

In May, 2005, my husband, David, son Bradley, and I adopted Amelia (Mia) Fujun from Wuxue City, Hubei province, China. She was just over one year old at the time and was already a walking, social, curious, spirited child. At the time, we had no idea how much laughter, love, and enrichment she would add to our lives.

When we returned to Lafayette with Mia, we wanted to keep her exposed to the only language and culture she knew in her first year of life so we looked into Chinese language programs. It was important to us that she also attend a traditional pre-school a couple of days a week and driving a significant distance to a Chinese school was not an option with the busy schedules the four of us already juggle. We wanted an environment that was warm and welcoming both to Mia and to us, despite our very limited knowledge of Mandarin and the fact that we are not Chinese. Music plays a big role in our family's lives so a musical component to the program was important to us. Nothing we found fit that description.

Also, we realize how fortunate our children are and how their perspectives may be limited by what they see every day. We are passionate about broadening little ones' horizons by educating them about other ways of life, celebrating differences, and helping children who are in need.

Early this year, we were fortunate to meet Phoebe Chen who has tutored Mia and her friends for months, sharing her wealth of experience and wisdom with us all. Mia lights up at the mention of her and regularly shares the new Mandarin words she has learned with pride. We are so grateful to have found Phoebe when we did.

So, with her invaluable help, we formed Small World to be that local, flexible, warm and friendly place where kids of all backgrounds and races can learn Mandarin and experience the rich Chinese culture. By engaging each class in a project to benefit less fortunate kids and by donating 1% of revenues to children's causes in the world, Small World will give something back. Our hope is that Small World children, including Mia and Bradley, grow up believing that the world truly is small, equipped to flourish in diverse communities and workplaces, and with compassion for others.

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