



OUR CHINA STORIES

我们的中国故事

Stafeil, Lily

Michigan

Adoption place: Guangdong Province: Qujiang SWI, Shaoguan's Qujiang district

Adoption date: March 2008

Age at adoption: 18 months

Hi, my name is Lily.

I am nine years old and I live in Michigan. I have two big brothers, one younger step brother, one older step sister. My family is important to me – I know they will be there when I need them and they'll always be a part of my life. My family makes me happy when I feel sad or scared.

I also have three dogs – Eli is a new puppy. He stays at Mommy's house. Pretzel goes to whichever house me and my brothers are at. Oreo stays at Daddy's house. I love all dogs. When I first came home from China I was scared of dogs. I was scared of them until my family got Pretzel. Pretzel was nice, playful, happy, licky and I got used to being around him. Now, whenever I see a dog I want to pet it, but I always ask the owner first. My favorite thing with the dogs is to play fetch with Pretzel. We just got Eli, so I don't know what he really likes yet. Oreo is a snuggler and I like to pet him. I am in fourth grade and I like to play "don't touch the ground" tag at recess when it's warm outside. My favorite classes are art, computer, and PE. Last fall, we studied monarch butterflies in science, art, and Spanish. We raised monarch butterflies from eggs to butterflies in our classroom. Some of the caterpillars did not make it to be a butterfly. This was sad, but we learned that not all caterpillars can survive.

I play soccer. My team is called the Storm 06. I like soccer because its fun, competitive, and we work as a team. I've played soccer since I was three years old. I like being on a team because you get to know people and I think it's fun to work together. Other things I like to do include skiing, bouncing on the trampoline, playing with my friends, riding my bike and scooter, rollerblading, and building with Legos.

I don't remember anything about China. I've always wanted to back and visit. I would like to see the social welfare institute where I lived and just see what China is like. I also want to see the Great Wall of China and try the food.

Stafeil, Rachel

In May 1997, I traveled to China on a graduate school study trip. Much of the trip was spent visiting companies, but we found time to see some sights, including the Great Wall and the Forbidden City.

I remember seeing American families struggling to push their newly adopted Chinese babies over the many thresholds of the Forbidden City. Who would have known that eleven years later I would be back in China to bring home my own precious daughter? Fast forward to 2008 and I found myself back in China with my then husband pushing our own newly adopted daughter through the sights of Guangzhou. Our two sons were home with Grandma and Grandpa while we were bonding with Lily. Maybe some business person or student saw us and will be back years later to adopt their own daughter!

In March, we celebrated eight years with Lily. I can't believe it has been eight years – the time has just flown by. Our family without Lily is unimaginable. It sounds so cliché, but she has been a gift to us and to all who meet her. She is kind, thoughtful, loving, and just all around awesome.

Since Lily joined our family, life has been an adventure full of twists, turns, and bumps in the road that I never would have imagined. Lily has adjusted to interstate moves, house moves, crazy older brothers like a champ. The biggest bump in the road came four and a half years after we adopted Lily – her father and I divorced. I worried about how all my children would react to this change. Amazingly they all, including Lily, took it in stride. Now, three and a half years later my kids are well adjusted and used to going back and forth between their dad's and my house.

Adoption has added so much to my life. Besides the obvious gift of my amazing daughter, adoption opened me up to a fascination with Chinese history and culture. Adoption introduced me to a group of friends who live all over the country with whom I have the special bond of having spent the first weeks with our daughters together. Adoption has made me more thoughtful about other cultures and the struggles mothers face throughout the world. Most importantly, adoption brought me Lily.



Lily Stafeil