

morning tears newsletter

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Editorial

Their body remembers

2013 is an anniversary year for morning tears. We started to provide assistance for children of convicts 15 years ago. Our harvest is not small: the recognition that we received from the hundreds of children that we individually accompanied in regaining their feelings of safety back is nothing less than a reason for living for those involved in the morning tears movement. But we also harvested something else. Children allowed us to learn from them. Their stories, pains and happy moments made us think and research how to continuously advance our methods of care and protection. We deeply enjoyed witnessing the small and bigger successes in helping rebuild worlds for children who lost their own. But we also learned and continue to learn things that we do not like. One of these lessons is something that can only be learned after working with children for 15 years, children that now are adults: their body remembers.

Every single child in morning tears has been subject to multiple emotional traumas, varying from abuse, witnessing violence, separation, death of parents to biases, bullying as well as mental and physical torture. Through our work we learned that we have to psychologically work over all those traumas with the children. With our help the children learn to talk about what happened. Our intention is that children completely believe that they cannot be blamed for anything that happened to their beloved ones or to themselves. We want to make them realize that very bad things happened in their lives, but that there is still a life ahead with dreams, love and wonderful things. However, now after 15 years, we also know that it is difficult to completely heal the emotional scars that the multiple traumas have caused. Today we know, because their body remembers.

These children who are now adults often have psychosomatic problems. They have illnesses, pains and physically very uncomfortable periods that do not have medical explanations. They suffer, and when all medical tests have repeatedly shown that there are no physical explanations for their complaints they have to start accepting that the mark these traumas have left on their body cannot be erased. They face a choice. They can enter a deep and painful journey of psycho-emotional self-discovery again as an adult that might bring some relief, but it also has the



Editorial (cont'd)

danger that more undiscovered traumas surface. Or they need to accept that this is what life has to offer. Most of them choose the second option. Acceptance brings internal peace and this is in turn a positive environment for physical and emotional recovery.

For us this is a lesson. Children like to play and children with multiple and complex traumas are not any different. Often, the kids avoid any therapeutic activities that confront them with what happened and prefer to continue to play in denial of the past. For caregivers, parents and project staff it is very comfortable to leave them in that very fragile and short-lived happiness. What should be done instead is invent more in finding attractive activities that are geared towards psychological rehabilitation. Only this way – as adults- their body will not bring the pains of the past to the present.

Morning tears would like to thank all the young adults for sharing their suffering. We will use it – together with everybody who is involved in morning tears - to help the younger generation of children who have a parent in prison.

Koen Sevenants

Founder - Director of morning tears

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News

New faces at morning tears introducing themselves

Hans Lenders

Program Support Manager



Since the 1st of December 2012, I have taken over the position of Program Support Manager from Ange Moray. In this capacity I will be responsible for all day-to-day operational matters for morning tears on the Chinese mainland (projects, finances, fundraising, events, communication etc.) and support all of the morning tears countries as much as possible.

I grew up in a small village in the South of the Netherlands, close to Belgium and Germany. I have a technical BSc. degree in Toxicology as well as a Masters degree in Environmental Policy. Along with my studies, I was active in organizing student simulations of the United Nations throughout Europe and worked for more than ten years with my father and brother (both tilers) on constructions sites. After graduating I worked for both the project management and the policy division of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment in the Netherlands. I had lived abroad for several shorter periods when the opportunity came by to work for the Netherlands Embassy in Nigeria as a policy advisor on political and economic affairs. My broad background served me well there and it is also the place where I met my partner. When my work was finished there I followed her to her new posting, China, and here we are.

As for morning tears, there is a lot of work to be done, especially with the start of the EU supported project, but I am looking forward to it! If you, at any point in time, have questions, feedback, or ideas on how to do things smarter or just want to say “hi” then please don’t hesitate. You can always call me (+86 - 18600274910) or send me an email (hans.lenders@morningtears.org.cn).



Tom Tobback

President morning tears Hong Kong



My name is Tom Tobback. I am originally from Belgium and have been living abroad for the last 15 years, of which the last 10 years were spent in Beijing. That's where I met my wife Tanya, who is from Vladivostok in Russia. Our three kids were born there. As an engineer, I worked for various international companies, with also a six-month mission at the UN. For the last 4 years I worked at the Belgian embassy in Beijing advising Flemish cleantech companies on doing business in China. Last summer, we decided to move to a green corner of Hong Kong where I am enjoying my new role as stay-at-home dad. I have known morning tears for many years and I am excited to be part of the team!

Soon, my morning tears email-address will be registered, but for now you can contact me at tomtobback@gmail.com.

Christmas Show at Vision Park Kindergarten



Morning tears was once again asked to participate in the Christmas fundraising event at Vision Park Sports Kindergarten in Shanghai.

The children had been working very hard in the weeks before Christmas, not only to prepare for the show, but also by making masterpieces of art!

On the morning of the 15th of December, all families gathered to see the children on stage. The children gave a marvellous performance with dancing, singing and a complete Christmas play! They were adorable!

During the break the class artworks were auctioned. Many parents were interested in buying and there was

serious competition. Our volunteer Arnie Yan together with Peter Bezuidenhout from Vision Park did an excellent job in co-auctioning, quickly responding to the bids made and promoting the artworks at the same time. Furthermore the children's individual art works were for sale.

The morning finished with a raffle for which parents and companies had donated prizes.

Thanks to all the teachers at Vision Park, the PTO, all the parents and not to forget - the children! It was an amazing day, we had a lot of fun and together we raised 90,000 RMB for the children of morning tears.

Toys bring joy: donation by VICTOR International

Many companies from Germany produce in China and some are also happy to give back and donate to our children! It was Christmas time and a time for toys and games. VICTOR International donated lots of playthings: frisbees, balls, beach games and high quality badminton rackets and many shuttlecocks. Our kids love to play outdoors despite the cold, so for their Chinese New Year they will for sure be able to use their new sports equipment and go with even more positive energy into the Year of the Snake.

A big thanks to Jan and to VICTOR International!





Christmas wreaths in support of the morning tears children

For the second year in a row Element Spa teamed up with morning tears Shanghai. In the months leading up to Christmas we were present at bazaars and markets all around town selling Christmas wreaths and telling people about the children in need.

Just like last year – it was a great success! This year, we had five different kinds of wreaths for sale. The customers could either buy them on-the-spot or pre-order them for the beginning of December. All of the proceeds from the sale went to charity!

Our slogan for the whole project was: “Share your Christmas joy with the children in need”, and people certainly did. At the bazaars the wreaths caught a lot of attention and many people came by the morning tears booth just to have a look. For quite a few people it was their first introduction to morning tears. They were very interested and pleased to hear that they could support our cause by purchasing a wreath. Besides generating almost 14.000 RMB, selling the wreaths also helped us to get in contact with so many new people. It was a great way of promoting our organization.

Overall, there was a lot of work that would not have been possible without the help from our good friends at Element Spa. Their help in planning and coordinating the whole project was priceless - we truly appreciate all their effort and look forward to working on this together again next year – where we most likely will be selling Christmas wreaths (...again) ☺.

morning tears Shanghai

Like morning tears on Facebook

Follow morning tears on Facebook and receive easy updates on our projects and events. Find the Facebook site in your country or simply select the international site with updates from all over the world.

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- morning tears Germany: www.facebook.com/MorningTearsDeutschland?ref=stream
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- morning tears the Netherlands: www.facebook.com/MorningTearsNL

See you on Facebook and remember sharing is caring so invite your friends!

Don't forget!!

- Morning tears and Beermania in Beijing will hold a ‘drinks for charity evening’ on Tuesday the 12th of March. Come along and bring as many friends as you can!
- Morning tears was once again chosen as one of the two beneficiaries of the annual Gala Ball of the Benelux Chamber of Commerce (Bencham). The gala will be held on Saturday the 23rd of March at the Renaissance Capital Hotel Beijing. For more information and tickets please visit; www.bencham.org/events/gala_ball



Morning tears' strategy

In 2012, incredible work was done, but the year 2013 is going to be an important year for morning tears. Morning tears is growing as an organization by extending its reach into new countries and strengthening its work in China with support from the European Commission (more about this below and in the subsequent editions).

A growing morning tears community

Worldwide there are more than 30 million children that have a parent in prison. On any given day about 290 children in the US have a parent jailed. In China, daily about 260 kids have their mother or father sent to prison. In the EU, 238 children per day have a parent taken away to prison. With prison populations on the rise in many countries these numbers will only increase and result in even more children entering the process of confusion, feelings of guilt, anger, loneliness, falling into poverty, being subject to prejudices and often facing a desperate mix of hope and fear. Morning tears can make a difference for these children.

We see that morning tears is in fact a rapidly expanding community of motivated people who care about this even more rapidly growing group of children of convicted parents. If you would like to connect with a group in your country to receive more information about morning tears, become a volunteer, raise funds or support us otherwise then we would love to hear from you. Morning tears is mainly volunteer driven and there are always a number of opportunities to become involved in various countries.

Morning tears and its volunteers are now present in the following countries/places:

- Belgium
- China – Beijing / Shanghai
- Denmark
- France
- Germany (NEW)
- Italy
- Singapore (NEW)
- Spain
- The Netherlands
- United States
- Cambodia (NEW)
- Hong Kong (NEW)

Find your country at www.morningtears.org or contact us at info@morningtears.org.

A national level impact in China on childcare and the protection of children.

The 1st of December 2012 marked the start of a three-year project aimed at strengthening childcare institutions and the increasing protection for vulnerable children, particularly children of prisoners, in China. The project will be carried out in a close partnership between morning tears, the Zhengzhou Child Protection Centre and the National Training Centre for Child Protection Workers, which falls directly under the Ministry of Civil Affairs. The European Commission is supporting the project by co-financing 72% the project with a maximum grant of 3,929,000 RMB (€ 484,000). Morning tears has a responsibility to fund the rest from other sources.





Morning tears' strategy (cont'd)

Official estimates place the number of children of convicts in China who are in urgent need of assistance at more than 600.000. When a parent goes to prison the children stay behind and often lack basic needs like adequate housing and food, have health problems and suffer from traumas. Morning tears has been working in China since 1999, to provide children of convicts with a safe home, food, clothing, education, medical as well specialized psychological/trauma care. Contact with their parent(s) in prison is facilitated whenever possible. This way these children, who initially lost everything, get their life back.

Alongside the institutional care, morning tears has also been working in close cooperation with the Chinese partners to create a better understanding of the specific needs children of convicts and more generally to contribute to improving childcare and protection in China. This work has resulted in a solid foundation for the current project and its four key aims:

1. The development of an inspection unit for child protection in China under the Ministry of Civil Affairs.
2. Developing standard operating procedures for ensuring childcare and protection when a parent goes to prison.
3. Creating and implementing training materials and plans for relevant authorities on childcare and protection that can be used by the national training centre.
4. Setting-up a model centre for childcare and protection that will function as an example for other centres in China.

The project is carried-out under the leadership of Madam Xie, director of the Zhengzhou Child Protection and the National Training Centre for Child Protection Workers. Morning tears will assist with the project coordination and use its technical expertise in the field of childcare and protection to provide technical assistance and training. Koen Sevenants will act as the technical expert on behalf of morning tears. Hans Lenders will take care of project coordination, finances and reporting to the EU.

Relevant Actualities

- On the 7th of January, a fire killed seven children in an unlicensed orphanage in Lankao County, China. This very sad event has resulted in a review of applicable legislation by the Chinese government. What the exact implications will be is yet to be seen.

Source: www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1120203/seven-die-fire-unlicensed-orphanage-henan

- An article in the China Southern Morning Post of the work of morning tears in China.

Source: www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1139666/doctor-wants-more-done-children-prisoners



News from Coming Home Project - Henan

Recent happenings

- On the 15th of November, Mrs. Alice Cooman, Representative of the Antwerp China Development Agency, visited the Coming Home project.
- On the 16th of November, a delegation of high-level officials from the Chinese Ministry of Civil Affairs visited the project and called it an example for other projects in China.
- On the 17th of November, the Children's Art Group from Zhengzhou Television gave a performance and these children sang and danced together with morning tears children.
- On the 23rd of November, 11 secondary school children from the project went on an excursion to Zhengzhou University. They were very impressed and were also happy to have an afternoon without school and homework.
- On the 30th of December, a prison visit was organized for 12 children to see their parents in Yuzhong prison (Henan Province). Morning tears facilitated the visit and the children were allowed to meet their parents without a separation and they could enjoy a meal together. Some of the children brought letters they had written and the youngest one made a nice drawing.
- Birthday parties were organized for the children born in December and January.
- Some of the children won prizes in a table tennis competition held at their school.



Finances

The financial results over 2012 are currently being compiled and we aim to provide you with more information in the next edition of this newsletter and on the website.

The start of the EU project and the partial financial support also requires us to meet their standards for financial management. This includes annual financial and narrative reports about the project as well as an audit by a pre-approved auditor before the final payment, which will be coordinated by the Beijing office. We will keep you informed.



morning tears Belgium

BNP Paribas Fortis
 Account No: 001-4495454-65
 IBAN: BE 18001449545465
 BIC/SWIFT: GEBABEBB

morning tears Netherlands

ABN Amro
 Account No: 45.75.13.764
 Stichting Morning Tears Nederland
 IBAN: NL81ABNA0457513764
 BIC/SWIFT: ABNANL2A

morning tears Spain

La Caixa d'Estalvis i Pensions
 Account No: 2100.0233.99.0200332319
 IBAN: ES28 21000233990200332319
 BIC/SWIFT: CAIXAESBXXX

morning tears Denmark

Danske Bank
 Account No: 10490189 Reg. Nr. 1551
 IBAN: DK14 3000 0010 4901 89
 BIC/SWIFT: DABADKKK

morning tears in China

Bank of China, Beijing Xi Cui Lu Sub-Branch
 [中国银行北京西翠路支行]
 Account No: 4160-3000-1880-2623-90
 Beneficiary: Guo Zhi Hong (郭志弘)
 BIC/SWIFT: BKCHCNBJ110

morning tears rebuilds the world for children who have lost their own world.

morning tears rebuilds the world for children who have suffered or are suffering heavy emotional pain.

We focus particularly on:

- children whose parents are in prison;
- children whose parents have been sentenced to death;
- children who have been abused or neglected;
- orphans;
- children who haven't been registered at birth, and thus have no rights;
- street children.

morning tears has been operating since 1999 on an informal basis without legal structure. However, in March 2005 morning tears became a formal non-profit organization registered under Belgian Law. Currently, morning tears has offices in Belgium, Spain, The Netherlands, Denmark, France, Italy, the USA and China.

morning tears is run mainly by volunteers. These volunteers are mostly professionals from the social sector or development aid workers, although we also have journalists and engineers in our group.

The running costs of morning tears are kept very low, so that donations can go almost entirely to the children in need.