



None of us “Patch in China” clowns will ever forget holding the babies in the Putuo Orphanage in China. Especially the babies with the cleft pallets, the deformed noses, the wondering eyes. They were well cared for, but who wanted these little bundles of love, who wanted a baby with a deformity?

Most of us went home with that sweet-sad memory, and many of us gave talks and spread our experiences, but Marcy Graves of Granbury, Texas connected with some doctors in her home town and miracles happened.



Clowns with babies from the Chinese Orphanage
 Above left John Glick, M.D., sho is on the Gesundheit Institute Board of Directors; above right Jenny Herrick a Speaker on Humor and Health from Sioux City Iowa. Below left: Laura Haldane who now clowns at nursing homes and hospitals in Mesa, Arizona. Below right: Mary Dixon, a nurse and hospital clown from Santa Rosa, California

(Photos on this page by John Haldane)



The Shanghai Five



By Marcy "Nurse Ducky" Graves (Pictured above)

In China we all remember the babies we held with cleft lips, and hydrocephalus. (it's water on the brain; in the USA it's not that big a deal. we just put a drain in and monitor it). Well, these are the ones! Five of these children from Shanghai arrived in Dallas to go to Medical City in Plano Texas. They all had faciocranial surgery. After hearing our China story, Dr. Yonshun Chang, one of my friends from Presbyterian Plano Hospital contacted one of the doctors that I spoke with at a Beijing hospital. The result was five of these children came here for free to have corrective surgery at Medical City Plano Texas. They are five of the cutest little angels you have ever seen.

Gongzan, she was born with no nose. She was the 9 year old and I guess the most social. I also loved the 2 year old but he spent most of the time under my clown dress hiding (just like a man!)

They all arrived from Shanghai through the GRACE Foundation in conjunction with the Buckner Foundation. Northwest Airlines donated all travel expenses for the children and their caretakers. The children and their caretakers flew from Shanghai to Dallas/Fort Worth on the 22nd of January. The children were accompanied by administrators and one nurse from the orphanage. The people from Grace Foundation met them in New



Children from Shanghai with Michelle Buckner, of the Buckner Foundation.

York and traveled on with them to Dallas. The doctors donated their services and the Chinese churches in the area stepped up to house and feed the children and caretakers. *Nurse Ducky* was at the airport to greet them and was also at the hospital to hold hands and entertain.

Surgeries were scheduled for January 25th, 27th, and 28th. The children were only in the hospital about four days after their surgeries and then returned for laser follow-up treatment. Yonshun Chang, MD Presbyterian Hospital Plano is the one that gets the kudos for getting the "proverbial ball rolling." Even though he is originally from China he has a heart as big as Texas!

Dr. Jeffrey Fearson is the name of the craniofacial surgeon at North Texas Hospital for Children where the surgeries were done. Dr. Michael Bannon was the pediatric anesthesiologist.

The children's conditions ranged from severe to relatively mild. One child had her nose completely reconstructed in a complex two-step surgery Another suffered from a rare bone tumor that required delicate surgery around the optic nerve. One child was born with a rare condition that caused her eyelids to be mere slits. Another underwent laser surgery on severe facial discolorations. The fifth child required only a simple cleft lip/palate surgery.

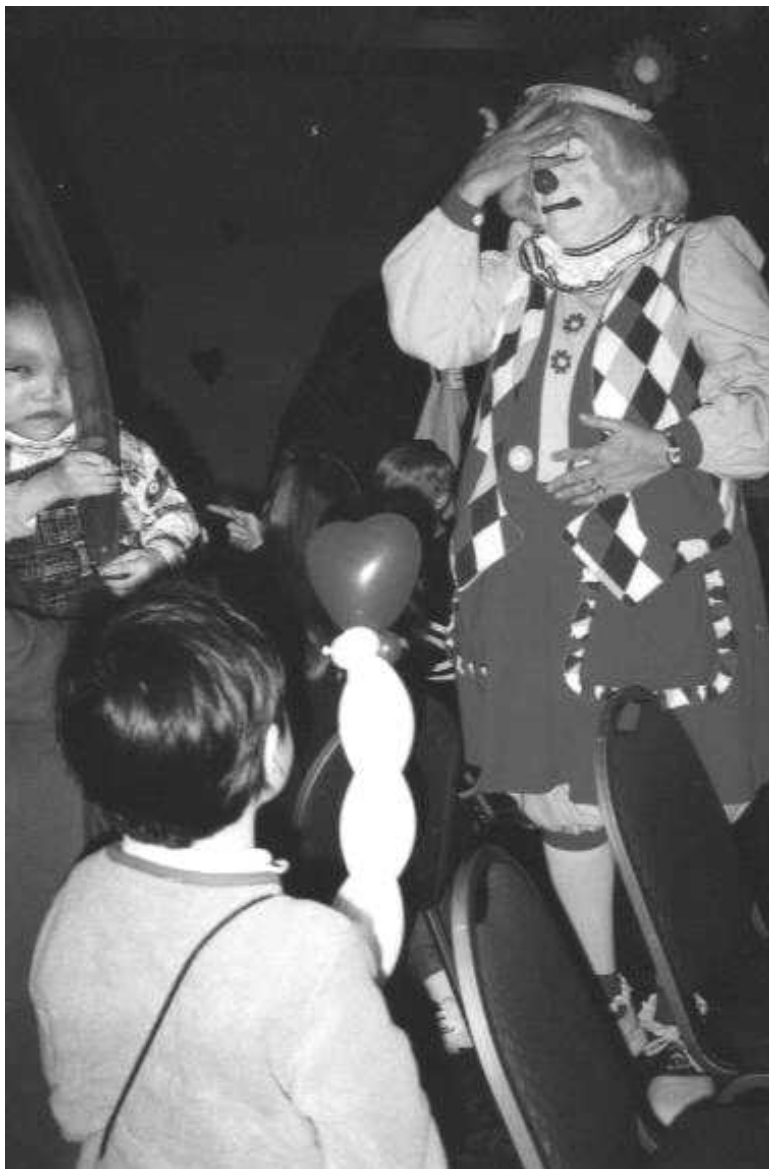
The final follow-ups for the kids were done on Valentine's Day and on the next day we had a big Texas whoop-de-do. Of course *Nurse Ducky* was there.

The children in the pictures look fully recovered -- that's a miracle in itself. Although these were serious medical procedures, it tells you how easily accessible they are in this country.)

I think about this a lot: Gongzan may never have gotten a nose if I had not gone to China? Or if Dr. Chang had not invited me out to lunch after reading that I was going to his home country of China? Or if People to People Ambassadors had not scheduled us at that particular orphanage? Or if Patch Adams had not had the notion to spread the joy of love and laughter to the people of China? I truly believe that everything happens for a reason, although I am still trying to find out why my behind is so big!

Hopefully this will be a more frequent occurrence now that we started something! The hospital that the children were in is not one of the hospitals in the system I work for. But knowing my hospitals, they will try to outdo Medical City so maybe we can get 10 children here.

There was another clown, a friend of the Buckner Foundation, that also was at the airport and at the final party. She was fabulous! She knew all the tricks and illusions. Her name is Brenda, but her clown name is *Flower*. I never really got to sit down and talk with her. But, like most clowns, we just sort of played off of each other. She IS a professional clown whereas I just play a clown along with my medical duties."



Brenda Marshal "Flower" Farewell Party.

From Brenda Marshall

Shobi e-mailed Brenda "Flower" Marshall (former President of COAI) and she sent some photos and the following: "I was privileged to be a part of the festivities with Nurse Ducky. I met the airplane when the "Shanghai Five" arrived and then got to be a part of their farewell celebration before they left for China.

"When I met the children as they arrived, I used my lite make-up character, Dr. Abby Normal, who does the humor cart at Cook Children's Medical Center in Fort Worth. There was a crowd of people, including the host families for each child, the Buckner people, many families who have adopted Chinese orphans, and the local media. When we performed for the farewell festivities, I was "Flower" in full white face and the children's reaction was great! I had just come from Children's Medical Center in Dallas, where Flower has been a regular visitor for the past five years."

What's really funny about *Dr. Abby Normal* is that I do *Flower* at Children's Medical Center in Dallas and *Dr. Abby* does the Humor Cart at Cook Children's in Fort Worth. I have had some of the same patients and they don't even know it's the same person underneath!! They tell *Dr. Abby* all about *Flower* and vice versa.

"The plan was for us to be able to visit each of the children in the hospital after their procedures, but that didn't work out. Unfortunately the lady who was in charge of the floor they were on all at the hospital in Dallas (not my usual Children's Hospital) does not allow clowns on the floor! I couldn't believe it! I even offered to provide references from both major children's hospitals here in the Dallas/Fort Worth area.