



FEATURE

THE LIGHTHOUSE CHANGSHA

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CEO MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

The Lighthouse has been at the centre of ICC's work for nearly two decades. The 3-storey building in a leafy neighborhood of Changsha has provided homes for young people, specialized care and a wide range of services over the years. Even as it featured as a prominent part of ICC's programs, the Lighthouse also served as a connection to the community. Our neighbors were used to seeing youngsters with disabilities clambering up the building's steps. They got to know the staff and shared conversations with our young people living in nearby community homes. The best way to turn a stranger into a friend is to spend time with them. Soon we will have one of our Little Ark food trucks positioned on the street by the Lighthouse, providing more opportunities for people in the neighborhood to come to know the young people who run the small business. And we're bringing more families to the Lighthouse so their children with disabilities can also experience the range of programs we offer: from music to cooking to computers. The Lighthouse continues to be a beacon for both the young people and the community. ☺



Peter Maize
Chief Executive Officer



THE LIGHTHOUSE, CHANGSHA

The recent lockdowns in Changsha have caused a lot of stress on our staff. After finishing a 14-day shift at the care centre, our vocational training project manager, Karen Lee, was required to return home immediately for self-quarantine. We spoke with Karen to find out the latest news on our vocational training project at the Lighthouse:

“*The Lighthouse is located in Tian Xin District. We offer vocational training classes for young people over 18 years old. These students come from ICC's community group homes in our Changsha Care Centre, and families in our community.*”

Karen and the Changsha team have been working closely with local organisations to connect with families throughout the neighbourhood. “The community helped us to promote our programme. We also contacted some older children who were involved in FPP. Because FPP serves children who are under 18, we hope that they will join our vocational training programme when they graduate from our FPP programmes.”

The modules include craft, music, cooking, sign language, personal development and life skills to suit various needs. A weekly class schedule has been designed with the young people's needs in mind, and they are encouraged and guided to select their own choice of modules.

The vocational trainers meet with the parents regularly to discuss the young people's progress. The students not only find practical benefits in the classes, learning new skills and gaining independence, but they also enjoy the sense of community and the chance to bond with their fellow classmates.

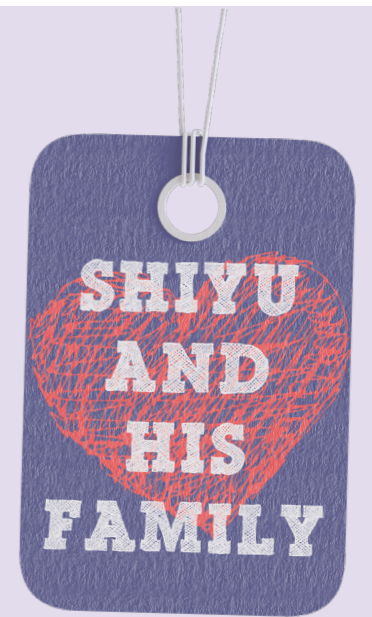
At the beginning of the programme, there were three trainers, including Karen herself. But recently there has been a staff shortage, and Karen has been assigned to look after the Little Ark, another ICC's vocational project in Changsha. “We only have one vocational trainer available to teach at the Lighthouse. While Xun, our trainer, gives a small class, the rest of the group are supervised by ICC's young adults, Gui and Dongxiu, to make crafts,” Karen commented.



Due to a surge of Covid cases in the nearby provinces, the local government has recently imposed lockdown restrictions in Changsha. With students no longer able to attend in-person classes, attendance dropped significantly as students found the transition to online learning difficult.

“*During the lockdown at the Lighthouse, the young people attended the online classes conducted by Xun and our social workers. Initially, it was tough because it was a matter of getting used to doing classes virtually. Then, difficulties came when there was a drop in attendance. Xun took the initiative to do a cooking class on a social media platform, Tik Tok. She taught them simple ways to prepare dishes. We asked the young people to cook and take photos of what they cooked. In this way, we were sure that the young people could cook by themselves when alone at home. The families were very supportive, as our programme helped bring some comfort and relief to the parents,*” Karen shared.

As the Covid situation settles, in person classes will be reestablished. We look forward to having eager young people back at the Lighthouse, as well as new entrants as we expand the programme. ☺



Luelue is a bright, friendly young woman with Down syndrome who lives in our Changsha Care Centre. She may be known as the quieter one amongst her sisters, but she has a strong, independent mind of her own. Luelue is often quick to offer a helping hand with housework, and is the first to greet visitors who stop by, warmly welcoming them into her home.

She has developed a close bond with her caregivers, who have been with her for many years, affectionately referring to them as "Mum." She follows any instructions they give her without complaint, assisting them with chores such as washing the dishes and folding laundry.

At the end of 2020, Luelue began to experience problems with her kidneys. In April 2021, she began weekly hemodialysis treatment at the hospital. Throughout this difficult medical journey, Luelue's optimism and cheerfulness have not dimmed. She travels together with her sister Yaofang (who also needs regular medical treatment) to each appointment, and they are never late. She pushes Yaofang in her wheelchair and helps guide her through the hospital.

"While she is receiving treatment, Luelue watches animated videos on her tablet. Later on in the day, she takes out her cookies and cakes from her snack bag and enjoys them with a big smile," our staff commented.

Unfortunately, Luelue became ill after her initial treatments. Her immune system was weakened, she began to lose her appetite, and later she was diagnosed with acute pneumonia.

"In just two months, Luelue was in and out of different hospitals five times. You could see that her face was sometimes filled with helplessness, hardship and pain, but you also saw her optimism and strength." Dr Liu shared in her report.

After diligent care and the support of our selfless staff, her condition stabilised, and she was able to return home. She still attends weekly dialysis treatments, but remains a source of joy for the doctors and nurses who interact with her.

"Her smile and strength has returned with the help of all of us." – Dr Liu



Our team had the pleasure of meeting Shiyu, a young man with Cerebral Palsy, back in October 2008. Shiyu and his family were among the first families to join our Family Partners Programme. Our teachers carefully evaluated Shiyu and crafted an individualised programme for him and his family. For over a decade, our FPP staff have provided tireless support, and walked with this wonderful young man and his family through the challenges and triumphs they have faced.

A strong, brave woman, Shiyu's mother is a single parent, solely responsible for the care of Shiyu and his sister. When Shiyu was seven years old, determined to provide him with the best education possible, his mother made the difficult decision to send him to a public school. His school teacher made an unexpected request: that Shiyu's mother accompany him to study. Since then, she has become Shiyu's tablemate and helped her son through the ups and downs of his schooling.

Shiyu's mother has found an incredible support network through attending FPP's social activities. They are familiar faces at the annual Summer Camp, parent support group and Walk the Wall. Through these events, they have been able to interact with families in similar situations, and join a vibrant, loving community.

Shiyu's mother has also participated in parental training classes organised by our international volunteers. These group meet-ups have offered valuable tools and advice, and continually helped Shiyu's mother learn more about raising her young son.

Shiyu holds a special place in his classmate's hearts. He has a talent for creative writing and has won awards in national competitions, including "Variety Rubik's Cube" National Primary and Secondary School Students Composition, and the "Creation Cup" National Youth and Children Composition Competition. His classmates eagerly await installations of his novel series, which is modelled from "Notes on Tomb Raiders."

"Today, Shiyu's cognitive abilities are no different from his peers," commented our FPP staff. Shiyu's mother has requested that they continue to attend classes with FPP, and our teachers are partnering with them to craft a customised curriculum.

FPP has witnessed the remarkable transformation Shiyu has undergone over the last decade, and we are honoured to be able to continue to provide support for him and his family. We are grateful to have partners like you for bringing hope and opportunity to wonderful families like his.



YOUR LOVE BRINGS LIFE

Vocational Training in Hengyang

We have seen how they flourish with joy and confidence as they learn, develop and put their skills to use.

Our Youth Department has six teachers, and five are involved in more than one programme. The young people who participate in these programmes have cerebral palsy, autism, learning disabilities, Down syndrome or other physical disabilities. We have seen how they flourish with joy and confidence as they learn, develop and put their skills to use. They find joy, purpose and value in their work and enjoy the fruits of their labour in different ways.



Hope Farm was built in 2015 and is situated next to our Hengyang Care Centre. The farm is built on a small slope behind the care centre. The gardens are planted on a long strip of land with the chicken farm about 100 ft. away on another slightly elevated slope. The garden is accessible from the ground level through stairs or an entrance on the 2nd floor. A sprinkler system and some cement paths were added in 2019 to make farming easier for the workers. The chicken farm was expanded in 2021, raising 300+ free range chickens and three geese to protect the chicken from weasels. Seven young people are working on the farm at the moment. Three students regularly work from Monday to Friday in the garden and chicken farm. Four or five other young people come to help when there are more chores during planting and harvest season. Two teachers work hands-on, as well as supervising the project.

Hengyang's Little Ark has three teachers, one captain and six crew members. Two students finished junior high education and one is receiving special education in a public school. They all have different roles in the Little Ark, such as designing menus, taking orders, preparing food, making deliveries and cleaning up. Two of them are wheelchair users, and the Little Ark is wheelchair accessible. We installed an air conditioner in the Little Ark last year because of the high heat in summer and deep cold in winter.

The Little Ark is located inside our care centre and opens for business Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, before Covid surged again and forced us to close down temporarily. Since the training started, one of the objectives is for the students to develop more independence and learn about teamwork. The students now have more self-esteem and can operate independently as they develop their potential and abilities. Some have even started to think about what they could do in the future! They have one common goal, "Let's move the Little Ark into the community, we want to work outside!"



Hengyang's Craft Shop provides vocational training opportunities for 12 students. They make different craft items like jewellery, beaded decorations and large diamond pictures. Four students also work in the Little Ark or Hope Farm and come to do crafts when their schedule is open. Whenever someone visits the Craft Shop, they can see students beaming with pride showing off their products. Apart from making crafts, their class time also includes music, dance, cooking and physical exercise. Three teachers teach and supervise the students in the Craft Shop.

AWARD

Our wonderful Vocational Training Manager, Karen Lee, recently won the Changsha Influential Volunteer Award. Karen has been a valued member of the ICC family since 2014, spear-heading inspirational projects such as our Little Ark food trucks and "Flowers in the Desert" handicraft store. Congratulations, Karen!



FPP

One of our Family Partners Programme projects is currently in the process of renovating their spacious new premises. This new, 412 square meter space will enable us to provide even greater therapy and support services to vulnerable families throughout the region.



CONNECT WITH ICC

AUSTRALIA

+61 1300 951 680
australia@chinaconcern.org
f australiaicc

CANADA

+1 604 322 3119
canada@chinaconcern.org
f chinaconcerncanada

CHINA

+86 731 85231546
china@chinaconcern.org

HONG KONG SAR

+852 2529 2192
hongkong@chinaconcern.org
f hongkongicc

NETHERLANDS

+31 6 2686 1931
nederland@chinaconcern.org
f NederlandICC

SINGAPORE

+65 9684 6914
singapore@chinaconcern.org

UNITED KINGDOM & REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

+ 44 (0) 191 2611079
uk@chinaconcern.org
f chinaconcernuk

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

+1 360 746 8520
usa@chinaconcern.org
f AmericanFriendsofICC
www.aficc.org



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