Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! Christmas 2010

2010 has been a year of blessings for us, and we hope for you too.

We all enjoyed visits from cousins, visits to cousins, family reunions, graduations, camping, sports; overall, a normal year. Amy graduated from University of Delaware and is now in grad school studying parasitology (trypanosomes which cause several of the neglected tropical diseases) at University of Georgia. She is continuing her ministry working with internationals. We drove Amy down to Georgia and then enjoyed camping at Unicoi State Park in their "Squirrel's Nest" camping area. We hiked and saw a dozen waterfalls.

Melanie is a junior studying animal sciences at University of Delaware, currently thinking about becoming an animal nutritionist. We are grateful she has a good roommate situation this year and has been very involved in the IVCF group. She spent another summer chasing kids at the local playground as a playground supervisor.

Joe graduated from high school and is now in his first term at Dartmouth, where he is busy with the salsa club, Christian Impact, an active dorm floor life, and trying out for the crew team. Dartmouth made him retake calculus and chemistry, and Joe is surprised that he actually has to study hard and still is only at the median. He loves Dartmouth.

The ShakesPEER group Melanie began as a senior project continues. Andy is playing Bottom in Midsummer's Night Dream in February. The first of our six to attend public school, Andy enrolled in 10th grade (unenthusiastically) and immediately joined drama improv club, debate club, and choir. This summer, as usual, Andy acted, danced, and sang in two Upper Darby Summer Stage musicals. Our first kid into politics, Andy was happy the Republicans won the elections, and he spends hours at the computer reading BBC news and politics, and chatting online with friends.

David is in kindergarten (he just turned six), and seems to enjoy trying to decode reading, though his passion is sports. David has four very close homeschooled friends in our neighborhood and they are all sports crazy. One Sunday night at bedtime David asked what the next day of the week would be, and when he heard it would only be Monday, he asked his mother, "Why can't it be Monday-Wednesday-Saturday?" (His soccer practice was Wednesday with the games on Saturday.) Another story: we thought David had mostly forgotten his first three years in China, but the other day he told Peggy how sad he felt every time one of his friends at the orphanage left to be adopted, and he was not chosen.

Both David and Daniel have had extensive speech therapy and they both have improved markedly.

Right after Daniel turned four years old, he suddenly became talkative instead of merely pointing at everything, which makes us happy. Daniel loves videos such as Bob and Builder, Dora Explorer, Veggie Tales, Thomas the Tank Engine, etc., so we have to work hard to keep him happy with nonvideo activities. Peggy has been busy taking David and Daniel to their speech and other medical appointments; Bob has enjoyed a sabbatical this fall and written two papers. Bob's parents are doing fairly well, with his father settled in a nursing home this spring (he is 82 with Parkinson's and diabetes but is doing well) so his mom has been able to get some rest.

Some more photos are at
http://www41.homepage.villanova.edu/robert.styer/Kids/some_photos_2010.htm

Love and Christmas greetings from the Styer family.