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Stay in touch!

Please keep your email updated with CCAI so we can contact you with the latest news and events!
mail@ccaifamily.org

Annual Family Reunion a Huge Success!

We continued our 25th Anniversary celebration this past June at Centennial Center Park here in Colorado. Despite some rain and wind, we had between 300 and 400 people join us for Lion Dancers, games, and great food from local food trucks. As always, our JCCS dancers gave wonderful performances and families were able to enjoy the park's amazing splash pad. We are already looking forward to celebrating our 26th annual reunion with our families next year!



Building Families, Enriching Community



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Save the Date! CCAI's National Reunion is June 22, 2019

ADOPTION STATISTICS

As of 10/31/2018

12,722
Total Adoptions

4,318
Children with Medical Needs

10 Bulgaria
12,351 China
151 Haiti
82 Latvia
92 Ukraine
35 US Domestic
1 Taiwan

10,377 Girls
2,345 Boys

Changing Landscapes

Our daughter Anna came to us in 2004 at almost ten years old with Tetralogy of Fallot, a combination of four congenital heart abnormalities that caused oxygen-poor blood to flow out of the heart and into the rest of the body. She was from China's relatively new undertaking called the Waiting Child Program under which a few carefully selected agencies were assigned every two months a couple of dozen files of children with special needs for possible match with their families. At the time special needs adoption represented less than 5% of all China adoptions. Today, China adoptions, as well as adoptions from other programs such as Bulgaria, Taiwan, Latvia, and Ukraine, are primarily for children with medical needs or who are older.



While international adoptions overall have declined over the past 15 years, the amazing thing is that we continue to see hundreds of incredibly courageous and passionate families come forward to embrace these special kids with unconditional love. (This year alone we expect to see another 350 special children welcomed into their forever families!) Even more amazing, these families will be the first to tell you that they aren't "saints;" that they simply wanted to reach out and provide a home, hope, and healing to an orphan in need.

Adoption has always been about changing lives. Today, that significance has been elevated to a new height as CCAI has answered the call for broader support to our adoption community, with heritage tours, orphanage service trips, and birth family search. With our steadfast commitment to improving the quality of child welfare in orphanages, CCAI stands ready to meet the ever-changing needs of the international adoption landscape.

We thank God daily for the unbelievable blessing to serve our amazing families who see only beauty and joy in those precious little ones hoping each day for a family to call their own.

By the way, our gorgeous daughter Anna is 23 now and is doing great physically (three surgeries later) and academically. She will be an artist when she graduates from college. What a blessing!

Thank you again, our CCAI families, for constantly trusting, supporting, and praying for us. With your love CCAI will continue to drive forward as long as there are still orphans in this world.

Love,
Josh and Lily

Chinese Consulate Celebrates Adoption

On Tuesday, April 10, 2018, CCAI Texas local families were invited by the Houston Chinese Consulate to attend the performance WITH LOVE, FROM CHINA CONCERT, featuring the Beijing Inner Voice Art Troupe Co. Ltd. Performers consisted mainly of youth with a range of different disabilities. Eleven families joined in the heartwarming and inspiring evening that ended with a special appearance by the Consul General of China, Ambassador Li, who enjoyed greeting families and sharing his joy in visiting with children adopted from China!



CCAI's newest endeavor
into Birth Family Search

www.mytaproot.org

Have you felt it? A spark of hope has ignited a wildfire of interest worldwide, not only for adoptees but also for birth families in China searching for their missing links!

As the Chinese adoptee community grows older, the desire for birth parent and sibling discovery has drawn more interest. Birth family search has long been considered extremely challenging in China, if not entirely impossible, until recently. Time has brought potentially wonderful changes to this narrative, thanks to the extensive reach of social media, an undercurrent of support by the Chinese government, and some miraculous stories from Chinese adoptees who have invited the world to follow along on their birth family search journeys.

Our children came to us on this adoption journey from a place of loss, too often growing up with a sense of missing identity. It is a reality that can leave both parents and children feeling helpless. While some adoptees are at peace with their past, others may be in a constant search for something to fill in these missing pieces. CCAI co-founders Josh and Lily's youngest daughter Anna expressed a desire to know more about her past and connect her own story very early on. Together, Josh and Lily have been searching with Anna over the past ten years, trying to help her uncover her missing links. In their work, Josh and Lily have spoken to countless adoptees about this same wish to know more about their personal history, with one simple question: Can you help?

It was out of these conversations that grew a deep responsibility to find a safe and effective way to help.

MyTaproot is the realization of that desire – built with the hopes of providing the most effective and secure birth relative search program for adoptees and their families to begin searching on their own terms. It is a project of the heart, created with extensive survey-based input and

conversations with both adoptees and adoptive families on what they would like to see in an all-inclusive birth family search service.

Since launching in May 2018, more than 1,200 adoptees and/or their parents from the United States as well as all around the world have chosen MyTaproot as their birth family search service. We take these numbers to heart, and know that adoptees and their families are trusting MyTaproot to continue to forge new paths and lead the way in birth family search. We are thrilled to announce that we have already had the honor of confirming four birth parent/adoptee matches through our services!

When it comes to birth relative search, there have been endless questions, met too often with silence. MyTaproot is the beginning of a new and exciting journey toward answers. Regardless of a match, we emphasize open communication with adoptees and their parents along the way, making sure each adoptee has the resources and support they need when approaching the emotional and technical complexities a birth relative search entails.

taproot (noun)

tap·root | \ 'tap-, rüt, -, rüt\

1. a large, central, dominant root from which other roots sprout

A taproot is the central root that feeds the soul and anchors life. If you are a Chinese adoptee and have been considering starting a search for birth relatives, please visit MyTaproot at www.mytaproot.org to learn more about who we are and what we do. Don't hesitate to reach out to us with any questions along the way.

CCAI's Children's Charity Fund

remains committed to serving the many children in need all across China. We are an objective-based organization that is not focused on raising money for the sake of it – every single dollar that we raise is solicited with a need in mind, brought to our attention by our many close charitable partners in China or, in many cases, by you!

This year, we have organized and led large trainings for orphanage caregivers, hosted benefit concerts, renovated facilities, celebrated birthdays, and donated more diapers, blankets, clothing, and food than you would even believe! We are proud to come to work every day with the knowledge that every hour we're here and every dollar you entrust to us is in service to the needs of children.

Thank you for partnering with us in our incredible mission to provide loving care and compassion to every single child that needs us. You are the key to changing the lives of children and we look forward to another year of continuing the orphan care ministry.

CCAI is looking for foster care sponsors!



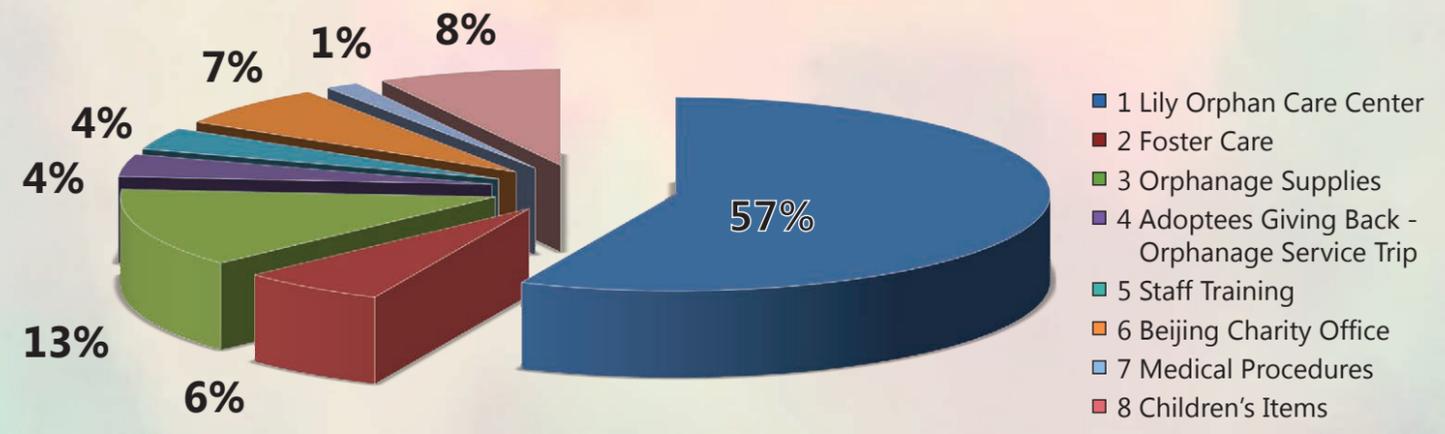
DONATE TODAY!
 online: ccaifamily.org
 mail: 6920 S. Holly Circle
 Centennial, CO 80112

2018 CHARITY REPORT

PROVINCE	ORPHANAGE	DONATION ¥	PROJECT	
Henan	AnYang	107,860.00	Staff	
		11,860.00	Cribs	
		7,470.50	Toys, books and clothes	
			2,358.00	Hot water heater
	HeBi	1,800.00	Wheelchairs	
	JiaoZuo	47,600.00	Cribs	
	KaiFeng	5,899.00	Air conditioner	
		124,900.00	Staff	
			6,108.29	Toys, books and clothes
	LuoYang	40,928.00	Foster care	
NanYang	4,200.00	Quilts		
	4,800.00	Exams		
		165,800.00	Staff	
		7,541.75	Toys, books and clothes	
		4,000.00	Laptop	
PingDingShan	5,120.00	Uniforms		
PuYang	11,550.00	Foster care		
	34,570.00	Formula		
		1,800.00	Wheelchairs	
RuZhou	30,000.00	TVs & washers		
SanMenXia	13,340.00	Clothes		
ShangQiu	27,480.00	Air filtration		
ShangQiu LiangYuan	9,870.00	Clothes		
	30,400.00	Cribs and therapy equipment		
XinYang	1,800.00	Wheelchairs		
	4,439.00	Air filter		
	10,636.40	Sets of children's closets		
XuChang	42,000.00	Cabinets		
		178,300.00	Staff	
YeXian	2,960.00	Printer		

PROVINCE	ORPHANAGE	DONATION ¥	PROJECT	
Henan	ZhengZhou	24,139.00	Foster care	
		29,223.30	42 children's exams and public announcement fees	
			610,401.00	Staff
			12,189.90	Toys, books and clothes
			1,499.00	Disinfection cabinet
			42,570.00	Cribs
			23,700.00	Bathroom renovation
			2,090.00	Sofa
		ZhouKou	2,580.00	Camera
			4,514.40	Children's clothes
	ZhuMaDianLOCC	134,914.00	Staff	
		4,894.85	Toys, books and clothes	
	Training	6,999.00	Therapy training	
Guangxi	BeiLiu	6,289.00	A/C	
Beijing	CCCWA	88,000.00	Training	
Jilin	ChangChun	40,619.83	AGBOST	
Guangdong	GaoZhou	8,700.00	Charity project	
Guizhou	GuiYang	3,073.00	Medical treatment	
Gansu	JinChang	18,200.00	Cribs	
Shanghai	ShangHai	2,935.00	Wheelchair, art supplies, diapers	
			Children's supplies	
Shaanxi	Yulin	34,000.00	AGBOST	
Hubei	WuHan	55,358.14	Laptop	
			Foster care	
Hunan	ZhuZhou	84,975.00	AC & washing machine	
	ChenZhou	23,590.00	Charity Office	
Beijing	Charity Office	177,575.00	Blankets, clothes, bottles, toys, books, etc.	
Henan		169,000.00		

Total ¥2,563,419.36
or \$400,534.28 USD
 (approx., based on avg 6.4 exchange rate)



Forever Ours

By Kristin Leininger

My husband and I will never forget the first time we received the email from CCAI about some children in China's Special Focus Program. We received a picture and a brief description of Jing Bo, a child about to age out of the Chinese child welfare system. We had adopted through the foster care system and had fostered children in and out of our home for several years. Honestly, we were not even looking into international adoption, but knew we were always willing to share our home and family with children in need. Jing Bo tugged at our hearts. Like every other child whose file we read, he was more than a stack of paperwork and medical descriptions. He was a young man in need of a forever family and home. He had a history, a story. It took us very little time to determine that we would pursue him. Like other opportunities we had to receive children in our home, this once again felt like we were to take a step of obedience and see what God had in store.

We knew that time was a critical factor with the limitation of him aging out on a specific date – his 14th birthday. With that, we honestly weren't even sure if everything could be completed in time, but we had to trust that if God meant for Jing Bo to be ours, He would provide. I guess you could say that the rest of this story is of God providing. We attacked the pile of paperwork and list of responsibilities, and CCAI was incredibly supportive during this process. I don't want to give any false expectations, because everyone's story is different, but we did not have a single setback in the whole process!



We brought our son, Ethan Jing Bo back home and into our family just two weeks before he was about to age out. Although he has been in our home and family just over a year now, he has seemed forever a part of ours. He shares stories of growing up in China and he loves to hear stories of our family before he came to be a part of it. For everyone who has adopted, we could also tell stories of trials. The transition is not always easy. The language barrier at first is very delicate and complicated. One of the biggest hardships was truly trying to understand how he was doing. Emotions and feelings are sometimes complicated to communicate with someone that you are just getting to know. We believe, however, that every single sacrifice is so very worth it. It is worth it, because in the end, we are all being changed.

Ethan has taught us so much. He has taught us about the Chinese culture, he has taught us compassion, and, being the most content kid that we have ever met, he has challenged us to also be content. He can tell you about his finding place. He can articulate the trials he had in the orphanage. He loves to tell and at times even act out stories of his life. He can ask hard questions of us and of his time in the orphanage. He has asked us several times if I would have wanted him if I saw him as a baby. Of course, yes! But, in the grand story of his life and our life as a family, we see how God purposed to bring Ethan to us in His timing. We know that as years continue, and we are further knit together as a family, we will continue to learn from Ethan. Ethan brings us great joy and we will forever be grateful for the gift he has been to all of us.



In the Nick of Time

By Brian Crisman

Our family has been actively involved in orphan ministry for many years through the ministry founded by Sonya's brother, Heart of the Bride Ministries, and we actively pursued the adoption of a sweet little boy in Kenya just before they closed to international adoptions. After moving to Florida and engaging in the orphan care ministry directly, we felt the renewed call to adopt in October of 2016. We really wanted to adopt from a place where kids typically receive less care and attention and our prayers eventually led us to consider China. We felt led to adopt a boy because, well, there are far less males in our family than females. At that time, we had 4 daughters and 1 son. Adopting a boy made sense for housing and our son needed a brother! We had friends who'd adopted from China through CCAI so we began filling out the paperwork and looking at children on the Waiting Child list. We requested the file on one child and carefully prayed through his situation while consulting doctors and therapists. Ultimately we came to the painful decision that we simply could not provide the care that he needed with the medical community around us. In fact, the therapy he needed wasn't even offered anywhere near us. But, one week later, we found ourselves looking at the face of a little boy called "Li" on CCAI's website. On the morning of December 1, 2016, Sonya called Sarah at CCAI and asked about him. Sarah informed Sonya that "Li" was still available but his file was due back in China the next day. Instead of the usual week to consider him, we had until the end of the day. The race was on.

We discussed later that we felt pretty sure he was ours from that moment on, but at the time, there were many things to consider and due diligence to be done. By the end of the day we felt very confirmed that he was ours - our son - and we weren't even done filling out the application! Sonya

called Sarah to confirm our desire and we braced for a long evening of getting everything done. On the call, Sarah told Sonya that they had been waiting on "pins and needles" all day for our call and here's why - the really cool part of the story. Keep in mind, the Crismans really like coffee - all of us. That morning, the lady who processes the return files to China had sorrowfully begun her task. It isn't easy sending files back into the huge shared list. At some point, she went to make coffee and discovered that the coffee pot was broken. She decided to run out for coffee and offered to get some for the office. **It was while she was gone that Sonya called and asked about our boy.** Sarah, knowing that his file was in the return pile, went to retrieve it and found "Li's" file on the very top. **His file had been the very next one to be returned.** Had the coffee pot not broken he would have been gone. Out of reach. Lost within a huge system. The ladies in the office believed it was providence and awaited confirmation. Sometimes I think God has fun while He's working miracles. He throws a little something fun in the mix just for us. I don't have a biblical reference for that, just experience - a coffee run saving our son for us.

Daniel (Li Ming) became a Crisman on December 4, 2017. His brother was there with us to receive him. He was quiet and frightened but very brave at the same time. He softly uttered the words "mama," "baba," and "gege" as he greeted us. The days to follow were difficult, but he soon cracked a smile which was followed by a laugh. The months since then have been miraculous. He has attached to us quickly and embraced his five siblings with ease. His personality is fun-loving and silly. He is Crisman in every sense of the name. And, wouldn't you know it, he loves coffee. Yep. He's a Crisman.



CHINA ADOPTION UPDATE

If there's one constant with international adoption - as with life - it's CHANGE!

The China adoption program, and specifically the Waiting Child Program, has seen a number of alterations over the last year...

- Revisions to qualifications for adoptive parents and withdrawal of the "Concurrent" Special Focus Program
- Cancellation of "One-to-One" Orphanage Partnership programs for all agencies; children's files are now made available to all agencies at the same time on the Shared List
- Suspension of older children's Journey of Hope and Hosting programs
- Guidance from the US Department of State clarifying that child referral can only be made to families with a completed home study
- Shift from an expected orphanage fee to a voluntary orphanage donation

What hasn't changed?

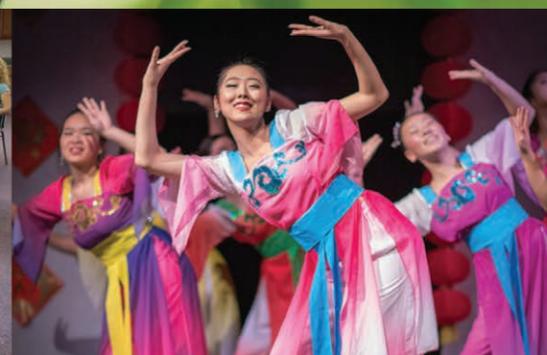
The children waiting. At any given time, there are over 3,500 children waiting on the Shared List for their families, and new children's files are added each month. Every day CCAI and its Waiting Child Program staff serve families who are searching for a potential child match, considering children's files, and working hard toward bringing their new child home. While the program may look different, the need is still there - and CCAI continues its mission to find loving homes for as many abandoned and orphaned children as possible!

Welcome to The Park An Adoption Community Center

"We believe that to best serve the wider adoption family, we need to offer programming and support to the entire community, lifting up not only adoptees, but also relatives, partners, friends, and also those who may know nothing about adoption."



THE PARK
ADOPTION COMMUNITY CENTER



To CCAI's longtime family, the unveiling of this community center will at first be most immediately visible as a combination of the teams and resources of our existing programming – Joyous Chinese Cultural School, Adopteen, Xpress Yourself, The Connected Parent, MyTaproot, and Heritage Tours will all operate under The Park's umbrella. With a central team and a renewed focus, we plan to offer the best version of all this programming in 2019.

However, our vision expands to so much more than improving on what we are already doing. We believe that to best serve the wider adoption family, we need to offer programming and support to the entire community, lifting up not only adoptees, but also relatives, partners, friends, and also those who may know nothing about adoption. We will slowly expand our slate to offer opportunities for everyone to engage in the conversation, locally and on national and international levels. In the months to come, look out for announcements regarding new programs to be held at The Park in Centennial, as well as a brand new website experience that will take the discussion online - including videos, podcasts, and blog content. It is our hope that by expanding our visibility

and scale, we can bring more people from the wider adoption experience - including from programs and regions that we have not reached yet - into the fold and make adoption a larger, important conversation that is a vital part of the greater national dialogue.

When our team thinks of The Park, we think of a space that adoptees can come to every night after school for tutoring or just to have a unique space to finish their homework. We think of a center that will have programming any given week for every single person in the adoption community – regardless of their interests. We envision community nights, carnivals, and sleepovers. We've already planned international backpacking trips, service opportunities, and exchange programs. Our vision and hopes for The Park seemingly have no bounds – we just need you, our community, to join in the conversation with us and create a space unlike any we have seen before.

We are so glad to have the opportunity to share a peek of this exciting new endeavor first with our CCAI family and hope to see you in January as we begin the next step in our journey.

Lilypad (ages 3-7)

Our Lilypad programming is offered for children ages 3 to 7 and focuses on surrounding children with community and augmenting their experience for a happy and healthy childhood. Classes like *The Connected Parent* will provide children with the tools they need to cope in stressful situations, while *Parent and Me* offers a first touch on the Chinese language and culture.

Treehouse (ages 7-12)

The Treehouse is our first opportunity to begin discussing heavier topics and to provide a guiding light for kids that are starting to ask the hard questions and become even more interested in who they are and their place in the world. Programs like *Xpress Yourself* will focus on a more therapeutic touch, while *AdopTween* is an opportunity to connect with older teen mentors and the hard topics at hand in a more low key and easygoing environment highlighting fun and meeting one another.

Greenhouse (ages 13-21)

As we grow older, the need for more diverse opportunities and the desire to choose our own adventure grows with us. Greenhouse lets us do just that. Be an *AdopTween* Mentor, *Adopteen* Leader, travel on the *Adoptees Giving Back-Orphanage Service Trip* and other international opportunities, and do much more with The Park! Our college-age friends also have the opportunity to start coordinating local chapters, summer events, and manage creative content for our online community! The opportunities are endless, and the limits only where you draw them.

Evergreen (ages 21+)

You're about to graduate college, have found a job, or otherwise have moved on in life. Maybe you've forgotten about the Park, but we haven't forgotten about you! Evergreen offers programming for adults looking to connect with one another – happy hours, dinner parties, book clubs, and excursions fit for the most adult of adults.

Parent Corner

Parent support is incredibly important to us, and The Park wants to bring you into the fold more than ever. Monthly book clubs, focused workshops and discussions, and online creative content are only the beginning of our parent program offerings.

The Neighborhood

Relatives and friends are often dismissed from the adoption conversation, when their experience is just as valid and important to our community. We will introduce programming for all ages, including *Community Nights*, *Breakfast Club*, and creative content specific to the adoptive sibling and friend experience.

Coffeehouse (All Ages)

Our Coffeehouse is where all of our creative content is imagined and developed! It's a creative space for all who want to share their stories and their experiences and move the adoption conversation into the greater national dialogue. We're talking: Blogs! Podcasts! Videos! Cartoons! Magazines! Photos! Books! Music! You name it, we'll make it together. All ages and perspectives welcome.

Adoptees Giving Back - Orphanage Service Trip

"Hua was beautiful. Intelligent yet humble, warm yet reserved, mature yet youthful. Unlike me, Hua was never adopted. She lives at a government-funded boarding school with orphans from all over Changchun Province."

"What struck me the most was the similarity of our origin stories - presumably abandoned by our mothers as baby girls - yet our strange inability to convey the simplest ideas through verbal language. Instead, we interacted through vivid hand motions and meaningful facial expressions."

"I saw in Hua an embodiment of my unadopted self - her personality and character strongly reflecting my own. I lament that a deserving individual, so much like myself, has never known the kind of family I have. Now, more than ever, I value my life's remarkable path, and wonder how I wound up in South Bend, Indiana, 7,500 miles away from Hunan Province, with more than I could ever ask for."

"Our group's departure came all too soon. Hua and I had developed a deep bond after an afternoon together and, in an emotional farewell, we grasped hands and held each other in warm embrace for a long time."



"I met her in a paper-cutting class, as my fellow travelers and I were dispersed among tables of students. The teacher rapidly demonstrated a cutting technique, snipping away at golden-speckled paper with a dexterity I failed to mimic. Inevitably, I trimmed a wrong corner, and Hua swiftly grabbed another sheet for me, refolding it. I was impressed by her eagerness to take care of me throughout the afternoon, as she held my hand, straightened my backpack straps, and even wiped my forehead in the warm sun."

"I can still distinctly remember the connections I built with the children and the overwhelming love I felt for the children in the same place I had been 18 years ago. When it was time to leave, it was one of the most difficult days of my life. And yet, the greatest self-discovery I experienced was through the impact the trip had on me after I returned home. Although I had always been comfortable with my identity as an adoptee, traveling with AGBOST made me feel truly proud of who I was and where I came from. I developed a strong sense of gratitude for all the opportunities I had been given. My memories in China cemented a desire going forward to continue to give back to my community on a local and global scale. Finally, I left China with twenty-five new friends who are the closest thing in my life to sisters."

Shared by Zoë Bonnell and Maddie Buss (pictured)

Joyous Chinese Cultural School

JCCS Workshop Offerings

JCCS is excited to present a brand new slate of workshop offerings for the 2018-2019 school year! These workshops offer an additional, broader understanding of the Chinese culture, and are presented in a more accessible and shortened format, with convenience in mind for our many busy families. Cultural workshops are available for the whole family, including **Cooking, Basic Chinese, Paper Cutting, Calligraphy, and Painting.**

For more information, visit us at www.joyouscenter.org!

Notice our name change?

Effective this year, we have changed the name of our program to Joyous Chinese Cultural School. This is to reflect a larger change of CCAI's post-adoption programming, to be housed underneath one umbrella - The Park Adoption Community Center, opening its doors January 2019 - and a renewed focus on cultural education.



Spotlight on the Hill Family by Mike & Mary Hill

It has always been important to our family to learn about and embrace the rich fabric of the Chinese culture, and JCCS has played a large role in keeping that cultural connection. We attend the language and dance classes every Saturday during the school year. We have 4 daughters Sarah (19), Madison (16), Jessica (14), and Brooklyn (7) that we adopted from China, and they began attending JCCS classes when they were as young as 3 years old. The girls perform their dances during Chinese New Year for the school and at the reunion. We love the beautiful costumes and all the different dances including the Fan, Umbrella, and Lantern dance. They have had amazing experiences performing at various venues including the Dragon Boat Festival, the Buell Theater, and the Paramount Theater. My

girls have all taken the language classes at JCCS as well, and every Saturday after class, the girls enjoy delicious pan-fried dumplings, dripping in soy sauce, before we head home.

Attending JCCS has been a springboard into volunteering as a mentor to younger adoptees at Adoptween, and participating in a giving back trip to China with AGBOST. With help from JCCS and their wonderful staff, the girls have woven the Chinese culture into their daily lives through language, dance, and Chinese traditions. The teachers at JCCS are warm and caring role models who are always supportive of the girls' learning and their experiences as they grow into young women. We are thankful to be part of this incredible community!



Adopteen Chicago Chapter

by Laura Williams

Slanted Eyes, White Parents, Chinese, White World. As an adoptee growing up I knew I had a different experience from those around me, but I knew I was not alone. I have always wanted to meet adoptees like me in order to share my experiences and find a community with whom I truly felt I belonged. Adopteen offers a wonderful experience for adoptees. Starting in Colorado, we now have 8 chapters nationally. From coast to coast, Adopteen has been growing with new chapters starting in Chicago, Austin, and D.C. just to name a few. The opportunity Adopteen has given me is the experience to be in a group where everyone is like me. When we are used to being the minority, as a group we empower each other.

I decided to start Adopteen Chicago because I wish I had had a community of people like me when I was growing up. Now, Adopteen Chicago is celebrating our one-year anniversary as of October. As a Chapter Coordinator, it has been an amazing experience to learn and grow with my fellow adoptees. Every Hangout is different, and we have gathered for activities such as packing meals for Feed My Starving Children, meeting for Dim Sum in Chinatown, and ice skating and drinking hot cocoa at the Bean. Throughout the year, I have offered a wide variety of options for our diverse community of Chicago Adoptees. During our monthly hangouts our Chicago teens have grown a strong bond with one another as well. What started as a group of strangers not knowing one another to teens trading social media user names has created friendships. We are much more than just a group of adoptees who meet up once a month; we are an active community, whether we are celebrating our culture or simply enjoying each other's company.



ADOPTEN 2019

Adopteen Midpoint: Conyers, GA
Feb 16 - 18

Adopteen Camp: Colorado Springs, CO
Jul 8 - 13

Adoptees Giving Back:
Jul 10 - 21

Adoptees Giving Back:
Jul 24 - Aug 4

Adopteen Camp: Corvallis, OR
Jul 28 - Aug 1

Adopteen Chapters

Adopteen Chapters are an opportunity for a quick hangout with other adoptees 13 and up in your area - whether you're a longtime Adopteen fan or just starting out, we are a low key chance to meet others in your community!

Check out the map below to see if we're already in your area, and visit www.adopteen.org to learn more about Chapters - including how to start a Chapter in your area!



Celebrating Adoption

From September 6-11, 2018, CCAI hosted the CEO and the Director of Social Services from Cathwel Children's Services, our partner agency in Taiwan. Our guests learned about CCAI's amazing services, toured children's therapeutic residential facilities in the area, visited with families who had adopted through Cathwel and ended the week with a celebration of adoption of Taiwanese children from Cathwel. Families gathered at our CCAI KY office, where children spent the afternoon bowling, playing laser tag, maneuvering a ropes course and reuniting with friends from Cathwel. It was a fabulous day for all! For more information about our Taiwan program or to view profiles of more than 50 children waiting for families, please visit ccaifamily.org/Taiwan/Taiwan-Adoption or contact us at taiwan@ccaifamily.org!



A Choice of Faith & Love

Tobin and Cassandra Simonetti are one of our families currently pursuing an adoption from Taiwan. They are matched to a little girl and are eager to bring their daughter home! Sharing their unique perspective, we asked Tobin and Cassandra some questions, and are grateful they've given us a peek into their incredible journey.

What led you to adoption, and specifically, Taiwan?

For years, God has put it on our hearts to adopt. As a beautiful portrayal of the Gospel of Jesus, we have chosen to respond to God's love by adopting. We dream of having a multiethnic family filled with children, perfectly designed by God to make up our family.

As we pursued the journey of adoption and understood the options on the global horizon, through prayer we felt led by God to adopt from Taiwan. Taiwan has an incredibly rich history forged through years of turmoil and tension, creating a culture that is vibrant and lush with authenticity and depth. It is this beautiful culture that we are eager to weave into our family story as we welcome our adoptive daughter home.

Compared to other countries, the matching process for Taiwan is fairly unique and for some, seems quite scary/uncertain. What you were thinking/feeling as you sent off your home study for consideration of the little girl who had captured your heart and how was it during the wait to hear if Cathwel (the orphanage) had selected you?

We've always trusted and knew that CCAI and Cathwel have the child's best interest as top priority and we appreciate that they want the best parents to take care of that specific child. Therefore, understanding that the process is designed to clarify who is best suited to be matched together, gave us great encouragement that if we were matched it was right. If not, there is another family better suited to care for the child we loved.



Speaking of that wonderful moment when you'll finally be united, what are you most looking forward to as you prepare for the next steps and finally bringing your daughter home?

When thinking about what we're most looking forward to as we take the next steps to bring our daughter home, our eagerness to be a family is palpable! We're looking forward to potentially being able to have additional video chat conversations. Having the opportunity to meet our daughter, engage her care givers, and see where she truly is, has been such a gift to us.

But when it comes to meeting our daughter, we're so excited to be together as a family. To discover who she is and who God made her to be. To snuggle her, to hug and kiss her. To play and explore music (we know she loves music). To truly delight in our precious, beautiful little girl!

Is there anything more you would like to say to other members and friends of our CCAI family about your journey, especially those who might be considering adoption, but maybe haven't really put much thought towards Taiwan?

We strongly encourage those considering adoption to say Yes! Why? Because it's the one of the most eye-opening, faith-stretching journeys you can embark upon as a family.

As far as the Taiwan program, the reality is that there are a multitude of children waiting. Waiting to be loved, to be embraced, to be cherished and delighted in.

One additional, important note related to the Taiwan program is in regards to medical care. Had our daughter been elsewhere in the world, we do not believe she would be thriving as she is nor be alive. But because of the intentional, prompt, and proper medical intervention she was given, she now has the ability to thrive in life even with ongoing medical disabilities. We're very encouraged to know the level of care, intentionality, and medical services provided to the children cared for by Cathwel in Taiwan.

As we continue to support and cheer the Simonetti family on as they complete their adoption process, we are excited to see the Taiwan program grow and more precious Taiwanese children find their forever families! For more information about CCAI's Taiwan program, please visit our website or reach out to taiwan@ccaifamily.org.



2018 has been a great year for our Eastern Europe Programs! By the end of 2018, we anticipate more than 80 children will be home with their forever families.

In our Latvia program, CCAI had the opportunity to host four delegates from Latvia at our Colorado office in June. Over the two days the delegates, CCAI staff, and representatives from Project One Forty Three discussed hosting and adoption, as well as teleconferenced with families who have hosted and adopted from Latvia. The delegates toured CCAI and learned about our mission and programs. We also saw our first-ever adoption of a sibling group of FIVE children from Latvia, as well as the oldest sibling of another group of five be reunited with his other four siblings here in the US!! (SPOILER ALERT: read their story below!)

In Bulgaria, CCAI has started a new partnership with the NGO "Family National Association!" As a result, CCAI is developing the Bulgaria Waiting Child Program, for children ages 2-15. The younger children in the Bulgaria Waiting Child Program have medical conditions such as physical, mental or developmental

delays, limb differences, congenital heart disease, spina bifida, vision or hearing issues, neurological or gastrointestinal issues, etc. Many of the children have more than one medical need. There are also older healthy children, some with siblings! Visit our website for more information on the Bulgaria Waiting Child Program and the nearly 200 children currently waiting for their families:

ccaifamily.org/Bulgaria/WaitingChild

For Ukraine, CCAI saw a lot of growth in both older child/sibling adoption, and younger children with medical needs.

CCAI continues to support Older Orphan Hosting with Latvia and Ukraine, with children between the ages of 10 and 16, many of them sibling groups! For more information on the Latvia and Ukraine Host Programs, please contact latvia@ccaifamily.org.



Not for the Faint of Heart

by Christina Slade

Our adoption story has not been perfect. There have been amazing highs and terrible lows. After hosting visits, we set out to adopt a sibling group of five, but adoption journeys are often slow and it was the same with ours. It took about two years from our first hosting until we were finally able to travel to bring them all home. As we prepared for our trip we were told the devastating news that the oldest of the five siblings, now 14 years old, a child who called me "mother", a child whom I loved dearly, was unsure he wanted to be adopted. He said he loved our family and wanted to continue to visit, but the teenager he had grown into now wasn't sure he wanted to leave his friends behind. I can't even express the disappointment, pain, confusion and grief that swept over my heart. *Imagine proposing to someone you really love and think will be excited to marry you, and then they say "no".*

While we remained committed to adopting his four siblings, we began to question everything we had worked so hard for up until that point. We wondered if this was the best use of our resources in caring for orphans, especially if our goal was to reunite siblings and it looked as though we would be leaving one behind in an orphanage alone. *Was this a dumb idea?*

I realized that I was letting my fear consume me and my trust in Him falter, but I felt the Lord speak to me and knew that I needed to continue in my

hope that He knew what He was doing. We persevered on our journey. We traveled and stayed in country with all five of the siblings in hope that maybe the oldest would change his mind by the end of our visit. He didn't, but we soldiered on knowing we were providing a home for the four who deeply desired to be with us.

We traveled back home with our four precious new children, but there continued to be sadness and worry over "the one we left behind." Why did this child choose to remain in an orphanage over our family? What was wrong with us? We knew that we needed to model God's unconditional love to this son, despite his rejection of adoption. And so this is what we did. We continued to try to parent him across an ocean.

Then his orphanage shut down and he was forced to make some hard decisions. It wasn't until then that he FINALLY began to hint around to the fact that perhaps he truly did want to join our family. Of course the first adoption case was completely closed before he came to this decision, thus meaning we had to start from square one! Yet, I was joyful to begin this process again. I completed everything as fast as I could, as I knew we were coming up against deadlines that could prevent his adoption.

Finally, we got the news we had been waiting for; we were able to travel to pick up our son! Miraculously, God arranged our trip to fall during the Awakening Europe event, and through the powerful testimonies heard that weekend, my precious son felt led to open his heart to Jesus. And finally, I understood; one of the reasons my son said 'no' to us all those years was because God knew that he would need to be there *that specific weekend* to be able to say "yes" to His Heavenly Father.

Someone said to me early on in our process, "adoption isn't for the faint of heart".

It didn't really hit me how powerful that statement was until I went through it. *Adoption of older children is not for the faint of heart.* Adoption is HARD STUFF! You absolutely cannot lack courage, spirit, strength, or vigor. You cannot become weak. You have to be strong. You have to be brave. You have to ask the Holy Spirit to provide you with everything you need. I can promise that you WILL go through some hard times.

Adoption of older children always begins with loss, the worst kind of loss there is. Not only is there this trauma of losing one's parents, but usually these children have suffered many other types of abuses and traumas. You are going to wade through the brokenness. It's messy. BUT - if you aren't faint of heart, if you are strong and courageous, you will reap a harvest of the most beautiful flowers imaginable by the grace of God.

Miracles on 4th St.

By Katie Stromberg

I was thirteen when God set a dream in my heart. It began when my mother accompanied a dear family friend of hers to China to support her as she adopted a little girl, and continued when a couple years later our family watched another Chinese adoption story unfold for dear family friends. God was at work in my heart even then, stirring my heart for China and for these precious ones who needed families. Once in college, I studied China's one-child policy in my Sociology major and then had an opportunity to visit an orphanage in Southern China. This is where God confirmed the dream that I would one day adopt a little girl. I shared my dream, or rather informed, my then boyfriend, (now husband Lars) that I would adopt a little girl from China someday, and that if we were to continue our relationship toward marriage, I wanted to make sure he was on board with this idea. He was. :)

Then in 2003 my older sister Emily was hired at CCAI (to this day, she'll tell people she took the position primarily because she knew I was passionate about adopting from China. And in our more tender moments we both feel that while her time at CCAI allowed her the great privilege of helping bring over 3,000 children into their forever families, her decision to work at CCAI was perhaps mostly about her future niece, our daughter Lydia).

Fast forward five years, and we had become a family of four with our two sons. Life was moving along, and we knew the adoption dream had to be shelved for a time, because we did not qualify for Chinese adoption. Then came a season of loss. We experienced three pregnancy losses in two years and we were tired and questioning, what could be God's plan in this? After the third unexplained miscarriage, Lars and I looked at each other and decided that it was time for us to re-open the CCAI folder that had been sitting in our file cabinet for years. We began to pray, "Lord is it time?" We looked at the qualifications for Chinese adoption. And there it was...our age, our finances, we qualified. We walked forward, into the unknown, and we watched with wide eyes as God provided every step of the way. The finances, the support, the wonderful guidance of CCAI, and patience for the waiting... He was with us in every step. And after nearly two years of waiting, we met Lydia DanQing. And that's when God started really showing off. :)



The following excerpt is from our adoption blog January 2018:

Miracles on 4th St.

Four years ago today Lydia walked into our arms on a cold day, in an official government building in Zhengzhou, China. It was truly one of the best days of my life. A day of tiny miracles all wrapped up in this little girl. And as is God's way, He was at work back home in another mother's heart, working a miracle that would only come to fruition three years later. So, as I am reflecting on the miracle of Lydia today, my heart and mind are extra full because we have been witness to another adoption miracle on 4th Street and that story needs to be told.

The day after we got off the plane with Lydia back in late January 2014, our doorbell rang. There stood our neighbor with a welcome gift for Lydia, a sweet stuffed pink and white giraffe. She welcomed Lydia and then got choked up standing in our entry. I didn't really know her all that well and I didn't know what was happening for her, until she said through teary eyes, "We have been following your blog and your journey with Lydia and we've always thought about adopting from China and we're going to do it." In my fresh-off-the-plane-from-China-with-a-toddler stupor, I was stunned. Oh my word. She was my neighbor, like our neighbor across the street. Of all the people in the world to feel the pull, the same heart desire, it was my sweet neighbor? Just wow.

This dear family across the street decided to go with CCAI too and began the process to adopt a little girl. Anna and her family attend our church, and we have prayed together and cried together when the waiting seemed too much to bear. This adoption journey has turned us from neighbors into precious friends.

And then on May 31st of this past year, when it seemed impossible to wait any longer, the call came from CCAI with news of a little girl who needed a family. Her name would be Savannah, and we had been praying for her by name for well over three years. As I stood with Anna looking at pictures of this precious little girl, I was overcome again. How incredibly gracious of God to put us in each other's lives in this season.

Four years ago Anna watched out her window as we brought Lydia home from the airport. And this August I watched out my front window as Anna and family left for the airport to go meet Savannah. As I sat watching them pack up the car, I just wept at God's faithfulness. Two miracles have occurred on 4th Street. There are two less orphans in the world, and there are two families now complete.



Heritage Tour

ccaifamily.org/heritagetour

Join us for this once-in-a-lifetime chance to discover the wonders of China and learn about the history and beauty of your child's homeland!

Inclusions: breakfast at hotels, in-country airfare/train tickets, attraction tickets, group meals, guide/driver service and airport/hotel transfer expenses per itinerary. Look for a sample itinerary with further cost information on our website!

On your 10-day, multi-city tour, you will:

- Visit the Great Wall, one of the greatest wonders of the world
- Stroll through Tian'anmen Square
- See the incredible architecture of the Forbidden City
- Tour the CCCWA, China's adoption authority where it all began
- View the famous Terra Cotta warriors in Xi'an
- Visit pandas at a reserve in Chengdu
- Enjoy tea at a local park and experience local life
- Cruise the magnificent Li River
- Learn to cook authentic Chinese food and learn Tai Chi

and much more!

We can arrange your add-on orphanage visit(s) either before or after the main tour.

Heritage Tour 2019 Schedule

June 9 - 19, 2019
July 14 - July 24, 2019
December 22, 2019 - January 1, 2020

Trip cost:

- \$2,099/adult (non-China adoptee)
- \$1,599/age 2-11 (non-China adoptee)

All China Adoptees of any age travel **FREE** for the main tour!

NEW Spring 2019 itinerary coming soon! Please check our website for updates.



This tour will be something your family talks about for years to come!

Book your heritage tour with CCAI for an amazing and unforgettable trip for your family! For more information, please contact our Heritage Tour Coordinator at:

Email: heritagetour@chinesechildren.org

Phone: 303-850-9998, ext.48



"Thank you so much CCAI! There is no way my family could have possibly put together such an amazing trip / experience -- so THANK YOU!! Overall, the hotels, food, guides, tours were FANTASTIC. Really top notch."

"You cannot put a price on this trip. Its value is priceless."

"We had a wonderful time and would definitely travel again with CCAI/BLAS. It was well-run and a great value for the money."

"Thank you for making it possible for my children to rediscover their homeland. This is the best tour we've ever been on."

"Easy and worry-free, leaving us to enjoy the tour."

"We loved our experience; it was absolutely an amazing trip! Highly recommend!!!"

"Our daughter's takeaway is that she's proud to be Chinese. You can't ask for more than that!"

