



FEATURE

THE DANCE PARTY

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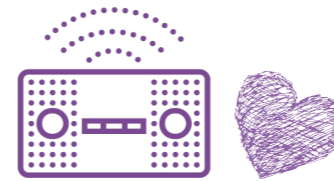
Dear Friends,

When we reflect back on a year, we often focus on the big developments or challenges that absorbed our attention. ICC experienced plenty of those in 2022. But it is the small achievements: a child learning to walk, a boy being given the chance to explore his artistic potential, a little girl going to school for the first time—that are the true milestones that define ICC's work in China. They accumulate throughout the year, one by one, and when we look back we see lives that have been transformed and dreams that have come true.

The stories you read in this newsletter tell just a few of those stories. You are part of each one of them. Sometimes you need to look closely, because the changes are subtle and delicate. But together they are immense, and unforgettable. As we step into a new year, I encourage you to watch for these small stories of achievement and love. They will fill an entire year and spill over into the next. Every one of them has the small, indelible stamp of our loyal donors. Thank you for another year of small stories about great achievements. ♡



Peter Maize
Chief Executive Officer



THE DANCE PARTY ♡

By Kyla Alexander (ICC China Operations Director)

It was a sunny Thursday afternoon in September and the excitement was palpable in the Hengyang Care Centre courtyard. It was the day of the Big Dance Party competition.

The concept of having a dance party was birthed out of a need. The morning dance time in Hengyang needed some refreshment and new life. Every day at 8:15 am the music goes on in the courtyard, and staff and children gather for dance. But after several years of the same songs and dances it had all become a bit familiar and was a little lacking in flavour.

Grandma Hilda came up with a solution. We could organise a competition where each floor chose music, designed a dance, and competed for prizes. In Chinese culture dance holds a special place, and so when the dance competition was proposed the staff were super excited, and preparations started.



Guidelines on suitable dance entries stated that they needed simplicity, inclusivity, energy and creativity. Each floor got to work on designing a dance, and we started to see them being practiced in the craft rooms, homes and courtyard.

On the day of the competition each team was dressed in their team colour. The first floor kicked off the competition in green. This floor provides homes to the children with very high needs, so each adult danced with a child in a wheelchair. The interaction between staff and children in the dance was incredibly touching. Ling Ling's face lit up as she joined in the dance, Ding Ding smiled shyly at his therapist who was dancing with him, holding her arms above her to make the shape of a heart while she looked straight into his eyes.



When the fifth floor boys burst onto the floor we were all stopped in our tracks to watch them. They won the overall highest marks for their flag and fan dance celebrating strength and bravery. Feng and Uncle Cheng did a powerful job of the introduction, banging on the big drums calling everyone to join. It was artistic and hugely creative; and so amazing to see the boys involved in something so moving.



That wonderful day, celebrating dance and colour and music is a strong memory in our minds and hearts. The goal of reenergising our morning dance was met. The set of songs each morning is the same as that day, and the staff and children remember the moves. There is energy, there is life, and there is so much more interaction between the staff and children during dance time. And joy is abundant! ♡

The second floor team danced in white. This is the Hengyang Care Centre's youngest residents. They danced to a song going through their body parts, clapping their hands, wiggling their bottoms and lifting their shoulders. Guilu, a four-year-old with Down syndrome, stamped and clapped and wiggled along with her housemates as kindy teacher Li danced in front of them, encouraging their participation. While the toddlers on foot danced, caregivers danced with the children in wheelchairs, and the crowd was delighted at the cuteness in front of them.





📍 Community Group Home, Changsha Care Centre

On the 3rd September 2021, we were honored to welcome Weikang, 11, and Xiaohe, 10, into our Changsha family. Xiaohe is a lively young girl with Down syndrome who is quick to laugh. Weikang, who has a learning disability, has been described by his caregivers as “polite and helpful.”

When Xiaohe first arrived at her new home, her new sisters were quick to welcome her into the family, and Li took Xiaohe under her wing and enjoyed teaching her about life at ICC. Unfortunately, Weikang had a more difficult time adjusting. He found nights difficult and would often stay awake, hugging his knees to his chest. The caregivers would sit with him and comfort him, and his sleeping gradually improved.



Both Weikang and Xiaohe struggled with their self-care skills initially. The staff set manageable, targeted goals to help them improve, which included independently brushing their teeth, dressing themselves and making their beds. While Weikang initially found it difficult to share, he now shows a great spirit of cooperation, offering to help his brothers with the daily chores. Xiaohe is also eager to lend a helping hand at home, and will escort her visually impaired roommate back to their room after meal times.

While under ICC’s care, Weikang and Xiaohe have also excelled at the special school they attend. Weikang is excellent at reading aloud in class; he is clear and lively, and his teacher often praises him. Xiaohe has made great progress with her writing and maths, but her favorite subject is painting, where she has been commended for her “incredible patience and creativity.”

They still face challenges, and they are learning emotional management skills for when problems do arise, but the staff have shared that *“overall, the most fundamental change in the two children in the past year is the burst of vigorous vitality...they are full of hope.”*

At ICC, we promise that every child in our care will receive all the tools they need to thrive and reach their God-given potential. Both Xiaohe and Weikang have been on challenging, rewarding journeys over the past year. We are incredibly proud of the progress they have made, and cannot wait to see what they accomplish in the years to come. 🍁



Sponsor a child on

www.chinaconcern.org/sponsor



“TASTE OF AUTUMN” OUTDOOR ACTIVITY

To find out more about ICC’s work with families: www.chinaconcern.org/category/transformed-families/

This autumn, the intermittent lockdowns in Changsha disrupted the work of our FPP Kaifu Qu team, leaving them unable to conduct their usual fun-filled activities at our centre. So our innovative staff came up with a solution- taking advantage of the beautiful fall weather, they decided to host an outdoor activity on October 26th. They invited twelve families to a barbecue campsite near the Xiangjiang River, for an exciting day of games and food.

Our staff arranged a variety of vibrant autumn-themed activities, including a sensory game that centered on a “train ride” through a nearby osmanthus garden that was in bloom. They also organized a craft activity where the children used fall foliage to create works of art. Each child collected twigs,

leaves or flowers from the surrounding park and created unique collages. The grandmother of one little boy, Wuyang, shared that “after we returned home, Wuyang was happy to find leaves and do it again!”

Of course, no FPP event is complete without sharing a delicious meal together! At noon, everyone gathered to eat and reflect. One attendee, Huahuan, sang “Listen to Me, Thank You” as a tribute. An FPP social worker, Chen Zhang, emotionally shared that *“one of the expectations of the event was to invite two families who have never participated in FPP’s activities. Huahuan’s family was one of them. The mother was very grateful to the staff and volunteers for their meticulous preparation, and that Huahuan had the opportunity to make friends.”*



FPP has created a community, and we are very thankful to our dedicated staff for continuing to find ways to support vulnerable families, even in the midst of pandemic challenges. One of those families was Yuanyuan’s, and his mother put it best when she commented that

“FPP’s activities are not only practical, but more importantly, let us feel cared for instead of being labeled as a special group. When participating in their activities, parents can empathize with each other, communicate and help one another.” 🍁

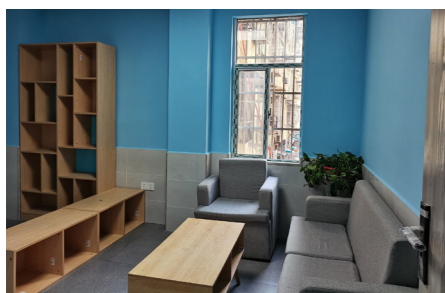


Partner with a family
www.chinaconcern.org/partners



THE LIGHTHOUSE STUDENTS VISIT

ICC's vocational training project at The Lighthouse is unique, as it engages both the young people in our care, as well as those in the community. Located in the Tian Xin District, it offers vocational training to individuals over the age of eighteen. Our staff work closely with local organisations to recruit young people with disabilities from the surrounding district.



Another integral part of the Lighthouse programme is the chance to engage with local middle school, elementary school and kindergarten students. Over the Summer holidays, we encourage students to visit the Lighthouse. During their visit, they are taught to make a simple craft, such as a bracelet. Our staff and young people also share about life at ICC and take them on a guided tour of the building. This also creates an opportunity for our young people to sell their handicraft products, as well as the delicious treats from our Little Ark. Recently, a "disability experience" educational component was added to the itinerary, which involves completing a task such as threading a bead blindfolded, or pushing a wheelchair using one arm. Students will then write a reflection on this experience and share how it has challenged their perspectives.

After participating in a similar activity, one student shared the deep impression our young people had made on her:

“

Today, we met a group of big brothers and sisters. They appreciate their lives. Some of them can speak English, some of them can make popcorn, and some of them can make great beaded artwork!... We have to learn from them, do not give up when facing challenges. ”

Another young girl left with a deeper sense of responsibility *“to be respectful and be thankful, humble towards our life, and cherish it.”*

ICC's mission is to not only to support and uplift children and young people with disabilities, but to help create a more inclusive society. Through vocational projects like those at the Lighthouse, we offer pathways towards independence and self-confidence. We also invite the wider community to learn from the countless lessons our young people have to teach. With education and mutual respect, ICC works toward creating a brighter future filled with love, hope and opportunity for every young person. ♡



The Lighthouse, Tian Xin District, Changsha

LOCKDOWNS

Due to the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic, several of our projects were affected by recent lockdowns. Our Hengyang Care Centre went into lockdown on October 4th, with our staff alternating between weekly shifts. The Changsha Care Centre went into lockdown on October 10th. Our FPP projects were also affected, and some of our Kaifuqu staff were required to conduct sessions remotely via video conferencing. Thankfully, The Lighthouse was only required to close for a week, and they have since resumed sessions. We would like to thank everyone for their continued prayers and support during this challenging time. Our staff and young people have found the best in the situation, enjoying the cooler weather and relishing in the opportunity to spend time on the playground, or participate in a friendly game of Boccia!



FPP KAIFUQU CENTRE

Our new FPP Centre in the Kaifuqu district of Changsha officially opened in July. After months of renovations, our Aixihui team hosted their first event there on July 13th, an end of the school year graduation party. There were over fifty people in attendance, and many of the families complimented the new space, sharing how easy it was to get there by train.



INDEPENDENT LIVING CAMP

In early August, some of our young people living in Changsha participated in a three day Independent Living Camp that focused on life skills. Together, they learned cooking and housekeeping tips, and they also went on a field trip to Bach's Bakery, where they were instructed on bread making techniques, before baking a couple loaves of their own! The greatest joy of the week was the kinship they shared with one another, which they celebrated with a group Hot Pot dinner. Guigui, one of the participants, shared, "I learned new things that I never knew before - confidence, discipline and self-care. This has been the most meaningful camp of my entire life."



FPP SUMMER CAMP

On August 19th, FPP hosted our 2022 Summer Camp, where families got the opportunity to gather together, play games, share stories and eat delicious food. One of the participants, Hengrui, drew this beautiful picture that depicted some of his favourite moments from the event, which he then gifted to the FPP staff as a heartfelt thank you.

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Our Vision

Love, hope and opportunity for every child with a disability.

Our Mission

International China Concern is a Christian development organization that provides love, hope and opportunity to children with disabilities and strives to end abandonment by keeping families together.



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