

Half the Sky



Our China Care Children Progress Reports: Summer 2014

We are pleased to provide you with these stories and photos about the incredible progress of the medically fragile children at our China Care Home. Thanks to your help, the children are receiving stellar, often lifesaving, medical care and patient, loving, nurturing as well.

We think you'll be especially pleased to read the "Exit Progress Reports" for children who have completed treatment -- it is so gratifying when infants and toddlers we welcomed at The Home -- so weak and so sick -- are given a clean bill of health so they can move on with their lives and soon find a permanent family.

Again, our deepest thanks for enabling us to help these children who have so much potential once they are given the medical care and love they desperately need.



Exit Progress Report – YuBing

Last October, YuBing was admitted to the China Care Home for the second time. She first came to us in December 2010 when she was four months old. At the Beijing Tongren Hospital, she was diagnosed with retinoblastoma in her right eye, and they found three lesions in her left eye. The tumor hadn't extended beyond her eyeball, but the vision in her right eye had already been destroyed so the surgery to remove her right eyeball was done. YuBing had two cycles of chemotherapy in addition to the enucleation of her right eyeball. The risk of her left eye developing cancer was evaluated. She was at a stage B at that time. Therefore, the doctor suggested treating it with chemotherapy to try to save the eye. YuBing had five cycles of chemotherapy to kill the tumors. The total length of treatment was almost a whole year. She was then sent back to the institution in February 2012.

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In October 2013, we got news from the institution that unfortunately, YuBing's left eye also developed cancer. She came back to the China Care Home for more treatments. A few days after her arrival, she was taken to Tongren Hospital to see the doctor. It was confirmed that her left eye couldn't be saved. YuBing had one cycle of chemotherapy and then enucleation of her left eyeball on November 27. One month later, she resumed chemotherapy cycles. She lost all her hair due to the side effects of the chemotherapy and suffered from loss of appetite and fatigue. Her nanny took care of her around the clock while she was in the hospital. Her nanny held her in her arms, giving her loving cuddles so she would not feel alone. She wanted YuBing to always know that someone was there for her. She also encouraged YuBing to eat. The side effects went away soon after the chemotherapy and in mid May 2014, the treatment was over and YuBing returned to the China Care Home to rehabilitate with us.

Despite all that this poor child had suffered physically, YuBing was a strong-minded and happy girl. She loved to interact with her nanny. When holding her nanny's hand, she could walk around. When asked to walk by herself, she was very cautious. She held on to the wall and took little steps. If she encountered small obstacles, she kicked them away and kept moving forward. As she got more familiar with her environment, she was able to go to the bathroom, bedroom and activity room by holding onto the wall but she felt safer if someone was with her and kept talking to her.

YuBing developed basic life skills. With a little help from her nanny, she could use the spoon to feed herself. If she was given something new to eat, she would touch it carefully to try to figure out what it was. Then she would put the food in her mouth. After she tasted it, she smiled. YuBing could put on clothes and shoes by herself, and even do up buttons. Before washing her face, she would roll up her sleeves. Her favorite activity was to dance to the sound of music. She would turn in circles while holding her nanny's hand. She had so much fun and giggled.

YuBing's conditions was stable and medical checkups showed no signs of recurrence so in early June, she was sent back to the institution, where she would enter Half the Sky's Little Sisters Preschool program and continue to be valued and loved.



YaZhi



YaZhi was only one month old when she came to the China Care Home, in September 2013. She had a bilateral cleft lip and palate and had feeding troubles so her institution turned to us for assistance. We needed to first help with the feedings and then arrange for her lip repair

surgery when she was six months old.

YaZhi cried a lot at the beginning due to the new and unfamiliar environment. Her crying was so loud that people in other rooms could hear it. Her nanny held her and walked around the room with her, telling her where she was and showing her interesting toys. They gradually established an emotional attachment and YaZhi then seldom cried unless she was hungry or needed a diaper change. Her nanny fed her formula with great patience and made sure she

wouldn't choke or vomit after feedings. YaZhi has expressive eyes. When she stares at somebody, it seems like her eyes can speak. And when we laid her down on the floor mat, she would reach out her hands to touch the toys hanging from the baby gym. As the toys flapped back and forth, she got quite excited, gesticulating with her hands and feet. She smiled more and more and became an easygoing and sweet little girl. Whenever someone called her name, she responded with a pretty smile.

In late February this year, YaZhi turned six months old. We took her to the hospital for her lip repair surgery as both her age and weight were acceptable. But during pre-surgery blood testing, the doctor found that her blood work results were too high and the surgery couldn't be done. Therefore, she was discharged. We arranged further medical checkups and it turns out that she has an increased number of white blood cells and abnormal ALT levels.

The doctor believed that she was fighting an infection and treated her with intramuscular injections and medication.

After careful nursing at the China Care Home for about two months, we took YaZhi back to the hospital once more but once again, the surgery couldn't be done due to her high blood count and abnormal ALT levels. She had to come back to the China Care Home and

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continue waiting until she was well enough.

YaZhi is ten months old now. She can stand up when holding onto her nanny's hand or rails. She is quite energetic. Once she is awake, she keeps busy, either by crawling around or playing with her nanny and other children. She is quite popular and all the nannies love her. Recently, she was able to take a few steps by holding onto the wall only, or the bars of her crib.

When visitors come, she claps her hands to express her "welcome" and smiles sweetly. Sometimes, she snatches toys from other children. But if her nanny tells her to share the toys with the others, she is also willing to do so.

It is still uncertain when YaZhi will receive her lip repair surgery. Hopefully, it will be soon. We are looking forward to seeing more beautiful smiles coming from YaZhi.



YuNuo



YuNuo was born with anal atresia in September 2011. He had a colostomy surgery right after birth, but was abandoned later at the institution. He was sent to the China Care Home when he was two years old. He needed attentive care for his colostomy wound on his belly and underwent two more surgeries to fix his condition.

YuNuo was quiet at the beginning. He could understand many words, but only said a few words such as "mama" and "baobao (hug)". He was a little

nervous when his nanny put him on the floor mat as he was not familiar with the other children there. After he watched them for a while, he began to join them and play with them. He gave his toys to others and also bounced a ball happily with them. He was not quite as cooperative when the nurse wanted to change his colostomy bag however. He just cried and waved his hands to stop her. His nanny comforted him patiently and told him, "It's fine. We'll do this quickly. It's good for you." After a while, he stopped fighting and allowed the nurse to do it for him. When it was done, he sat up and his tears turned into smiles.

About one month after his arrival, YuNuo was hospitalized due to an intestinal obstruction. In the hospital, he had to fast and was given nothing to eat or drink; he was given total parenteral nutrition instead. His condition was managed successfully with the treatment. Then he was discharged from the hospital and the surgery was scheduled for two months later.

In early February this year, just after Spring Festival, YuNuo was hospitalized for some surgeries. A colostomy closing surgery and anoplasty were done on February 18, 2014. During the surgeries, the doctor found that YuNuo had intestinal disorders, which would affect his recuperation. Due to the complexity of his condition, YuNuo stayed in the hospital for almost three months following the surgeries and he was discharged back to the China Care Home in early May.

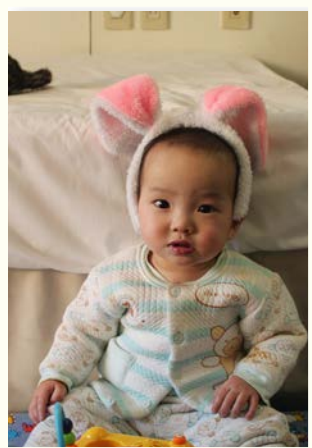
YuNuo is 2 years and 9 months old now. Like most children, he always wants to go play outdoors. If his nanny says to him: "NuoNuo, let's go out to play," he gets very excited and can't wait to put on his shoes. In May, several students volunteered in YuNuo's room for two weeks. He had a great time with the older sisters and brothers. They played games, read stories, sang songs, etc. Sometimes, he had to lie on the bed in order to keep his wound from getting infected. YuNuo and BoYuan are good friends. They play together and share toys or food with each other. They both like to have their photos taken and then look at the screen of the camera. They point at the photo and say: "This is BoYuan", "This is NuoNuo". We print out the photos and put them up on the wall. They are very happy to see them there and show them off to visitors.

YuNuo will have a medical follow-up at the end of July to see if he still needs more treatments. The nurses and nannies at the China Care Home take good care of him and hope he can recover fully soon.



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Exit Progress Report – MingJun



MingJun arrived at the China Care Home on January 20, 2014. He was born with a heart defect. Heart surgery was done for him in early January through the government's Tomorrow Plan program. He needed post-operative care for a period of time before returning to his welfare institution, so he was admitted to the China Care Home.

MingJun was one year old. He needed to take several kinds of heart medicines every day. The nurse at the China Care Home brought the medicines to his room and administered them to him carefully and on time. Occasionally, he needed to be put on oxygen due to low oxygen saturation levels. Most of the time, his condition was stable. He was placed in a foster family with a loving foster mom who cared for him 24 hours a day.

MingJun developed well both physically and emotionally. He got acquainted with his new environment and his foster mom. When he saw his foster mom, he reached out his hands and asked for a hug, calling out "mama" at the same time. As he stayed in his foster mom's arms, he clutched her and stared at her with a smile. In this way, he expressed his attachment to her and told her how she was needed. Whenever he was unhappy, the best way to stop him from crying was for his foster mom to hold her in her arms. MingJun loved listening to music. When the music was on, he clapped his hands and also danced to the rhythm. His foster mom mocked the way he danced, which made him burst into laughter even more. When he woke up in the morning, he pointed to the MP3 player and babbled "ah, ah". His foster mom turned it on, and he smiled.

MingJun is a fast learner and a smart boy. When he was taught something, he watched and listened carefully, and then followed the instructions to do it. He knew how to do the gestures for "welcome", "bye", "thanks", "call someone", etc. When he was asked to make a call, he picked up the toy phone and put it to his ear or even gestured his fingers as if to dial and said, "Hello! Hello!" He also practiced walking with his foster mom's help. He could take a few steps all by himself when his foster mom loosened her hands. She kept praising him: "Well done! You're amazing!" and this made him happy and he walked faster.

On March 31, MingJun had a heart ultrasound and the results showed that he had made a good recovery. The doctor said he just needed to continue taking Aspirin Enteric-coated Tablets once a day and he stopped taking his other heart medication. Everyone at the China Care Home was happy about the good news regarding his health. At the end of April, MingJun was sent back to the institution. We hope this lovely boy will have a permanent family soon.

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