

For many years, Staci worked as a counselor at Pine Lake Camp in Eldora, Iowa. Through that experience, she met many campers. Over the years, she kept in contact with one of her former campers, Deann, whose son Zach was born with spina bifida. When Zach was little, he often became frustrated because he couldn't access some of his toys. Deann's uncle in Minnesota was an engineer and decided to do something about this. After much tinkering, he created the ZipZac, which is a tiny wheelchair that sits very low to the ground. Zach loved this and used it for many years.

Parallel to this, Steven Curtis Chapman, a Christian recording artist, and his wife Mary Beth, decided they wanted to expand their family of three biological children. They eventually adopted three daughters from China. Through this process, they realized how expensive it is for Christian couples to adopt and saw firsthand how great of a need there was. They decided to do something about it and formed Shaohannah's hope (later simplified to Show Hope). As Steven toured, he'd speak about the organization and encourage the concert-goers to become donors. Over time, they were able to help many, many couples through grants for their adoptions. Staci, who has been a life-long Steven Curtis Chapman fan and has always had a heart for adoption, especially after our failed domestic adoption in 2002, started donating to Show Hope.

In 2008, the Chapman family was struck with a terrible tragedy when their daughter Maria died in an accident at their home. As a result, there was a tremendous outpouring of financial support to the family. Steven and Mary Beth discussed it and wanted to do something with the money that would have a lasting impact. They decided to expand the work of Show Hope beyond providing adoption aid grants to families. They partnered with New Hope, a US-based organization that was running several orphanages in China. In total, Show Hope ended up providing around 70% of the annual budget for New Hope. They built a seven-story orphanage in Luoyang, China and called it Maria's Big House of Hope, in memory of their daughter.

In 2011, Staci and I built a house for our family of five. Since our kids were all in school, Staci was looking to redirect her time to something she was passionate about. Shortly after moving, Staci received a call out of the blue from someone at Show Hope saying they were sad to see us discontinuing our donations. Staci was surprised to hear this because we had not stopped. Apparently, we had missed some mailings that were sent to our previous address, so we had missed the annual donation renewal. Through the conversation, Staci realized the person on the call was Steven's daughter-in-law, Julia Chapman. Staci told Julia that not only were we still

interested in donating, but she was wondering if she could volunteer with Show Hope. Through this, she became much more acquainted with Show Hope and worked at many of Steven's concerts to help bring in new donors. Soon, she was the main contact for Show Hope in Iowa and was tapped to help any time Steven was performing in the state. Naturally, she became well-acquainted with several of the staff for Show Hope. Among those she met was David Trask, who had been Steven's road manager for many years and was working as the Show Hope rep on his tours. David was such a trusted member of Steven's inner circle that he accompanied Steven and Mary Beth to China when they adopted their children. Over time, Staci became friends with David and communicated with him outside of concert activities.

In the fall of 2014, Deann (Zach's mom) made a social media post that she was sad because Zach had outgrown his ZipZac (ZipZac #1 from a growing company) and she didn't know what to do with it. Staci told her it could be put to good use in China because there was a large number of kids at Maria's who had spina bifida and there were very few wheelchairs (which didn't necessarily fit the kids well) to go around. Staci arranged for me to meet Deann to pick the ZipZac up because we were soon heading to Nashville for a Show Hope fellowship weekend.

A month or so later, we arrived at the Cedar Rapids airport to fly to Nashville with the ZipZac in tow. I was surprised to see Staci not pack the ZipZac in any sort of container to check it with the airline. She was sure they'd put it in a bin or something, but I had serious doubts of that and feared it could be broken. Sure enough, when we arrived in Nashville, the front caster was broken off. Staci, to her credit, is a firm believer in keeping her word. Not only was she irritated the airline broke the ZipZac, but this also ultimately meant she wasn't able to keep her word to her friends at Show Hope and deliver the ZipZac. She was further infuriated when the gal in the airline's baggage claim center said, "It's only a wheel." After Staci sternly corrected her understanding of the situation, she called Deann to ask how to repair the wheel. Deann then called her uncle, the creator of the ZipZac, who said, "I invented the tool to put the wheel on, so I'm the only person in the world that can repair it." As a result, the airline agreed to send the ZipZac back to the uncle for repairs. The airline also provided Staci with a travel voucher, which she would later use toward her trip to China.

Early in 2015, Staci received a call from David Trask, who invited her to go with him on a donor trip to China. Staci very much wanted to go, but hesitated because she thought it would be better for the money to be donated to Show Hope rather than being spent on a trip. David understood, but persisted by saying he really thought she needed to see the work that was

being done there. Staci asked for my thoughts. I told her I was fully in support of her going, but I “didn’t want her to bring any China babies back in her luggage.” I said this because, for several years by that point, Staci had wanted to adopt a child. I wasn’t opposed but I felt like I was already maxed out with three children. I worried that adding another child would only take away from my ability to spend time with our three existing kids. Staci understood and accepted this. She went to China and was at peace that it wasn’t a precursor to adopting. I knew that the “risk” of her going would be like sending Anna to the humane society.

Whenever someone traveled to China with Show Hope, the airline allowed them to check two pieces of luggage. To help Show Hope send medical supplies to Maria’s free of charge, they asked anyone going on a trip to bring only one piece of luggage for themselves and to use the second checked bag for supplies that the staff of Show Hope in Nashville would pack. When Staci received her supply bag from Nashville, she opened it to discover that it contained the newly-repaired ZipZac, casting supplies and several pairs of corrective shoes for children with club foot. These all happened to be donations that Staci had secured. When Show Hope needed casting supplies to treat club foot, Staci reached out to several companies and medical offices for donations, but she had no luck. After Christian broke his leg and saw an orthopedic doctor, Staci asked the doctor for casting supplies and he happily provided them. Staci had also secured the corrective shoes from an organization called On His Path, located near Iowa City. Treatment for club foot was pioneered by a doctor with the University of Iowa, which is why the orthopedics company is located there. On His Path was developed alongside MD Orthopedics as a charitable organization for non-profits such as Show Hope. Staci made a personal visit to meet the staff there and receive their donation. Interestingly, Staci also received treatment for club foot as a young child.

Staci met David Trask at O’Hare airport and flew with him to China. A small group of donors also joined the trip. When they walked in the front door at Maria’s, a large group of children and nannies were celebrating Easter in the lobby. By no coincidence, this happened to be the birthday of the baby girl whose adoption fell through for us. The travel group was exhausted and it was time for bed. They stayed in rooms on the seventh floor of Maria’s. The next morning, the group gathered and made plans to spend time with the children. Staci’s goal was to meet all 154 kids at Maria’s and pray over each one over the course of the week. Most of the travel group decided to start visiting rooms on the sixth floor of the building and work their way down, so Staci decided to start on the first floor and work her way up. Since each room had a window in the door, it was easy to look in to see what the kids were doing. In the first room at the end of the hallway, the children were eating. Staci decided she would go in later. In the

second room, most of the children were resting on mats on the floor. Again, Staci didn't want to upset the peace, so she crossed the lobby and went to the nursery at the other end of the hall. This was the Tinkerbell room. Staci looked through the window to see 3 little boys sitting in a row on the floor with their backs toward the window. The middle boy turned around, saw Staci, and motioned for her to come in. As she opened the door, this little boy quickly scooted across the floor and threw his arms up to be lifted up. Clearly he couldn't walk and he didn't want to be put down. Rather than visiting other rooms, Staci stayed and played with him nearly all day. This little boy's advocacy name was Vincent.

The next morning, Staci and the group had breakfast with Nate Renich, who oversaw Maria's. Nate had assembled the ZipZac and he asked Staci if she wanted to join him as he took it to the little boy that Dr. Steve had identified as a child who was ready to use it. Staci was pleasantly surprised to learn that Vincent was the child, and it was a sweet gift to place him in the ZipZac for the first time. Vincent quickly learned how to push and turn the chair, and though his friends loved to chase him in it, he didn't want any of them to sit in it.

Dr. Steve Martin was the doctor who typically lived at Maria's with his family. Staci had the opportunity to meet Dr. Steve when she arrived in Beijing, which is where Steve and his wife were staying temporarily while they had a new baby. Dr. Lim was filling in at Maria's in Dr. Steve's absence. During one conversation with Dr. Lim, Staci asked about Vincent. She learned that he had Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus. We would later learn from Dr. Steve that Vincent was dropped off at a local hospital gate when he was just a few days old. The hospital repaired his back but did not put a shunt in his brain for Hydrocephalus (which most kids with Spina Bifida have) because his brain pressures were not high enough. When Vincent arrived at New Hope, a doctor examined him and determined that a shunt was needed. As a result, he contacted a doctor in Hong Kong who was very good at shunt surgery. Vincent traveled to Hong Kong where he had a programmable shunt installed. In retrospect, Dr. Steve said the government hospital not putting a shunt in for Vincent probably saved his life. Apparently New Hope had received several kids from this hospital and 100% of them had complications because the surgeries were not done well.

When Staci told me about giving the ZipZac to Vincent, I felt this was more than a coincidence, so my radar went up to see what God might have in store for us. The kids and I were regularly FaceTiming with Staci while she was in China. She was almost always with Vincent, so we really got to see his incredibly outgoing personality. Despite there being a language barrier, we had

no difficulty communicating or seeing his sense of humor. During this time, I felt God prompting me that maybe we should adopt Vincent. I decided to see if God was truly opening a door for us or if all that had happened was truly a coincidence, so I called Cathy Troyer, who was friends with Staci and worked for Show Hope in Nashville. I asked her if Vincent was available for adoption, but Cathy said that Show Hope was just a funding arm. The actual adoption agency that might handle Vincent's case was based in Denver, Colorado. They were called CCAI, or Chinese Children Adoption International. Cathy gave me their phone number and I called to continue my inquiry.

The contact Cathy gave me was out on maternity leave, so I spoke with the person who answered the phone. I told her I was interested to see if a boy named Vincent at Maria's Big House of Hope in Luoyang, China was available for adoption. She said, "This is really weird that you're calling." I didn't know what that meant and I didn't ask. She asked if I had access to a computer, which I did. She directed me to their website and asked if the boy I was calling about was the one in the bottom row, third from the left. I told her I thought it was. Again, she said, "This is really weird that you're calling." At this point, since she had now said this twice, I asked why she was saying that. She said that "97% of the time, we don't have their file." I had no idea what that meant, so I asked. She said the Chinese government puts together a "dossier" for any child that is eligible to be adopted. This file includes all their medical records, citizenship information and anything that would be needed for adoption. This process can take years, doesn't necessarily start at birth and there are many instances where the government doesn't bother creating such a file if they believe the chances of the child being adopted are low. Being the Chinese government, there's no way of knowing if a file is being created, has been created or will ever be created. The Chinese government works with one agency in a country for each province. In other words, in the Henan province, where Maria's Big House of House was located, this agency in Denver handed all the adoptions to the US from that province. She asked if I'd like her to send me the file, which I agreed to. Soon thereafter, the file was in my inbox. In her email, she asked me to make a decision if we'd like to adopt Vincent by Monday. I was surprised by this truncated timeframe because while Staci had left Maria's by now, she was in Beijing and wouldn't be home until Monday late. I asked why there was such a rush. She said that when the Chinese government sends a file to a particular agency, that agency is the only agency in the world that could process an adoption for that child. Because of this, the agency would only have the file for 30 days. If they couldn't place the child, the file would need to be passed along to another agency. Astonishingly, there is no tracking system for these files. The agency didn't want to send the file to a prospective family and have them take weeks to decide because while the family has that file, there is no other family in the world that can consider that child. This made sense to me, but rushed an already unplanned decision, something I'm

never comfortable with. That was a Friday and I asked for an extra day to decide, until Tuesday. She agreed.

Because it was mostly medical records, I sent Vincent's file to a doctor friend so they could give me some idea of what we may be getting ourselves into. I also called my good friend Ben and asked him if he had a second. He had adopted two children himself (one internationally), so I thought he'd be a good one to ask about his experience. Ben is also an incredibly strong Christian, so he could give me guidance in that area as well. He was in a shoe store getting dress shoes for one of his kids because he was on his way to marry a couple. He knew I didn't just call for no reason, so he inquired about what I needed. I asked him how he reconciles doing something completely illogical. I told him what was going on and that it seemed like an incredibly illogical move to knowingly adopt a child from another country, at great expense, who was paralyzed and therefore open myself and our family up to the sorts of difficulties such a condition brings with it. He offered me some great council and prayed with me.

I called Staci that afternoon and asked if she could talk for a minute. She said she wasn't sure because she was on a bus on a six-lane highway to see the Great Wall of China. At some point the bus was going to stop. When it did, her group had to quickly get off since there wasn't a place to stop, but she didn't know when that would be. I told her that was no problem and that I'd just talk to her later. Staci, however, just like Ben, knew I don't just call for no reason, she knew it must be something important. I simply told her, "I have Vincent's file." I knew she'd know what that meant. Just then, she said the bus had stopped and she had to go. I told her, "I'll see you Monday" and that was the end of our conversation.

When Staci got home, we briefly discussed the prospect of adopting Vincent. She said, "You know what my answer is, but you have to be ok with this." I told her I really felt God had changed my opinion while she was gone like He had never done before. I had a true peace about the idea and was actually excited about it. The following night, we took our three kids out to dinner to ask them their thoughts. After they had FaceTimed several times over the previous week with Staci and Vincent, they had also formed a bond with him and were quite excited about the prospect. By then, the decision was made. We called the agency and started the process. One year later, the five of us flew to China for 2 ½ weeks and the six of us came back.

“Vincent” became Jonah He Zhou because his Chinese name was He Zhou (pronounced like Huh Joe) and he was called Jo Jo at the orphanage. We wanted his new name to be similar to the names he was already familiar with.

I’m sure some folks could consider his situation just a bunch of coincidences, but I do not for a minute. Here is a brief listing of some of the “coincidences:”

- Staci happened to be a counselor at a camp and have a camper (Deeann) who happened to have a child (Zach) born with Spina Bifida, the same condition as Jonah.

- Zach happened to have an uncle who was motivated and skilled enough to solve a problem (accessing toys on the floor) that Zach happened to have and that Deeann happened to communicate to this Uncle, despite him living in another state.

- Staci happened to stay in contact with Deeann and she happened to see Deeann’s social media post about finding a new home for the ZipZac that Zach had outgrown.

- Staci happened to not properly pack the ZipZac when flying to Nashville, resulting in it happening to be broken.

- Because the ZipZac was a unique product, it happened to not be able to be easily fixed, but had to be flown back to Minnesota for repairs, resulting in an upgrade and an airline voucher for a trip Staci did not yet know she would take.

- We happened to build a house, resulting in our donations to Show Hope happening to be discontinued and Steven Curtis Chapman’s daughter-in-law happening to reach out to Staci. Staci happened to answer the call, for no good reason, and she happened to be at a point in life where she was looking for more ways to give back, now that her other three children were in school. This happened to result in Staci becoming a crucial volunteer in Show Hope’s work in Iowa.

- Staci had no luck collecting the casting supplies that Show Hope needed until Christian happened to break his leg, resulting in an appointment with an orthopedic doctor who was willing to donate. These supplies happened to end up in Staci’s China supply bag.

- Staci happened to be born with club foot. When Show Hope needed corrective shoes, they asked Staci if she could secure donations. The pioneer of club foot correction happened to be from Iowa, and Staci was able to drive to the manufacturer to receive them. These supplies also happened to end up in Staci’s China supply bag.

-Because the ZipZac happened to be broken, its delivery to China was delayed until Staci was traveling to China and she happened to place Vincent in it for the first time.

-The government hospital just happened to not put a shunt in Jonah (which was extremely unusual) and Jonah just happened to land at a US run care center who had a connection with a doctor in Hong Kong that happened to be very good at shunt surgery. This is a result of Steven Curtis and Mary Beth just happening to be moved to adopt from China, of all places. Years later, their daughter happened to be tragically killed, resulting in Show Hope opening Maria's Big House of Hope that just happened to be in the town Jonah was born in. This funding also just happened to fund the shunt surgery Jonah had.

-Staci happened to start on the bottom floor of Maria's to meet kids and the first two rooms just happened to be "uninterruptible" at the time, leading her to move to the Tinkerbell room

-Staci just happened to be in China during the 30-day window that CCAI just happened to have his file. This is after China just happened to decide to create a file for Jonah.

After so many coincidences, anyone would be more than naïve to believe all of this is nothing more than a coincidence. If you don't believe Jesus Christ is alive and well from this story, you never will.