



OVERSEAS HELPING HANDS

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A Very Merry Christmas
And a Happy New Year!

Home at last! Though I am home at last, my mind and spirit often wander to the remote village where our family of 296 students are studying and learning with glee. The Christmas Season celebrates the Joyful Birth of Christ long ago. This season we are celebrating the joyful birth of a new school, the Bo' Ai (Universal Love) School, and the new beginnings for 296 young souls from eight villages!

On April 7, 2005, the school formally opened for 167 day students from one village. Then on August 31, our school held its grand opening celebration. The next day, September 1st, the new school year commenced for our family of 296 students from eight villages. What a joy it was to see them coming to our school, ready and eager to learn!!!

Transitioning from a dilapidated and condemned building to our new campus was an easy task for our students, but transitioning from the old system of learning to a demanding curriculum and new method of teaching from our college-trained teachers was more challenging. The students had been taught by village school teachers who were middle school graduates. Under the guidance of Principal Sun, who has forty years of teaching experience under her belt and close to twenty years as principal, our students prospered. The children are now given a new lease and the improvement has been astounding as evidenced by the government tests, showing anywhere from 20 to 25 percent improvement.

When you walk on campus, you can easily see and feel the smiles and excitement of the students! Now they are learning under a caring and enriched environment. Their self esteem grows. No longer do they consider themselves "the dumb village kid". They are motivated by the faculty with a driven purpose for high achievement. There is hope!!! The school uniform gives them a new identity that they can be proud of. The young teaching staff is hard working, enthused and glad to be involved in the betterment of education for the children

We are indebted to the two mission teams who came to serve in our school in 2005. A youth mission team from Maryland came in June and a dental and health team of 37 professionals came in October from the States, Hong Kong, Canada and China. What a breath of fresh love they generated! They ministered to the children physically, emotionally and spiritually. Amen!

Many challenges still lie ahead. The radiator heating system and the hot water system had to be redone or rerouted due to shoddy work. It caused a long delay in heating the buildings and providing hot water for showers for the children. The cost of coal has been rising for the past four years and the price of coal per ton quintupled during this period of time. We burn one ton of coal per day just for heating the buildings and allowing showers once a week. Wouldn't it be nice if we could afford the initial outlay for solar panels for heating the water? Most of the toilets leaked water to the floors below and one ceiling even fell off. Fortunately there were no students in the restroom at the time.

On the positive side, we have acquired 30 computers and the kids are learning computer knowledge - something they would never have dreamt of! In the near future, we plan to continue on to junior and high school, adding one grade at a time so that the graduating 6th graders wouldn't be thrown back into the village school. These are lofty plans and we need your help. The Lord has been faithful and as always, we are grateful for the support and donations you have given us.

All children attend the school without paying any tuition. Two hundred and twenty four students room and board at the school and pay one third of the food cost. 72 students would like to room and board at the school but could not because they could not afford to pay the fees..... Three hundred dollars will sponsor a child's tuition, board and room.

Wouldn't you like to be the **WIND**.....beneath their wings!!! So they can soar like **eagles!!!** Please donate and help. May God bless you for your generosity!!!

I am thankful that Jim Devine is at the school for these two months so I can be home with my family. We are anxiously waiting for the arrival of our second granddaughter in early January. I wouldn't want to miss the birthing like I did the first time three years ago at Christmas time with Malia.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you and your family!

Christine Chan
Executive Director
Overseas Helping Hands



Our school is situated at a remote village area at Fung Cuen, Qinyuan County, Shanxi, Province, two provinces west of Beijing and south of Inner Mongolia. The campus encompasses 4 acres and consists of five larger buildings and four smaller buildings. It took Overseas Helping Hands three years to complete building the school.

Bo' Ai (Universal Love) School replaces the eight elementary schools in the area. The elementary school at Fung Cuen had been condemned for two years before our school was able to be finished. The classrooms were heated by coal stoves as is customary in rural China. Note the heap of coal to the left of classroom.



Sixth graders in new classroom. Unless we continue on and expand to a junior and senior high school, these students will be thrown back into the deficient and inadequate village system of education.

Students in the assembly room. Each student receives two sets of uniforms that give the student an identity that he/she can be proud of. The girls are in red uniforms and the boys in yellow.



\$300/year or \$25/month will support a child's tuition, board and room for a year.

**Tax-deductible donation checks should be made out to:
OVERSEAS HELPING HANDS
P.O. Box 91004
Portland, OR 97291
(memo: student sponsorship)**