

## Tessa, Justin & Harbin

My husband and I arrived in Harbin in the Heilongjiang Province in the evening and went to the Civil Affairs office the next morning to meet our son, who we decided to name Harbin after his hometown. They put Harbin in my arms and I instantly was ready to go home. I had spent months planning our trip, and looking forward to visiting the Great Wall, and hoping that we would get to travel before the Ice Festival ended in Harbin, but now I would have traded all of that for a ticket home. As soon as we were alone my husband echoed my feelings and said, "We can go home now." We were both ready to have our son home with our other children and start our life as a family of five.

Our son has hemophilia, which means his blood has low amounts of the clotting factor that helps stop bleeding. He does not bleed faster than other people, but he is at risk for external bleeds that take a long time to clot and internal bleeds in his muscles and joints. My husband and I are very glad to have our son home where he can receive the regular treatments that he needs to lead a healthy life. If untreated, our son would have had a life expectancy of about 25 years old, which is the reality for many people with hemophilia in China. At the orphanage, our son was not allowed to run or play with the other children because they were not treating him adequately and were worried he would get hurt. Here, insurance will cover synthetic clotting factor that he can receive prophylactically at home. He now has a normal life expectancy, and doesn't have to live with restrictions. He can finally play like a little boy.

Our son was abandoned when he was two and a half years old. I like to believe it was because his birth family realized that he has hemophilia and knew that they would not be able to provide the care that he needs and were hoping for more for him. I wish I could tell his birth parents that he is riding a tricycle. That he loves to go down slides. That he is expected to live right through adulthood and into old age. I wish I could share with them the words of E.E. Cummings, "I carry your heart, I carry it in my heart."

Thank you to Helpusadopt.org for helping give us the honor of being his parents.

