



Shepherd's Field  
CHILDREN'S VILLAGE  
牧羊地儿童村

# Heartbeat

March 2018



## Welcoming the Year of the Dog

As we said goodbye to the *chicken* and hello to the *dog*, Shepherd's Field was filled with lots of fun activities. Staff and children celebrated Chinese New Year for an entire week, and each day provided something special. The kids received their traditional *hóngbāo* (red envelopes) with a small amount of money inside, and later went to the neighborhood *xiǎomàibù* (little store) to buy some treats – and learn a few new life skills. The kids giggled with excitement as they received other little treasures besides the *hóngbāo* – like beautiful, red silk bags filled with dried snacks.

On Chinese New Year's Eve, we all gathered in the Shepherd's Field courtyard, ignited a huge bonfire, and shot off a bunch of amazing pyrotechnics. A chorus of *oohs* and *aahs* sang out as each firework shot up into the night sky and exploded into a beautiful display of shimmering color. The kids loved the bonfire so much, that we roasted hot dogs and made s'mores over another one a few days later. It's a good thing we bought plenty of extras because the children devoured

hot dogs until their bellies were full (this is how they said hello to the year of the "dog"). No matter how full, though, they found room for dessert – a gooey, melting confection of marshmallows, cookies and chocolate s'mores. Everyone went home that night with full bellies, sticky hands and lots of energy from the sweets.

Since we were celebrating the Year of the Dog, we invited the Shepherd's Field dogs – **Stevie, Trouble, Zai and Jacob** – to get involved as well, so the

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## Welcoming the Year of the Dog (Cont'd. from pg. 1)



dogs volunteered some “animal therapy” time, and played with the kids all afternoon. However, the kids weren’t all excited about it! Most of them love our dogs, but there were a few timid ones who stood to the side and just watched. On the final day of the New Year week, the local villagers from **Yangge Community Dance Troupe** came and performed their annual traditional Chinese dance for our kids and staff. Our in-house dancer extraordinaire – **Cody** – jumped right into the dance routine just like he’d been dancing with the troupe for years. Of course, he was an instant smash hit, and the star of the show. What a perfect way to start a new year!

## Bad Kidneys and a Defective Heart Can't Quench Her Spirit

As we said in last month's *Heartbeat*, **Maggie (Tian Xin Xin)** has renal failure and our Medical Team is working hard to find the help she needs. Kidney disease is a serious condition all by itself, but Maggie's situation is made even more precarious because of a heart defect. Currently she's being evaluated for a kidney biopsy, to see if she's a good candidate for a transplant. Her kidney doctors are consulting with her cardiologist to determine if she can withstand the biopsy and surgery safely. She's also received genetic testing to see if there's anything that might indicate congenital renal failure.

Through all of this, Maggie remains in good spirits and is her usual cute and feisty self, even though she's currently hospitalized in Tianjin. Her medical bill has grown to US\$6,937 (¥43,895RMB), and if tests show that she's a good candidate for a kidney transplant – and one is located – the cost will balloon to US\$110,622 (¥700,000RMB). Our Medical Fund does not have enough money to cover these expenses, so we need your prayers and financial support for little Maggie. If you'd like to give, see the instructions on page 4, or contact: [info@chinaorphans.org](mailto:info@chinaorphans.org).



**H**ouse of Blessings is full of energetic, friendly boys of all ages, who'll meet you with a chorus of excited greetings and hearty pleas to stay and play! In the midst of all this hustle and bustle, you'll find a quiet young man with the biggest, brightest smile – and a wicked sense of humor.

**Leonard (Ling Dai Wei)** is nearly 11 years old, and he greets every day with a smile and a wink. Though he's unable to use words to speak, Leonard can tell great stories! On a recent visit, I asked him to tell me one, and he just laughed and rolled his eyes – then happily obliged.



*"Is this a story about a long long time ago?"* I asked. Leonard shook his head, and his smile faded a bit. *"Is this a story about right now?"* I offered, to which he replied with a hearty *"Uh!"* and his signature smile. *"Ok, so this is about right now. Is this a story about a king?"* Again, a shake of his head and an absent smile told me the answer, so I continued with more options. I soon realized that he was telling a story about the two of us! *"I see! So this is a story about you and me, and it takes place today! Where does this happen?"* He completed his story by letting me know that this was in fact a true tale, in which the two of us went outside to play. Leonard then made it very clear that the story was not to be *told* any longer, but instead acted out. *So we went out to play!*

Everyone has a story to share, a joke to tell, something worth being heard. Sometimes kids just need someone willing to take the time to hear, listen and be their voice. Some of the greatest stories I've heard have been told by people unable to speak a word.

## Welcome to Shepherd's Field!



Sarah-Grace

This month, we welcomed three new babies to our growing family. **Sarah-Grace (Ji Xinyi)** and **Jean-Marie (Kong Huangbei)** are both just 11 months old, and are adjusting well to life in Zachary House. Jean-Marie has hydrocephalus and is post-surgical for a myelomeningocele with a functioning VP shunt. She's very gentle and loves to snuggle. Sarah-Grace was born with congenital syphilis, which was treated at birth. All of her medical tests have come back negative for the infection.



Jean-Marie

She has a very sweet and gentle temperament, and loves to play with her friends in Zachary House. **Zack (Shi Wen Li)** is eight months old, and also has hydrocephalus with an active shunt. He's a smiley and happy addition to the House of Blessings!



Zack

# Ethan Ditches His Shoes



In the summer of 2016 – when **Ethan (Zhang Shuai)** was only about two – his future mother and sister left Huntsville, Alabama, to volunteer at Shepherd's Field. They came with open hearts, but had no idea how that would change them forever. They'll always remember when they first saw Ethan, then fell in love with him that summer. Just last month, they met him again – but this time the Parsley family welcomed

him as their new son! Alex and Jason were filled with excitement as they met Ethan at their front door. His first act was to take off his shoes, and that made everybody laugh. They all spent the morning coloring, cuddling and rejoicing at finally being together. *Congratulations, Ethan and your new Forever Family – our hearts are filled with joy for you all!*



## Seeking the Best for Cathy



Over the last few months, our Medical and Therapy Teams ordered several diagnostic tests for **Cathy (Zhang Fanghua)**, to understand her condition better. She tested normal on all her blood work, and there were no abnormalities in her abdominal, kidney and liver ultrasounds – which is good news. However, now that Chinese New Year celebrations are over, Cathy will undergo two additional tests, which our medical staff is hopeful will provide answers that will help us give Cathy the best care possible. Thank you for your continued prayers and support for this sweet girl, who is already more energetic and engaging.



We are grateful for your prayers and financial support!

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