

Angel House workers minister to Chinese children with cerebral palsy

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GUANGXI PROVINCE, China (ABP)—More than 1.7 million Chinese children under the age of 13 have cerebral palsy.

Because of poverty, limited medical services and China's laws limiting each family to one child, these children often are abandoned to starvation, isolation and an early death.

Angel
House
director
Kate Wang
Fang, right,
works with
Xiao Yu as
her mother
participates
in training.
(Jay Paul
Photo)

Despite the number of children with cerebral palsy—a muscular impairment caused by brain damage—there are few schools in China designed specifically to help them develop.

But Angel House Rehabilitation and Education Center in Guangxi Province is making a difference.

At Angel House, each child is integrated into a program to help them assume normal roles in society. Kate Wang Fang, director of Angel House, said parents often ask her why she provides the service.

She tells them it's because she's a "Christ-follower."

When Fei Fei, 3, arrived at Angel House, he was unable to sit up and could barely talk. With help from the workers like Wang Fang at Angel House, his cognitive and speech development now are nearly normal for his age. He also can sit without assistance and is gaining strength in his legs.

Along with Fei Fei, Angel House serves 20 children with a range of physical disabilities. Its staff of 14 forms a team of special-education teachers, rehab

workers, caregivers and administrators. Their program includes speech therapy, exercises for developing motor skills and role-play designed to help students transition into society.

Brenda Lisenby, who serves as a [Cooperative Baptist Fellowship](#) representative in China, said working at the house has been a life-changing experience.

“Because nongovernment organizations are rare in China, Kate struggled to get Angel House off the ground,” Lisenby said.

“We relate openly as a Christian organization. We are not always well received. Some local schools and local governments prefer not to partner with Christian organizations. But then there are others who do wish to partner with us,” she added.

For six years, Lisenby taught English at a Chinese university. With her background in education, her facility with the Chinese language and her growing network of contacts, she is excited about the potential for serving in special-needs education.

“We definitely work among a marginalized segment of society,” Lisenby said.

“This work gives me an opportunity to impact whole families ... as the Chinese learn how to affirm and welcome special-needs individuals into their society. I am amazed at how God works.”