

# Foreign teens get taste of U.S. life

By Patti Dobranski  
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When Christina Kozemchok's 2 1/2-year-old adopted daughter, Anna, found out she would be spending time with some Chinese exchange students this summer, she told her mother, "My Chinese friends are home now." Anna was adopted from China by the Kozemchok family when she was 10 months old through Adoptions from the Heart's Greensburg office.

Founded in 1985 and based in the Philadelphia area, the agency facilitated actress Angelina Jolie's adoption of her son, Pax, from Vietnam.

The Hempfield family got temporarily bigger over the past month with the addition of 14-year-old exchange student Han Duo Duo, who is going by her American name, "Jane." Jane, along with 24 other students ages 12-19, arrived from China last month with their teacher and chaperone, Xu Wei Fa, who described their visit as "an education in American culture." The exchange was made possible by People Link, a California-based educational agency.

On Friday, the students joined families at the annual reunion of Adoptions from the Heart at Idlewild Park, in Ligonier Township, to celebrate their heritage.

Kozemchok said she prayed for seven years before adopting Anna and was somehow able to save the \$20,000 needed to adopt her in just two years. "Since I was five years old, I knew I would some day adopt a little girl. When I first saw her, I was numb. There were so many emotions. I am so honored to raise someone else's child. I know her mother loved her, but she couldn't keep her," Kozemchok said yesterday. Jeff and Christina Kozemchok have three biological sons -- Andrew, 14, Colton, 12 -- who is disabled and has special needs -- and 10-year-old Chad. Kozemchok said that the challenges of caring for their disabled son, Colton, is a testament that adopting is possible for anyone. "If we can do this, anyone can," she said.

Jane said she was enjoying America and was especially impressed with the friendliness of the people she's seen. "Everyone waves to each other, even if they don't know you," she said. Jane also loves American cuisine -- especially steak and spaghetti. She was, however, alarmed by the notion that many people own guns. "No one is allowed to own a gun in China," she said. An only child, Jane said she is enjoying her "sister" Anna and her "brothers," although Chad likes to scare her with rubber spiders.

Katie Houser, of Adoptions from the Heart, has adopted 11 children and currently has six exchange students living in her North Huntingdon home. Among Houser's student guests is Xiao Yuan, 15, who is using her American name, Miranda. Miranda said she liked all the American food and enjoyed tubing on the water the most. She hopes to return to the United States to attend college and pursue a career in the media. "This is the kind of job that attracts me because it allows you to be creative," she said.

Dong Kai Li, 16, who goes by the American name Kelly, was enjoying the beauty of the opposite sex. "I love the beautiful girls," he joked. Houser said Kelly has a great sense of humor, but he won't eat his fruits and vegetables.

"These kids are so special. It's fun to watch how they react to things, like food. They saw scrambled eggs and I tried to explain to them it was like a hard-boiled egg mixed up, but they just looked suspicious and started talking to each other in Chinese. They probably said, 'What's this lady trying to feed us?' " she laughed.

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**Anna Kozemchok, 2, of Greensburg, sits between her adoptive mother Jane Kozemchok (left) and exchange student Jane Han Duo Duo during the Adoptions From The Heart picnic on Friday at Idlewild Park in Ligonier.**  
*Eric Schmadel/Tribune-Review*