



Zach and his sister, Zilana

Zach Lee is currently seventeen years old and living in Greenwich, Connecticut with his family, including his nineteen-year-old brother, Alex and his six-year-old sister, Zilana, who was adopted from China in 2002. With a great deal of creativity, hard work, and passion for his cause, Zach created and executed the fundraising event described below on his own and raised a total of \$8,000.00 for orphans of Bobai, China.

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On June 19th last year, the **Run for Orphans** took place, raising money for the orphanage in Bobai, China. I decided to organize the event based on my own personal experiences. My family adopted my sister, Zilana, through the Alliance for Children, a little over four years ago from the Anqing Children's Welfare House in Anhui Province. I was thirteen years old at the time, and to be completely honest, being the youngest child and getting all the attention, I was against it. Within minutes of seeing my sister at the airport though, she had found her way into my heart.



Since then, her presence in my life has affected almost everything I do. Aside from shaping me into essentially a different person, her story has given me an awareness for the issue that will last for a lifetime. Today, the physical separations between me and my sister have melted away, and I don't see her as any different than myself or anyone in my family. It is this realization that has sparked a need inside of me to help children like Zilana. She is just as wonderful, talented, and beautiful as any other child her age, and she was chosen completely by random from a country on the other side of the earth. There are millions of children just like Zilana, who are restricted by society and unable to pursue the incredible amount of potential they hold within them. Seeing my sister develop into the girl she is today, I knew I had to do everything I could to help the children like Zilana.



It was near the end of the year when I organized the run. I only had about three weeks to pull it all together, but the amount of support I received from my classmates at Greenwich High School was overwhelming. With five company sponsors and hundreds of student sponsors, the twenty runners ran twenty-four laps around my schools track. The six miles came a lot harder that day, considering it was 110 degrees outside and so humid it felt like we were running through soup. One of the runners had to actually take a break half way through because the ground was starting to melt the soles of his shoes. One girl, Luisa, really summed up the atmosphere of the event though. After running sixteen laps, or four miles, she got very sick and could not continue. After fully recuperating later that night, she ran the last two miles alone on her treadmill, just to say she finished.



This event has opened my eyes to the potential we all have to make a difference. We all should do our part, wherever the help is necessary. The support of my friends and my peers has given me a lot of hope that there are so many good people out there, and that the plight of the millions of Chinese children will not be forgotten or left unattended.

Zachary Lee

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If you want to follow in Zach's sneakers and you have an idea that you need help with, please contact Bonnie DeLongchamp at [bonnie@allforchildren.org](mailto:bonnie@allforchildren.org). To learn more about the Bobai Orphanage and other projects to help orphans in need around the world, please visit the **Alliance For Children Foundation** (<http://www.afcfoundation.org>).