

Traveling to China with Jeannie Butler was an amazing experience that I will never forget. I've been to China with Jeannie twice now. My trip in 2011 was very exciting because it was my first time back to China since my dad swept me away almost 17 years ago. I am now 22. I was adopted from China, so this trip would be a little different than for someone else. Going back to a country that abandoned you can be a little daunting. However, I was ready for what lay ahead. During this trip, I was just in awe of everything. The culture was "new" to me since I do not remember anything before I was adopted. The first thing that ran through my head was, "There are so many Asians in one place". Remember, America is a melting pot of many different ethnicities, but in China all you see are Asians. It was definitely a culture shock for me. After my initial shock, I took everything in for the next two weeks. We did some touristy stuff like seeing the Great Wall, Tiananmen Square, and Terracotta Soldiers, which was fun and gave me more insight in the Chinese culture. However, the purpose of Jeannie's trips is to offer aid to the orphans or more correctly to other abandoned children.

My second trip to China, which was this year, 2014; I saw more of the orphanages and helped in any way to make life happier for these children because that is what they are. Orphans are forgotten children and they need our help to be remembered. Traveling with Jeannie opens your eyes to an unknown world that seems implausible. Seeing rows of cribs and rooms full of children is saddening and heartbreaking. It was also especially difficult for me because I was once an orphan and seeing where I used to be was scary. But I am thankful that I was able to help these children. As my group would agree, we wish we could just take them all home and give them the love they deserve, but of course we cannot. All we can do is give love to all the babies and toddlers for that short period of time, give them a cleaner environment to live in, and bring the supplies that they desperately need. This trip has opened my eyes to a world that I never really fully grasped until I saw it myself. As Jeannie says "This trip is an opportunity to change a life... yours!" So if you have the time and money, go on a trip with Jeannie because not only does she have traveling to China down to a science, she is an amazing women. She does this each year, even twice a year to help, love, and remember all the children who have been forgotten. It is truly an amazing trip and I plan to go again and again whenever possible.

- Gaby Wibking