



Families With Children from China Winter Newsletter 2011 Austin, Texas

Letter from the Prez...

When we were first considering adopting a child from China, I was completely overwhelmed by the thought of traveling to the other side of the world and parenting so far away from my supportive circle. I called my friend Liz for advice, as she has two children from Korea. Liz explained that she met her children in the Detroit airport as they were escorted from Korea by representatives from their adoption agency. She was wildly enthusiastic about our opportunity to actually go to our child's country of birth. She told me I would be able to share so many details about China with my child having been there and experienced it, as opposed to her not-too-glamorous journey to the motor city. That conversation changed everything about my perspective. Fear transformed into excitement and I came to embrace the opportunity. And she was right. I loved parenting in China where all we had to do was love on the baby, eat amazing food and see the wonders of China.

And so now, even though I am somewhat overwhelmed by this last month of holiday season, I look forward to the next few weeks and Chinese New Year with that same perspective of opportunity. I am grateful that my family gets to wear our beautiful Chinese clothes, go to a celebration with other families that sorta look like ours, do and see fun and interesting activities, and then eat a great Asian meal together with a community of friends.

Yes, it's a lot of work, but just like the trip to China, so very, very worth it.

Becky

*Becky Harding
FCC Austin
president*

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Mark Your Calendars

FCC Chinese New Year
Saturday, January 22, 2011

China Care
Sunday, January 30, 2011
Sunday, February 13, 2011
Sunday, February 27, 2011
Sunday, March 27, 2011
Sunday, April 10, 2011

AKA Meeting
Monday, February 21, 2011

Attachment Workshop Part 2
Sunday, February 27, 2011

FCC Culture Camp
August 8 - 12, 2011

Why Renew? - It's more than just numbers.

By Stacy Cone

Why Renew Your FCC Membership in 2011? If you renew your family's membership at Chinese New Year, you'll pay \$26. If not, you'll pay the standard rate of \$30, no matter when you renew.

Thirty dollars is not a huge sum, but why do it? Why give up the dough? What's in it for you? You could probably throw that money in a thousand different directions. Right? Let's just think.... You could put gas in the car. Nice. Treat yourself to a special lunch. That'd be nice, too. Or maybe take the kids to a movie next weekend. Sweet! But take a minute to think again....



FCC membership buys you all the stuff you already know. Participation, entry, access, and/or discount rates to all our annual events and special events throughout the year. In years past, this has meant such things as trips with other FCC families to tour exhibits such as the Terracotta Warriors in Houston and/or weekend-long seminars with the adoption expert Jane Brown. This last year, it meant a chance to meet and hear speak the Chinese adoptee and author Meiling Hopgood, whose book about meeting her birth family in China captivated many FCC readers. Members this year also had the unique chance to meet and view the work of Dr. Changfu Chang, the "professor of adoption films," whose film portrayed adoption from the perspective of birth parents in China.

All that should be worth just \$26-\$30 to you.

But we all know that FCC membership gives you more than those things. Much more. We're talking the kind of things that you don't and *can't* put a price on.

How much is it worth to belong to a community of families that all have the remarkable quality of being multi-cultural in the same way yours has?

What price do you put on the chance to meet and learn from other parents making the same journey?



How much should it cost to find out how other families celebrate the special occasions that we all cherish—like family day?

How much would you pay to be able to find parents who can help you navigate and think about the big and small child-rearing concerns and challenges we so often face?

What price for our playgroups? Our growing library? Our myriad developing interconnections to one another?

What price for our children to grow up knowing one another—children with nearly identical histories, circumstances, birth stories, and adoption journeys?

Is any of that worth \$26-\$30 this year?

FCC is important to you—to all of us—in inestimable ways. Our numbers matter. Our connections to one another matter. But in a larger context, we are not *just* a community. We are part of something even bigger. A social force. A social phenomenon even. With local activity and a national presence. As an organization, we are not without political potential. And therefore, we are all of us stronger together in every way than we are apart. Together we help one another. Together we grow. Together we learn. Together we move forward in ways that help, encourage and promote the welfare of our children and of our very special families.

Is there a price you can put on that?

...continued on page 3

What's priceless....

Membership in the FCC is an extension of the red thread that binds my daughter to our family--it binds our family to the greater community of families much like ours. Besides providing interesting social occasions and connections, the FCC also demonstrates that we are a social force--one to be reckoned with!

~ Esther Teller

I can't imagine raising Sophie without FCC.

~ Pat Nealon

I love FCC because its board (not counting me, a new member) has always been focused on supporting all of our kids through cultural events and proactive community building.

~ Alan Greenberg

My FCC membership has put me in touch with the pertinent resources I need at each stage of my daughters' life. From providing opportunities to experience Chinese culture to helping with understanding and managing the issues that my daughters experience as part of a multi-racial family, FCC has always been there to help me.

~ Karen Bondy

"An invisible red thread connects those who are destined to meet, regardless of time, place, or circumstance. The thread may stretch or tangle, but will never break." --An ancient Chinese belief"



CHINESE NEW YEAR RETURNS TO COVINGTON MIDDLE SCHOOL



Date and Time: Mark Saturday, January 22, 2011 from 2 pm to 5:30 pm on your calendar as our community will celebrate the Year of the Rabbit at Covington Middle School in south Austin. Please then join us afterwards for dinner at the Buffet Palace - West Gate.

On Line Tickets: On line registration begins on Wednesday, January 5, 2011. Go to our web site www.main.org/fccaustin/ to the events section to secure and pay for your tickets to the event. This is also an excellent time to renew your membership and get a price break to this and all our events and you can do it all at the same time and web location. Please note - *Everyone pays the non-member prices at the door the day of the event.*

Slide Show: Stacey Cone will again create a nifty slide show that runs before the entertainment portion of the celebration. If you would like to contribute some photographs to this slide show, email those images to her at FCC.CNY@gmail.com. These are for this one-time only slide show and will not appear anywhere else or on the Internet.

Crafts: We have brought back the free children's crafting to this event. Volunteers from the University of Texas China Care organization, led by play group president Lucy Liu, will be in the cafeteria hosting four crafting stations. Cheryl Dragel and Robin Davis will coordinate rabbit face painting, chop stick character frames to build, card stock with your name in Mandarin available and another chance to create a prayer flag wish. We will also have free snacks available in the cafeteria.

When you arrive at Covington Middle School, you will see strings of prayer flags decorating the inside and outside of the building inscribed with symbols, prayers, good wishes, uplifting thoughts, and drawings created by adults and children from our community. Based on the Tibetan monk tradition of planting and hanging, these decorated fabrics offer a wish for harmony in the universe. We have had children and adults from the China Care play groups contribute to these strings as well as students from Ms. Robyn Stringfellow's Mandarin classes at Murchison Middle School. The opportunity is still available to anyone as we will have a space in the cafeteria with materials for drawing or writing wishes and helping us send positive energy to the winds.

Time Schedule:

- 2 pm - 3 pm Registration, Silent Auction, Barefoot books for sale, the FCC Library, photography and Year of the Rabbit t-shirts for sale in the main building lobby, children's crafts and free Snacks in the cafeteria in the main building and Taiko drumming in courtyard
- 3 pm - 4 pm Slide show and Entertainment (see separate article) in the auditorium of the Fine Arts building
- 4 pm - 5:30 pm April Rain School of Chinese Dance leads us in a community dance in the courtyard, then the Lion dancers perform in the courtyard
- 5:30 pm Everyone heads to dinner at The Buffet Palace - West Gate



CNY ENTERTAINMENT LINEUP FOR 2011

By Kim Goodman

On January 22nd at Covington Middle School. Doors open at 2 p.m. beginning with a silent auction, along with books for sale from Barefoot Books, and our very own Abby Turner will be present if some wish to peruse FCC-Austin's Loaner Library.

We have many items available for the silent auction. All proceeds from the auction go to charitable foundations like Half the Sky, China Care, the Philip Hayden foundation, Love Without Boundaries, and Grant Me a Chance. Payment may be made by cash or check and some of the silent auction items include:

- ☞ several "date night" packages, which will include a gift certificate for a local restaurant, movie tickets and babysitting compliments of China Care;
- ☞ a necklace from Sunfluer designs ([view Barbara's work online](#));
- ☞ an American Girl Bitty Baby;
- ☞ some lovely papercuts (pandas, hummingbirds, flowers);
- ☞ children's and adult books on Chinese culture and/or adoption;
- ☞ and numerous other dolls, jewelry, puzzles



Photographer Jim Garrison (<http://www.jhmg.net>) will be on hand from 2:00-3:00 p.m. for those wishing to have family portraits taken in their Chinese finery. At 2:30 p.m., Austin Taiko Drum will mark the beginning of our entertainment portion with their annual appearance, followed by a slideshow inside the auditorium of our beautiful kids and families.



We have also confirmed performances by students from Murchison Middle School. Some of Chinese teacher Robin Stringfellow's students will perform with Chinese yo-yos, Santanu Rahman and Vicki Kix of Austin Kung Fu Academy will perform a martial arts piece set to music. In addition, some of the current board members' children will provide a lion dance/acrobatic piece.

Some of Terri Xiang's Chinese Preschool students from 77 Mandarin Preschool (<http://77mandarinschool.com>) will perform finger plays and a Happy New Year song. Terri also will be on hand throughout the entertainment piece of our celebration in the cafeteria area to help with our little ones who just might get a little restless. She intends to have a calligrapher on hand and provide a craft for the children wherein she'll create mock Chinese passports complete with various Chinese stamps.

Refreshments will be available as well, such as Mandarin oranges. A Tibetan dance, Little Horses dance, and Happy New Year dance will be provided by the April Rain Chinese Dance School, and we have confirmed two performances by the For the Love of China dancers: a wonderful Fan dance and a *spectacular* Ribbon dance. Finally, expect to see the Texas Dragon Dance/Lion Dance Team wow the crowd as they always do, to cap off what promises to be this truly magical event. See you there!

Covington Middle School
3700 Convict Hill Road
Austin, TX 78749
[Click for Google Map](#)



Other Central Texas CNY Celebrations

CNY at Wells Branch

Saturday, January 15 11 am to 12pm, FREE Admission

Wells Branch Public Library, Austin, TX

See a live Dragon Dance performance and learn about the Chinese New Year holiday and traditions.

[Asian American Cultural Center CNY Festival](#)

Saturday, January 29, 2011, 10:00 a. m. to 3:00 p. m. FREE Admission

11713 Jollyville Road, Austin, TX

There will be different Asian cultural performances of dance, music, martial arts demonstration, calligraphy, Lion Dance and authentic Asian foods for the entire family to enjoy throughout the day.

[Chinese New Year Wine Dinner](#)

Saturday, Feb 5 5:30 pm to 8:30pm, \$60/Person

Flat Creek Estate Vinyard and Winery, Marble Falls, TX

Join Flat Creek Estate Saturday, February 5, for a Chinese New Year celebration. Learn to pair wines with traditional Chinese dishes and sample a little Chinese Rice Wine. After class, enjoy a 3-Course meal at The Bistro. Price includes Education, Wine & Dinner

[Austin Chinatown Center CNY Festival](#)

Sunday February 6, 2011, 11am, FREE Admission

Austin Chinatown Center

10901 N. Lamar, Austin, TX

Traditional fire crackers, two lion dancer teams, Kiwi the Clown.

[Austin Central Market Cooking School - N. Lamar](#)

Class time Monday, Feb 7 6:30 - 9:30 pm \$65

4001 North Lamar Boulevard, Ste. 100, Austin, TX

Welcome the New Year as you prepare these festive, traditional dishes with Dorothy by your side. Menu includes: Tiny Shrimp Spring Rolls in Lettuce Wraps; Lobster & Vegetable Stir Fry; Steamed Salmon with Black Bean Garlic Sauce; Sesame Chicken; and Chinese New Year Sweet Treats.

San Antonio CNY Gala

Saturday, February 12, 2011, 6pm

Carver Community Cultural Center, 226 N. Hackberry, San Antonio, TX

San Antonio Chinese Alliance (SACA) and Confucius Institute (CI) at UTSA are co-hosting the 2011 Chinese New Year's Celebration Evening Gala at the Carver Community Cultural Center in downtown San Antonio. The Evening Gala will be a spectacular Chinese stage performance exhibiting Chinese culture and arts through classical Chinese musical instruments, vocal music, dance, magic, martial arts, calligraphy, and much more.

Adoption Knowledge Affiliates Meeting Features FCC Dad Michael Davolt

*Being Adopted, Meeting the Birth Family, and Adopting:
One Man's Life Experience and Knowledge of Adoption*

Monday, February 21st at 7 pm
Westover Hills Church, 8332 Mesa Drive, Austin

FCC member Michael Davolt will share some of his life lessons about being adopted, reuniting with birth parents & siblings, and parenting adopted children from two cultures in this free AKA meeting. He brings his unique perspective to the February AKA meeting, which promises to be engaging and compelling.

FCC Offers Attachment Workshop Part 2*

Date: Sunday, February 27, 2011

When: 4:30 pm–6:30 pm

Where: Austin Kung Fu Academy (North-Central Austin)

Where 7739 Northcross Drive, Suite G, 78757

Cost: Free to FCC members, \$7/person to non-members

Registration: Email your interest in participating to Pat Morgan at pat@bluestarcounseling.com.

Presenters: Em Hardy, Ph.D., and Pat Morgan, LPC

This workshop was a highlight of last year's educational offerings so we have asked area therapists Em Hardy, Ph.D. and Pat Morgan, LPC to revisit, extend and expand their dialogue about attachment and adoption. If you came to the workshop last year, please join us again and if you would like to attend for the first time, you are certainly welcome to participate as well. This is an adults-only event. Topics include but are not limited to:

- What are the symptoms of attachment disorder and attachment issues?
- How do I know if my child's behavior is traditional development or something related to attachment?
- Strategies to enhance bonding with your child
- Helpful parenting techniques

Em Hardy, Ph. D, is an Austin psychologist/psychotherapist/consultant with a speciality in adoption, attachment, and bonding. Since obtaining her Ph.D. in psychology from Michigan State University, she has had over 25 years of varied experience, including training with the Attachment and Bonding Center (ABC) of Ohio, and is a registered clinician with ATTACH.org. Prior to moving to Austin, she had an independent practice for many years in Colorado.

Pat Morgan, LPC, is a licensed professional counselor and has a full-time private practice where she works with children and adults. She specializes in therapy with individuals who have trauma and attachment issues. Pat and her husband, Richard, have a daughter adopted from Jiangxi province. She recently served two years on the FCC leadership board.

***Note: The workshop is capped at 20 participants.**



Off the Beaten Path... CNY Resources around the Web

The History Channel has a page devoted to Chinese New Year, including videos, photos, and articles. <http://www.history.com/topics/chinese-new-year>

Eating China is a blog devoted to Chinese food -- history, articles, recipes and interesting factoids all about food. <http://eatingchina.com/index.htm>

Activities and printable items for the kiddos
http://www.activityvillage.co.uk/chinese_new_year.htm

FCC and UT School of Social Work Chinese Cultural Camp 2011

DATE: August 8 - 12, 2011 from 9 am to 2:30 pm with a Friday night celebration dinner from 6 pm - 9 pm

LOCATION: The Northwest Hills United Methodist Church at 7050 Village Center @ Far West Blvd.

REGISTRATION: Materials available on the FCC web site from March 1, 2011 until April 30.

COST: FCC member price - \$200/first child, \$175/each additional sibling; Non-FCC member price - \$225 per child
The price includes a camp shirt and all materials for the week.

Camp co-directors Rowena Fong, Ed.D., and Becky Harding will again lead the FCC - UT Chinese culture camp at the new central Austin location, The Northwest Hills United Methodist Church located behind the Starbucks on Far West Blvd. and across the street from the post office, the library and an HEB on Village Center. We found the previous facility was, at peak traffic times, a challenging drive for our south families and was not available this year for the Friday night dinner event. The new location looks as though it will meet our needs very well.

Children, ages 5 -13, adopted from China and their siblings are eligible to participate in this camp. Students are enrolled in the class based on the grade they will be entering in August of 2011. The classes are: pink bunnies - Kindergartners, green monkeys - 1st and 2nd graders, blue pandas - 3rd and 4th graders, orange tigers - 5th and 6th graders and red dragons - 7th and 8th graders. High school young people are invited to participate as assistant counselors for no fee and should complete the registration materials as well. Each class will have adult Asian-American counselors who assists the teachers and supervises and nurtures the children. We strive for a 1:5 ratio of counselor to children. We will cap each class at 20 children based on the postmark on the registration materials.



The goals of the camp are threefold. The first is to empower our Chinese-American children, strengthening their ties to both cultures in sessions teaching Chinese language, heritage and cultural activities. The second goal is to expand ethnic identity and build self-esteem, helping better prepare our children to respond to prejudice by developing skills for dealing with racism. The third goal is to kindle new and close friendships, explore mutual adoption journeys, and build a sense of lasting community among children who share similar histories.

The content of the camp will include adoption journeys and self identity, Asian American pride project and performance, sons of China tribe time each day, Asian festivals, Chinese songs, Chinese jump rope, chop stick races, Choy Lay Fut Kung Fu lessons, kite building, lion dance participation, mahjong lessons, Mandarin vocabulary, conversation and character instruction, media presentation created by the oldest group, provinces of China and geography exploration, ribbon stick making and dancing, tea ceremony and tools for combating racism and building tolerance. In addition, as a service project, each camper will create a pillow for the Texas Oncology program to assist and comfort patients seeking treatment for cancer during the chemotherapy process.

All of the teachers from the 2010 camp are returning to offer their services again. They are Linda Cao (Lion dancer), Xiwei Chen (Chinese games), Fursey Gotuaco (team building), Em Hardy, Ph.D. (adoption and racism), Sharon Lai (Mandarin), Kathy Lin (Mandarin), Pat Morgan (adoption and racism), Ruth Tang (Mandarin), Joyce Wu, Ph.D. (music) and Valerie Zhong (Mandarin). We are excited to announce that in addition to these excellent teachers, we have confirmed Stacey Cone, Ph.D., and Yvonne Kim Wilson as co-teachers for the red dragon media project. Stacey is a retired journalism professor and Yvonne is the editor of the on line publication Asian Austin. Rick Gabrillo, former award winning choir teacher and the assistant conductor of the professional choral ensemble, Conspirare, will teach a music class assisted by Stephen Chao, a high school student who sings in the Conspirare Youth Choir. Santanu Rahman, the director of the Austin Kung Fu Academy, will expand his role and offer more martial arts sessions this year.



Camp brochures will be available at our Chinese New Year celebration.

Odds and Ends

The Sons of China playgroup is off and running! Contact Anna Uliassi at uliassianna@yahoo.com if you are interested in joining this Boys from China group.

Check out this awesome website for Asian educational materials: www.asiaforkids.com. It includes reusable calligraphy practice paper!



Kung Fu Panda 2 is due in theatres in May. The free Kung Fu Panda World web site is kinda fun for kids. Check it out at: kungfupandaworld.com/online-game/membership.

Documentary filmmaker Dr. Changfu Chang has recently completed two new projects: *Sofia's Journey*, and *Daughter's Return*, which detail three adoptive children's searches for their birth parents in China. We hope to have him return to Austin this year to screen these films. An overview of his work can be found at: www.lovewithoutboundaries.org/bio/index.html.

Join us on Facebook under: *Families with Children from China - Austin, Texas chapter*.

Texas Asian Festival takes place in San Antonio on February 5th at Institute of Texan Culture Center in downtown San Antonio. This is a one-day fun event from 10 am through 5 pm, offered by many local Asian organizations. <http://texancultures.com/events/asian.html>

UT China Care Playgroup Resumes

Are looking for something fun to do on Sunday afternoons? Do you want an easy way to connect with the Asian-American community that our kids just love?

Well then, bring your child and come to the University of Texas China Care playgroup!

Hosted at the Dell Jewish Community Center in north Austin, these wonderful Asian-American UT college students usually present a classic Chinese scene or story, then have craft & art centers, some playground time, and a light snack in these bimonthly 2 p.m.–4 p.m. sessions.

The playgroup is free, although a small donation is most welcome, and offers our children a chance to build meaningful relationships with some *stellar* same-race role models!
Oh yeah, and they run around... A LOT.

For more information, check out the the web site at <http://www.txchinacare.org> or contact Lucy Liu, playgroup director, at lucyliu2k@gmail.com.

Newly-posted Second Semester Dates:

*Sundays from 2 p.m.–4 p.m.
Dell Jewish Community Center*

January 30
February 13
February 27
March 27
April 10



Family Focus: The Turners

by Abby Turner

Don and I have three kids. We have been married 20 years. We chose adoption because we had had a couple of miscarriages and we felt called to parenthood not pregnancy. Domestic adoption was fastest and I wanted a baby. When Zach was one, I did give birth and our daughter died at 7 months. She had a genetic condition that was terminal from birth. I very much wanted a girl child after her death and we chose China. When Alisan was 2, we adopted again and because our experience with domestic adoption had been positive and less expensive, we went with domestic for Ashlyn.

Zach is 18 and a senior. He has always been an athlete and played varsity football this year. He will graduate in May and go to college next year somewhere still to be determined. Zach was adopted at 8 weeks old. He is biracial and born in the US. We have an open adoption and stay in close contact with his birth mom. Alisan is 15 and a freshman. She plays soccer, is a straight A student, and plans on medical school. She was adopted from China at 7 months old. Ashlyn turns 13 on January 18th. She is a 7th grader. She sings in the choir and dances. Ashlyn is also biracial and was born in Texas. When she was adopted, she was 16 months old. We were her third home. Toddler adoption takes more patience and leaves more scars. We have an open adoption but have had less contact.

Our blend of adoption factors has been interesting. I have always felt that each part of each situation has added something wonderful. Every family has their individual personalities but ours has heritage as well. Zach's birth mom has always been in touch and lives nearby. Open adoption gives your child the knowledge that they were **not** placed for adoption because they were unloved. The birth parent can say right to them, "I did what I thought was best for you." This is a wonderful gift that all my kids witness even though they don't all know their own birth families.

Alisan's adoption gave us China and FCC. FCC has been the community in which my kids have been known and accepted whether they were Chinese or not. Learning and sharing Chinese culture and heritage has, of course, been mind expanding. Honoring Zach and Ashlyn's African American heritage is more obvious as it's part of our culture, but challenging because we rarely noticed it before. Ashlyn's adoption has helped our kids understand the difference in giving birth and parenting.

The older two walked through the waiting into the reality with us. That was a huge eye opener. Ashlyn brought many things from her first year that we all had to learn to understand.

Our racial and adoptive diversity keeps us from ever forgetting everyone's individuality. We are each genetically, culturally and experientially unique individuals. My kids will tell you that that's all me and not them. However, I think it is so much a part of their thinking they can't even imagine not understanding people as individuals not stereotypes.

FCC has really made the adoption experience fantastic for us, probably mostly for me. In the beginning, FCC was just a collection of families who felt different and wanted to be among others in a similar situation. I first became involved because I wanted Alisan to have friends who were adopted. I knew Zach had friends who looked like him and were being raised in American families. But Alisan's situation was less common and I wanted to make sure she knew girls in transracial adoptions.



The terrific Turner clan

...Continued on page 11

...Family Focus continued from page 10

I wanted FCC's structure to be flexible and inclusive. I felt I had the time to try to plan activities and events that would connect people and honor our children's heritage. We started meeting for Wednesday and Saturday playgroups when Alisan was one. Fourteen years later, our kids and our groups have changed form and shape but they still continue. I have served as president, vice president of events, and just activity organizer. I've enjoyed helping out because I really want FCC to succeed in creating a community for our families.

My focus has broadened to include any adoptive parents whenever I can, because I think adoption is the glue not China. After years at Wednesday playgroup, all my kids started school and I felt so lost without my weekly dose of adoptive moms. I had so many things I still needed to talk about. Now I plan Wednesday lunch. We are a smaller group because many of us returned to work but we still meet when we can. I also participate in bookclub and Moms' Night Out. These women understand my life. They don't forget the adoption part or the race component. I would say that it is because we have been together forever but that's not completely it. I recently met an adoptive mom and brought her to bookclub. Her adoption story is very different from anyone else's at bookclub, but she fit right in. I feel like we've know her as long as anyone else.

It is important to have a support group and FCC helped me create mine. I'm not sure if adoptive parents adopt because they are special or if we become special through adoption. I know I make connections with adoptive parents that are deep and lasting. FCC has been the framework for these relationships. I stayed involved in FCC even when my kids lost interest because I enjoyed the like-minded company. My kids have reignited their connections time and again.

This summer Alisan was an assistant counselor at Chinese Culture Camp. She was resistant to going but wanted community service hours. Right away she became involved with the kids she saw every day. Their adoration of her was unbounded. They appreciated her height, her age, her ability to know what was going on. Of course, they recognized her as Chinese and adopted and growing up fine. Alisan became very attached and enjoyed every minute of camp. She turned down a party invite from friends to attend the dinner on Friday night! When Moon Festival time came, she was ready to go. She wanted to see her little friends. Culture camp was wonderful for Alisan. She got a chance to pass on her amazing understanding of being part of two worlds just by being there. She can't wait for next year.

My children are growing up. Zach will be graduating this year and I am amazed to realize that if I close my eyes I can remember the first day he was mine, just like I can remember this morning. I miss him already and I'm not even sure he is leaving yet. His maturity has progressed steadily and I feel confident that he will do well in the world. But I keep making him breakfast and doing his laundry because these are the things he will still take from me. Someday will it only be money that he will need from me? Alisan and Ashlyn also see their futures ahead of them and race towards them. In six years, Don and I may be alone in our house. On the bright side, the house might be clean. I can both cry and cheer.





FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN FROM CHINA
— AUSTIN, TEXAS —

YEAR OF THE RABBIT

FCC is proud to unveil the design for this year's Chinese New Year shirts. The original design was created by Leah Sherman-Weiner, a 7th grade FCC member and member of the dragon class at last summer's camp.

Great job, Leah!

** Shirts will be on sale at the 2011 Chinese New Year event (see page 4) **

Book Reviews on Bullying



Reviews by Toni Raymond

Little Girls Can be Mean: Four Steps to Bully-Proof Girls in the Early Grades, by Michelle Anthony, M.A., Ph.D., and Reyna Lindert, Ph.D.

Stand Up for Yourself and Your Friends: Dealing with Bullies and Bossiness, and Finding a Better Way, by Patti Kelley Criswell, and illustrated by Angela Martini



My vivacious, outgoing, second grader needs help in school. Not academic help, but help with bullying behavior. She has been a target as well as a witness to this behavior in school. She is not alone. In the past week, I have talked with at least a half dozen moms whose daughters are in the same boat, albeit for varying reasons, and in different settings. I think it is all too easy, but unacceptable, to dismiss these behaviors as "girls being girls." We need to empower our daughters to be strong and assertive in the face of these common mean-girl/bullying behaviors.

Being a bookworm, I have searched for helpful books ever since the problem first came to my attention last spring. Last night I finally came home with two books that have already given us encouragement, ideas, and hope. *Little Girls Can be Mean* is geared specifically for parents, teachers, and counselors of girls from pre-kindergarten to sixth grade. The authors use a four-step approach to help parents, teachers, and counselors become problem-solving partners for young girls struggling with bullying. The book is full of real-life examples and includes: Teacher Tips, Tips for Girls, and highlighted sections throughout the book entitled: Think, Share, and Do. It also addresses very specific types of girl-bullying, including shunning, rumors, and cliques. What I appreciate the most about the book is the very simple and direct strategies to help girls be assertive in dealing with this all-too-common problem.

The other book is written for young girls to read themselves and is an American Girl® book: *Stand up for Yourself and Your Friends*. My eight-year-old has devoured it. It is extremely well-written and very much geared to her age level. Some of the specific responses showcased in this book were contributed by actual girls in her age range. In clear and concise language, these tailored responses and examples empower girls to stand up for themselves. It also encourages them to support others who are being bullied and guides them on when and how to get help from an adult.

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Sun Dragon Workshop Recap

"Thank you for supporting the kind of world I want to have my children live in . . . I thought the class was excellent. Spot-on in its message (use your brain---strangers can be fine and people you know can be not fine), the techniques she taught (basic and just a couple to keep from overwhelming, intent is important!) and her energy (up-beat, serious but not scary). THANK YOU for this!" was the reaction a parent had to the first empowerment workshop FCC offered with the Sun Dragon Martial Arts school in south Austin.

In a response to families talking to FCC board members about incidents of bullying and racist behavior toward our community, we partnered with Sun Dragon Martial Arts School to offer three age levels of empowerment workshops to our children offering one a month this fall.. These workshops focused and expanded on a five step philosophy of "1. think 2. Yell. 3. Run 4. Fight and 5. Tell."

Sensei Joy Williamson, the head instructor at Sun Dragon taught the classes that stressed learning to speak up for themselves and others, and how to identify safe adults when they need help. They practiced strong body language, basic physical skills to get out of grabs, and how to tell the difference between tattling and reporting.



BUYER BEWARE: NEGATIVE CONNOTATIONS IN CHINESE

By Kim Goodman

So, last year our family went to San Francisco for Chinese New Year and came back with a few souvenirs bought along Grant Avenue in Chinatown from that wonderful trip. One of these souvenirs was a t-shirt for our daughter who was born in 2005, the Year of the Rooster. I bought a larger size so she could fit in it for an extended period of time. To this day, she loves that shirt, and wants to wear it as soon as I launder it on a weekly basis. In the past, I had happily obliged, so glad she's proud of her heritage. However, I now find myself surreptitiously deterring her from wearing that very shirt in public, especially if we plan to go where I can expect to see Asian Americans.

Why? Well, according to her Chinese preschool teacher, Terri Xiang, the large Chinese character prominently displayed on the front of this child tee straight from San Francisco's Chinatown—and let's face it, probably made in China as well—actually has a very negative connotation in Chinese. In Chinese, this particular character phonetically pronouncing Rooster is actually slang for *prostitute*. Yeah, I can't believe it either; it's not something I care to explain to my 5-year-old... so I haven't, and instead simply continue to innocently steer her away from wearing it in public—on a weekly basis. I can't wait 'til she grows out of it. Or maybe I can speed things up by inviting her to wear it while painting with acrylics or some really messy project... she probably won't oblige me, though... she really loves that shirt.

Here's what the negative connotation (Rooster) looks like: 鸡

Here's what the appropriate connotation (Year of the Rooster) looks like: 鸡年

In speaking further with Terri, she said with a chuckle how she can't even count the number of times she's seen Asian character tattoos emblazoned on some (formerly) unsuspecting westerner that are either completely nonsensical, or surely could not possibly have been the intention of the wearer. I won't go any further on that story. I even have a set of four Kanji Stampin' Up!® rubber stamps. Of the four, only one (the one for love) is correct. The others she says are completely nonsensical because they have no meaning without the missing characters. Apparently, it was deemed more attractive for each stamp to simply have only one character attributed to them (peace, tranquility, love, and wisdom)... even though they don't mean *anything* this way. Talk about form over function, eh? I also bought a set of Name Chops for each of us at the Great Wall back in 2006. Apparently, mine reads *Kimor*. I prefer Kim.

To be honest, I know very little Chinese, and know absolutely nothing regarding hanzi (Chinese) or kanji (Japanese) characters, let alone Chinese slang. But in this case, ignorance is not bliss.

In the future, buyer beware. Even purchasing merchandise from Asians in a Chinatown, anywhere USA, is still no guarantee that the characters will be correct or appropriate. To this day, I still wonder how that 50ish Asian woman could have sold us the rooster shirt with our beautiful child in tow. And no, my daughter was not some rude little monster-child in her store (perhaps a somehow karmic way to get back at rude patrons). We've always taught her to be courteous, kind, and thoughtful, especially in public. She was great that day, and continues to behave herself in stores. I guess the almighty buck must have trumped her conscience.

Does anyone else have a similar story? Perhaps this could be a regular column in future newsletters wherein we can enlighten and educate each other.

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China drafts its first law to protect intangible cultural heritage

China began the calendar year by presenting the second draft of a law banning the collection of information on "intangible cultural heritage" by foreign sources to its National People's Congress. The first draft was presented in December. The long and short of the law indicates foreign entities cannot enter the country and document or record items of cultural heritage without government approval and without being escorted by a designated government representative. The legislature comes along with a national push to preserve what the government believes to be eroding cultural practices, values, and historical items of value. Recent activities that attempt to protect heritage items include limiting tourism to the Monuments of Dengfeng and doubling ticket prices for UNESCO designated heritage sites, <http://www.chinaculture.org>

Attunement for Attachment

By Robyn Gobbel

Attunement (noun): being or bringing into harmony; a feeling of being "at one" with another being. Think about the strongest relationships in your life. The person you call when you really need someone who gets it. How do you know they "get it?" What is special about those relationships? How does that relationship make you feel? Chances are, that person doesn't spend a lot of time trying to fix anything. Or arguing. Or convincing you that it "really isn't that big of a deal." That person just listens. Says "Oh, you must be really hurting." Provides a safe space for you to fully experience your feelings, and allows for those feelings to just be experienced and held. Attunement validates our inner world, providing a solid foundation for the development of a positive identity and sense of self.

Attunement supports attachment.

Imagine your child is upset because you are out of his favorite lunch. "I want macaroni and cheese!" he wails. You don't have macaroni and cheese and there's not much you can do about it. It's easy to respond with "We're out, I'm sorry. What would you like instead?" But as you've noticed, this may lead to your child kicking and screaming on the ground, in despair over the missing blue box. How about responding with "I know- I know you want macaroni and cheese. It's so disappointing." Or remember a time when your child came running in the front door with muddy shoes, carrying a bunch of weeds plucked from your hasn't-been-mowed-in-several-months front yard. It's natural to respond with "HEY! Your muddy shoes!! Don't come one step further! Look at the mess you are making!" But what if you said "Oh Jan! You picked those just for me! Thank you! That was so thoughtful! And oh my!! Your shoes are so muddy! Let's head back outside with those muddy shoes!"

Attunement. To join our child on their inner journey. Your child isn't thinking about your freshly mopped floors. She just picked you a beautiful plant from your yard and wants to share it with you. This doesn't mean we gracefully accept muddy footprints all over our freshly mopped tile. It simply means that before tending to your dirty tile, you take a moment to join in with your child's wonderment and excitement. To tell our child "I get it! You're so excited and I understand. Your feelings are worth it and they are more important than my tile." And then maybe you can both fill a bucket with water and have some fun with the suds.

Sometimes our adopted children have big feelings. Big feelings that are a little scary- scary for your child and scary for you when you hear your child express them. Feelings like "I hate it here! I look different and don't fit in with any of you!" Or feelings like "She gave me away! She didn't love me!" As parents, we want to reassure our children, to fix their feelings. We say something like "We love you! We don't care that you look different! I love your dark hair and your beautiful skin! You fit in here with us because we love you." Or "She did love you! She loved you enough to know she couldn't parent you and wanted to find you a family who could take good care of you." When we meet our children's feelings with contradiction, they feel misunderstood and invalidated. Instead, we should mirror our children's feelings and join in their journey and validate their feelings. The next time your child expresses grief over her adoption, try responding with "You look different than us and feel like you don't fit in." Or "You are so mad that your first mom gave you away and think that she didn't love you." By hearing you reflect back what she has expressed, your child feels heard and understood. She can then begin to process and work through those feelings, and your relationship strengthens because she is learning that you "get it."

Attunement addresses negative behaviors.

Attunement also means taking a close look at our children's "misbehaviors." Is your toddler having a tantrum because she is hungry, tired, or overwhelmed? Is your preschooler whining because she misses feeling connected to you? Is your teenager being sassy because she's having a fight with her BFF and is overwhelmed with feelings about losing her friendship? Attunement doesn't mean we tolerate negative behaviors; attunement means that first we consider the source of the behavior and then tend to that pain.

...Continued on page 15

...Attachment continued from page 14

Attunement leads to healthy foundations.

Why bother? Why is attunement important? Think about how a newborn baby develops a healthy attachment with her caregiver. Baby sleeps. Baby cries. Caregiver tends to cry and fixes problem. Baby is consoled. Baby is happy and enjoys quiet, playful time with caregiver. Repeat. Again and again. This cycle of attunement – where the caregiver recognizes, understands, and then consoles – is the very foundation of attachment. Our older kids certainly have more complex needs than infants, and attunement can be much more difficult. However, true attunement with our older children will encourage the same healthy foundation of secure attachment.

Robyn Gobbel, LCSW is an adoption therapist and home study specialist, helping parents enjoy parenting and raise confident kids. She blogs about adoption, parenting, and adoptive parenting at gobbelcounseling.com/blog.

Did you know? There are a number of legends on the origin of the twelve animals in the cycle of the Chinese Zodiac. One popular legend is that Buddha invited all animals to join him for New Year's Day but only twelve animals went to see him. He rewarded them by naming a year for each one in order of their arrival. Another popular legend states that Buddha invited the animals on the day he was to leave the earth and only the twelve appeared (rat, ox, tiger, hare, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, cock, dog, and boar).

The observance of the 12 signs arose during the Han dynasty, making it more than 2000 years old.

Proposed 2011 Year of the Rabbit Board Members



(clockwise from bottom): President Kim Goodman is a budding flamenco dancer, former microbiologist, and stay at home mom to five-year-old Maya. Vice President of Membership Stacey Cone is Raea and Lorelei's mom and a former University of Iowa professor of journalism. Co-vice President of Events Deanne Brown is a former elementary and high school teacher, and currently is a stay at home mom, professional child chauffeur, and mediator to her two children. Co-vice President of Events Denise Davolt is a stay at home mom to a five-year-old daughter from China and a two-year-old son from Ethiopia. Secretary Kathie Tovo is a former university professor and is now an independent writer/editor and mom to two daughters from China: Ella Jiao and Qui Li. Culture and Outreach board member Becky Harding is a teacher and parent to two daughters from China. Treasurer Alan Greenberg is a dad of eight years to Claire Lily, and a consultant and a market analyst.

Don't forget to check out the Austin FCC website. The web contains the latest event updates, play groups, membership renewal, and invaluable links and other resources.

<http://www.main.org/fccaustin/>

What's up Doc? The Year of the Rabbit is Upon Us! Begone Tigger!

Were you born in 1915 (unlikely!), 1927, 1939, 1951, 1963, 1975, 1987, or 1999? Or have you got a young'un on the way or hope to adopt a child likely to be born in the next year? If so, then you were born in the year of the Rabbit—or you are about to be facing a kid with the habits of a very nice animal that *does* eat its veggies: the rabbit? Maybe you'll be lucky and have fewer diapers to change!

The rabbit is the fourth animal in the 12-year cycle of the Chinese zodiac. People born in the year of the rabbit often are talented, ambitious, and courtly: they often make ideal diplomats or politicians. Rabbit people have grace, culture and beautiful manners. Although they get on well with everyone, at heart they are reserved creatures (who can blame them?), and are most happy when they are engrossed in a scholarly or intellectual activity.



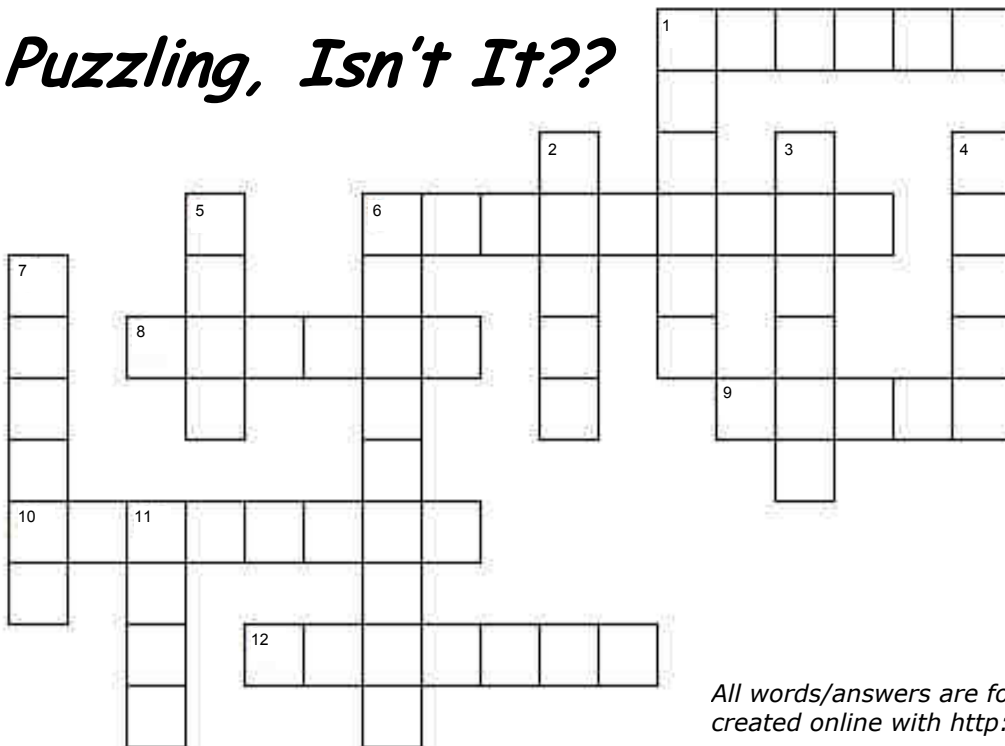
Rabbit people are admired, trusted, and often financially lucky. Kind ones, it's hard to make them lose their temper. They are clever at business and yet because they are so thorough, rarely back out of a contract. They would make good gambler, as they have the uncanny gift of choosing the right thing—we think they have good parking space karma, too—but at heart they are conservative and wise. They are most compatible with those born in the years of the Sheep, Pig, and Dog. And they are least compatible with those born in the year of the Rooster and Horse.

Rabbits make excellent therapists, doctors, writers, teachers, publishers, designers, actors, and business partners!

Sources: Wikipedia, gotohoroscope.com, usbridalguide.com

Alan Greenberg is a market analyst and consultant, FCC Austin treasurer beginning in 2011, and father to Claire Lily Greenberg, nee Zhang Man Li of Changsha, Hunan Province, currently residing in Austin, TX.

Puzzling, Isn't It??



ACROSS

- 1 February speaker
- 6 Location of 2011 CNY celebration
- 8 2011 zodiac animal
- 9 Trained with ABC Ohio
- 10 CNY auction item
- 12 They are in focus

DOWN

- 1 Animal dancing at CNY
- 2 2010 zodiac animal
- 3 Area therapist
- 4 Pushy person
- 5 Camper and artist
- 6 Interactive playgroup
- 7 Bring to harmony
- 11 "Must do" event in August

All words/answers are found within this edition. Puzzle created online with <http://www.puzzle-maker.com/CW/>