

## SPRING 2008

Dear COCOA supporter

*GONG XI FA CAI! (that's Happy New Year to you)*

February 2008 marks the start of the Year of the Rat, and it looks set to be an exciting year for China and we hope for COCOA too.

### C O C O A N E W S

#### *Farewell Wendy*

In December 2007 we said a sad but fond farewell to our Chair of Trustees Wendy Sturgess, who has been a tireless campaigner for COCOA since the very early days. We haven't quite forgiven her for leaving, but we thank Wendy for all her hard work and inspiration over the years and wish her all the best in her future ventures and adventures.

#### *COCOA visit China*

In November two of COCOA's team spent two weeks in China visiting existing and potential beneficiaries of COCOA funds. Criss-crossing the whole country we visited nine orphanages plus a number of foster homes, and met other associations which support abandoned infants. We were inspired by the work our grants have been able to support in China - but recognised the scale of the need which still exists. Never ones to shrink from a challenge, we returned more determined than ever to fulfill COCOA's mission to improve the lives of children in China's state orphanage system.

As a result of our visits we are sponsoring a conference in Beijing so that the organizations we visited and others that care for the disadvantaged Chinese children can share ideas and discuss common problems for the children in their care.



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## *OLYMPIC FEVER*

We found excitement mounting in China ahead of the Beijing Olympics this summer. You don't need to go all the way to China to be part of the action - there are all sorts of events in the UK to mark the Olympics' taking place in China - why not check them out?

## *CHINA NOW*

COCOA is delighted to be associated with CHINA NOW as one of the official charity partners. CHINA NOW is a nationwide programme of events running from Chinese New Year in early February up to the start of the Beijing Olympics in August. See [www.chinanow.org.uk](http://www.chinanow.org.uk) for details of an event near you!



## *East Meets West*

In March this year there will be a rare chance to see the famous Beijing Elderly Arts Group outside China. This choir of senior citizens, who performs regularly for Chinese dignitaries right up to the President himself, will be visiting the UK as part of the *East Meets West* programme. They will be giving a public performance at the Queen's Theatre in London on 30th March. Contact the Chinese Community Centre on 020 7292 1350 or 200 7439 3822 for more details.

## *PEDAL POWER*

Apparently there really are 9 million bicycles in Beijing - recently they were joined by the wonderful Hon Ng and Kie Lam, who cycled - yes, cycled - all the way from Beijing to Hong Kong, raising thousands of pounds for COCOA in the process. Thanks guys, and we hope you weren't really too saddle sore ...



## *Virgin Atlantic*

We're thrilled to report that COCOA will be the recipient of Virgin Atlantic's 'Change for Children' on-board appeal in July 2008. The money raised will be used to help fit out a new orphanage being built in Henan province to give 98 children a long-term secure home. So if you're flying on business or holiday with Virgin Atlantic don't forget to donate your unused Dollars, Rupees, Rand and Yen. (PS We accept Sterling too!)



**DON'T FORGET** - You can help COCOA at no cost to you -see the [www.buy.at/cocoachina](http://www.buy.at/cocoachina) webshop for lots of new retailers and the ASK search facility (via [www.cocoa.org.uk](http://www.cocoa.org.uk)) - we get money every time you click!

## *HOW WE SPEND YOUR MONEY*

After the appeal in our last newsletter you really came up trumps, and a further 12 children are enjoying the increased comfort and independence of their own custom-made wheelchair. We, and the children, thank you.

Last year COCOA agreed to fund a baby room in Hunan province which is receiving 84 abandoned babies a year. As well as the infants' basic care, the grant paid for three medical staff to treat them, run diagnostic tests and give them those essential childhood vaccinations. Your money is quite simply helping to save these babies' lives. The grant will keep the baby room running till the summer - but then more funding will be needed. Can you help us to keep more babies safe?



## **EMERGENCY APPEAL**

Many of you will have seen in the media that China has been weathering the most severe winter in 50 years. Extreme weather conditions have wreaked havoc and some of our projects in Southern China are in survival mode as they face food, water and electricity shortages. International volunteers and employees have been filling and transporting water containers by hand from a farmer's well. Many employees are working 24-48 hour shifts as transport has come to a standstill. Some of our project buildings have structural damage. Additional clothing, bedding and supplies had to be purchased - expenses which had not been budgeted for. Many of the children have poor circulation and complex health issues, and it has been a challenge for staff to keep them warm. Your donation, however large or small, will help provide what is needed now and in the coming days and weeks.



### **DONATION FORM**

I would like to help the emergency appeal with a donation of

£10     £20     £30     £50     £100     Other amount

I would like to help with a general donation of  £

Please make your cheque/postal order payable to 'COCOA'

Or fill in your credit card details below

Card number \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry date \_\_ / \_\_

Signature ..... Date .....

Name .....
Address .....
..... Postcode .....

Please send me details of COCOA's sponsorship programme