China Care’s Intensive Care Unit in Beijing, China.

The highlight of the evening will be a “East meets West” runway fashion show performance with fashions designed and organized by Opal Muannathong and Christina Liu ’15. The show will feature Harvard models as well as dance and original choreography from the Asian American Dance Troupe. It is with great excitement that we will also be incorporating our Xiongdi Jie-Mei mentees into the show, as they will be modeling a few select pieces.

The benefit dinner will open with a series of captivating dance performances by Harvard’s very own Asian American Dance Troupe (AADT), a student run organization. For over eighteen years, AADT has made it their mission to spread the appreciation and awareness of Asian culture through dance. The company performs a variety of styles from ethnic minority to martial arts to a fusion of modern and traditional. Many of our Mentoring and Dumpling families enjoy going to see their annual spring production, Eastbound, and we are extremely excited to have them become further integrated into our HCC family.

Fashion designer Opal Muannathong makes up one half of the duo behind FRESHOB. Opal’s love of fashion and creativity drives her to produce avant-garde items that represent the dual identity that she feels as an Asian-born American. Blending inspirations from her Thai background with Western fashion trends, Opal produces eclectic fashion designs that reflect the incessant balance between West and East, traditional and avant-garde.

Also joining us is Debra Jacobs, child care provider and co-author of From Home to Homeland: What Adoptive Families Need to

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This summer, Harvard China Care sent nine interns to China as a part of our annual summer internship program. This special program projects the efforts of Harvard China Care abroad, extending our compassion and love to orphans in China and directly contributing to their well-being. During the summer time frame, the interns were sent primarily to two locations. Dora Tao, Linh Vo, and Rena Mei interned at the Jiaozuo Children’s Welfare Center in Henan province, while Karen Xiao, Nina Gu, Lynelle Chen, Angie Peng, Lauren Gabriel, and Christine Shrock worked at the Bethel Foster Home in Beijing.

Responsibilities of the interns during the summer internship included, but were not limited to, teaching English, assisting with physical therapy, carrying out playgroup activities, and assisting with administrative tasks at the orphanage.

To prepare them for their summer journey, the interns attended four on-campus workshops before beginning their internship covering a variety of topics, such as medical conditions of the orphans, orphanage logistics, international/domestic travel, Chinese culture and etiquette, and daily life in China. In addition to the aforementioned topics, the essentiality of intern-children interaction was emphasized, and past interns of these sites were invited to workshops to talk about their unique experiences and provide suggestions. Parents of adopted Chinese children also graciously lent their time and spoke about the adoption process and general sentiments.

The Harvard China Care internship program allows students to truly make a difference in the lives of orphans. When interns returned back on campus this fall, they all reflected upon their summer experiences with great fondness, bubbling with personal anecdotes and admiring each others’ photograph albums. In fact, the internship experience touched them so deeply that many interns have become more involved in Harvard China Care itself during the school year. Some have even started learning Chinese as a second language. We are delighted to see that the summer interns have been able to impart upon the orphans such positive influences, while gaining a meaningful summer experience for themselves.
Volunteering at Jiaozuo
by Dora Tao

Coming from the two biggest cities in China, I never thought that I would end up in the small city of Jiaozuo for three weeks of my summer. I can honestly say that interning at the orphanage was one of the most incredible experiences I have ever had.

The simple lifestyle of Jiaozuo was a complete 180 from the fast paced college lifestyle I was used to. Every morning, the other interns and I would wake up and go downstairs to play with the young toddlers there. They were the definition of adorable. Because there were often twenty kids to about two caretakers, we found that the main thing that the children there lacked was just attention. Thus, we gave our best effort to personally play with each kid, even those who had disabilities that kept them in their beds all day. To see the smiles on their faces every day was heartwarming and let us know that we were there for a good reason.

Aside from just playing with the little kids, we also spent time teaching the older kids simple lessons of English and math. The oldest children at the orphanage were 13. It saddened me to think that they might never be adopted and would have to spend the rest of their childhood growing up in orphanages. Yet, to see their faces every day and all the potential they had, I only wish that they would have opportunities that so many other people are lucky enough to be given.

Being at the orphanage taught me about learning to appreciate what we have. I found it surprising that most of the children at the orphanage knew that they had been orphaned or abandoned as children, yet there was rarely a day where they would complain or seem to be unhappy at all. I realized that the kids there were content with the lifestyle that they were living and that everybody there for them was their family. The three weeks at the orphanage were more than I could have asked for and I can only hope that, as interns, we were able to make a difference in their lives.
Welcome Back, Dumplings!

by Annie Qin

Following tradition, our first Dumpling Playgroup of the semester opened with a celebration of the Mid-Autumn Festival! After a relaxing summer for our Dumplings families and volunteers, it was great to once again return to the basement of the First Church in Cambridge to see familiar faces. We are so excited to announce that several new volunteers and Dumplings families joined the program this year!

Although the actual date of the Mid-Autumn Festival fell on September 12th this year, our celebration took place on Saturday, September 24th. One of the traditional and most famous icons of the Mid-Autumn Festival is the moon rabbit. Therefore, our opening activity was a craft activity where we made rabbits out of lunch bags. To do this, we first drew rabbits on the front of our bags. After coloring and decorating our rabbits, we cut out and glued on rabbit ears. We then stuffed the lunch bags with newspaper so that our rabbits could stand on their own.

Why exactly is the rabbit an icon of the Mid-

Following the video presentation, we expanded our Chinese skills and learned the Chinese phrases for Mid-Autumn Festival (zhong qiu jie) and mooncake (yue bing). Afterwards, we got up to play a fun interactive game of charades. This turned out to be a huge hit with the Dumplings kids, who loved acting silly and imitating animals such as rabbits, dogs, cows, cats, and much more. After this lively game of charades, we returned to our craft tables and made colorful Mid-Autumn Festival mobiles with moons, stars, rabbits, and Chang’e hanging off the mobiles.

A Mid-Autumn Festival wouldn’t be complete without mooncakes! To end our Dumplings kick-off event, we sampled delicious red bean and green tea flavored moon cakes. Just like how the Mid-Autumn Festival is similar to a Chinese version of Thanksgiving in that it brings together friends and families, it was so wonderful to be able to celebrate the festival with our Dumplings friends and families. We look forward to a great year ahead!

Mentoring Moves to a New Home

by Karen Xiao

We were so excited to kick off the new year of our XiongDi JieMei Mentoring Program on October 2nd with 19 mentor-mentee pairs—8 new and 11 returning! For the kick-off event, we met in our new home in the Cabot Living Room, right across the street from our old location in Currier House. While we loved our old location, we had outgrown the space because of our growing numbers and wanted something a little larger, but still cozy and fun.

For the first event, we took some time to get to know our mentors and mentees as well as the other people in the program. Through our “fun-facts” activity, we learned lots of interesting information about our friends. Some are members of traveling soccer teams or competed in ballroom dance competitions while others love to read or are learning how to play the drums.

We took advantage of the beautiful lawn that surrounds Cabot House for our photo scavenger hunt. Each team of two mentor-mentee pairs had to complete a series of silly tasks such as doing a kung-fu move, making a human pyramid or acting like an animal.

A Mid-Autumn Festival wouldn’t be complete without mooncakes! To end our Dumplings kick-off event, we sampled delicious red bean and green tea flavored moon cakes. Just like how the Mid-Autumn Festival is similar to a Chinese version of Thanksgiving in that it brings together friends and families, it was so wonderful to be able to celebrate the festival with our Dumplings friends and families. We look forward to a great year ahead!
“EAST MEETS WEST”...

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Know Before Making a Return Trip to China. She also co-founded the Tufts Big Sister/Big Brother program, which pairs members of the Tufts Chinese Student Association with children adopted from China, and initiated Hao Pengyou, a culture/adoption support group for Chinese adoptees and their parents. She will be speaking on her experience of adopting children from China and how the HCC Mentoring Program has helped her daughter. Aidan Madigan-Curtis, one of the founding members of Harvard China Care, will also be speaking.

All proceeds from the dinner will be donated to cover the operational costs of a special care unit in the Beijing China Care Home, which provides individual and professional care to medically fragile orphans both pre- and post-surgery. Funded in collaboration with the Jenzabar Foundation, our unit opened in April 2010 and has already cared for over 100 infants, many of whom are now on their way to recovery and in the process of being adopted. With your generous support, we hope to continue this worthwhile endeavor.

Last year’s Fall Benefit, which raised over $20,000, showcased smooth jazz with a surprising Asian twist with performances from Harvard’s Mainly Jazz Dance Company, Boston’s Dance Revelasiian, and performances by acclaimed jazz vocalist, Le Zhang and piano accompanist Brian Friedland.

We would like to extend an invitation to all our friends, families, and supporters to join us again this year. Together, we can make a difference.

UPDATES FROM BEIJING

Throughout the school year, Harvard China Care consistently receives updates about the Special Care Nursery Unit at the China Care Home in Beijing, which we have been proudly supporting since 2008. The unit is ideally situated next to some of the best medical institutions in China, which allows excellent pre- and post-operational care for fragile orphaned infants. Last year’s fundraisers, including the Benefit Dinner and Silent Auction, covered the home’s operation costs for the past year. Each update reminds us of the tremendous impact of our efforts and your generosity.

In early June, the China Care Home celebrated its second year anniversary, having served over 450 children. These infants range in age from a few months to a year, come from orphanages all over China, and have vastly different personalities and characters. Yet, all of these children are medically fragile. Some are born with developmental defects such as bilateral cleft lip, where there is a gap in the lip or nose, or retinoblastoma, a rare cancerous tumor in the retina.

The stories of the children are inspiring, as already there have been quite a few success stories: Ai Tao, a 4-month-old baby from Henan province, who suffered from a heart defect has now recovered and is returning to her institution soon. Qing also has a heart defect, inguinal hernia and unilateral cleft lip. Although she is 1 year old, she is unable to crawl or stand, but steadily she is beginning to be able to raise her head and look at the toys in front of her. Her heart surgery has allowed her to be more active. Bing, who has stayed in our HCC home since last year as she recovered from retinoblastoma, has completed her third and final round of chemotherapy and the cancer has not spread. Many more individuals are currently recovering from surgery or preparing for surgery in the special care unit.

Since June, we have provided care to a total of 17 infants in China. We hope to continue to be part of their stories in the coming year. Thank you for your generous support, and we hope that these stories bring a smile to your face as it does to ours.