

Families with Children from China

Austin, Texas Chapter

Fall Newsletter

December, 2012



President's Letter

Wow, so many exciting and wonderful things going on! With our *Somewhere Between* screening having just happened, our very first Camp Retreat courtesy of Carrie van der Wal on the horizon, as well as a new and different format for our Chinese New Year celebration just around the corner, I'm really looking forward to these upcoming events, and I hope you are, too.

If you're as enthusiastic as me, I urge you to reach out to any former members with whom you've remained close and encourage them to rejoin, as our FCC chapter continues to grow/change/flourish. And this is no easy task; while some FCC chapters have languished, we're still a strong, vibrant chapter.

I attribute this mostly to our proactive, tight knit community, with a willingness to help each other via sharing knowledge and resources, as well as our ability to shift gears when needed (such as gradually changing our focus to consider the needs and interests of our tweens and teens in the form of a dedicated, active subcommittee).

We have flourished because we have members who come forward from time to time when we need them most, or when they themselves see a need for change, or an opportunity for enrichment to promote community and networking within our chapter. And for this, I am very thankful.

Hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving!

Sincerely,
Kim Goodman
President, FCC-Austin

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FCC Austin 2013 Spring Retreat

By Carrie Van der Wal

Over the last few years, our family has made treasured connections within the FCC Austin community; that's *why* we joined FCC. And while we cherish the traditional FCC community celebrations, the time spent in each other's company—for both the children and the grown-ups—passes far too quickly. Like us, other members have also expressed an interest in spending more time together. Let's enhance our community connections at the first ever FCC Austin Retreat, April 19–21, 2013, in Spicewood, Texas at the T Bar M Camp on Lake Travis.

The 140 acre T Bar M facility will be ours alone that spring weekend, with more amenities than we might be able to fully utilize: a sports field, ping-pong, foosball and pool tables, basketball, volleyball, and washers courts, tetherball, frisbee golf as well as a “tree house fort” playground. For those big enough to safely fit in the appropriate harnesses, the camp will offer a supervised rock climbing wall and barn swing on Saturday for two hours. During that time, we'll also have a special activity planned exclusively for the wee ones that are too small for the harnesses. Saturday evening we'll enjoy a group campfire and s'mores, perhaps even a talent show or karaoke.

The sleeping accommodations consist of 24 rustic cabins, each furnished with three sets of (twin) bunk beds. The cabin windows are screened, not glazed, though their canvas coverings can be lowered for privacy, or in case of cooler weather and/or rain. There are electrical outlets within the cabins though the cabins can't be locked. The showers and toilets are located a

short walk from the cabins, in communal bathhouses/bathrooms. Overnight retreat participants are responsible for bringing their own towels, pillows, and bed linens/sleeping bags. Additionally, families may want to bring flashlights and portable “camp chairs,” either to sit by the campfire or relax on your cabin's porch. Each individual family will be assigned their own cabin.

If your family wants to join the FCC camaraderie but not overnight at T Bar M, retreat day guests are more than welcome on Saturday, April 20th.

Check-in on Friday night will be between 5 and 7 p.m., with individual families encouraged to bring a picnic dinner or dine before arrival. Saturday breakfast, lunch, and dinner as well as Sunday breakfast/brunch will be prepared on site. At our disposal is The Grande Rio dining hall and adjoining kitchen. All able-bodied retreat participants—both campers and day guests—will be asked to participate in the planning, preparation and clean-up of (only) one of the four group meals, via “meal teams.”

Every family will only need to bring its own contributions towards one group meal, with Saturday Day Guests asked to participate in either Saturday lunch or dinner. This way, everyone will eat well throughout the retreat, but will have to participate in meal prep and clean-up only once.

After the March 1st registration deadline, families will be randomly assigned to and notified of their meal teams, after which each meal team will plan what they're collectively cooking as well as who brings/does what. Having organized and participated in group meal teams once before with a group camping trip, I can attest that meal

teams are a fantastic communal experience, with undertones of friendly albeit serious culinary rivalry. As a parent weary of meal preparation, I'm thrilled with the thought of not having to even think about the majority of the retreat weekend's meals. (Though as coordinator I'll be ensuring we don't have end up with three spaghetti meals.)

We encourage children to participate with-in their family's meal teams, but realize that some families (i.e. those with the youngest of children) may need alternative options. Naturally, we're flexible and will be happy to find roles suitable for everyone. Please note that due to food allergies, the retreat will be a “nut-free” weekend. Additionally, we will be happy to accommodate any other special needs that families might have.

We've had a very enthusiastic initial response but please know that we still have cabins available for interested families; day guests are enthusiastically encouraged, too. General details and registration information as well as the required paperwork (registration, FCC release & T Bar M release forms) are available at <http://www.fccaustin.org/events.html>.

Like ours, your family joined FCC Austin in order to connect with our unique Austin community. I hope that your family will join us in reinforcing those special connections—and making new ones—at our Spring 2013 Retreat. Questions? Email me at carrieree@yahoo.com. ❖

Carrie Van der Wal is an enthusiastic Austin FCC member, mom, and planner of our retreat!

FCC-Austin's 2013 Chinese New Year Celebration

2:30 to 5:00 pm at The Marchesa Hall — Sunday, February 3, 2013

By Kim Goodman

As promised, we have changed the look and feel of this event to freshen it up! Many of you told us in the survey conducted this past spring that you wanted to see a change to this event, with some cautiously voting for change but curious as to what those changes might be. And we think you'll be quite pleased!

The biggest change: the venue. We've secured The Marchesa Hall, which is conveniently located off of I-35 near 2222, 183, and 290. With these nearby interchanges, hopefully this venue will be a reasonable commute for everyone; ample, free parking is available.

The main hall has a stage, theatre lighting, a sound system, and seating for 200. We'll be providing refreshments and Asian appetizers, so no need to hop in your car for dinner immediately following the event; we can enjoy each other's company, have some tasty food, and engage in a bevy of activities. This year, you can decide how you wish to spend your time at this event.

Another major change: while we will have a Chinese Lion Dance performance as a finale to the event (how can we not?), many of you requested an alternative experience with more opportunities to get to know the community in new ways. Plus many of you indicated you have to miss the fun because so much time is spent prepping kiddos for shows, frantically assisting with costume changes and such. And because that time of year affords many opportunities for performances at other venues, we decided to give everyone a break and have one less performance in the mix.

Instead, we're lining up many new activities, including a Dumpling Eating Contest! This was suggested by a member in the spring survey, and the entire board LOVED this idea! So we're gonna make this happen—it just sounds like a whole lotta fun. I have a feeling some daddies and mommas are gonna be superheroes onstage as their kids cheer them on. And what kids do NOT like dumplings themselves? None I know! This promises to be a fun event for all ages; hopefully I won't be the only mommy onstage for this! :)

We will still have a Silent Auction, as this is our only fundraiser of the year to raise money for charities and nonprofits near and dear to our hearts: UT China Care, Philip Hayden Foundation, and Love Without Boundaries are our favorites. Do you have a favorite nonprofit or charitable organization you'd like for us to consider? Please share this with our Treasurer, Alan Greenberg at: ggroup@mindspring.com. And once again, if you have anything you wish to donate to the Silent Auction or would like to volunteer part of your time during this event to help out with the Silent Auction, please contact Dianne Harwood at: di@austin.rr.com. Deadline for donating something to the Silent Auction is January 3, 2013.

Finally, we need your help to make this event a successful one! The following is a list of subcommittees where we could use a bit of help. Would you like to head a subcommittee or be part of one? Honestly, it's not as scary as it sounds, because it is just one component of the entire event. If so, please contact Denise Davolt at: denisedavolt@gmail.com and let her know how you'd like to help. Last year's group of volunteers were simply stellar, and with your help once again, we can have a smooth running event! ❖

Silent Auction

Chair: Dianne Harwood
di@austin.rr.com

Dumpling Eating Contest

Chair: (Your name here?)

Setup/Decorations

(1:00 to 2:30)

Chair: Robin Davis
robinsdavis@austin.rr.com

Cleanup Committee

(5:00 to 6:00)

Chair: Deanne Brown
deanne_brown@hotmail.com

Appetizers/Food

Chair: Alan Greenberg
ggroup@mindspring.com

Beverages

Chair: (Your name here?)

Utensils, Paper Plates, Napkins, Tablecloths, Food Warmers(?)

(1:00 to 2:30)

Chair: (Your name here?)

Kids' Crafts

Chair: Sandi Ross
rosyk@austin.rr.com

FCC-UT Chinese Culture Camp

August 5–9, 2013

Registration materials will be available on our web site beginning March 1, 2013.

Brochures with details about activities and teachers will be available at our Chinese New Year Celebration on Sunday, February 3, 2013. ❖

Xi Shuang Ban Na Cultural Exchange Learning Project Update

By Becky Harding

The Asian American Cultural Center, Families with Children from China—Austin Chapter, and The University of Texas in association with The Austin China Relation Advisory Council have made their final selection of the participants to be part of this pilot program with the city of Ban Na. Leaders Rowena Fong, Ed.D., Amy Wong Mok, and I are pleased to make this announcement. Congratulations to Pema Bear, Emily Danuser, Katie McCormick, Claire Roberts, and Zoe Watts, who together will represent their city, state, and country from June 15–22, 2013 in Yunnan province, China.

The applicants were required to write essays detailing their preparation, their

expectations, and their talents. If they have been to China before, they were asked to expand on that experience as well. In addition to this, one parent from each applicant's family was asked to write an essay clarifying their expectations for the program and/or the trip. From these essays, the leaders asked some of the students to come to an interview. This interview process included having the students expand on their preparation, talk about getting lost (if that has ever happened) and how they would handle that situation in China. And we explored what teamwork means to them and how they see themselves as a part of a team. They were asked about how they deal with stress and what tools do they use for calming themselves in stressful situations.

Lastly, the girls were given a scenario of having a plateful of cooked cicadas placed before them at dinner in China and how would they react and respond to this traditional, though perhaps not appetizing offering from their hosts. They all answered beautifully. Truly.

The entire group will meet monthly starting in December to learn more about the province and its customs, create presentations that will be given in the classrooms in China, and prepare the entertainment portion of the project. This is an incredible opportunity and we have an amazing group of young people involved in this project. ❖



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For over a thousand years, the people of Xi Shuang Ban Na wish each other health and happiness during the annual Water Splashing Festival held in mid April. These women are collecting water from the Lancang River for a ceremony held during the event.



The Ornament

By Melanie Chung-Sherman, LCSW



Year after year, my mother continually surpassed herself with Christmas decorations, culinary treats, and traditions. She meticulously collected annual ornaments throughout our childhood. Each ornament represented a symbolic aspect in our lives. When my brothers and I moved out of our parents' home and settled into the confines of adult life, we each received our Christmas ornaments for our family tree. When I was a little girl, my mother unwrapped a delicate ornament from its year-long slumber. She would gather me near and share the meaning of this porcelain figure that held the most coveted place on the tree—the very top near the angel. She reminded me that this ornament represented the first year that I celebrated Christmas with my family following my adoption. Approximately one year before I was adopted, she purchased this ornament with a hopeful desire that one day her dreams of parenting would eventually manifest. As a child, I did not recognize the significance of this narrative, but was intrigued by an additional aspect to my adoption.

Secretly, the ornament allowed space for me to wonder about my birth parents and my adoption narrative, though I never mentioned this to my mother:

- Did they celebrate Christmas, too?
- Were they thinking of me during the holidays?
- Were they too poor to afford gifts?
- What are they doing right now?
- Because it was Christmas, would they want to come find me?

As a teen, I no longer desired to hear the story and hurried my mother along to place the ornament on the tree. The ornament was a symbolic reminder that I was abandoned by someone I had never met, but was intrinsically connected to halfway around

the world. For my mother it represented me joining their home and completing an aspect of our family. It began to represent the ambiguous loss of not knowing what happened, who I looked like, or if those who gave me life even acknowledged me, yet deeply desiring to know. It reminded me that I had lost something profound in order to gain something equally profound. Without words or understanding to call out these deep feelings, I buried these thoughts away and tried to forget. Perfectionism, compliance, and busyness created a balm to hide deep longings, fears, inadequacies, and shame connected to my abandonment and relinquishment. (Though, I did not consciously understand that then). The desire to dismiss my adoption ran deep. Anyone who tried to ask about my life story was met with defensiveness and a superficial smile. To talk about them was too overwhelming and revealed deep fissures of confusing sadness and loss. It would take years to confront those truths. Holding on to a false belief that it was selfish to fantasize about an alternative life with my birth family became a safeguard that covered me into my early adulthood. Weak attempts to squelch the curiosity of what it might feel like to meet others who shared similar characteristics, connections to lost familial and cultural ancestry, and the possibility of being found by those who let me go so long ago continued to surface.

The year I was married, my mother wrapped each ornament up and gave these to me to decorate my first Christmas tree. I had forgotten about the ornament—as I had so many things. Rather than hang the ornament, I never took it out of the box. Life had moved forward and I believed that I no longer needed a symbolic meaning to help me make sense of what I had felt so deeply. Through the years, I began to reconcile portions of my narrative. It has been a redemptive, thoughtful, and enriching process.

It was not until my child's first Christmas that I was prompted to seek out the ornament. I tore through the holiday storage boxes trying to locate that which I had hidden away. I was ready to embrace it all. It was buried under several boxes of Christmas past that had been from my early days of living on my own. Methodically, I unraveled the paper wrapped around this delicate trinket. I was surprised to find how aged it appeared. The porcelain was beginning to crack, the gleam had turned yellowish, and the angelic wings had faded. Similar to my life story, it too had evolved, aged, and matured. My son's first Christmas also coincided with the same age that I was when I was placed with my family. I recognized that this tradition would become a part of his as well. My mother's voice and loving intention to create this memory haunted me—the symbolic meanings became more integrated as I transitioned into motherhood. He and his younger brother now gather around me to hear the story of my childhood ornament. Ownership of this portion of my life is no longer mine alone, but theirs. One day they will make sense of how adoption has played a role in their lives—and possibly their children's. They will have their own story as well as their own ornaments... ❖

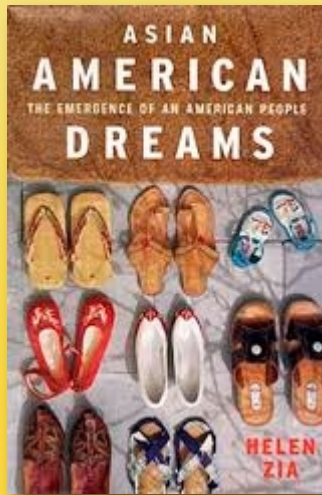
This article is reprinted with permission from Melanie Chung-Sherman's blog. She is an LCSW who specializes in adoption-sensitive therapy. Melanie and her husband live in the North Dallas area with their two sons.

Asian American Dreams: The Emergence of an American People

By Helen Zia

The sum total of all I now know about Asian American history is confined within the covers of this 365 page book. Award-winning journalist Helen Zia, skillfully leads readers through Asian American history starting with the earliest arrivals in the 1500s, detailing pivotal moments along the way as late as early 2000s, when the book was written. Ms. Zia was a key activist in the Vincent Chin case and her coverage of this time was particularly in depth and compelling. Chin (who incidentally was adopted) was murdered in '82 because he looked to be Japanese. Reading such in-depth coverage of Asian American history at times honestly horrified me and put me on alert as to the prejudices my daughter may face in our society.

The book is also a political call to action. Ms. Zia covers the formation of a pan-Asian identity, one that was and is difficult given the great language, cultural, “home country politics,” and religious differences within the demographic. She celebrates positive changes effected along the way



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by the power of people working together. I am confident that were she to revise the book to bring it more up to date, it would certainly include mention of a case the Supreme Court is currently considering, Fisher v. University of Texas, which may put an end to affirmative action in college admissions.

By far my favorite sections of the book were Ms. Zia’s personal anecdotes, which lead off each chapter. She touches on grow-

ing up a minority, wavering between concealing and reveling in her own Chineseness, struggling with learning Mandarin, and having conflicted feelings while visiting China. Perhaps my favorite takeaway from these portions was from learning how she deals with the “where are you from” question. Ms. Zia asserts she is an American from New Jersey and if persisted, reveals her ancestry and turns the table to inquire about the ancestry of her questioner.

I wholeheartedly recommend this book to any in FCC who are fascinated with history or committed to social justice. Multiple copies of the book are in the Austin library system. For those who get cross-eyed reading paragraphs full of dates and names, the personal anecdotes at the beginning of each chapter are in and of themselves a great reason to pick up the book. ❖

FCC Board Member, Bethany Morrison, resides in Austin with her husband, two young kids, and a tiny flock of backyard chickens.

The Bakers, the Dragon, and Camp China: North Carolina, Summer 2012

By Lynda Lieberman Baker

The Year of the Dragon has once again brought good fortune to our household. The greatest gift was of course our dragon daughter. This Dragon year we had the opportunity to participate in a family-oriented Chinese Culture Camp with another family from our adoption trip.

It has not been that difficult to stay in touch with Carolee and her family. We got along well when we met in China and were eager to support our girls in their relationship, despite the fact we live in Texas and they live on the east coast. My family has managed to get out east and see them every few years and we were fortunate to host Carolee and her daughter here in Austin in April.

After this last Austin trip our girls were finally interested in staying connected. The eager moms jumped on the opportunity. My daughter and I planned to travel to South Carolina and see them this summer. “How about we meet outside in Black Mountain, North Carolina at the weekend FCC Culture Camp near our home state?” Carolee suggested. She had been interested in going for a while and we had never been to a Chinese culture camp either. My husband enthusiastically supported this mother-daughter adventure invitation. “We’re on our way,” I said.

The camp location was beautiful of course—nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains, what’s not to like? But the warmth of the atmosphere extended beyond the climate. Several of the families attending the camp had been participating for many years. The counselors were Chinese-born adoptees who had grown up with the camp. And of course most of them live in that region of the country.

As a family with a child from China, it does not take very long to feel like part of the bigger family of Children from China. When it comes to celebrating the love for our children, their culture, and our adventures in becoming their parents, we share that unique bond. I was reminded of my own FCC in Austin and how I missed those connections we made when my daughter was a toddler.

The camp spirit was ignited on arrival—as everyone is presented with their Dragon Year T-Shirt to wear for the weekend. Each age group, the parents, and counselors don a different color of the same shirt—creating a rainbow of energy and activity on the grounds of the YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly as campers walk the grounds.

While the cultural activities included Chinese brush art, cooking, and tai chi, the campers—mostly girls—also had the opportunity to swim, roast marshmallows at the Saturday night bonfire, and even show off their talents at the closing night talent show. Probably the most touching activity for me, however, was the craft time we spent as a family making friendship bracelets for children in an orphanage in China. Kay Bratt, author of several Chinese orphanage and adoption books, instructed the children to introduce themselves by writing their names, ages and hometowns and explain that they were adopted from China. Kay would then make arrangements to get the bracelets to children in the orphanage in which she has volunteered and written about.

Complementing the programs for the children were several lectures for the parents with Dr. Changfu Chang, the “professor of adoption films.” I was first introduced to Dr. Chang’s work when Austin FCC brought



him to town. This trip afforded me the opportunity to spend more time learning from and interacting with him as we discussed identity, birth parent search, cultural differences, and his documentary film making over the course of the weekend.

Like many things we do with and for our children, we are never quite sure what the impact will be. My daughter Emily enjoyed the weekend—the flexibility that it offered balancing structure with free time, the chance to spend time with her old friend from Yichun, and of course the excitement of a trip away from home. I appreciated the chance to finally learn what parents who give their kids a Chinese Culture Camp experience are providing that I have been remiss in doing!

The Chinese aspects of this camp however, were far more significant for me than for my daughter! Talking with Chinese adults and other adoptive parents about identity issues and birth parent searches was fascinating. Meeting Kay Bratt and visiting with Changfu Chang was great preparation for my trip to China and my daughter’s orphanage that occurred later in the summer. I have now seen all of Changfu’s documentaries, read two of Kay’s books, and rejoined FCC Austin.

So for me the Year of the Dragon is indeed an auspicious one. I guess the Dragon has come through again. ❖

Lynda Lieberman Baker, her husband Kerry Baker, and their daughter Emily, 11, are once again members of Austin FCC.

Chinese Lantern Festival

5 to 10 pm daily thru January 6, 2013, Fair Park, Dallas, Texas
<http://www.chineselanternfestival.com>

By Kim Goodman

With a spur of the moment trip up to Dallas after Thanksgiving loosely planned, and a vague recollection of this event in the back of my mind (thanks to Lela Wallis's Facebook post), my family piled into our minivan and headed north.

Fair Park's various kid-friendly venues seems to be our go-to place whenever we're in Dallas, with its Aquarium, Butterfly House, Natural Science Museum, etc., and now this impressive display, which is open 5 pm to 10 pm daily until January 6, 2013.

Some of the most memorable displays: a beautiful blue dragon that was ~200 feet long with an articulating head, a replica of the Temple of Heaven, a salmon-colored lotus flower on a giant lily pad in a body of water that ever so slowly opened and closed among many other stationary ones, and a herd of Longhorns... just for fun!

It's about the same length as Austin's Trail of Lights and just as spectacular, along with some tasty hot chocolate and such, but sans the Hey Cupcake trailer. And the big-

gest difference besides the theme: the price. While the Trail of Lights was always a free event (and will be back this year December 16-23 as a free event), the Chinese Lantern Festival is \$19 per adult, and \$7 per child, in addition to a massive array of souvenirs and trinkets for purchase, right at kid level.

Was it worth it? Definitely. While it was rather pricey, we're not up there very often, and the kids really loved it! ❖



FCC-Austin Culture Camp Roundup

Some very special Tigers from this past summer's Culture Camp have written short pieces describing people they enjoyed meeting in August. We thank these young FCC members for their thoughtful and entertaining contribution to the newsletter this month.

Lane's Lovely Life

Claire Roberts & Sage O'Brien

Lane Allison was adopted 18 years ago from Ma'Anson, China, by Jane Allison, a single mother. Lane grew up like any other child in Dallas, TX. She went to school, made friends and had sleepovers.

She wasn't interested in talking about adoption until a boy in her high school class said something hurtful after the class watched a video about adoption. After that, she was more open to talking about adoption. At one point she went back to China to search for her birth parents. She went to do a DNA test with her possible birth parents, but unfortunately, the DNA test did not match. The family that thought she belonged to them wanted to redo the DNA test. They still believe they have found their child even though the DNA did not match.

Lane says she wouldn't have stayed to live with the family even if they were her birth parents. She loves her life in America and with her mom.

Today, she attends George Washington University and has a bird named Stanley. She feels confident about herself and being a counselor at the FCC Culture Camp.

Minta

Joie Parma & Chandley Stohrer

This is the story of how Minta got her little sister, Chandley. Minta was 5 years old when her mom said she was getting a little sister from China. When they arrived in China to get Chandley, Minta was super excited. Once she got her little sister, Minta spent a ton of time with her. They went to the park and played on the merry-go-round.

Minta loved to feed Chandley when she was a baby. She liked her little sister a lot but like with most siblings, they go through periods of annoyance and love.

Carrie van der Wal

Xiaoman Lancaster & Emily Freireich

Each year at the FCC Culture Camp, they do a service project. This year's service project was a collage with 100 pieces of artwork. The completed project will be given to Dell Children's Medical Center.

The collage was made of 6x6-inch squares. Everyone uses the same material but paints and draws different designs. Once they are completed, they are framed and are approximately 30-by-30-inches each. Ms. Van der Wal uses double-sided tape and sticks the squares to a matte board.

She has been an artist for 13 years but this is her first time teaching at the FCC Culture Camp.

Archery Can Be Fun!

Frankie Harris

Frankie was recently introduced to the sport of archery. The book and movie *The Hunger Games* has brought archery new fans. Here are some tips when learning archery:

Archery is really fun, especially if you know how to use one. The most important thing you need in archery is a bow and arrow. Next, you need a good target to practice. And you need a target range.

Make sure no one is around your shooting range because archery can be very dangerous! You can hurt someone very badly. Just make sure no people or animals are around.



Twin life

Julie & Jade Bondy

Some people think that twins always get the same thing and get along very well. But that is sometimes not true about Jade and Julie.

Jade and Julie were adopted from China and now live in Austin. They love to garden, play games, art, act, and do other fun activities such as cooking. They love almost all kinds of animals, especially elephants, giraffes, and zebras.

They are always there for each other. "We always love each other," they say. Being a twin is awesome!

Genevieve Norman

Sicily Stull & Jian Jian Heath

Genevieve Norman was adopted from China when she was 7 months old. She thinks it is awesome to be adopted from China. She also feels it is better than awesome to be adopted in general.

She is now 20 years old and is a counselor at the FCC Culture Camp. She enjoys being a counselor. She is 5 ft. 5 in. tall and her boyfriend, Jason, is her best friend. Her parents are David and Dottie. She enjoys sleeping in and cooking on the weekends.

She loves being from China and has been back 3 times. On her last trip, she lived there for 6 months to study abroad. She says it was a life-changing experience and would love to go back to China again. ❖

Cyndy Perkins (left) and Kristi Gordy, Senior Development Directors at Austin's Dell Children's Medical Center accepting the FCC Chinese Culture Camp service project collages, October 15, 2012.

Under the direction of FCC member Carrie van der Wal, the 100 children who participated in this year's camp created their unique images of what Chinese New Year means to them.

Somewhere Between Screening + Q&A Session

By Kim Goodman

We had a great turnout for the *Somewhere Between* screening FCC held at the Highland Galaxy Theatre on Thursday, December 6th. This documentary is a must see, without a doubt. Each of these four teens is simultaneously strong and vulnerable, and handles issues of identity as transracial adoptees in her own, unique way. This is what makes the film so riveting and multifaceted. And in making this film for her daughter, Ruby, in order to get a glimpse into the future of what her adolescence might look like, Director Linda Goldstein Knowlton provides us with insight we

would not otherwise have, making this documentary such an invaluable contribution to our community and to the growing body of work about international adoption.

As expected, the remote Q&A session with Linda following the screening was informative and touching; however, I will refrain from going into details here since not everyone was able to attend. We will keep a list of the questions asked in order to share them with others for future screenings of this film. The FCC-Austin board intends to schedule satellite screenings in various homes located throughout the Austin area.

Suzanne Danuser, Tween/Teen Subcommittee Chair, has already said that her subcommittee will have a screening exclusively for teens in the future.

As of this writing, the DVDs are expected to be released in February. It is strongly recommended that the film be screened by those 14 and older. ❖

Note: For those who attended, some did inquire about the URL recommended to be “liked” if indeed you enjoyed the movie. The URL is:

<http://www.facebook.com/somewherebetweenmovie>.

November Treasurer's Report

By Alan Greenberg

Well everyone, the board and specifically Culture Camp directors continue to amaze me with their collective pecuniary wisdom and general thriftiness. First, let me thank the 2012 Culture Camp sponsors: FCC-Austin (oh, you and me), the UT School of Social Work (cash and its indefatigable camp co-director Rowena Fong), and the Northwest Hills United Methodist Church. Then there were the sponsors (besides UT) who offered cash donations: Lotus Travel, Sun Travel, Austin Great Wall Chinese School, J&J Chinese School, and Longwen Chinese School. Several members whose employers offer matching or cash donations for “dona-

tion of time” worked as volunteers, enabling us to receive extra cash donations from Dell and AMD. And one parent—he knows who he is and we thank him profusely—saw that scholarships were available to families in need and donated a full scholarship for another camper, besides paying for his child.

Sponsors that provided goods or free/discounted services included April Rain School of Chinese Dance, Austin Moonwalks, Austin Taiko Drumming, BookPeople, Marvelous Mandarin, Master Yi's Tukong Martial Arts Academy, Orpheus Academy of Music, and the Summitt Elementary Lion

Dance Team. Some of these donations were in the form of lessons and classes that otherwise would have cost us; others took the shape of specific discounts that helped us save money.

The heartening aspect of all of this is not only were we able to come in under budget (in the black), we were able to provide several scholarships to deserving kids in need—and still throw a big party and afford to make MoonFest a free, fun event. ❖

Alan Greenberg is FCC-Austin Treasurer and Dad to Claire-Lily, 10.

Braiding/Hair Techniques + Makeup Workshop Recap

By Kim Goodman

This past summer's workshop held exclusively for FCC-Austin tweens and teens was well received, as in the past. With a pared-down crew of Toni&Guy professionals to accommodate this smaller demographic of our FCC membership, it made the event much more intimate.

While Clayton led discussions on various fun and trendy tips about hair coloring, Alizeh (Alley-ZAY) demonstrated some Hunger Games-inspired braiding techniques as well as updos. However, it was no surprise that everyone's favorite part of the event was the makeup tips, tricks, and demos.



themselves for the first time in a very different light: with eyes that appeared much more open, and yet, not overdone.

While most all parents see their child's beauty (inside and out), sometimes it takes just a few strokes of a brush for an adolescent's beauty to be sufficiently enhanced for her to see it herself. ❖

Note: As of January, 2013, Toni&Guy will no longer have a presence at Lakeline Mall, although they still will have shops in Barton Creek Square Mall and Hill Country Galleria. As of this writing Clayton will be working at the Hill Country Galleria location. Alizeh Hussain has since started her own business and now rents space inside the Salons@1890 Ranch in Cedar Park: <http://www.salonlilu.com>. She is still willing to do our FCC daughters' makeup, gratis, for special occasions such as homecomings and proms.

It was absolutely amazing to see some of these transformations, with so little makeup applied, but expertly done. Some of the girls were simply giddy with joy when they witnessed the results! A few expressed the feeling that the uncreased eyelids they were born with are something to be corrected, perhaps surgically in the future. However, with just a little bit of makeup strategically applied, they began to see





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10 Ways to Help Your Child Develop a Healthy Self-Concept

A mom asked me the other day for recommendations on how to foster a positive self-concept for her kids. What a great question! This is a long list, but you will probably find some strategies that you are already doing, some that surprise you, and some that you'll be excited to try. So, in no particular order, here are 10 things parents can do to help their children to develop (or strengthen) a positive self-concept.

1. The first place that children begin to form their self-concept is within the parent-child relationship. Within that relationship, we teach children that they matter: their needs, opinions, experiences, feelings, and preferences are an important part of the family culture and decision-making. Children aren't the only voice in the family, but they need to know that they do have a voice.
2. Let them have experiences that include: working really hard, succeeding, and failing. All three things are a normal part of a healthy adult life, and for children to feel good about themselves, they need age-appropriate experiences of these things, too.
3. Feel good about yourself, and let your words reflect this. When you speak about your actions, your habits, your body, your brain, your hair, your clothes,

your life—try to speak to and from your best self. Of course, no one is perfect, which leads to:

4. Acknowledge that you are not perfect. We are ALL learning and growing, and we are healthiest when we can acknowledge and learn from our mistakes, and practice self-compassion. (Self-compassion is critical to health, as mistakes are inevitable and frequent, in both childhood and adulthood.)
5. Be careful how you word your judgments of others, especially your children. Try to criticize actions, not the people who take those actions. In other words, come from the perspective that for the most part, people do the best they can with what they have. Having compassion for others makes it easier to have compassion for oneself.
6. Give your children power and control over age-appropriate decisions. Let them flex their muscles both literally and figuratively.
7. Make sure your child gets enough good sleep, healthy foods, and exercise. The mind cannot be healthy when the body is not. (And make sure you do it for you, too, parents are usually deficient in this.)

8. Assertiveness. People feel better about themselves when they feel empowered, and assertiveness skills are a key component of feeling empowered. Teach good communication, and validate that your child has a right to ask for what they want! (Which also then leads to the useful learning opportunities of dealing with it when you don't get what you wanted.)
9. Give your children permission to have their feelings. Even when feelings are uncomfortable, send the message that all feelings are okay. (The expression of feelings is another matter, and another blog post.)
10. Cultivate a sense of humor. A sense of humor is another key component of resiliency—the ability to bounce back from problems, setbacks, frustrations, failures.

So there it is: 10 ways to help a child's growing positive self-concept. What else would you add to this list? ❖

Katie Malinski, LCSW, is a licensed child & family therapist and parenting coach. In addition to her one-on-one work with families and children, she presents dynamic parenting workshops on a variety of topics, including: Beyond Birds and Bees, Parenting Through Divorce, Mother-Daughter Puberty & Communication, Your Parenting Toolkit, Increasing Your Child's EQ, Typical Parenting Conflicts, and more. For more information on her services, visit her website at: www.KatieMalinski.com.

2012 FCC-Austin Moon Festival: The Best One Ever!



A glimpse of the festivities that day.



FCC teens were in charge of carrying the raft holding the children's wishes down to the water's edge.



"Moon Lady" Lisa Jasak posing with Co-VP Events Board Member Denise Davolt.

“Our family has always enjoyed the FCC Moon Festival but this year’s committee went above and beyond. Thank you for all your effort.

The most exciting event for my children (ages 6 and 8) was the Moon Lady. They sat mesmerized while she retold one version of the legend where the famous archer, Hou Yi, shot 9 moons out of the sky, Chang’e flew to the moon and Jade Rabbit made heavenly medicine.

The ‘Moon Lady’ used props, music and involved all the children as she spoke.

They also loved the photo booth and came home with many photos of friends old and new. Thank you for providing this opportunity for our family to be together and focus on FAMILY.”

—FCC Member Laurie Moyer