

## Providing a Scholarship to a Chinese Orphan

By Lia Savage

I have always been thankful of the opportunities I have in America that I would not have if I remained an orphan in China. Adopted from the Jiangxi Province at 13 months old, I realize how fortunate my circumstances are and have held a longstanding desire to give back to orphans still in China.

The project itself began as an assignment for the International Baccalaureate program, a program I am in at my



Fundraising promotional materials.

high school, but soon shifted into a more personal project. Partnering with my friend Emma during our junior year, we brainstormed ideas of what we wanted to do to help an orphan in China. Eventually, we decided on sponsoring a child's education with a scholarship. Since education is such an important part in both of our lives, we knew this was one of the best ways we could impact someone's life.

Additionally, as the Chinese government does not provide the funds for higher education for those in the orphanage system, we knew that this may be the students' only opportunity to secure a better future.

From that point on, we worked with Dr. Peggy Gurrad and the Amity Foundation to find an orphan in need of a scholarship in the Jiangxi province. In the end, we chose H.D., a 17-year old boy from the Nanchang SWI. The same age as us, Emma and I made it our goal to raise all

of the \$650 needed to provide him a two-year scholarship to vocational school. To do so, we asked friends and family for donations as well as sold buttons and magnets to students at our high school. The design on the buttons showcased the Chinese character for "opportunity" because ultimately, that's what we hoped to give him. We started the fundraising process mid-May 2016 and in a little less than a month, ended up raising over \$800!

Meanwhile, my family was planning a heritage trip to China, and we were able to get in contact with Ms. Tan, the director of the Nanchang SWI. She graciously allowed us to schedule a meeting with H.D. when we were there. The meeting itself was a great experience as we were the first people to tell him about his scholarship and were able to get to know him a bit. Although he was a little shy, he shared that some of his favorite hobbies included chess and drawing, and that he hoped to study math when he went to school. Overall, this project not only helped someone in need by providing a great educational opportunity, but it also helped me fulfill a personal need to give back to someone whose same shoes I could have been in.



Lia (third from right), meeting H.D. and his foster mother on a recent trip to China with her adoptive family.