



## Families With Children from China Summer Newsletter 2011 Austin, Texas

### *Letter from the Prez...*

Wow, this summer is just flying by! While the summer series of events is coming to a close, it will be quickly followed by our Chinese Culture Camp, a Braiding/Hair Techniques event, the UT China Care playdates, Moon Festival, and Lion Dance Workshop, which then leads into the gauntlet of holidays in the fall and winter.

Busy, busy, busy... and of course, that's why it seems like we're moving at warp speed! And yet, there are poignant moments during such times that can put certain things into perspective.

I recall working backstage during our Chinese New Year celebration and feeling a bit overwhelmed. And amid the utter chaos was our five-year-old daughter who approached me speechless, with tears welling up. She was upset because there was a large group of young girls who had commandeered the lion head she was going to be using in a performance; she thought they might damage or break it before she was to go onstage. And honestly, it was a legitimate fear—those little girls were really man-handling that thing... giggling and laughing, playing tug-of-war so they could pose with it as one of the parents stood by snapping photos.

Needless to say, I addressed the issue with the girls and parent, and allayed our child's fears. But later on, I had an epiphany: rather than be annoyed at all these kids for wanting to take pictures/play with the lion head, I should try to address this very strong interest in lion dancing that so many of them apparently have. Sure, they always see the lion dancers perform, but they never really get to try to be a lion dancer themselves—with authentic equipment. I always thought that our daughter's interest in lion dancing was a somewhat isolated case, and perhaps her extreme interest is rather unique. But what I saw backstage that day led me to believe that a lot of our kids would really enjoy something like this. So here we are, just a couple of months away from our first Lion Dance Workshop! I do hope you *carpe diem* if your kid is fascinated with lion dancing; it's a chance for our kids to enjoy a part of their Chinese culture, and it's gender-neutral. I'm getting sweaty palms just thinking about how fun this will be for our kids—I can't wait!

So in closing, it's good to remember to sometimes take a step back from the chaos and reflect on the events taking place, rather than merely getting through them... because something magical can transpire from the least likely places.

Hope you're enjoying your summer,  
Kim Goodman  
President, FCC-Austin

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### Mark Your Calendars

Chinese Cooking with Dorothy Huang  
Saturday, July 30, 2011

Chinese Culture Camp  
August 8–12, 2011

Moon Festival  
Sunday, September 11, 2011

Lion Dance Workshop  
Sunday, September 25, 2011

# 2nd annual chinese culture camp

FCC Austin and the University of Texas School of Social Work hosts its 2nd annual Chinese Culture camp this August and it's slated to be an extraordinary event. Co-directors Becky Harding and Rowena Fong, Ed.D, have designed five different "camps within a camp" to serve the needs of our FCC community. The 100 children on the roster will be joined by 15 college counselors, five high school assistant counselors, 22 teachers and almost 40 parent volunteers.

The camp will kick off on Monday morning with guest speaker Dallas high school senior, Laney Allison, who together with Charlotte Cotter, founded China's Children International, an organization designed to connect adoptees with each other. Laney will share her interest in global community with the camp then join the smaller classes for more discussion.

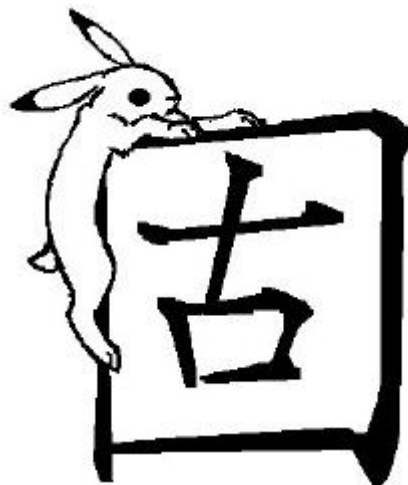
During the weeklong camp, the youngest group, the bunnies, will learn about the Chinese zodiac, build collages in their adoption journey class, read and keep the book *China ABCs*, have Mandarin class with area Chinese teacher Kathy Lin, learn about the lantern festival and sing Chinese songs with St. Stephen's choir director Rick Gabrillo.

The 1st and 2nd graders in the Monkey classes will learn about their province with Murchison Middle School Chinese teacher Robyn Stringfellow, read and keep the book *Star of the Week* by Darlene Friedman then make their own star posters. They will study Mandarin including some character writing. They will read a story about the Moon Festival with Lucia Markert, sample real moon cakes and make faux ones for decorations. They will play traditional Chinese games with Xiwei Chen as well as have chopstick practice and yo-yo time. They will make ribbon sticks and learn a dance choreographed by Alisan Turner.

The Pandas, children entering 3rd and 4th grade in the fall, will also learn about China's provinces from Robyn Stringfellow. They will read and keep the book *The Three Names of Me* by Mary Cummings and create their own life books. They will have chopstick races and time to practice the Chinese yo-yo. Orpheus School of Music teachers Wendy Kuo and Joyce Wu will teach a session in Asian music and Selma Lan from Marvelous Mandarin will help the pandas create scrolls. They will build a paper panda in a fun activity. This group will have Mandarin lessons as well as daily classes in the Choy Lay Fut Kung Fu style taught by Santanu Rahman from the Austin Kung Fu Academy.

The 5th and 6th grade Tigers will also practice chopstick races and the Chinese yo-yo. Wendy Kuo and Joyce Wu will teach the two oldest groups how to make (and eat!) dumplings. The tigers will build animal kites imported from Weifang, China. They will also make life books in their adoption journey session as well as host guest speaker Sarah Han, an adult Korean-American adoptee who has lived in China. They will read and keep the book *Stand Up for Yourself and Your Friends: Dealing with Bullies*. This class will have daily lion dance lessons with Linda Cao and Todd Morton of the Summitt Lion Dance Team.

The oldest group, the Dragons, will create a media project with iPad 2's in a class taught by Stacey Cone, Ph.D, a former CNN producer, and Yvonne Lim Wilson, the online editor of *Asian Austin*. They will also have Mandarin lessons, make dumplings and host Sarah Han. In addition, this class will learn mahjong taught by Jocelyn Lai and have time with YNN anchor/reporter Heidi Zhou Castro. Deanne Brown will coordinate the service project element again this year with each camper creating a pillow for the Texas Oncology program. Last year's camp play director, Fursey Gotuaco, will return to conduct team building with the older groups. Em Hardy, Ph.D., and Pat Morgan, LPC, will teach the adoption journey sessions. We will have a morning coffee cafe, camp shirts, and a Friday night celebration dinner. It should be an amazing event.



## Chinese Culture Camp

Families with Children from China  
The University of Texas School of Social Work  
The Northwest Hills United Methodist Church  
August 8-12, 2011

## Autumn Moon Festival



Ya know, it'll be here before you know it! It's our next big event, it's free, and non-members are welcome! We do hope you'll be able to join us once again.

This year's Moon Festival will be held on Sunday, September 11<sup>th</sup> from 4:30 to 7:30 at Central Market (4001 North Lamar Blvd., Austin, 78756).

There will be a performance by Austin's Texas Dragon Dance/Lion Dance Team, free moon cake samples, moon tattoos, a *fabulous* face painter (Allison McAlister, the same artist at our Dragonboat Festival booth), the annual launch of our bamboo raft led by the lion dancers to the water's edge, carrying the tea lights and good wishes of our children, not to mention the delicious food and drinks available at Central Market.

It was so nice last year to see our families truly enjoying themselves on a beautiful fall evening, relaxing while eating a wonderful meal, meeting other members, the kids laughing and playing all around us. But of course, this particular date in American history is a somber one, making the wishes made upon the tea lights that much more meaningful. So please come if you can; it's a lovely event!

## Lion Dance Workshop for Kids

FCC-Austin's very own Lion Dance Workshop for kids will be held on Sunday, September 25<sup>th</sup> at [Austin Kung Fu Academy](#) (7739 Northcross Dr., Suite G, Austin, 78757) from 2pm to 4pm, lead by instructor Rick Galione.

This event will be capped at 12 kids, ages 5 and up. The kids will be split up into a couple of groups, based on age. If there's an overwhelming response to this workshop, we'll have a second Lion Dance workshop to accommodate those children.

The cost will be approximately \$15/child for FCC members who pay before August 25<sup>th</sup>, and approximately \$20/child for non-FCC members or anyone who pays after August 25<sup>th</sup>. A registration site similar to the one set up for our annual Chinese New Year celebration will be available *very* soon for this event. It will have a waitlist component in case a second workshop is necessary.

If it turns out that we have some children who are truly passionate about learning lion dancing, playing the instruments used in lion dancing, etc., Sifu Santanu Rahman has agreed to collaborate with us to form a lion dance school for our kids! And we have agreed that it's not about the number of kids interested—it's about their level of passion for the art of lion dancing that will dictate whether this results in a lion dance school for FCC-Austin.

So, if your child is one of those kids who is just fascinated with the lion dancers seen at various events throughout the year, here's your chance to allow them to experience what it's like to be a lion dancer themselves!



**Note:** The 2–4pm timeframe will include a snack time. Sifu Santanu Rahman has kindly asked that the snack you provide your child is not messy... example: yogurt.

## Considering Hosting a Foreign Exchange Student?

Have you and your family been pondering the possibility of hosting? If so, by all means go to [our web site](#) as a first step in this process. If you have some general questions for those who've already successfully completed their hosting obligations of a Chinese foreign exchange student, our group of consultants—all FCC-Austin members and friends—are more than happy to help, *gratis*: [FCCAustinFESConsultants@yahoo.com](mailto:FCCAustinFESConsultants@yahoo.com).

If you would *definitely* like to host, now's the time to act! In addition to your search for an agency and student you feel would be compatible with your family, you should also contact the high school they would attend to find out the number of exchange students they have been allocated for the coming school year and how many vacancies remain.

## Braiding/Hair Techniques I: A Retrospect

By Kim Goodman

We had our first hair braiding event back in May, and needless to say, it was a good time! FCC Board Member Denise Davolt hosted the event at her home in Round Rock, and we feasted on the yummy mini cheesecakes, chocolate cookies, and packaged snacks she provided.

FCC Member Cara Schlegel kindly provided the materials and knowledge to walk us through one of the latest hair embellishment crazes: hair tinseling. It was a little tricky at first, but once we all got past the slip-knot step, the only other part that was a bit challenging was trying to tinsel a single, solitary hair, rather than a small clump of hair—no easy feat!

She also was an expert at both versions of French braiding: an underbraid and an overbraid. And she even demonstrated how to French braid sideways and along the front, as modeled by Hannah Raymond in the photo.



So, thank you Denise and Cara, for making this such a successful event!

Our second Braiding/Hair Techniques event is still in the works, and the date is narrowing down to either August 20<sup>th</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup>. I will provide further details only to those who've already expressed an interest as they evolve since this event is now full.

*Historically, married Chinese women wore their hair in a knot at the nape of the neck. Braids were worn long by young unmarried girls.*

## Considering the Mystery of DNA Testing and Adoption

by Jena Heath

*This article was published in the Austin-American Statesman on July 9, 2011 and is reprinted here with permission.*

Here's the thing I've discovered about motherhood: It's rarely what you expect that trips you up.

When my husband and I decided to adopt our daughter from China, I read volumes about everything that could go wrong. Encouraged by our adoption agency and what felt like a never-ending supply of books and advice from well-intentioned friends, I boned up on fetal alcohol syndrome, bonding and attachment, how to avoid failure as a bicultural family and other cheery topics that I've thankfully forgotten.

The wait for our daughter stretched from one year to three, leaving me plenty of time to scare myself—for no reason. From the moment Caroline was placed in my arms, she stuck to me like Velcro, and she ultimately relaxed into the loving and affectionate 5-year-old she is today. She was small, but otherwise perfectly healthy. We take a mommy-and-me Mandarin class, love our close friends from China and enjoy learning about Chinese culture and history. Austin has an active Chinese adoption community, so Caroline spends lots of time with families like ours.

So far, so good—except for those surprises.

China matches adopting couples with their children. Because we were an older couple, our agency explained, we were matched with an older child, not the year-old infant we had envisioned. This meant that I became the instant mother of a strong-willed, highly verbal 2-year-old. The excellent Chinese guide who shepherded us and 10 other American families through our three-week adoption trip made a point of translating Caroline's commands.

"She's saying, 'Play over here. Play over there,'" Veronica would tell me, looking mildly worried since my Mandarin stopped at the greeting "Ni hao."

When we got home, still fretting about bonding and attachment, I let Caroline steamroll over me for months until my mother, a wise observer, pulled me aside.

"She's attached to you; anyone can see it," she said after a particularly harrowing afternoon of unchecked misbehavior. "Stop attributing everything she does to the fact that she was abandoned, or you will have a spoiled 5-year-old on your hands." I set boundaries and stopped theorizing that every attempt Caroline made to push them was some unconscious reaction to being adopted.

I learned that nothing but time would make the preschool drop-off meltdown go away and that some people truly aren't kid people. I mourned lost and suspended friendships and moved on.

And then the day came when a friend told me about a Yahoo group she'd joined. The group allows adoptive parents of Chinese children to post photos of their kids in hopes of finding siblings. Wouldn't it be great if we could find biological relatives for our kids, my friend reasoned? Any such information is precious because the Chinese adoption system remains closed, with information about birth families strictly withheld from adoptees and their new parents.

I thought about it—hard—and decided that no, it wouldn't be great, not for me. For one thing, confirming any suspected blood connection would require a sibling DNA test, essentially, a high-tech probability game. The technology is advancing rapidly, however, says Brian Stuy, an adoptive father of Chinese daughters who runs [Research-China.org](http://Research-China.org), a Utah-based service that provides research for adoptive families hoping to learn more about their Chinese children's origins. Stuy has done some limited research for us, and we often talk about the issues facing our families.

Initially a skeptic, Stuy told me he has changed his mind about whether families should proceed with DNA testing. He believes that recent advances in the technology make it less likely that there will be false positives.

"The technology has improved in the last few years, actually in the last year or so, that I'm cautiously optimistic

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that a definitive test can be performed for sibling relationships,” he says. “Families that have tested with the old technology, however, should be extremely cautious about establishing relationships with other children” who might not be related after all.

I have other questions though. Say we found a suspected sibling and were satisfied that a DNA test result was accurate. What next? How would we forge such an intimate relationship with a family we might have nothing else in common with, one whose values we might not share, one we might not even like?

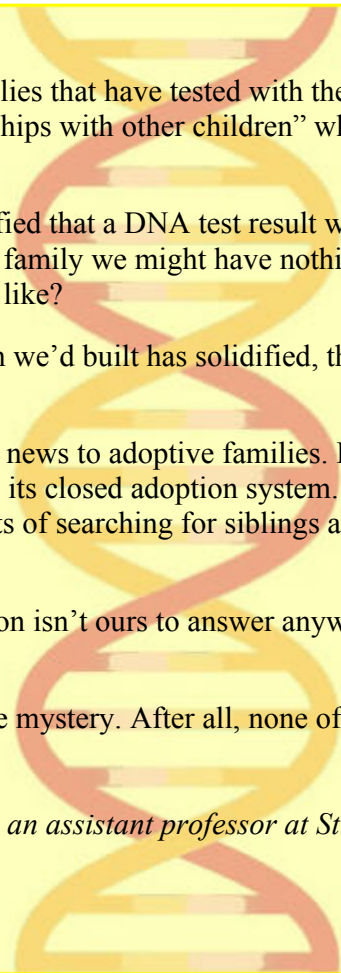
Far more importantly, how would we explain to Caroline, just as the foundation we’d built has solidified, that the family she knows isn’t the family she knows?

That the Internet and advances in DNA testing are transforming adoption is not news to adoptive families. It seems inevitable that, together, their sheer force could one day pressure China to open its closed adoption system. Until then, however, adoptive families are freelancing, weighing the risks and benefits of searching for siblings and even birth parents on their own.

There is no right answer, of course. In our house, we’ve decided that the question isn’t ours to answer anyway. It’s Caroline’s. When she’s older, if she wants to search, we’ll help her.

In the meantime, along with the surprises parenting brings, we’re embracing the mystery. After all, none of us truly knows where we come from.

*Jena Heath, a former reporter and editor at the Austin-American Statesman, is an assistant professor at St. Edward’s University. She can be reached at [jenaheath@gmail.com](mailto:jenaheath@gmail.com).*



## **Congratulations, Kathie!**

Cheers to FCC Board Member Kathie Tovo for running a great campaign! Her hard-earned win against incumbent Randi Shade to attain Place 3 on the Austin City Council was an arduous task that required a graceful, effective strategy and much tenacity. Kudos to you, Kathie!

## **Parent Support & International Adoption Specialist Jane Brown Returns to Austin**

Jane Brown, MSW, adoptive parent, author, and creator of Adoption Playshops, has been invited by FCC-Austin to host a weekend of her Adoption Playshops. These Playshops are designed to help families support their children as they explore and integrate their adoption history into their present and future lives. Jane’s last visit to Austin was over two years ago, and was wildly popular with both parents and children. We are hoping to have the Adoption Playshop in mid-November, pending final confirmation from Jane. Families with children in Culture Camp will find the Playshop especially helpful as a follow-up to the adoption activities in camp and questions children will surely have as they process camp experiences and start school in the fall. Check back on the FCC-Austin web site for more information on Playshop dates.

Jane Brown’s own web site, [www.janebrowntoronto.weebly.com](http://www.janebrowntoronto.weebly.com), has brief explanations of her philosophy and methods. Searching her name, Adoption Playshops, and other related terms will provide information in more depth about how to help our children navigate the questions and thoughts they have about their lives as international and transracial adoptees.

# The Birth Parent Chat...

By Pat Morgan, LPC

We had an excellent discussion at our June 4<sup>th</sup> Parent-to-Parent Series meeting on “Talking to Our Children About Birth Parents”. Our small group was led by FCC parents Diana Heath, Becky Harding, and myself, Pat Morgan. Everyone who attended came with good questions. The sharing was open and relaxed. We talked about how to broach the subject of birth parents with children ages 3 to 13.

I think we could summarize the discussion by saying it is important to know when to lead and when to follow when we deal with these topics with our kids. We should lead the discussion about birth parents with our kids for a number of reasons. We are transracial families. Any four-year-old can look at us and know that we are a family that was made by adoption. So questions come early! Our children need to be able to cope in some way with their ever inquisitive play mates. We as parents need to be able to start conversations about birth parents in gentle ways so this will never feel like a scary topic. Then we need to be able to follow our children’s lead when they have a direct question about their history. We also need to be attuned to our children and help them ask questions that maybe they don’t know how to ask at their stage of development. But just as important, we have to know when to leave this topic alone. Not everything is about adoption and birth parents!

As our conversation at the meeting progressed, it became very apparent that in talking about birth parents, children’s books are frequently used tools for opening this subject with our kids. Since this was to be an informal discussion and not a planned speaking event, we three leaders did not get together to plan how our discussion would go. I brought a stack of books. Diana Heath brought a stack of books. And many of our books were the same. There is about a four year difference in our daughters’ ages. My daughter is 13 and was adopted in 1998. Diana’s daughter was adopted a few years later.

But the number and quality of books about birth parents have really grown and developed since our daughters were small. We relied on *When You Were Born in China*. The book *I Love You Like Crazy Cakes* came out when my daughter was 3 or 4. It was a great revelation. I think Diana’s family got in on the second wave of “adopted from China books.” Now we have a plethora of reading material! And so many are really beautifully illustrated and well stated. I think our families are really lucky in this way. There are not so many for children adopted from American foster care and other situations.

I really liked this event. I so appreciate Becky Harding and Stacy Cone for envisioning it. I longed for something like this when Richard and I were new parents of a baby from China. I always thought FCC could provide something where parents just sat and shared from their hearts about our particular issues.

By the way, I found a really good article on talking about birth parents in the January/February 2011 edition of *Adoptive Families Magazine*. If you are not a subscriber, check it out on their web site: [adoptivefamilies.com](http://adoptivefamilies.com).

*Pat Morgan is a Licensed Professional Counselor who specializes in adoption-related issues in children and adults. She is a former FCC board member.*





For those end of summer road trips and last minute weekend getaways, Katie Malinski offers these great travel tips.

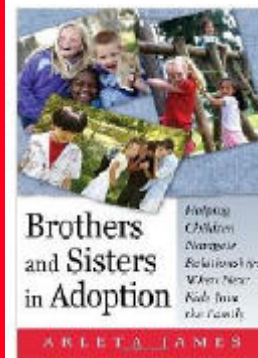
Yay summer vacation! Are you planning a trip with your family somewhere this summer? If so, here are a few tips for making things go a little more smoothly.

- ✓ Remember that when you bring your kids, it's a "trip," not a "vacation." You'll still be working plenty, so set your expectations accordingly. (Travel is work for kids, too, btw.)
- ✓ Plan some down-time for every day.
- ✓ Are you staying with friends or family? Then plan 'away-time,' where just you and your immediate family are together, maybe even every day. Also, consider exchanging some info with your hosts ahead of time, like the rules of their house, and your kids' sleep habits, etc.
- ✓ Consider planning individual, away-from-your-kids time if you and your partner can swing it. Expect some behavioral regression. Being away from home, eating strange foods, constant novelty—these things are fun but wearing. Do yourself and your kids a favor and don't worry too much when/if they happen. Stay calm, and switch to Plan B (downtime).
- ✓ Talk with children ahead of time about what will happen on the trip, including the good, and the bad. Explain what they are likely to encounter at the airport, or the lines at Disney, or how Grandma's house has breakables.
- ✓ Give kids a basic daily agenda each morning ("Today, we are going to take a boat tour, and see Uncle Mike, and walk through a big park") so they know what to expect.
- ✓ You set the tone for emotion. Try to project a calm, flexible, adventurous vibe when things go wrong.
- ✓ Make sure to leave yourself at one day after your trip to recover, before anyone has to go back to work/school/routines. More is better if you can.

And one more: Enjoy yourself, loosen up, have fun!!

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*, and more.

Katie blogs about parenting and therapy at [www.katiemalinski.com/blog](http://www.katiemalinski.com/blog), and about Teaching Healthy Sexuality to Children at: [www.BeyondBirdsandBees.com](http://www.BeyondBirdsandBees.com). You can sign up for her free parenting newsletter at [www.KatieMalinski.com](http://www.KatieMalinski.com).



BOOK REVIEW:  
***Brothers and Sisters in Adoption***

Reviewed by  
Abby Turner

Don't be led astray by the title of this wonderful resource by Arleta James. *Brothers and Sisters in Adoption* is a comprehensive coverage of adoption from pre-placement planning through coping with common problems post-placement. James includes a great deal of information on helping the children who are already in the family, but she also has plenty of help for parents and the adoptee who is experiencing difficulties.

I wish I had read this book before I began on my adoption journey. However, I also benefited from her wisdom 13 years post placement. Adopted children often suffer complex traumas. They bring their painful ways of coping into your family. Families in crisis often get stuck in their day-to-day difficulties without realizing they can adjust and improve. In *Brothers and Sisters*, there are pages of ideas on how to get help and where to find it. How to choose the right therapists and adjust your expectations are just two of the areas examined in detail. Every family member is included and encouraged to participate. I particularly enjoyed her areas of Sibling Talk. These are quotes from siblings of adoptees offering their unique perspectives.

I would certainly recommend this book to anyone whose child is experiencing attachment or other difficulties "fitting" into the family.





# Kung Fu Culture

By Santanu Rahman

It is very exciting for kids to be involved in a martial arts class. They get to do punches, kicks, blocks, and acrobatic techniques in a safe environment.

It is in the media quite a bit, from TV, movies, videos, video games, and books. With films such as *Kung Fu Panda* and children's books such as *Little Bunny Kung Fu*, martial arts is everywhere around children.

As such, there are many kids martial arts programs at martial arts schools. Generally, good kids programs spend some time making sure kids understand proper etiquette, respect, focus, self-discipline, and self-control with their training.

Where Austin Kung Fu Academy differs is that we also are adamant about making sure our students learn about the Chinese culture from which their art came.

Again, there are many kids martial arts programs in Austin, but not too many that really have a strong foundation into Chinese culture.

We teach a style of Kung Fu called Choy Lay Fut. It is one of the most popular styles of Kung Fu in Hong Kong today, and we make sure the kids all know where it comes from, what its traditions are, its history, and the Cantonese terminology.

When the kids learn a routine, they will be able to say what its name is in Cantonese, know its historical significance, and be able to call out each movement in Cantonese.

Lineage is very important for the kids to understand, as well. They will learn who the founder of Choy Lay Fut Kung Fu is, and who it was passed down to, and what generation they are, in the lineage chart.

It is very important in Chinese culture to show respect to your teachers, so we demonstrate that by teaching them about and acknowledging the past masters. Every child will understand and realize that what they are receiving is rare, and that it is a privilege to have an art form of such a high level of authenticity.

There are several kids who have made it to Black Belt, and have earned leadership positions. To the rest of the kids, if that Black Belt is a boy, he is their "Sihing", which literally means, "Older Kung Fu Brother". If the Black Belt is a girl, she is their "Sijeh", or "Older Kung Fu Sister".

Kung Fu styles were family secrets that were originally kept within the family, as it got passed down the generations. When it started becoming more public, the culture and titles still retained the family atmosphere. For example, the word for the head teacher is "Sifu". But Sifu doesn't just mean "teacher". It literally means, "Father-Teacher". It is a profound title, in that not only will the Sifu teach you Kung Fu techniques, but also how the training process applies to be successful in other endeavors and ultimately, life.



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The culture of Chinese martial arts espouses how to make good choices and smart decisions, and how to learn from mistakes. Kung Fu is actually seen as a scholarly pursuit, in China. The skills don't come overnight, it takes a lot of patience, practice, and resiliency.

Perhaps the best explanation is in the name of itself, compared to the names of some of the other types or martial arts. Karate means "empty hand" in Japanese. Tae Kwon Do means "the way of the foot and fist". Ju Jitsu means "gentle technique". All of these definitions are specific to the physical attributes of the art. This is where the Chinese martial arts differ. Kung Fu literally means, "skill acquired through time and effort". The style practiced at Austin Kung Fu Academy, Choy Lay Fut, are the combined surnames of the founder's teachers, again, demonstrating the high amount of respect given towards teachers in Chinese culture.



Kung Fu is featured in many popular movies.

The kids are given opportunities to go on field trips to Chinese martial arts events, such as demonstrations and competitions, to see the larger world of Kung Fu. This tends to impress upon the kids that there are others like them around the world, who are as devoted to their practice as they are.

The kids classes at Austin Kung Fu Academy are age-specific, as kids tend to do better with their peers. They are at similar growth developmental stages, thus, the classes are carefully structured in accordance to it. It is one of the many measures taken to make sure that the kids reach a high level of skill, acquired through time and effort. In other words, train them to have good Kung Fu!

### ***DO YOU KNOW LEONARD?***

Do you know Leonard? He's the child in China at Shepherd's Field Children's Village that your FCC membership dues are helping to sponsor this year. We recently received a letter from the Phillip Hayden Foundation with an update on Leonard. We're including it here so that you can follow how Leonard is doing and how your participation in FCC is making a big difference to a child.

"Leonard continues to do very well and he greets everyone who approaches him with a big smile. His special need is called Osteomalacia and he has remained unchanged with this underlying condition. He is a sweet little boy and we praise God for the wonderful love and care he is getting at Shepherd's Field Children's village."

If you would like to mail a package to Leonard for any holidays or for his birthday (12/20/2006), please mail packages to the address below and put Leonard's English name and other information on the inside *and* the outside of the package so the staff at the children's village knows who it belongs to. There is no obligation whatsoever to send a gift. We are simply including this information for those who wish to contribute.

Shepherd's Field Children's Village  
 Jinyuan Rd #26  
 Da Wang Gu Development Zone  
 Wuqing, Tianjin 301712  
 English Name: Leonard  
 Chinese Name: Ling Daiwei  
 Birthday: 12/20/2006  
 House: House of Blessings



## Family Focus: Helping Our Kids Blossom

Those of us with adopted children have been given amazing blessings. For a few short years we will have the privilege of guiding and nurturing them before they embark down their individual paths. For me, parenting has been the most rewarding—and most challenging—endeavor of my life.

Parenting a child who has been affected by institutionalization creates unique opportunities. Far too often, adoptive parents are unaware that our children have special needs... not necessarily the kind of special needs that require school intervention, but needs that will benefit from our awareness and parental intervention.

Let me offer my own story—anonymously to protect our family's privacy—with the hope that it will encourage parents to trust their intuition.

I have two daughters from China. My older daughter sometimes experienced what I called “dino brain,” so I tried a few alternative approaches to calm her down on these rare occasions. Otherwise, she was a typical child and I never delved deeper. My second daughter from China was my left-handed, right brained, spirited child, and I never thought more of it, at least not until someone commented that she was just like their younger brother with ADHD.

When my daughters were 9 and 13, I began my search into how they were wired, hoping this information could help me do a better job of parenting. A psychologist administered a battery of neuro-psychological tests on both girls that resulted in several diagnoses, including ADHD. I changed schools for the younger child and approached the older child's rigorous, private school about accommodations. (Because she is very smart, I had no idea how hard my older daughter had compensated and struggled, just to pay attention.)

I started the younger daughter in occupational therapy and discovered she had vision problems in spite of always testing 20/20 on the optometrist's exams. This led to vision testing for both girls and the realization that they had issues which could be addressed through vision therapy, such as an inability to change focus from the board to the desk—a crucial skill for successful note taking.

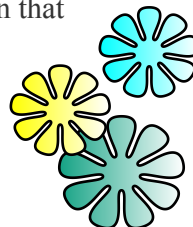
With great hesitancy, I consulted with a psychiatrist about medication and decided to give it a try. My 14-year-old really wanted to try medication and has clearly benefited from a low dose. My younger daughter had a less positive reaction; even though her concentration improved with a low dose, her emotions became less controllable. (This helped me see the depth of the anxiety that she deals with each day.) Both girls took the medication for a short time and are not taking anything this summer.

I had always planned to start family therapy with a therapist who specialized in adoption issues but never quite got around to it. Now that I am more aware of my kids and their emotional make up, the need to prioritize therapy has become more pressing.

All these interventions can become overwhelming and expensive. Certainly one approach to raising our children is to realize that every one of us has “issues”, and we cope just fine with them. Another approach is to become curious about which issues are ones that can improve with a bit of intervention.

I am now taking the latter route and trying to discover where I intervene and where I accept my wonderful daughters just the way they are. My only regret is that I was not aware of their unique neurological wiring when they were younger and their brains were more malleable.

Our children are amazing blessings. We have been entrusted with guiding them for a few short years. I encourage all parents—not just those with adopted children—to be curious and aware. If you think your child might benefit from a little extra help, trust your intuition and delve deeper.





**Dragon Boat Festival in April**



**Dr. Chang film screening in April**

# 2011 FCC Summer Family Event Series in Pictures



**June New Families Gathering at Central Market**



**FCC families at the Waco Mayborn Museum in July**

**Rowena Fong, Ed.D, hosted a Mahjong lesson for interested FCC members in June**

