

Words simply cannot describe the amount of things that I have learned from this experience. I am so grateful to have been able to spend the past five days visiting and teaching at the orphanage. Throughout the week, I had not only learned about the culture of China, but I had also discovered more about myself. Most importantly, however, I had witnessed and felt the power of love radiating from the organization.

Before this trip, I had little knowledge of the diverse ethnic groups in China. However, visiting here allowed me to appreciate each ethnic group and their individual cultures. For instance, we enjoyed musical pieces performed on the Mongolian Matouqin instrument and learned the traditional Uyghur dances. These outstanding performances demonstrated the rich history and culture of the different ethnic groups of China.

Furthermore, this place is where all the diverse cultures are respected. Each and every child with their own culture add to the harmony of the organization. It is as if pieces of colorful threads were woven together into a breathtaking quilt.

Throughout this experience I was touched by the love that the children have for each other as well as for us as it went beyond the boundaries of age, language, ethnicity and nationality.

I remember the BBQ festival we attended on the first day of our visit. During that time, a girl with blond hair and others welcomed me warmly. I was surprised at how friendly these children were to us. As the days went by, the children and I formed unbreakable bonds as we shared our knowledge and our jokes.

On the last day, one of the girls gifted me her favorite plush doll while one of the boys bought me a drink with his own hard-earned money. When he handed me the drink, I was overwhelmed with emotions. It made me realize that although the time we spent together was short, we had become brothers and sisters in heart.

Moreover, we are so much more privileged than these children, yet, we complain about the little things in life. In contrast, the children here chose to give us their most precious belongings. I want to spread this love to the people around me.

Lastly, I would like to thank those who made this possible. This includes my parents, Mr. Ma and his team. This was truly the experience of a lifetime. In Xinjiang, we made so many unforgettable memories together. Without the support of AE and the others, this trip would not have been possible.

-Judy