

Doing Good

NONPROFITS IN
CHINA

THE OFFICIAL
NEWSLETTER OF
SOCIAL VENTURE
GROUP

DECEMBER 2008

Liu Xiaorong and her husband have opened a dumpling stand in their hometown, Yilong County, Sichuan, using a microfinance loan from a Wokai field partner



Wokai.org: Launching China's First Online Microfinance Platform

User-driven website hopes to bridge China's rural borrowers to the world

A small loan allows a rural farmer to buy a tractor, another loan allows a poor woman to buy a goat to sell its milk, and yet another family borrows to start a small tailor shop in the village...what do all of these things have in common? The answer: Microfinance, broadly defined as small loans made to impoverished individuals and families that allow them to break the cycle of poverty. Recently SVG has been enjoying getting to know a new nonprofit group in China called Wokai (which means "I start" in Chinese, as in "I start my own business.") Wokai.org features China's first online lending platform focused on raising funds for microfinance institutions (commonly abbreviated as MFIs) in

China. The site launched in late November 2008, and would-be lenders can now go online and choose from a list of microfinance borrowers in rural China to support.

Co-founders Casey Wilson and Courtney McColgan are Americans who met in 2006, while both were studying Chinese at the UC Berkeley Inter-University Program at Tsinghua in Beijing. Ms. McColgan was completing a Fulbright scholarship in China on microfinance, and Ms. Wilson had a background in development economics and Chinese language that she wished to leverage to make a difference in China. The two women decided to join forces to empower MFIs in China and raise awareness globally, and the concept for Wokai was born.

Currently, over 200 million individuals in China live in severe poverty (defined by the World Bank as less than US\$1 per day), and Wokai's mission is to alleviate

poverty in China by using microfinance as a tool, channeling loan capital from contributors worldwide to MFIs in China. Currently, Wokai partners with two grassroots organizations, located in Inner Mongolia and in Sichuan. Users can logon and choose

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About Social Venture Group

Social Venture Group is a social enterprise registered in Hong Kong and Shanghai. Our mission is to assist individuals, families, businesses and foundations to identify and evaluate strategic charitable opportunities in China. SVG performs due diligence, ongoing monitoring and evaluation of projects to empower donors' giving decisions. We seek to build a community of Chinese and overseas donors for China social sector in the 21st century.

For more information, please visit us at: www.socialventuregroup.com

Dispatches From Sichuan

SVG researcher Leo Zhang gives us an update from Chengdu with the latest on the earthquake aftermath and recovery.

Six months after the May 12th earthquake that hit Sichuan, I had the chance to return to Chengdu and conduct research there for a period of time on behalf of an SVG client. Being not as seriously damaged by the earthquake, Chengdu has quickly recovered from the disaster and there are now no obvious traces of the earthquake in the city. However, residents are still talking about and sending assistance to the nearby affected areas. It seems that almost everyone I talked to is trying to contribute in some way, either through volunteering or through donations. The most tangible change is that many nonprofit NGOs have emerged, including international NGOs, government-run organizations, NGOs from other parts of China and new grassroots disaster relief groups in Sichuan. Most of these organizations are using Chengdu as their base of operations and are providing different earthquake relief or reconstruction efforts in Sichuan.

Though I did not get the chance to revisit the quake zones from my last visit, through talking to many NGO staff in Chengdu, here is a summary of the current needs and major issues of affected areas:

- **Basic living necessities:** The government has secured the basic living needs of most victims, though some remote rural areas still need material support, especially quilts and other supplies, as winter is here.
- **Housing:** After the creating temporary housing solutions on a massive scale, the rebuilding phase has begun in earnest. The government is subsidizing qualified households with 200,000RMB, and residents are responsible for the building effort. However, some challenges are: 1) the subsidy will only be paid after the house is built, which means victims need to bear the building cost first, and 2) in the very remote areas especially in the mountains, the building materials are very expensive due to the transportation fees, making the construction costs far exceed 20,000RMB.

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Grassroots Nonprofit Spotlight: 1+1

China's Disabled Find a Voice Through Media



北京一加一文化交流中心
BEIJING ONE PLUS ONE

What pops into your mind when you see “1+1”? An equation? A slogan or something else? Recently, SVG spent time getting to know 1+1, the name of a pioneering organization in Beijing, founded by disabled persons, which seeks to serve and empower disabled persons across China. The director Xie Yan says “1+1” stands for so much more than just a simple arithmetic equation. In the Chinese language, the word for “person” is the sequence of one stroke and then another, and in sociological terms, it points to the impact of one human life upon another.

In March 2006, Xie Yan co-founded the One Plus One Cultural Exchange Center (“1+1”) in Beijing with a group of friends, all who are visually-impaired or physically disabled. As a non-profit organization registered as a

company, 1+1 focuses on using radio broadcasting and audio podcasts as platforms to enrich and empower disabled persons in China. The organization seeks to provide broader vocational avenues than what is currently available for disabled persons, via trainings in media production and other related skills.

Most nonprofit organizations in China are run by able-bodied people who usually offer direct support or help to a specific target group of disadvantaged people (for example, medical assistance for children with cerebral palsy, etc). 1+1, however, is somewhat different. Not only is its service focus to provide radio and podcast programs for the visually-disabled, it is actually fellow disabled persons who are creating the content, managing the production and distribution, and running the organization. Xie Yan emphasizes that whereas the disadvantaged are often merely passive recipients of charity, this model allows there to be greater involvement and interaction. Its goal is to build up the confidence and social interaction capability of disabled persons with society at large.

The SVG team has been impressed by the passion and confidence Xieyan has for 1+1. Currently their main project, funded by a British foundation, is to offer training in professional media production training for the disabled. The goal is to form professional-level audio production teams consisting of 6 visually impaired people to produce content for distribution over China's radio stations. So far, several programs have been broadcasted on more than 60 radio channels all over China. The feedback so far has been positive, and the programs are specifically popular among visually-impaired persons. During the Special Olympics in Shanghai in the fall of 2007, 1+1 correspondents and production teams were granted the same press access as other news media outlets. It was the only professional media organization composed of disabled people, and its coverage spanned all of the events. Furthermore, during the 2008 Beijing Paralympics, Qing Feng, a visually impaired staff at 1+1, provided news coverage of the entire event as the only registered visually impaired journalist of the Games. It was the first time in the history of the Paralympics that a Chinese visually impaired journalist covered the event. This opportunity was historic for China's disabled persons, allowing them to raise awareness to the world and also to help the world to see the Paralympics through their eyes.

1+1's audio programming is not only for adult visually-impaired people, but also for blind students. At present, 1+1 is promoting their audio platform in blind schools across China. According to official statistics, there are approximately 47 schools for visually impaired students in China. The job opportunities for students after graduation, outside of traditional paths such as blind massage, tend to be very scarce. Addressing this situation, 1+1 hopes to help blind students have greater access to information about the world around them and to provide great opportunities for advancement. 1+1 also hopes to set up audio broadcasting studios in each blind school, so that the schools can produce and exchange their own audio programs. The hope is that audio media can become one of the means to enhance the overall capability and opportunities for visually impaired students.

Speaking of the future, Xie Yan hopes that 1+1 can continually enhance the breadth and scope of its audio programs so that 1+1 can be a professional audio media content provider and a webcast provider in China run by disabled people. The organization hopes to shift from being a non-profit organization to a sustainable social enterprise. The proposed enterprise would generate profit via sales and syndication of the audio content, while offering training and job opportunities for disabled persons in China. 1+1 also hopes to produce audio programs for other nonprofits in China, providing them another platform to market their services, so that like 1+1 more and more people can have a deeper awareness of the capabilities of China's disabled.

1+1's website is: <http://www.yijiayi.org>.

To find out more about how to give to One Plus One's work in China, please contact SVG at info@socialventuregroup.com.



Volunteers work with QCQ's autistic children on arts and crafts

The Renewal Center A Resting Place for Shanghai Trash Collectors

No doubt many city dwellers in China have noticed a peculiar group of individuals living among them. These folk are often seen rummaging through the garbage on the side of the road, looking intently for some apparently unknown treasure. They are the homeless trash collectors of the city, individuals who have moved from the countryside to urban cities to make a living by collecting items for sale via recycling. Have you ever wondered about how they live and what brought them to the city?

The Renewal Center is a non-profit organization registered in the US, that seeks to serve the homeless trash collectors in Shanghai. Located on the banks of the Suzhou River, near the Shanghai Railway Station, the Renewal Center offers homeless trash collectors from that area a place to bathe, do laundry and eat healthy meals for a change. In addition to meeting physical needs, the Renewal Center is also seeking to meet the emotional and spiritual needs of these individuals as well. Jimmy McWhinney, an American from Texas who has lived in China for many years, is one of the founders of the Renewal Center. He told SVG that he and his friends came up with the idea for the center in 2005. After personally encountering a number of poor migrant workers who had lost their jobs after moving to Shanghai and began rummaging through trash to survive, Jimmy and his friends decided to take actions. After an intense research project on the target population, the Renewal Center was established and opened to the public in June 2008.

At present, the Renewal Center is open for business every Wednesday and Sunday evening, from 6pm to 10pm. Each drop-in visitor is given a ticket which entitles them to usage of the shower and laundry facilities during a time period specified on the ticket. Meanwhile, the center also provides donated clothing and some limited healthy food choices. Most of the individuals who frequent the Renewal Center live in the nearby area along West Suzhou River and the Shanghai Railway Station. The volunteers at the Center regularly scout and canvass the area to get to know and understand their needs. Most Renewal Center visitors are then invited to come to the Center

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How Sweet It is: Legal Registration and Growth

An Update from Qing Qong Quan Autistic School

It has been nearly six months since our last report on Qing Cong Quan (QCQ), the largest training center for autistic children in Shanghai. Over the past six months, China has experienced several important events, including the Sichuan earthquake and the Beijing Olympic Games, all of which had had significant impact on China's charity sector.

August 8, 2008, was the opening day of the Beijing Olympic Games. That same day, QCQ received the approval from the Shanghai Civil Affairs Bureau to be officially registered as a non-profit organization in China. It took QCQ three and a half years (since its founding in 2004) to receive this coveted legal status. The registration and legal identity issue is often a top concern of grassroots nonprofits in China, as it is very difficult in practice to obtain a proper registration. The ability to be officially registered as a nonprofit organization is definitely a sign of progress and governmental of QCQ's efforts and is likely to bring stability and benefits to QCQ going forward.

In addition, in June this year, QCQ received a generous financial gift from one of SVG's donor clients to purchase a set of assessment and training tools from the Heep Hong Society of Hong Kong, an organization that serves disabled children. The tools will be used to assess the needs and development status of QCQ's students and to improve QCQ's rehabilitation programs and training courses. Three QCQ staff will travel to Hong Kong to be trained in using the tools in December.

Finally, in September, with the introduction of SVG, QCQ participated in the 2008 Shanghai Expat Show as an exhibitor for the first time. During the 3-day exhibition, QCQ was able to raise its profile among the community, and most importantly help raise awareness for the plight of autistic children in China.

During our recent visit, QCQ Director Ms. Chen Jie mentioned to us again that limited human resources continue to be a challenge facing QCQ. This challenge is mainly due to the lack of a pool of qualified special education teachers in China in general. As a result, QCQ has been training its own staff, yet problems with staff retention persist. Moreover QCQ has been overwhelmed with applications from families with autistic children since its inception. Due to a shortage of teachers, QCQ has to turn away many applicants. Just this year alone, QCQ has had to turn away about 60 applications in total.

Despite the shortage of teachers, QCQ has never changed their primary requirements for its staff: to truly love the autistic children. "Foremost, what these children need from us is love; everything else is secondary," Chen Jie said to us during the discussion. Currently, QCQ has a relatively stable staff team, which is rare in China's nonprofit sector. The team is comprised of 12 teachers, up from only 3 teachers in 2004. All the teachers adhere to QCQ's mission and have made relatively long-term commitments to the organization. When asked about the team, Chen Jie was full of pride and told us: "I never see them as just my staff. They are my close friends and partners ...because we are a team, none of us feels lonely."

In terms of volunteers, QCQ has established a relatively mature network of regulars, including many partner organizations. QCQ's specific needs and requirements for volunteers

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A Day In the Life

Follow SVG as we shadow three blind orphans at Bethel Training Center for the Blind in Beijing, and see how similar AND different their lives are from ordinary children



Meet Ling Yang An
2.5 years old, male
Arrived at Bethel in 2007

Yang An is a boy full of energy who likes to run every where, despite his blindness (he has congenital cataracts). He is recently starting to

talk and requires individualized care.

07:00 – 09:30	Yang An wakes tries to dress himself. After a successful attempt, he is very pleased and gives himself a round of applause. He wants to be the first in the dining room to get breakfast, so he runs. His caretaker reminds him to slow down! After breakfast, Yang An plays on the piano for awhile, which is his favorite activity. A caretaker reads a few books to him.
09:30 – 10:00	He listens to music. He loves music very much and is very content when listening.
09:30 – 10:00	Time for snacks and fruit! Yang An likes apples and cookies.
10:30 – 11:30	A caretaker takes him outside for a walk. The weather is good today but a little bit windy. His caretaker puts a coat on him to make sure he doesn't catch a cold.
11:30 – 12:30	He comes back from the yard and goes to the dining room after washing his hands. Lunch time!
12:30 – 14:00	Yang An takes a nap.
14:00 – 15:00	He wakes up and washes up with his caretaker's help. Then he goes outside for a walk again and enjoys the sunshine.
15:00 – 15:30	It's snacks and fruits time again.
15:30 – 17:00	Motor skills learning time in the afternoon. Yang An learns very fast. Afterwards, he plays and listens to music in the activity room with a caretaker and some other children.
17:00 – 18:00	Time for dinner. During dinner, a caretaker teaches Yang An simple words, such as egg, cookie, dinner, goodbye and so on. After dinner since it's still early, he goes to the activity room to play. He likes balls, play drums and small toy cars.
18:00 – 19: 00	A caretaker gives Yang An a bath. He has a lot of fun in the water. He reaches around to find the bath faucet by listening to the noise of the water. Whenever he touches it, he laughs out loud.
19: 30	He is ready to go to bed. His caretaker gives Yang An a hug and says "good night" to him. He falls sleep easily, with his favorite rabbit toy in his arms.

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Meet Jiang Xiao Li, 5 years old, female
Arrived at Bethel in 2002 (she was one of the first children who came to Bethel)



Jiang Xiao Li is a very delightful girl. She has limited vision but that doesn't stop her from living actively and independently. She is now studying in the Bethel kindergarten.

07:00 – 08:30	Xiao Li's caretaker calls her to get up. Xiao Li puts on her clothes and folds her pajamas by herself and receives praise for doing it well.
08:30 – 09:30	Morning exercises with the teachers and other children. Xiao Li is quite good at sports. She can now run after a teacher for up to 300 meters without stopping.
09:30 – 10:00	English class, taught by an American volunteer. Xiao Li likes the teacher very much, and is very active in the classroom.
10:00 – 10:30	Time for fruits and snacks. Xiao Li is very independent and can feed herself.
10:30 – 11:00	Arts and Crafts class. Today she has made two crafts with the help of her teacher.
11:00 – 11:30	Her third class in the morning is Braille. Xiao Li is quick to learn and is adjusting to new challenges at a fast pace.
11:30 – 12:30	During lunch, Xiao Li is very mischievous and tries to charm her way out of being disciplined. She finally finishes the lunch with reminders from her caretakers and is sent back to her room.
12:30 – 14:00	Xiao Li takes a good nap.
14:00 – 14:30	She wakes up and washes up by herself.
14:00 – 14:30	In the classroom, there is an exhibition of drawings and crafts made by the children in Bethel's kindergarten. Xiao Li likes her own works so much that she is rather protective of others touching her drawings and crafts.
15:00 – 15:30	It's time for fruits and snacks in the afternoon. Xiao Li volunteers to help younger sisters and brothers to clean up the tables and to wash the tableware.
15:30 – 16:00	Physical education class. The kids play a game of passing balls around. Xiao Li is the leader of one of the teams. Although her team loses the game, she feels honored to be the leader.
16:00 – 17:00	After school, Xiao Li goes back to her caretaker and starts to learn how to fold her clothes, which is her learning goal for the month. At Bethel, each child has a monthly goal to reach, which are set by their caretakers. Xiao Li has done very well in achieving these goals.
17:00 – 18:00	Xiao Li is in the dining room having dinner with the other kids, and she is still being rather naughty.
18:00 – 19:00	Xiao Li is in the activity room, playing with the other children.
19:00 – 19:30	After taking a shower, Xiao Li helps the caretakers fold the laundry of the children.
19:30	Time for bed!

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A Day in the Life- Blind Orphans

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Meet He Wen Yi, 8 years old, male
Arrived at Bethel in 2008



Wen Yi is a clever boy who arrived at Bethel in July 2008. Compared to other children, Wen Yi can see quite well. His vision has improved after receiving surgery on his eyes. Wen Yi is able to draw and write Chinese characters, and therefore he does not need to learn Braille.

Wen Yi is very creative and has great potential in art. He is able to complete small projects by himself. Moreover, Wen Yi is also a great helper for his caretakers at Bethel. Because he has better vision than other children, he often

helps his fellow classmates find their way and sometimes even offers to carry their bags.

06:30 – 08:00

Wen Yi wakes up by himself and dresses himself. He also makes his bed. He says to his caretaker with pride: "Look, all my friends haven't waken up yet!" Wen Yi always wants to be No.1. After that, he washes up by himself and runs to the dining room to eat breakfast.

08:00 – 08:30

After breakfast, he goes to the front door to welcome the day shift caretakers as they arrive. He enjoys telling them the interesting things that happened during the night.

08:30 – 10:00

Time for school! His first class is English. Wen Yi can recognize all 26 letters of the English alphabet, and his teachers have noted that he has a good memory. His second class is math. Wen Yi can do simple calculations such as addition and subtraction.

10:00 – 10:20

Wen Yi does morning exercises with his fellow classmates. He is very naughty today, trying to do things differently from others.

10:20 – 12:00

Chinese class. Wen Yi is learning Chinese characters and Tang dynasty poetry today. He is quite diligent in writing Chinese characters, however he does not like to read them aloud, which is not in line with his usual energetic self.

12:00 – 12:30

Time for lunch. Wen Yi has no problem in feeding himself and can fetch bowls and plates and cups without help from others.

12:30 – 13:20

Recess in the yard. He plays with the Bethel farm animals and feeds a rabbit with some carrots. "Rabbits don't like hot weather. It must be cooler for them under a tree," he says and moves the rabbit to a nearby tree. After a while, he begins to ride a bicycle. He is quite good at it.

13:30 – 14:00

The first afternoon lesson is arts and crafts. Wen Yi is very good at drawing. He can assemble raw materials and complete his own crafts and drawings. He can imagine ideas in his mind and create them. This time he draws a tower and gets praise from the teacher.

14:00 – 15:00

Wen Yi spends time with an expat volunteer who teaches him to read the Bible. When the teacher asks him whether he understands, he replies "yes" if he understands, and "noooo" drawing out his "oo's" when he does not understand.

15:00 – 16:00

Time to learn life skills. This month, Wen Yi is also learning how to fold his clothes.

16:00 – 17:00

Wen Yi is climbing a wall at physical education class. He is a natural at it.

17:00 – 17:30

Dinner

17:30 – 18:30

After finishing all his homework, Wen Yi takes a shower and gets ready for English corner.

18:30 – 19:00

Wen Yi is in the English corner, talking with volunteers. Wen Yi is not very good at English yet, because he has been at Bethel for only 4 months.

19:40 – 20:30

Leisure time. Wen Yi is watching cartoons with one of his caretakers.

20:30

Bed time!

Discussion Questions on "A Day in the Life":

- 1) What are your impressions of these children's lives?
- 2) What do you think are the similarities and differences between blind orphans vs. sighted children with parents?
- 3) What level of care should orphans in China receive?
- 4) Do you wish to see more Bethel-like orphanages in China?

If you care to share with us, here at SVG we would love to hear your thoughts. Please email us at info@socialventuregroup.com.

Wokai.org: Microfinance in China

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which individual borrowers to support and watch as the loan is repaid over time, and then choose another borrower to fund with the same initial contribution. Wokai's model is somewhat similar to several other so-called "person to person" online microfinance platforms in the US such as Kiva.org. As with most microfinance borrowers globally, the majority of borrowers in China's MFI networks are women.

"It's a small loan to a poor person that helps the recipient improve her own life. Along with access to credit, each microentrepreneur gets support and training from her loan officer and fellow borrowers that ensure her success. Over time she will be able to send her children to school, build a home for her family and grow

a new sense of confidence and pride in herself. It's about people, and it's about trust," says co-founder Ms. Wilson, who now runs Wokai's China operations in Beijing.

Wokai's website incorporates elements of an online social network platform, information portal and shopping experience. Currently, 100% of funds raised through Wokai.org go to the Chinese borrowers. Wokai as an organization operates on a mix of grants and seed funding and will eventually be sustained by an option 10% donation from users. The organization relies heavily on outside volunteers has already built up an extensive support network in various major US cities. The organization intends to grow the amount of loan capital supplied to Chinese MFIs by US\$4 million within four years and US\$6.5 million within six years.

Wokai's website is: <http://wokai.org>. For more information on how to get involved in microfinance in China, please email us at

Autistic School in Shanghai

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In terms of volunteers, QCQ has established a relatively mature network of regulars, including many partner organizations. QCQ's specific needs and requirements for volunteers are:

- Logistics or administrative skills. QCQ needs a large number of volunteers to help in administration and logistics work, such as website management, activities logistics, leading games with the children, event planning and so on.
- Long-term commitment. Volunteers with long-term commitments and consistent participation make the most difference.
- Teams. Compared with individual volunteers, volunteer teams tend to be more effective and make it easier for organizations to conduct volunteer trainings and assign tasks. For individual volunteers, QCQ recommends volunteering through groups such as Hands on Shanghai, which is a nonprofit organization focusing on volunteer training and activities.

In addition to the staff shortages, QCQ is also facing persistent financial pressures due to low fee structure, in order to make its services available to low income families. When pressured by outside parties to raise its fees, Chen Jie often replies: "Having an autistic child already leads to financial strain on the family. At QCQ, we never want to become an extra burden to them...we should never lose sight of the spirit of serving, even when under financial pressure."

Despite these difficulties, QCQ has already been active in helping other nonprofit groups and individuals in need. One recent example is that after the Sichuan earthquake, QCQ raised over 40,000 RMB through selling paintings and handcrafts of its autistic students, and donated all the money toward relief efforts in the disaster area.

To find out more about how to give to QCQ's work in China, please contact SVG at info@socialventuregroup.com.



A QCQ student shows off his finished work of art

Sichuan Update

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- **Employment:** Except for popular tourist destinations like Duijiangyan, the main industry of most cities in quake zone is manufacturing. Many factories collapsed during the earthquake, and in the current economic environment the rebuilding has been very slow. As a result, the available job openings in these cities are extremely limited. Currently, the unemployment issue has become the biggest problem in many cities in Sichuan.
- **Sichuan internal migrants:** Many affected cities and towns in Sichuan have a higher relative proportion of migrants (25% to 40%) who are from other parts of Sichuan. These internal migrants have resided in the quake zone towns for many years, and they also suffered heavy losses. The current reconstruction plan does not cover these individuals, which means that they will miss out on the housing subsidies, re-distribution of land, and other earthquake relief policies.
- **Returning unemployed migrants:** Sichuan province is the largest source of migrant workers in China. As a result of large scale factory closures in southern China (such as in cities such as Shenzhen and

Dongguan), many migrant workers have lost their jobs and have had no choice but to return to their hometowns in rural Sichuan. Many of these workers return to find very limited opportunities for income in the countryside. Anecdotally, there appears to be an increasing number of these returned unemployed workers who are now flocking to major cities in Sichuan, such as Chengdu and Chongqing, to look for new work. This trend may cause concerns surrounding social unrest in these cities as this population increases.

- **Psychological support:** Several NGO staff in Chengdu also mentioned that the suicide rate has begun to increase significantly in the disaster areas. Although many were aware of the importance of psychological support and assistance right after the earthquake occurred and a strong number of organizations have responded, it appears the current quality or the quantity of this kind of help is far less than enough.
- **Legal aid:** In the aftermath of large scale natural disasters, experience shows that a number of legal issues can arise. This was confirmed by several organizations who are working on legal aids in Sichuan province when I met them. The issues include the need for legal clarity around the rights of people affected both directly

and indirectly, for instance compensations for victims, rights to use land and housing, and dispute resolution mechanisms.

On October 13, 2008, the government released the document entitled, "Overall Planning for Post-Wenchuan Earthquake Restoration and Reconstruction." The 102-page plan is intended as an overall framework document and is not intended as a detailed implementation manual. What is clear from a review of the plan is that the scale of reconstruction required is on an unprecedented scale, which will require significant outside assistance from the non-profit sector, the private sector and also the international community. Already there has been considerable community participation in the quake relief effort. There have been a large number of newly formed NGOs with earthquake relief efforts now operating in the area. It's safe to say that these efforts will continue in the long-term restoration and reconstruction process.

SVG has been working to connect donors with local needs in Sichuan and will keep our clients updated with the reconstruction process and status as it develops.

For more information on how to contribute to medium and long-term needs in the affected areas, please contact us at info@socialventuregroup.com.

Renewal Center

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A Renewal Center volunteer

are then invited to come to the Center after several informal interviews. The Center has two shower rooms and a laundry room, in addition to a reception area that doubles as a dinner table. The Center has two shower rooms and a laundry

room, in addition to a reception area that doubles as a dinner table. The 40 square meter Center storefront space rented from a local business man. Every Wednesday and Sunday night now, the apartment is crowded with many homeless from surrounding areas. Often, the Center receives more than 30 people in one night!

Philip, one of the Chinese volunteer coordinators said that in the early months after the center's opening, hardly any of the homeless came, even though the services there are free. It appears that many were somewhat suspicious in the beginning. In fact, the problem of lack of trust is pervasive to a point that many of the homeless trash collectors refused the free assistance, even when

they acknowledged that they needed it. Fortunately, Jimmy and his friends didn't easily give up. Two months after the opening, the Renewal Center began to welcome its first "regulars". "People really like the place and they've even introduced their friends to come, too," said Philip, "Because they can feel the love and care here." Gradually, more and more homeless have come to the Renewal Center after hearing about it by word of mouth.

On a recent visit, the SVG staff were pleasantly surprised that some of the homeless visitors to the Center have taken up regular responsibilities at the Center, working alongside the staff and volunteers. "I really like it here. I feel like the Renewal Center is actually my home in Shanghai," said a 27-year-old man from Anhui province.

The vision of the Renewal Center is to improve the quality of life of homeless migrants, starting with those who collect trash. In the near future, the Center hopes to begin offering basic health services, job skills training and employment assistance for their guests.

Currently, the Renewal Center is looking for more consistent and committed volunteers to help out with its outreach programs. Help is needed in the areas of setup and cleanup, logistics coordination and visitations. Through the frequent interactions between volunteers and the homeless guests, the Renewal Center hopes to build a community based on trust and mutual understanding. In addition, as winter is coming, the Renewal Center is also seeking donations of warm clothing.

To find out more about how to get involved with the Renewal Center, please email us at: info@socialventuregroup.com.

Reflections From the SVG Team

The year 2008 will no doubt go down in history books as a year of great change in China, from the snow disasters of spring festival, to the May 12th earthquake in Sichuan, the Olympics and Paralympics in Beijing, the milk scandal, and now a global economic downturn. We, who are China-watchers and residents of China, believe that it has been a year that has forever the fabric of life in China as we know it, and undoubtedly for the better.

We believe that the global economic downturn is both a threat and an opportunity to China's nonprofits. In the short run, we are already seeing reduced donations to charities in China, especially from overseas sources. Yet the outlook is bright. Even as the social impact of the downturn becomes more apparent, we believe that individuals and organizations within China will rise to the occasion to meet the needs, and as a result, the sector will strengthen and grow. Because they often bear the brunt of a recession, there is never a better time to stand with the unfortunate, the poor and the needy in our communities than when economy is down.

In this issue, we have highlighted to you a broad range of charitable activities going on in China. From an enterprising web solution for microfinance, to disabled persons in Beijing paving the way for other disabled to compete in the market economy, to a group of volunteers reaching out to trash collectors, all the way down to the details of a typical day of a blind orphan whose path may otherwise never cross with...it is an exciting time to be involved in grassroots causes in China!

Here at SVG, we are learning so many lessons everyday about philanthropy and about charity in China. We recently decided to start a bilingual blog to highlight some of these lessons. You can find us online at: <http://chinaphilanthropy.typepad.com>. We will be updating regularly, and we hope that you will bookmark us and visit us often!

Finally, we want to wish you & your loved ones a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! We are grateful for your support to SVG in 2008, and we look forward to serving you in 2009!

With love, the SVG Team: Grace, Sam, Leo, Nora, Renee

SVG Showcased in Shanghai Expat Show Charity Circle

In September, SVG showcased its services in the Shanghai Expat Show, a large annual trade show in Shanghai that outreaches to expatriates living in China. This year the thousands of visitors, both expatriate and Chinese, passed through the show, giving SVG a good opportunity to tell the community about grassroots nonprofit giving opportunities across China. The team also made introductions so that some of Shanghai's grassroots groups could also showcase alongside us. We would like to give a special thanks Zhang Hao and Rob Jefferson for their graphic design expertise and to our SVG volunteers Jungrok King, Grace Nieh, Grant Pemberton and Micah Rowland for lending us a hand to make our booth a great success!

Contact SVG

SVG advises foundations, corporations and individuals in making informed giving decisions for maximum social impact in China. We do the research and monitoring so that our clients can rest assured that their donations are truly making a difference.

For more information about SVG or any of the organizations in this newsletter, please email us at info@socialventuregroup.com or visit our website at www.socialventuregroup.com.

The SVG team blogs at chinaphilanthropy.typepad.com