook-making sessions as a fundraiser for HTS. Volunteers could host a crop session and donate the proceeds to HTS. If you are interested in more information, please contact us at [volunteer@halfthesky.org](mailto:volunteer@halfthesky.org).



Dawn Houpe, Lynn Cobb, Beth Bush & Brandon Breaux

Many thanks to our intrepid Southeastern States volunteer coordinator Lynn Cobb and Beth Bush, Brandon Breaux and Dawn Houpe for putting together and staffing a Half the Sky booth at the Daniel Island Park Day!

Our annual on-line auction is not until October but it's never too early to start thinking of donations for our auction. We have so many talented supporters, adults and children, who make quilts, blankets, artwork, jewelry, etc. Supporters have also donated books, collector dolls, silk clothing, adoption, scrap booking supplies, etc. In addition to our annual on-line auction, you can list items directly on eBay Giving Works to benefit HTS at anytime. If you have something you would like to donate or would like more information, please contact us at [volunteer@halfthesky.org](mailto:volunteer@halfthesky.org). To access items at anytime that are listed on eBay Giving Works to benefit HTS, please select the eBay icon on the HTS home page.

Thank you for your awesome support!

## U.S. Volunteer Connections

If you are interested in joining Half the Sky's volunteer efforts, please contact the coordinator nearest you. If you do not use e-mail, please call or write Half the Sky for contact information. Please also check our Volunteer Resource Page at [www.halfthesky.org](http://www.halfthesky.org). To reach the page, click on "Volunteers" and then "At Home." You can learn more there about ways to help Half the Sky.

Northeastern States  
CT, DC, DE, MA, MD, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VA, VT  
Contact Anne Poliakoff  
[arpoliakoff@sbcglobal.net](mailto:arpoliakoff@sbcglobal.net)

North Central States  
IA, IL, IN, MI, MN, ND, NE, OH, SD, WI  
Contact Brenda Mellon  
[smellon888@comcast.net](mailto:smellon888@comcast.net)

Western States  
AK, AZ, CA, HI, ID, MT, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY  
Contact Betsy Martell  
[martells\\_6@hotmail.com](mailto:martells_6@hotmail.com)

Southeastern States  
AL, FL, GA, KY, NC, SC, TN, WV  
Contact Lynn Cobb  
[lynncoobb@hometelecom.com](mailto:lynncoobb@hometelecom.com)

South Central States  
AR, CO, KS, LA, MO, MS, NM, TX,  
New Coordinator Needed!  
Interested?  
Contact [volunteer@halfthesky.org](mailto:volunteer@halfthesky.org)

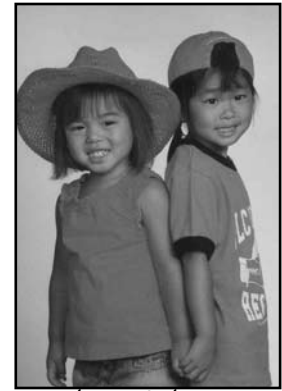
To Volunteer Outside The U.S.  
Please See page 16



Micaela DeVine



Mimi Jung & friends & birthday bears



Justine & Josie

### Birthday Donations to Half the Sky

Lily Zildjian, 10; Celia Li Major, 10; Cydney Blitzer, 6; Maia Athena Ben Hao Demitrack, 4; Anna Mei Yan Verhanovitz, 10; Katie Rowlett, 12; Lea Wenting Rysavy, 6; Mimi Jung, 6; Morgan Searcy, 9; Liane Folger, 6; Lydia Rose Huxue Carpenter, 8; Daphne Xinxing LiCalsi-Murray, 3; Amei Pratt, 10; Victoria Mao, 12; June Song, 3; Victoria Mao, 12; Lilli Carr, 8; Leah Skye Fuxiao Weigand, 2; Maya Blair, 10; Andrea Harvey, 6; Alexa Pursley, 10; Megan Rose, 7; Ming McDonald, 6; Ruby Kay Mingyue Shemaria, 5; Abigail Meiser, 2; MeiMei Dittrich, 5; Noel Pena, 6; Angie Easterbrook, 9; Michaela DeVine, 10 (see Micheala and her HTS poster above.) When Sarah Carpenter turned 40 her friends donated to HTS in honor of her daughter Stella.

### Fund-Raisers

The Chinese Culture Group of Greater Grand Rapids (CCGGGR) donated proceeds from their silent auction; Gail Bailey coordinated a Chinese New Year's fundraiser at The Christ

School in Orlando, Florida; Bekkah Goldstein donated money from her Bat Mitzvah where the family placed a HTS display; Dr. Garnett E. Stover (Dr. Tripp), a chiropractor in Mechanicsville, Virginia held a fund-raiser through his practice to celebrate his daughter Avery.

The Missoula, Montana FCC held a Chinese tea party; Charles Day donated proceeds from the sale of his Gaoyou book, [www.aboutgaoyou.com](http://www.aboutgaoyou.com); North Hollywood's Campbell Hall School donated proceeds from its holiday Outreach Gift Fair; the Neely family donated the proceeds from its annual "Angel Christmas Tree" party; Abby Mae Yu Qing's church family, in response to a challenge from their pastor, raised funds for HTS; the children and families of Campbell Hall School raised funds for HTS at their holiday Outreach Gift Fair; Ethel & Victor Tang-Quan, Claudia Bowman, Debbie & Normal Wing, Mamie & Vicki Yee, and Frank & Toni Quan, a China travel group, donated to HTS in lieu of presents at

Claudia and daughter, Lily Bowman's annual Christmas Holiday dinner;

The Featherstone family collected donations for HTS at their Chinese New Year's Open House; St. John High School's Club DC raised money for HTS by selling Christmas ornaments; the "China Group," a group of four Connecticut moms, sponsored five children & one nanny by organizing a benefit concert & raffle.

Our heartfelt condolences to those who donated to Half the Sky in memory of...

Mark Schmokel, father of two Chinese daughters/donations to the Yiyang Fund; Sandra Shindler; Anna Mary Straub; Kay Beck; Sherry Stanley, "mother of a beautiful girl from Changsha, Hunan Province." Families with Children from China San Diego Chapter renewed a sponsorship in Sherry's name with proceeds from a holiday party featuring angels

## A Note To Our Sponsors About E-mailing Progress Reports...

We are pleased to report that most of our sponsors are happily receiving their quarterly progress reports and photos via e-mail and that the cost savings has been significant. Shifting to e-mailed progress reports has enabled us to use more of our extremely limited resources to directly benefit the children still waiting in Chinese institutions. Thank you for helping us make the transition to e-mailed reports and please let us know if your e-mail address changes.

If you are a sponsorship who can receive your reports by e-mail but have not yet provided us with an address to do so, please send your e-mail address to us at [reports@halfthesky.org](mailto:reports@halfthesky.org) at your earliest possible convenience.

If you cannot receive your reports by e-mail, please know that we will be happy to continue to send them by mail.

Thank you for your continuing support of our sponsorship program.



# letters from the sky

*Dear Half the Sky,*

*I recently cleaned out my paper stash, and found a poem my Mom sent to me, just before she died in 1998. She loved her new granddaughter, but it took her awhile to really know why we adopted and did not try "harder" for the natural child. I think this may have been the special indicator that there was more to this adoption than just being a Mommy...*

*Love and Blessings,  
Megan B/Pennsylvania*



Emily Grace & Krista Mei Slifka

## We pray for our children

*Who put chocolate fingers everywhere,  
Who love to laugh  
Who stomp in puddles and ruin their new pants,  
Who sneak Popsicles before dinner,  
Who erase holes in math workbooks,  
Who can never find their shoes.*

## *And we pray for those*

*Who stare at photographers from behind barbed wire,  
Who can't run down the street in a new pair of sneakers,  
Who have never played with a ball or teddy bear,  
Who are born in places we wouldn't be caught dead,  
Who never go to the circus,  
Who live in an X-rated world.*

## *We pray for our children*

*Who bring us sticky kisses and fistfuls of dandelions,  
Who sleep with the dog and bury the goldfish,  
Who hug us in a hurry and forget their lunch money,  
Who cover themselves with Band-Aids and sing off key,  
Who squeeze toothpaste all over the sink,  
Who slurp their soup.*

## *And we pray for those*

*Who never get dessert,  
Who have no safe blanket to drag behind them,  
Who watch their parents watch them die,  
Who can't find any bread to steal,  
Who don't have any rooms to clean up,  
Whose pictures aren't on anybody's dresser,  
Whose monsters are real.*

## *We pray for our children*

*Who spend all their allowance by Tuesday,  
Who don't like spinach and pick at their food,  
Who like ghost stories,  
Who shove dirty clothes under the bed,  
Who get visits from the tooth fairy,  
Who don't like to be kissed in front of other children,  
Who squirm in church and scream on the field  
Whose tears we sometimes laugh at,  
Whose smiles can make us cry.*

## *And we pray for those*

*Whose nightmares come in the daytime,  
Who will eat anything,  
What have never seen a doctor or dentist,  
Who aren't spoiled by anybody,  
Who go to bed hungry and cry themselves to sleep,  
Who live and move but have no being.*

## *We pray for those children who want to be carried,*

*And for those who must, for those we never give up on,  
And for those who don't get a second chance.  
For those we cover with Love...and for those who will grab  
the hand of anybody kind enough to offer it.*

*Dear Half the Sky,*

*I had the weirdest experience the other day... I was walking my 17-month old daughter Anne (adopted 3/21/05 from the Gaoyou SWI through US Asian Affairs) down the main drag through our town (West Roxbury, a part of Boston, Massachusetts). An enormous concrete mixer coming up the street. As the barrel on the back of the truck slowly turned, it revealed an ad for Half the Sky painted on it! The name of the concrete firm is Tresca Brothers out of Millis, MA.*

*It sure is a small world after all!*

*Lucas Feininger  
West Roxbury, Massachusetts*



*Dear Half the Sky,*

*This was the best early Christmas present ever to open this email tonight and to find out that our dear daughter Chen XiuXi was in your program.*

*Our first daughter, who was adopted at 10 months of age in Aug. of 2001, was not in any program. She had some minor attachment issues but is doing great now. I could tell the minute we got Chen XiuXi that she had developed a bond to her caretaker because she grieved for her when we were in China. She wants to be held a lot and she looks you in the eye. She was well fed and she was just thriving when we got her. Your program has made a huge difference for our daughter and for us too.*

*Kim Ma  
Simi Valley, California*

*P.S. I just received my Mei Mei book today and it's really moving. Brought tears to my eyes.*



Alex & Sydney Ma

# kids'

# art&letters from the sky



"Butterflies" Collage by JingJu, Half the Sky Little Sister in Wuzhou

Dear Half the Sky,

My name is Angie Easterbrook and I am adopted from China. I'm nine years old. My birthday is October fifth. Instead of receiving presents, I asked for donations to Half the Sky. I am sending you \$400.00. I would like to sponsor a child for one year.

From,  
Angie Easterbrook, 9

p.s. I am sending a picture of my sister Allie and me. Allie is also adopted.



Dear Half the Sky,

This year, for my 10th birthday, some of my friends and I saw a play called "Cinderella," followed by a birthday lunch. We had loads of fun!! As with the last two years, instead of receiving presents, I asked my friends to make a donation to Half the Sky. I raised \$216 this year.

I love helping orphanages in China because I was in one and I know how it feels to not have a family. I hope the money will help to make playgrounds or any other things the children need. I would like to go back to China again some day to help take care of the children. When I get older, I promise I will come and volunteer.

Anna Mei Yan Verhanovitz, 10



Dear Half the Sky,

In honor and respect for my little sister Gracie ("Rou Rou"- adopted from Shenzhen, China in December of 2003 - I was responsible for the organization and coordination of a charity golf tournament and silent auction event, with the proceeds benefiting not only my high school, but Half the Sky.

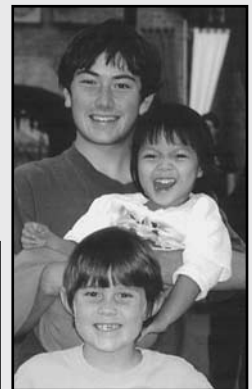
When I began this project, there was no way to know that in a few short months you would be heading to my sister Gracie's former orphanage to work your magic. But now that dream will become a reality, so it is my hope that all of these funds will be put toward the Shenzhen SWI build, to help the children who remain there.

I have much gratitude toward Half the Sky, and I feel very fortunate that you will be able to find a wonderful way to use my efforts to change the lives of children who need all you have to offer.

Garrett Neiman, 17



Garrett, Gracie & Griffin Neiman



"Friend, Pengyou" drawing by Megan Rose, 7

Hi,

My name is Olivia. I would like to give my \$13 to the Big Sisters program because I am a big sister to Lillian Wen Mott and she is from Chongqing. My mom lets me read your newsletter. Maybe I will be an artist and help paint the walls.

I like the children's work in the newsletter.

Olivia Marie Mott, 8



# International Connections

## Half the Sky's Growing Global Community

Thanks to an amazing and steadily growing group of volunteers from the United Kingdom, Spain, Belgium, Australia, France, Switzerland, New Zealand, and locations in between, Half the Sky is in the process of organizing activities all over the world. In Canada, Half the Sky is now fully registered as a charity, allowing our supporters to receive tax benefits for their donations. The charitable registration paperwork for Hong Kong donors to be able to receive tax benefits is almost complete. In Shanghai, our grassroots supporters are organizing major fund-raisers.

Through these efforts, Half the Sky is learning over and over that concern for the children still waiting in Chinese institutions knows no national boundaries.

We are working toward the goal of making Half the Sky's work providing nurturing care in Chinese institutions as well known in Europe, Australia, Asia, South America, and Canada as it is in the United States. We are already off to a good start in Canada and China, but we need help in other countries. If you live outside Canada and China and can give time and skills to help establish a HTS presence, whether through organizing volunteer events and activities in your community or through exploring charitable registration in your part of the world, please contact Emily Clarke at 1-717-642-9994 or [Emily@halfthesky.org](mailto:Emily@halfthesky.org).



### Meet Our New Volunteer Coordinators for Canada

Welcome to Rosemary Iacucci & Christopher Foroglou! Chris and Rosemary live in suburban Montreal in Quebec Province, the province that boasts the highest percentage of Canadian families who have adopted from China. They are the proud parents of two girls from China, Adriana and Jordana. Says Chris: "We are very blessed. Our girls are healthy, funny and active, but not wild. They both listen, at least to a great extent!" Rosemary, who speaks French and English, grew up in Montreal. Chris is a transplanted New Yorker who fell in love with Canada when he was a student at McGill University and decided to stay. Like many of our growing number of supporters outside the US, Chris and Rosemary discovered Half the Sky on the internet when they were researching charitable organizations that work in China. The couple, who also work full-time at the same pharmaceutical company, will be raising the profile of Half the Sky in Canada and organizing fundraising events: "We want to help out in any way we can," says Chris.

#### To Make Tax-deductible Gifts In Canada:

HTS Foundation of Canada (or)  
 Fondation HTS du Canada  
 1190 Place Nobel, Suite 100  
 Boucherville QC J4B 5L2 CANADA  
[htsf-canada@halfthesky.org](mailto:htsf-canada@halfthesky.org)

Telephone for donations: 450/655-1334 (ask for Louise Tremblay)  
 Telephone for more information about HTSFC: 1/717/642-9994

### If you live outside the United States....

Due to the cost of sending newsletters out of the U.S., we request a small, annual subscription fee of \$15 USD. If you already contribute \$25 or more to Half the Sky each year, please ignore this request and consider the newsletter complimentary, with our thanks!

Please send foreign subscription requests and payment to:

Half the Sky Foundation  
 764 Gilman Street  
 Berkeley, CA 94710 USA

Or fax credit card info to:  
 1/510/525-3611

### Our Half the Sky tee is now in lime green too!



All sizes available, as well as a limited selection of sizes in our other popular colors: butter yellow, blue, goldenrod, gray and white. Please see the order form on page 23 or visit our HTS web store.

# Half the Sky/Beijing

The supporters who make our work possible are scattered around the globe, but the children we serve are in China. As the number of children in our programs grows, our Beijing office, whose task it is to ensure that every child in our programs receives high-quality care, is growing as well.

Recently we hired the three new staff members you'll meet below to help us run our programs. Now we have a team of 7 in the Beijing office! All of our new staff members are dedicated to Half the Sky's mission to bring nurture, loving care and enrichment to institutionalized children. All three new staff members are also bilingual, a necessary qualification, says **Managing Program Director Zhang Zhirong** (that's ZZ, above right), because, "Half the Sky is an international organization."

ZZ, who used to be the lone person in Beijing, has been thrilled to see the office's rapid growth (including the arrival of executive director Jenny Bowen who moved to Beijing with her family) because it means that more and more children are receiving the nurturing they need. "It's like a snowball rolling. It is wonderful to see."

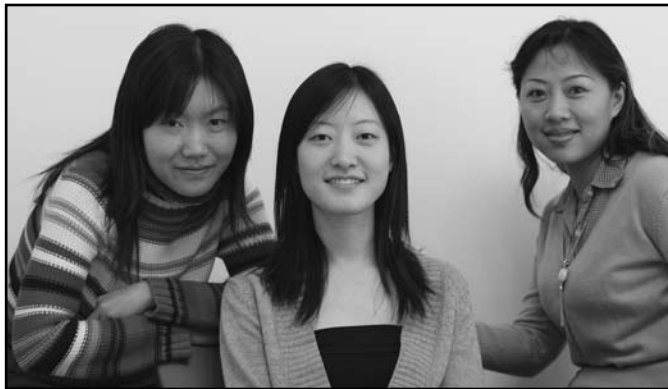


**Chen Yun / Nancy Chen -  
Program Finance Manager**

When Nancy was in South Africa studying for a masters degree in business administration to supplement her accounting degree, she saw an American film about Chinese orphans. After seeing that film Nancy knew she wanted to help. Now she is "very happy and very busy" keeping the Beijing office's financial house in order.

**Wang WanLing / Lynn Wang -  
Assistant Child Program Coordinator**

English major Lynn is helping coordinate translations of the quarterly progress reports our nannies and preschool teachers prepare about the children in their charge so that HTS can follow the progress of each child in our programs. She also helps to e-mail the reports to our loyal sponsors. She loves working in the Beijing office, which is "like a family environment."

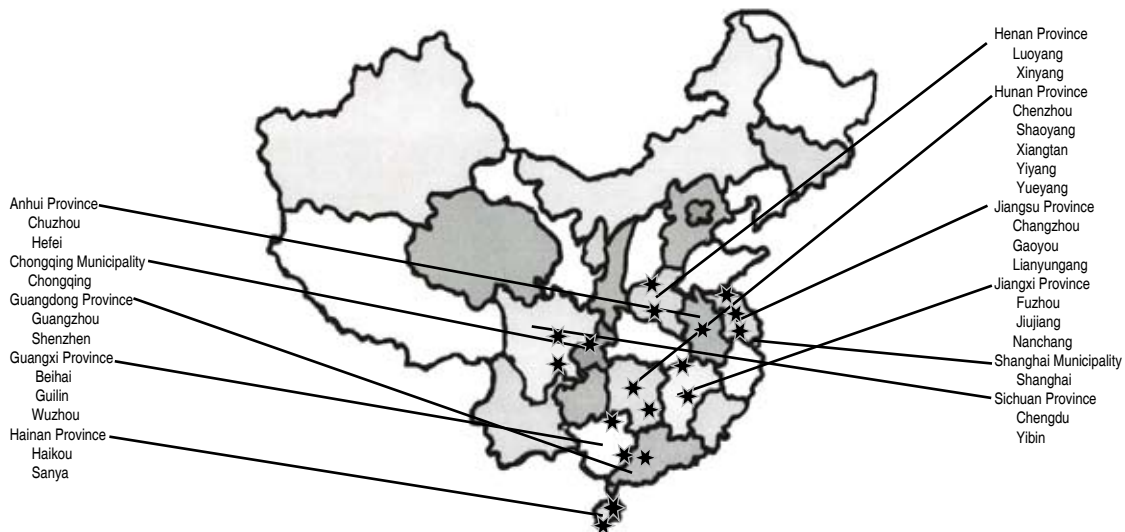


*Lynn Wang, Winnie Sun & Nancy Chen*

**Sun Wei / Winnie Sun -  
Executive Assistant**

With a degree in environmental engineering, Winnie was looking for a job at an environmental NGO. Instead, she stumbled on Half the Sky and hasn't looked back. Winnie loves the "crazy busy" pace of her job and the multitasking challenges: "You have to respond fast."

## Where is Half the Sky Right Now?



# Update on LiMei: Developing at “warp speed”

*Half the Sky, because of its special arrangement with the Chinese Government, cannot be involved in adoption. This is, in part, what gives us our unique access to the welfare institutions and allows us to actually operate programs inside orphanage walls, where no others can. But every once in a while we hear a story of a child in distress outside one of our programs. And where we can, we try to help. LiMei's adoptive family could not bring her home; they were told she had severe brain damage. They appealed to HTS and we were able to find LiMei her own special nanny, even through we didn't yet have programs in her province.*

*Over the months that followed, the Bauerles received regular HTS sponsorship progress reports about LiMei. Finally, they decided they must try to bring her home. And though the Bauerles had been told that Li Mei was probably severely retarded due to a brain injury or cerebral palsy, they brought her home last year. Here is her mother, Dee Baurle's update:*

Shortly before Chris was to travel for Leah there was a change in the administration of the adoption bureau and they once again questioned the wisdom of permitting this adoption, unable to believe we would be willing to adopt a child they believed was severely retarded. Actually, by that time, we were utterly committed to the decision and believed that our lives would only be improved by adding Leah to our family. We knew people with very disabled children and they were surviving and thriving. We had faith. But truthfully, the photos and reports from Half the Sky's nanny did NOT tell the story of a profoundly retarded child, and we had to trust our instincts. Boy, were we right on!

Leah has been home almost a year and is developing at warp speed! She has grown physically in a way that is most gratifying for this Italian mom (Eat! Eat!). She has gained 11 pounds and has grown 7 inches! She is a kind and empathetic little girl, who shows her love for Chris and me and for her sisters, especially if someone is injured (boo boos all the time with three active kids). She has our 70 pound dog wrapped around her finger, telling Duchess to “sit, down, stay” with total confidence. She has clearly been loved and cared for by her Nanny. She obviously learned that she was “large and in charge,” at least where her wonderful Nanny was concerned, and that confidence in herself and in her lovableness is always apparent. We just adore her.

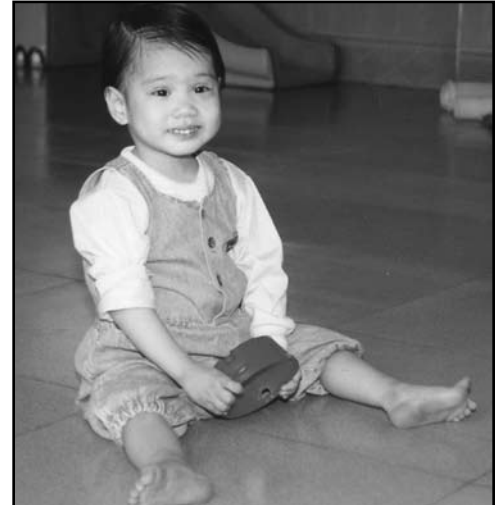
Leah does have some delays, especially related to language. While time, speech therapy and attention have tremendously improved her ability to speak and understand, we still have a way to go to prepare her to start kindergarten on time. She began Exceptional Student Education classes in a public school pre-K program where she is doing well academically and socially. We're not sure what is causing her delays-whether they are due to lack of experience, a hearing deficit (she is fine now, but her hearing was severely impaired when she arrived), or brain injury.

Leah only goes to school for a half day because she is a busy girl in the afternoons! She takes ballet and gymnastics and sees her private speech therapist. She is a subject in a Harvard study on language development in children adopted from China. She spends time riding her bike (a tiny two-wheeler with training wheels) and even spent an afternoon roller skating with Chris and me and her sisters.

Last year I received a call from a couple who were preparing to travel to China. The most recent photos of their daughter showed a child who appeared very different from the plump, healthy baby in the original photos. The parents were very concerned and not sure they were prepared to adopt a child with major health problems. The woman's parents lived not far from their child's SWI. Her father visited and confirmed their worst fears-their daughter appeared ill and extremely delayed. The parents were distraught and heartbroken.

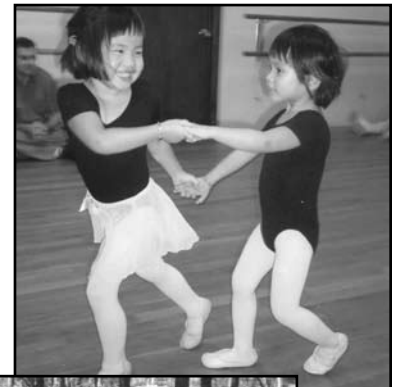
I told them that two years after we decided we could not adopt Leah, we were returning to finally make her part of our family. I told them how sorry I was they were facing this, but that they should give the little girl a chance, just wait until they had met her in person to decide whether she was the child they were waiting for. Their girl was actually fine, just tiny and tired! And she is a ball of energy and joy now. I don't know if I would have had the courage to give such advice if we hadn't had our experience with Leah.

So we are soldiering on and Leah is leading the charge! She is strong, happy, outgoing and willful! She has a great appetite for everything in life and a laugh that just cracks up the whole family. She's just a goof. We are very happy and thankful.



From LiMei's last HTS progress report

Below, LiMei (now Leah) at home...



# A BIG SISTERS MAKES GREAT PROGRESS

"Now I think of nothing else except to study hard."  
...Hefei Big Sister Feng WuZheng

When Feng WuZheng became a HTS Big Sister at the age of 12, it was clear that without extra help the prospects for this shy girl growing up in an institution were bleak. At 12, WuZheng could not add and subtract. She relied on her fingers to do simple calculations and even with the help of her fingers often got the answers wrong. Worst of all, WuZheng had come to believe that she could not learn. "WuZheng is an introvert and reluctant to talk. Afraid of making mistakes, she always refuses to solve problems by herself...If this bad situation goes on, I am afraid that it will be very difficult for her to achieve happiness in her life."

At the heart of WuZheng's low performance as a student was her lack of self esteem. "She is usually teased by her classmates because they think she is not smart," wrote her Half the Sky tutor. The teasing had taken a toll on WuZheng: "She always thinks that she is not able to do anything and the result is that she does the math problems wrong. There she hates studying and ignores math. I am afraid that we cannot train in the basic skills she needs to live."



*WuZheng proudly displays her honors certificate at school*

When we see children who have grown up in institutions without the one-on-one care they need to thrive we can't help but wish there had been a Baby Sisters or Little Sisters program for them when they were little. But we have also learned that older children can blossom when presented with a nurturing, supportive environment just as younger children do. For Big Sisters like WuZheng, Half the Sky uses the same approach we use with younger children: "Instead of censuring her," recommended our tutor, we "need to praise WuZheng more often and help her establish her self-confidence." Our tutors also experimented to find ways of helping her improve her ability to focus. "We are thinking of new ways to get her attention."

Gradually over the last two years we started receiving more upbeat reports. "She has made some progress during this period. I think she will make greater progress in the future!" By the third quarter of last year her longtime teacher, who couldn't tutor her anymore, wrote: "I will miss her...No matter who teaches her, I am sure that she will continue to make progress."

More importantly, WuZheng in her letters to us started talking about her progress: "I am getting much better in my Chinese class. My teacher has been giving me compliments. I really must thank you!"

In her most recent letter to us (left) WuZheng, who had once given up on her ability to learn wrote: "I think about nothing else except to study hard." Echoing the ambitions of lots of students around the world she also wrote that she wants to "earn a lot of money."

Yes, it would be better if every institutionalized child were nurtured when small. But for the shy WuZheng and other still young and resilient Big Sisters like her it is never too late to help ignite their ambitions, their dreams and their belief in themselves.

Dear Half the Sky,

I am now studying in grade four. Thank you for giving us so much help and support.



Orphans like us would never have a happy life if it were not for your love. I began to stay at the welfare house when I was two years old, and now I am already fourteen years old. I have had both happiness and tears during the twelve years here, but the happiness is more than the bitterness.

Now I think about nothing else except to study hard. I'd like to earn a lot of money to repay you for your kindness. I will never forget your kindness. Although I can't write that well, every sentence is full of gratitude.

I wish you health and happiness.

Feng WuZheng

# A Brief Photo Tour of Our New HTS Programs in Guangzhou

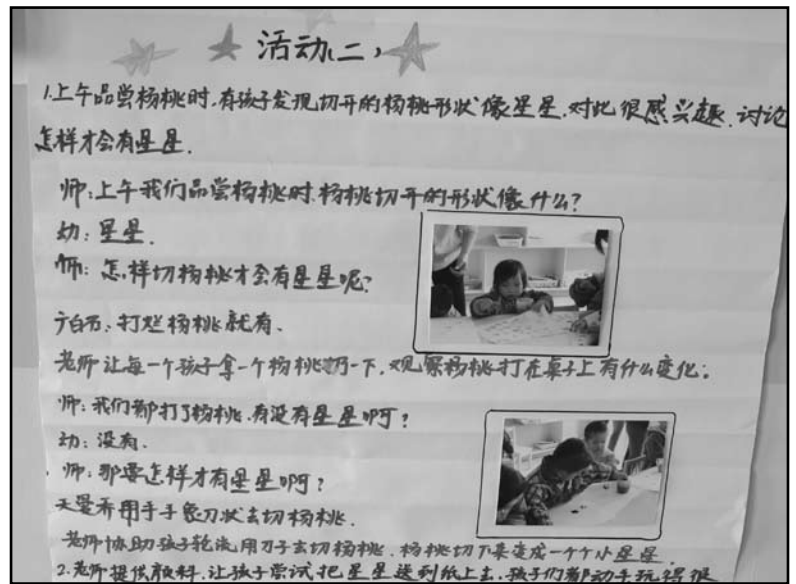


Two months after our new preschool and infant nurture programs were launched at the Guangzhou Social Welfare Institution, ZZ and I paid a brief visit to see how things were going in the early weeks. As happens in many new HTS sites, the infant nurture program was slow to get going. While it was great to see the babies out of their cribs and on the ground exploring, their new nannies had not yet grasped the concept of providing nurture and one-on-one engagement with three babies at a time, nor were the newborns yet included in the program. Picking up tiny babies and giving them cuddle-time just seemed like one thing too many for this very over-worked administration. We explained again how critical those first six months of life can be and how long six months are if that's your entire lifetime so far. Once again, we got promises all around to give these strange new programs a try and now all 60 babies are beginning their new lives in our infant nurture program. It usually takes about six months to really get an new infant nurture program underway. We'll let you know next spring how things are going.



Meanwhile, the huge (85 children!) new Little Sisters Program at Guangzhou got off to a great start. You can see a few moments we caught in the photos below. This month we launch our Big Sisters Project with 25 older children, and then, in June, a new permanent foster village for children who are unlikely to be adopted. We're so happy to finally be working in Guangdong!





## A Special Gift... The Mei Mei Portfolio



Half the Sky is offering hand-crafted, 16"x20" archival, museum quality, silver-gelatin prints from MEI MEI.

This is a limited collector's edition portfolio of 12 images, each hand-signed and numbered by Richard Bowen. Each image will be restricted to only 25 prints and can be purchased singly or in portfolio. Once the 25 portfolios are sold, there will be no further prints of these images made.

Proceeds from the sale will benefit HTS programs and are partially tax-deductible.

For purchasing information and to view all 12 images in The Mei Mei Portfolio, please visit [www.richardbowenphotography.com](http://www.richardbowenphotography.com).



## GIVE A GIFT, CHANGE A LIFE

**Give a Gift** to the children still waiting in Chinese institutions by signing up for one of Half the Sky's donation/sponsorship programs. Please let us know if your donation is also a gift to a friend or family member; we can send the certificate and information about your donation to you or directly to the recipient of your gift. You can also specify that your donation is being made in honor of a friend or family member.

**\$300 - A One-Year Child Sponsorship**, which can be paid \$25 per month, supports education and enrichment for a Baby Sister or Little Sister for a year. The sponsor receives a certificate with a child's photo, name, and date of birth in the mail. Sponsors also receive quarterly reports about the progress of their sponsored child via e-mail unless they request that the updates be mailed. You can request that you prefer your sponsored child to be from a specific SWI/CWI where we have a center. See page 23 or contact [sponsorships@halfthesky.org](mailto:sponsorships@halfthesky.org).

**\$600 - A One-Year Nanny Sponsorship**, which can be paid \$50 per month, supports a nanny loving care for 3-5 infants in our Baby Sisters Infant Nurture Program. Sponsors receive a certificate and a short nanny biography in the mail and quarterly reports on all of the infants in the nanny's care via e-mail unless they request that the reports be mailed. You can request that you prefer your sponsored nanny be from a specific SWI/CWI where we have a center. See page 23 or contact [sponsorships@halfthesky.org](mailto:sponsorships@halfthesky.org).

**\$900 - A One-Year Big Sister Sponsorship**, which can be paid \$75 per month, supports programs for older children in social welfare institutes all over China based on their individual needs - remedial tutoring, music, vocational training, art, sports or you can target your donation to our University Fund. Sponsors receive a quarterly Big Sisters Newsletter that spotlights the progress of the children in the program. See page 23 or contact [sponsorships@halfthesky.org](mailto:sponsorships@halfthesky.org).

**\$3,000 - A One-Year Foster Family Sponsorship**, which covers the costs of our foster parent's salary (one of the couple must be a full-time parent), home maintenance, and a special activities fund. Sponsors receive updates on the children in their sponsored family and can donate in a lump sum or in \$250 monthly installment. If you are interested in becoming a Foster Family Sponsor, see page 23 or contact [emily@halfthesky.org](mailto:emily@halfthesky.org).

**\$3,000 - Half the Sky Guardians** support our endowment fund, which is invested for long-term growth, to help secure the future of our programs. A small percentage of the fund's value is available each year to help cover the annual costs of operating our programs. Guardians can donate in a lump sum or pledge their commitment for up to three years. See page 23 or contact [emily@halfthesky.org](mailto:emily@halfthesky.org).

**\$5,000 or more - Half the Sky Angels** provide leadership support for our most pressing needs. Donors help launch new centers and sustain current programs. See page 23 or contact [emily@halfthesky.org](mailto:emily@halfthesky.org).

### PHOTO WALL PROJECT FOR HALF THE SKY "GRADUATES"

*We are assembling photo walls that feature children who have "graduated" from our programs. The photos will be displayed in the institutions where the children were in our Baby Sisters or Little Sisters program. We get many, many requests from our nannies, teachers, and directors for photo updates of the children. When you send photos, you are giving a gift to those who still care very much about your child. Please remember to note on the back of the photo our child's Chinese name, date of birth, and former welfare institution where we have a center. If your child was in a Half the Sky program, we invite you to send us a photo print (no e-mails please), perhaps once a year, of your child in her forever home. Before we sent former Yueyang Baby Sister Yue Zhi Mei's photo on to China, we copied it so you can see the kinds of snapshots parents are sending to our Berkeley office. Zhi Mei, has found her forever home in Michigan where she is known as Ava Mei Trowe. Thank you to her mother, Barbara Trowe for sending us the photos.*



Please send photos of your HTS "graduate" to:

PHOTO WALL  
Half the Sky Foundation  
764 Gilman Street  
Berkeley, CA 94710, USA

# Half the Sky Donation and Order Form for Mail and Fax

Yes, I want to help put a smile on this face!

Mail: Half the Sky Foundation  
764 Gilman Street, Berkeley, CA 94710 USA  
FAX: 1-510/525-3611



Special Instructions  
(e.g., "donation in honor of...")

- Enclosed is my gift of:
  - \$50  \$100  \$300  \$600  \$900  Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- I want to be a HTS Guardian and support an endowment fund to provide ongoing support for all HTS programs. 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 support HTS' Big Sister Project and receive a quarterly bulletin on the girls who benefit. I will commit to a pledge of  \$75 per month or  \$900 per year for at least one year.
- I want to be a HTS Nanny Sponsor. I will commit to a 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 pledge of  \$25 per month or  \$300 per year for at least one year.
- In order to double or triple the amount of my donation, I have enclosed my company's matching gift application.
- Please contact me about becoming a HTS Angel, sponsoring a Foster Family, or making a planned gift

Please send me cards, gift certificates, clothing and/or posters (more choices in our web store):

**MEI MEI:**  
Portraits from a Chinese Orphanage

**1 @ \$35 / 10-19 @ \$30 / 20+ @ \$25**  
90 duotone photographs  
Introduction by Amy Tan  
Afterword by Karin Evans  
Signed by the author,  
Richard Bowen

**Good Morning China**

**1-9 @ \$30 / 10+ @ \$25**  
By Hu Yong Yi  
Hardbound w/Chinese Sewing  
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**All HTS CARDS NOW \$25 PER BOX!**  
Please see our store at [www.halftheky.org](http://www.halftheky.org) for more HTS cards at \$25 per box.



**HTS Great Wall Poster**

**\$50 each**

**HTS Sweatshirts\***

**Child \$20 / Adult \$25**

Color: Grey  
Child XS - L  
Adult: S only

\*Note: Sweatshirts run a bit small



**HTS Tees**

**Child \$12 / Adult \$15**

Grey & Blue Adult: S-XXL  
Grey Child: XS-M  
Lime Green, Butter Yellow & Golden available in all sizes

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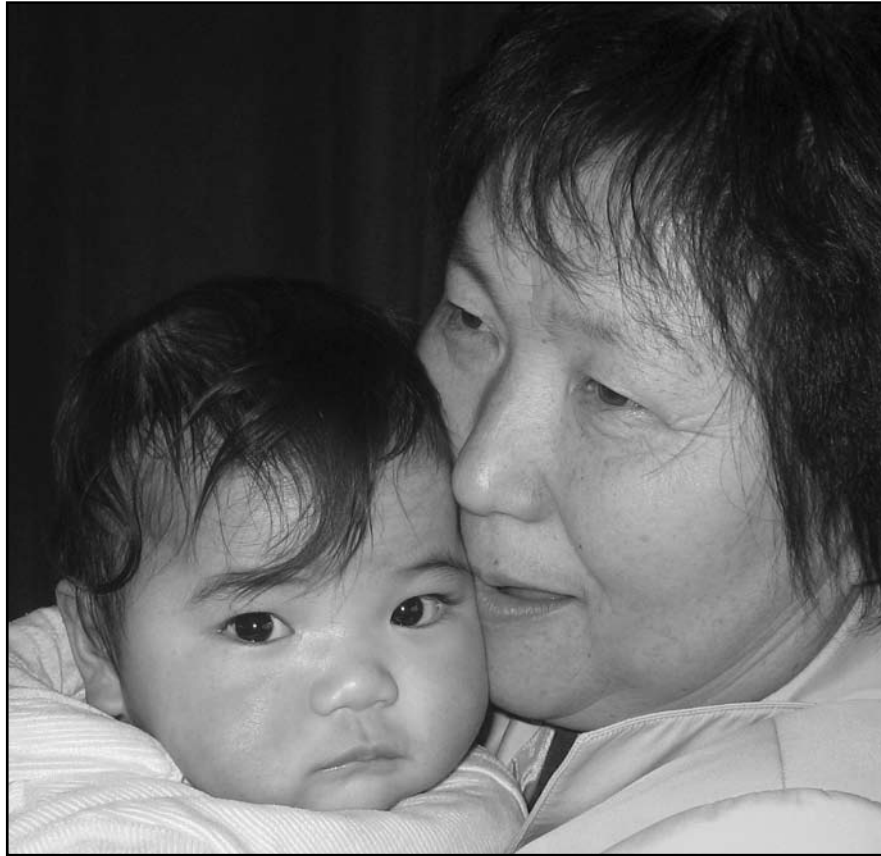
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*Helping her hold up half the sky.....*



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