

## **Project Tomorrow**

49.6% of all children living in Chinese orphanages today, from newborn to 18 years of age, are children with different kinds of physical handicaps, according to the Chinese Ministry of Civil Affairs. These children not only have less of a chance for adoption, but also face the much bigger battle and challenge of daily survival, both in and out of the orphanage. In order to “further demonstrate its commitment to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child,” the Ministry of Civil Affairs, together with the China Charity Federation, the largest charitable organization in China, the Chinese Social Workers Association, and the China Center of Adoption Affairs, launched in May 2004 the Handicapped and Orphaned Children’s Medical Operation Project, also called Project Tomorrow. The goal of the project is to “provide timely and quality medical surgery to orphanage children so as to save their lives, reduce their pain, and increase their chances for better living, education, and adoption.” (<http://www.mca.cn>)

The goal of the Project is to raise 600,000,000 RMB (about \$75,000,000) in three years, which will provide medical surgery to 30,000 orphanage children suffering from physical handicaps such as heart diseases, spinal deformities, missing limbs, and cleft lip and palate, etc. The Ministry of Civil Affairs has promised to allocate 100,000,000 RMB (\$12,000,000) each year from the fund generated through the National Welfare Lottery, an increasingly popular lottery in China nowadays. The rest of the funding will be raised through provincial and city level welfare lotteries, as well as through contributions from around the world.

The significance of Project Tomorrow is that it is the first time in Chinese history that the government is taking a specific and real action nationwide to address the serious medical issues among orphanage handicapped children that not only threaten their life but marginalize their chance for adoption. It is another clear sign that international adoption in the past decade has helped to bring to light the issues of Chinese orphanages. The government and society as a whole are making serious efforts and taking concrete steps to improve the livelihood of these orphaned and abandoned children.

CCAI is working with the Ministry of Civil Affairs to contribute to Project Tomorrow and to ensure that donors’ contributions go directly to the children.