



# Jiangxi China Orphan Aid

*Altrusa International of Longview-Kelso Foundation*

*working together with Amity Foundation in China*

## Heritage Trip:

### Guixi adoptee visits her Altrusa-sponsored foster family

*By Lori, Emeili's adoptive mom*

It took a village and two years, but we finally put all the pieces together. Peggy Gurrad was raising money for Jiangxi orphanages by offering Mother's Day cards with the option of donating in honor of your mother. I jumped at the chance to help the foster parent programs in Jiangxi because we had been told our daughter had been in foster care from the time she was 10 days old. But when we got to China, the director of the Guixi Social Welfare Institution told us that the info we had been given was incorrect—she had been in the orphanage the whole time.



Emeili, center, surrounded by her first foster family.

But when I told Peggy Emeili's Chinese name, Guo Hui Peng, she said she thinks that her Amity and Altrusa Foundation had sponsored Emeili in foster care. She said the only problem was that she had sent the files to a volunteer in California.

The volunteer was willing to look, but was having a medical crisis, and then was in the middle of a big move. But one day, she wrote me an email and attached were three foster care records. There was my little Emeili, "Guo Hui Peng," in the arms of a sweet older lady. The time stamps of the photo put Emeili at two months of age. She had been fostered after all.



The volunteer led us to the lady in New York who had actually paid the fees and sponsored the foster care for our daughter. We called her immediately and met her at Duke University, where her daughter was attending school. It was so awesome to be able to tell her "thank you" in person, and she was as sweet and wonderful as you can imagine.

Next, we had to contact the foster family to see if we could come and visit them. I asked our guide Tina, who had been our translator and guide to Guixi on our first orphanage visit, to go to the Mangzhou village and see if the family would like to



meet us. A few weeks later, Tina had very sad news for us. Emeili's foster mother, Jiang Chunfeng, had passed away in 2013. We were so sad to hear this, but Tina said she had other news. The Wang family—Jiang Chunfeng's husband and their very large family—really wanted to see "Hui Peng" again, and were excited to have us come to their village to meet them.

Emeili was accepted to a month-long Summer China Program through her school, Wesley International, to study Mandarin for

a month at Nanjing University. So we planned for me to pick her up after her program in Shanghai and head back to Guixi to meet her "First Family," which is what Chinese people call the Foster Family.

We met up with Tina, who was to serve as our guide and translator, and went to the orphanage. We asked them to look in her file to see if there was any record of Emeili having a foster family. The Director said the information was still not in her file and had no explanation of why it was not there.



So we walked 100 yards down the road and there we were, the village where Emeili spent her first year of life!! The Wang family is big: they had four sons and a daughter, 10 grandchildren, and scores of great grandchildren. Mr. Wang is now 82, a retired farmer. He was so excited to see "Hui Peng," as were all his children, and some of the older children who remembered the little baby the family had fostered.

The family invited us to dinner, and

Mr. Wang told us how he use to bounce Emeili on his knee while he ate his meals. He told us they had fostered other babies, but Emeili was the first to come back. During the meal, Mr. Wang kept toasting Emeili and making sure she did not burn herself on the hot food or eat something too spicy.

He never went to school, but he knew how to write his name, so Mr. Wang was proud to write his name in Emeili's sketch book, and he gave her 100 yuan as a gift. I am in communication on WECHAT with a Wang granddaughter who was 20 when Emeili lived with them, and we are already making plans to have Hot Pot next time we come to visit.

