



Newsletter

Volume 4, No 2

April 2009

IN THIS ISSUE

Editorial	1
News from Our Children Villages	2
Financial Barometer	2
Morning Tears' Strategy	3
About Basic Needs of Children (part 3 - final)	4-5
Feedback	5
Progress Report of the Henan Project	6
Report Study Trip	7
The Story of Guo Yin	8
News Briefs	9-8

Editorial

May 31 will be an important day for Morning Tears. It is the day that the Ai Tong Yuan Project in Zhengzhou will officially open its doors. The Coming Home Project where 120 children will find a safe haven, home-based care so that they can live in dignity, heal from their traumas, find psychological support, strengthen their resilience and fully develop their potentials.

But what happens to the 680 children that are already on the waiting list for this particular project? What happens to the 60,000 other children of convicts in China that don't have such a place? They will continue to suffer the traumas or emotional pains caused by the loss of their parents. They will continue to be rejected by their relatives and be weighed down by the stigmas and prejudices that say that children of convicts must be criminals as well, or at least bearers of bad luck. They will continue to experience the psychological and physiological impacts of the violence that they themselves often have to endure.

The Coming Home Project in Zhengzhou is a great project. It recognizes that compared to institutional care, foster care offers many more opportunities in the child's development: a higher amount of individual attention for the child, more chances for the child to develop life skills and better integration into society. Even though foster care seems to be the great winner, it does lack one crucial aspect for the Morning Tears children. They greatly need the support of their peers, children who understand what it feels like to have a parent in prison. So, instead, children in the Ai Tong Project in Zhengzhou will live in independent family units of 4 to 8 children and 1 caregiver, while still having the

support of the child assistance center that provides psychological and medical help; and coordinates and trains the caregivers and social workers.

Great projects cost money. Providing food and shelter, medical care and psychological guidance; organizing art therapy and visits to parents in prison; keeping in touch with relatives and celebrating birthdays and holidays; while ensuring they can fully enjoy their education and hobbies; it costs money. It costs about €2,233 per year per child. €2,233 per year is the cost to rebuild the world of a child that has lost its own.

We are an organization that entirely depends on donations and subsidies. The availability of money determines how many children we can help and the range of activities that we can offer them. We feel the effects of the crisis: costs increase, donations dwindle. We do worry about money, we do worry about the children we currently have under our care and how to ensure that they continue to receive the care they need and deserve. We do look at the numbers of children that we want to help and reach out to, if only...

Once again we want to launch a call to all the friends of Morning Tears: We need people, clubs, associations and schools to organize fundraising activities to compensate for decreased corporate donations. Our team can provide publicity materials and ideas and support you and your initiatives. Please contact: events@morningtears.org.

Katleen Mentens
Liaison Officer

katleen.mentens@morningtears.org

News from our Children Villages

Text: Gemma Guo

Translation: Esther Yu

- She is an optimistic girl with smiling eyes. She spent eight years in Xi'an Children village with her older sister. After her father was released from prison, she and her sister went back to their hometown in Hubei province. Last year she got such high grades that she was accepted to a key high school. But since her mother is seriously sick and her father still hasn't found a job, her dream of studying was shattered. The family simply doesn't have the funds. She completely lost the sparkle in her eyes and became very silent. With the help of Morning Tears, she can attend the high school of her dreams and this made her smile again. We are sure donors would love to see more smiling faces like hers.
- LL has lived in Xi'an's San Yuan Children Village for 5 years and studied at the vocational railway school. She now works as a conductor and travels to different cities. She provides excellent service to the passengers and works really hard to support her little brother's studies and her mother in prison.
- There are many children who have left the Morning Tears Children Villages and have returned to living a full life with responsibilities among family members. And yet, there are still so many children who need our help and support.

Financial Barometer

Morning Tears Financial Overview of 2008 in China

PROJECT SITE	ITEM	EXPENDITURES (In RMB)
SanYuan Project	Basic needs	110.000
	Food	70.000
	Heating	40.000
	Renovation of building	135.000
	Training to caregivers	6.753
	Excursion to Ankang	17.165
	Sub-total	268.918
Xi'an Project	Basic needs	192.000
	Education	66.800
	Prison visits	16.000
	Excursion to Pingyao	26.850
	Sub-total	301.650
Xi'an Family Support	Rent for two flats	19.450
	Furniture for families	16.900
	Basic needs of children	36.300
	Education	19.100
	Sub-total	91.750
Henan Project	Rent for land	129.720
	Construction	1.310.000
	Sub-total	1.439.720
Earthquake Project	Surgery for children	15.775
	Sub-total	15.775
Beijing Liason and Lobby Office	Exploratory Mission in China	150.555
	Office cost	125.849
	Staff salary	158.080
	Sub-total	434.484
TOTAL		2.552.297

Morning Tears' Strategy

In the previous newsletters we explained that Morning Tears uses research-based minimum standards for child care and protection. In our standards we differentiate seven quality areas, namely: planning for care; protective care; personal care; health, environment and safety, caregivers; management and administration. Here, we will continue to discuss the third quality area: personnel care. For our personal care we use 10 standards. In this newsletter we discuss standards 4, 5 and 6 of this quality area.

Standard 4: Children's positive relationships and attachments are encouraged

- *Caregivers understand the importance of their role in developing positive, safe and nurturing relationships with children. They create a happy engaging atmosphere and interact with the children in a warm and friendly way.*
- *Caregivers respond spontaneously when children are unwell or upset.*
- *Caregivers positively encourage the children in their ambitions and take interest in their hopes and fears.*

Why is this important?

- *Children whose primary attachment figures (parents) are dead or missing or have been unsupported, need these attachments replaced with another secure attachment relationship*
- *It is important for children to have appropriate and safe physical contact as a means of communicating praise or care, concern and comfort in times of distress*
- *One of the main qualities associated with resilience, which develops through the children's life experiences, is the development of strong attachments with a significant adult*

Standard 5: Children's right to privacy is respected

- *All adults responsible for children should promote the right to privacy consistent with the best interest of the child.*
- *Caregivers do not discuss children's experiences or history in front of others.*
- *Caregivers deal discreetly with children's affairs and understand the need for confidentiality*
- *Where possible toileting, dressing, and bathing can be undertaken in a private, lockable space, girls and boys having separate facilities*
- *Respect for privacy extends to the respect for the children's possessions. Each child should have a physical area that is identifiably theirs and where they can keep their belongings and papers*
- *There is a place where children can be safely alone*
- *There is a place where children's affairs can be discussed privately and where children can meet with visitors in privacy*

Why is this important?

- *Children's privacy is often not respected when children are viewed as property of adults and not as children in their own rights. It is important to respect children's privacy to ensure the development of the individual within any living situation.*
- *Respect for children's privacy translates to respect for the children as individual persons*

Standard 6: Children's sense of identity is maintained

Children and young people are able to maintain their sense of self-identity

- *Children are called by their given names*
- *Children know about their birth family (where possible), their culture and are helped to understand the reason they are looked after in a child care setting*
- *Children are encouraged and supported to help them understand and make sense of their own history and identity*
- *They are encouraged to have a positive view of and become increasingly confident about, themselves*

Why is this important?

- *For many children, the care experience is their whole life and it is important that their journey through different placements is recorded in a form that they can keep, such as photos of friends and caregivers, special times and celebrations, diaries, or other items*
- *It is important to consider a range of tools to support children maintain a sense of identity.*

About Basic Needs of Children (part 3 - final)

Text: Ingrid Cafmeyer – psychotherapist

Translation: Katleen Mentens

This article has been removed at the request of the author.

About Basic Needs of Children (part 3 - final)

Feedback

This is the second issue of the fourth volume of our quarterly newsletter. Your feedback will help us to improve. Also, we will be happy to include your contributions or announcements. We look forward to hearing from you. Please mail to: info@morningtears.org.

If you want to get our previous newsletters, visit our website at www.morningtears.org. You can download them from the site.

Progress Report of the Henan Project

Text: Tom Song

Editor: Katleen Mentens

With the walls freshly painted, the wooden floors put in and the furniture in place, decoration of the Ai Tong Yuan Project is completed, which means it is now ready to open its doors.

The Administrative Bureau of Justice indicated there are more than 300,000 Chinese children of convicts who currently need assistance. Leaders from the Bureaus of Civil Affairs and Justice in Henan province, and leaders from prisons around Zhengzhou city and Henan province will attend the official opening of Ai Tong Yuan. They will understand Morning Tears is a strong organization and is capable to help these children. Local authorities and their assisting departments, such as school and hospitals, that will attend the opening, will also better understand the objective of the project.



Currently the recruitment of caregivers and educators is in the process. For every four children there will be one caregiver, who will take care of them in their daily lives and their studies. In the first period, only two family units (16 children) will be operational. The objectives in this period are to guarantee the quality of the operational work of taking care of the children; and to raise funds to make the rest of Ai Tong Yuan operational.

The official opening ceremony of Ai Tong Yuan will be held May 31, 2009. All guests are welcome to participate and enjoy this first achievement.

Future Strategy

During the initial operational period, Ai Tong Yuan will be continuously evaluated so that improvements can be made if necessary and Ai Tong Yuan can truly serve as a model for future projects.

Based on the first phase of construction, it is estimated that constructing the facilities for every family unit of 8 children, costs 350,000 RMB and that monthly living expenses for each family unit are about 14,000 RMB (these include medical insurance, psychological treatment and school activities).



The main objective is for children in Ai Tong Yuan to live with a sense of security, love, friendship, respect and understanding.

Only together can we rebuild the world of children who've lost their own!

Report Study Trip

Text: Tom Song

Editor: Katleen Mentens

Between March 24 and April 2, a delegation from the the Zhengzhou Bureau of Civil Affairs and the Zhengzhou Protection Centre for Street Children travelled to Belgium, the Netherlands and Spain. Both organizations have a strong partnership with the Coming Home Program of Morning Tears in Henan. In 2007, Morning Tears signed a 10-year cooperation with the Zhengzhou Protection Centre for Street Children with the objective to develop a new model for protecting children whose parents are in prison.

The main objective of this year's study trip was to exchange experience in child protection between Europe and China, and to better understand the projects of Morning Tears in Europe.

Belgium



In Belgium the delegation was invited to have a look around in the Prison of Dendermonde, where it was made clear that the environment in which children play and communicate with their imprisoned parents is of crucial psychological significance for the children. After the tour, an informal discussion was held about the advantages and disadvantages of prison visits in both the Belgian and Chinese systems.

During their visit in Ghent assistance and aid to children of imprisoned children was center point. In Antwerp de delegation was guided through the city. The province of Antwerp – already a very important donor of Morning Tears – announced that they would be happy to extend their support to the Henan Project of Morning Tears. In Hasselt, the governor of the province of Limburg promised to attend the official opening ceremony of the Ai Tong Project on May 31 and the delegation was shown how volunteers contribute to Morning Tears



The Netherlands

Morning Tears officially registered in the Netherlands in August 2008. In the Dutch city of Amersfoort, volunteers introduced Morning Tears to the public. They also showed how important fundraising is for the organization.

Spain

In Spain the delegation had the opportunity to explain that the Child Protection of Zhengzhou is used as a model throughout China and an exchange on how to better protect children took place.

This study trip gave Morning Tears the chance to show the delegation how Morning Tears operates within Europe; how the organization raises money and how volunteers contribute. Meanwhile the foundations for better relations between China and Europe were laid.



The Story of Guo Yin

Her tiny hand gently falls into mine, as we are all watching TV. Her fingers squeeze mine and I know this is her way of asking me, begging me to put my arms around her so that she can snuggle up to me. She is terrified to be abandoned and needs the physical touch of an adult to feel safe. She needs to have her hand held; she needs to be hugged; she needs reassuring eyes that tell her “Don’t worry. I’m here.”

One morning six years ago, Guo Yin was alone at home with her father, when ten policemen busted their house, screaming. They dragged her dad outside and put him in a van that drove off, leaving her standing by the road surrounded by dust clouds. He never had the chance to say good-bye. Her mother struggled to make ends meet and eventually crumpled under the pointing fingers of neighbors and the suffocating shame she felt with her husband in prison. She dropped Guo Yin and her little brother off at the Morning Tears Village, without an explanation and without the promise to come back one day. All of a sudden Guo Yin had become an orphan with both parents alive.

Even though she felt abandoned and alone, she also felt an immense sense of responsibility to take care of her little brother; to be there for him no matter what. Guo Yin became the rock her little brother could depend on when he needed help to get dressed; he could turn to when he needed someone to wipe his tears and tend to his scrapes when he had fallen while playing; and whom he could hit and beat when he became frustrated. She was the rock that endured it all.

It was the day that Guo Yin’s mom decided to return from the big city and give up prostitution to be with her children, that Guo Yin started to blossom again. She walked on air when her mother took her and her little brother to their new apartment. She smiled, she sang, she danced...she was happy for the first time in four years. She started making friends at school. She started dreaming again. She fought back when her little brother hit her; and horsed around with him like most brothers and sisters do. She felt safe falling asleep, knowing mom was in the other room. She had become a little girl again.

And then a proverbial tsunami washed it all away. One warm summer day, her mother sent her children to buy some ice cream. They were happy because ice cream was not an everyday treat. When they returned though, they found an empty apartment. Guo Yin felt the unease pinch her stomach but she quickly convinced herself mom probably stepped outside to buy some fruit or vegetables. But when the sun set and the earth cooled down, she knew mom had left again and wouldn’t come back. The warm blanket of happiness had lifted and she felt the chill of loneliness creeping up again.

Guo Yin has learned to hold on to being a little girl and to accept that taking care of her brother is not her sole responsibility. She has a tremendous fear though that she will be abandoned once again and so, she needs the constant reassurance that someone is there for her. She needs to be held; she needs to be hugged; she needs reassuring eyes that tell her: “Don’t worry. I’m here.”

Katleen Mentens

katleen.mentens@morningtears.org

News Briefs (../..)

'Interrupted Life' Series calls attention to imprisoned mothers and their children

In its first year at SSU, "Interrupted Life" seeks to raise awareness of the pressing issue of incarceration in contemporary America, especially concerning motherhood and the many children who suffer from the effects of their parents' absence.

Source: Barbara Bloom (Sonoma State Star), April 2009, <http://media.www.sonomastatestar.com/media/storage/paper846/news/2009/04/07/Features/interrupted.Life.Series.Calls.Attention.To.Imprisoned.Mothers.And.Their.Children-3702940.shtml>

Jail a mother, condemn a child

Advocates urge alternatives to incarceration for women who commit small crimes — so their children don't follow in their footsteps

Source: Craig Kielburger (The Star), April 2009, <http://www.thestar.com/News/GlobalVoices/article/616388>

At Mound, prisoners man up and become fathers

More than 2 million U.S. children – and one in 14 African-American children – have an incarcerated parent. The rate could be double that in Detroit. These children are up to seven times more likely to go to prison themselves, yet few programs or agencies serve them.

Source: Jeff Gerritt (freep.com), March 2009, <http://www.freep.com/article/20090330/BLOG2505/90330084>



morning tears Belgium

Fortis Bank
001-4495454-65
IBAN: BE 18001449545465
BIC/SWIFT: GEBABEBB

morning tears Netherlands

ABN Amro
45.75.13.764
Stichting Morning Tears Nederland
IBAN: NL81ABNA0457513764
BIC/SWIFT: ABNANL2A

morning tears España

La Caixa d'Estalvis i Pensions
2100.0233.99.0200332319
IBAN: ES28 21000233990200332319
BIC/SWIFT: CAIXAESBBXXX

morning tears China

Bank of China, Beijing Branch [中国银行北京分行]
No.8 Ya Bao Lu, Beijing, China [中国北京雅宝路8号]
Account No: 4160300-0188-026239-0
Beneficiary: Guo Zhi Hong (郭志弘)
BIC/SWIFT: BKCHCNBJ110

morning tears rebuilds the world for children who have lost their own world.

morning tears rebuilds the world for children who have suffered or are suffering heavy emotional pain.

We focus particularly on:

- children whose parents are in prison;
- children whose parents have been sentenced to death;
- children who have been abused or neglected;
- orphans;
- children who haven't been registered at birth, and thus have no rights;
- street children.

morning tears has been operating since 1999 on an informal basis without legal structure. However, in March 2005 **morning tears** became a formal non-profit organization registered under Belgian Law. Currently, **morning tears** has offices in Belgium, Spain and China.

morning tears is run entirely by volunteers. These volunteers are mostly professionals from the social sector or development aid workers, although we also have journalists and engineers in our group.

The running costs of **morning tears** are kept very low, so that donations can go almost entirely to the children in need.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

WWW.MORNINGTEARS.ORG

News Briefs (./..)

Compilation: Mirjam Lambooi

Illinois Virtual Visitation for Incarcerated Fathers

Research has shown that children whose parents have been incarcerated "experience anger, anxiety, inability to concentrate, depression, preoccupation with their loss, sadness, grief, shame and fear following the incarceration." The Pennsylvania Family Virtual Visitation, created by The Prison Society in partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, provides high-tech video conferencing equipment that allows families to visit in "real time" with their loved ones who are incarcerated.

Source: Jeffery M. Leving (Mens News Daily), April 2009, <http://mensnewsdaily.com/2009/04/01/illinois-virtual-visitation-for-incarcerated-fathers/>

Study: Children of imprisoned parents suffer adverse, long-lasting impact

"There is a growing awareness that parents who go to prison do not suffer the consequences alone; the children of incarcerated parents often lose contact with their parent and visits are sometimes rare," said Marc Mauer, executive director of The Sentencing Project and co-author of the report, "Incarcerated Parents and their Children: Trends 1991-2007." "Children of incarcerated parents are more likely to drop out of school, engage in delinquency and subsequently be incarcerated themselves."

Source: James Wright (Frost Illustrated), April 2009, <http://www.frostillustrated.com/full.php?sid=5414>