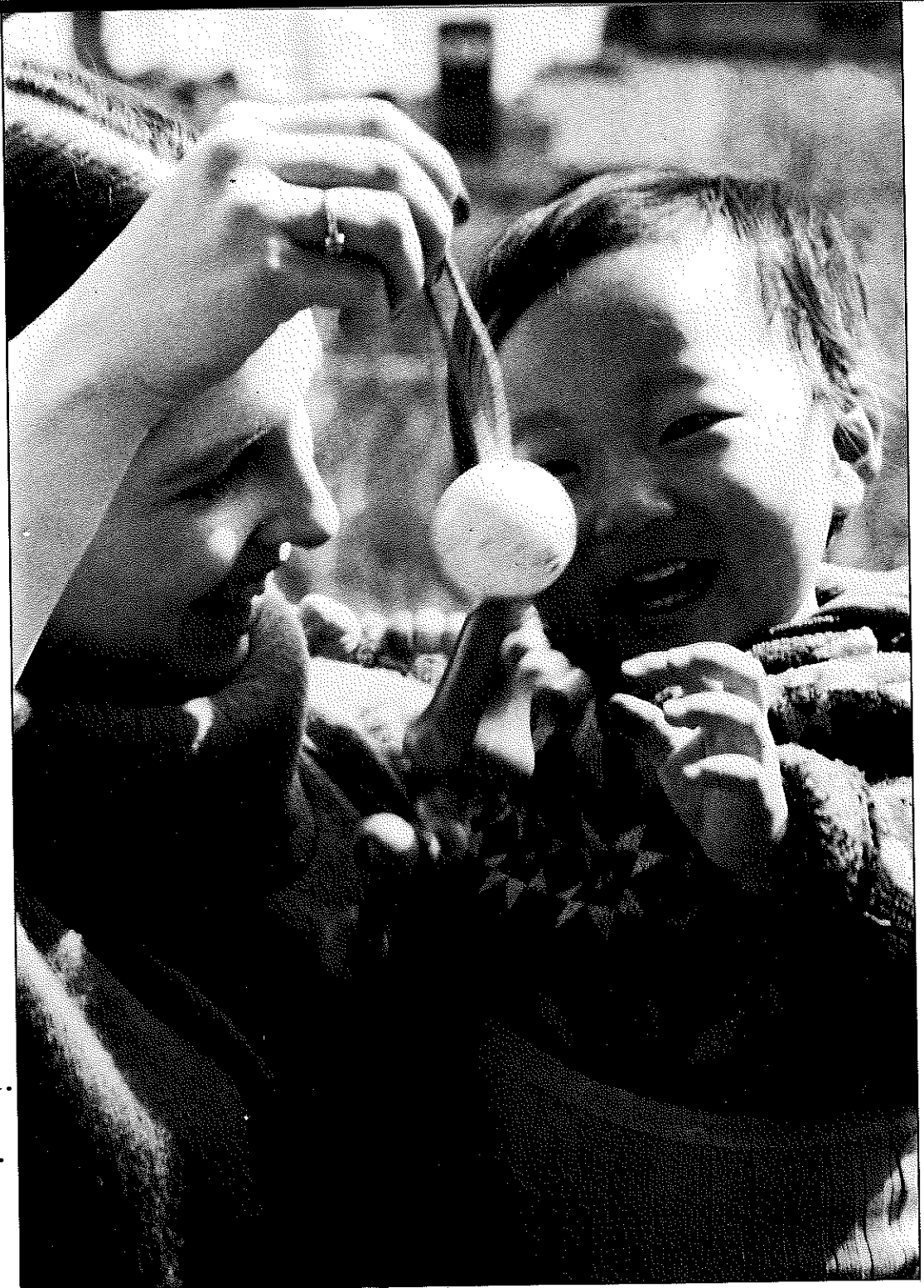


Reaching  
across  
two  
cultures,  
the  
Pauleys  
spoke  
in a  
universal  
language  
even  
children  
could  
understand.  
It was . . .

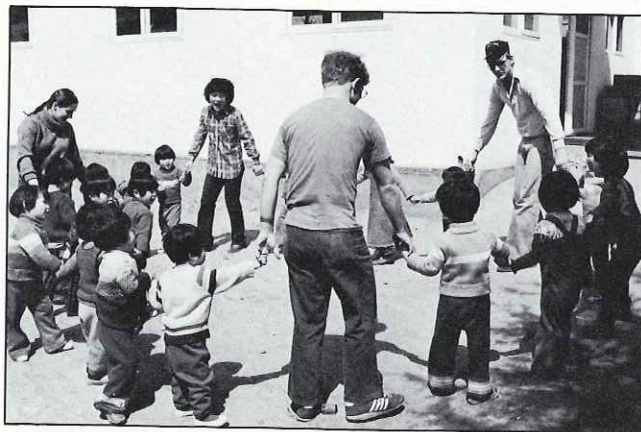


# The Language of Love

by SSgt. Craig Pugh / photos by TSgt. John L. Marine



**TOP TO BOTTOM:**  
 SSgt. Adolph Steiner, Mr. and Mrs. John Park Kim, and SrA. Cathy and Robin Pauley unpack a gift box of clothes for the orphanage. Older children play outside with the adults while infants are cared for inside.



*Editor's note: It was first with disbelief and then with sorrow that we learned of the death of Robin Pauley in a motorcycle accident earlier this year. He and his wife, Cathy, are featured in the warmly human story that follows. With Mrs. Pauley's permission—and encouragement—we publish an account of a special time in their lives.*

**I**f the infant cries a nursemaid attends to her. If she struggles to reach a nearby toy, it is tenderly placed within her reach by any of the other orphans in the room. Although none is older than six, all seem to realize the little girl with the larger-than-normal head is somehow different, and, therefore, worthy of their kindness. Born with Down's Syndrome, she lies drifting in her own hazy world on the floor of the IImag Won Babies' Home in Kunsan, Korea.

True, the young girl—no more than a few months old—is severed from a life of normalcy. Even so, thanks to a few people, that most precious of gifts—love—is within her fragile reach. There to provide it are the IImag Won's proprietors, Mr. and Mrs. John Park Kim, who in 1965 turned all their material possessions into a stake to start the orphanage. Through its 17-year existence, the orphanage has depended solely on contributions, and sometimes feeding the youngsters even three hearty meals a day is difficult.

Financial contributions aside, however, giving of another sort is equally vital; for like all children, the hundred orphans at the IImag Won have a very real need to interact with adults, who can play with them, pick them up when they fall, and hold them close when they cry for affection.

SrA. Robin and Cathy Pauley are two such adults. More than anyone else from nearby Kunsan AB, the Pauleys took time during their 12-month Korean assignment to share their lives with the orphans. In the process, the children came to know two special people and a little bit more of the meaning of love.

It is a tradition that each of the 12 orphanages in Kunsan, a port city of 175,000 inhabitants on the southwest coast of Korea, is sponsored by Kunsan AB units. However, with busy workweeks and frequent military readiness exercises, the sponsors are, at times, little more than names on paper.

Not the Pauleys, however, who were both working in the base dining hall at the time of AIRMAN's visit.

"I remember Robin's and Cathy's reactions when they found out no one was actively doing anything for the IImag Won, which is the orphanage our unit sponsors," said MSgt. Wayne B. Stark, their supervisor. "They got mad. They said if we were supposed to be helping, then we should be doing it. They soon became very involved in the IImag Won."

"Many people had told us working with orphans would be sad and depressing," Robin said, "but we

were interested enough to find out for ourselves." They had encouragement, too. "Before we got to Kunsan," said Cathy, "some retired friends at our last assignment advised us to go to a Korean orphanage, because it would give us something constructive to do if we liked kids. And we do," she said, smiling at her husband.

Added Robin: "Two weeks after we got here we hailed a taxi and asked the driver to take us to the IImag Won. No one we'd talked to on base knew where it was, but we were really surprised when even the taxi driver couldn't find it!"

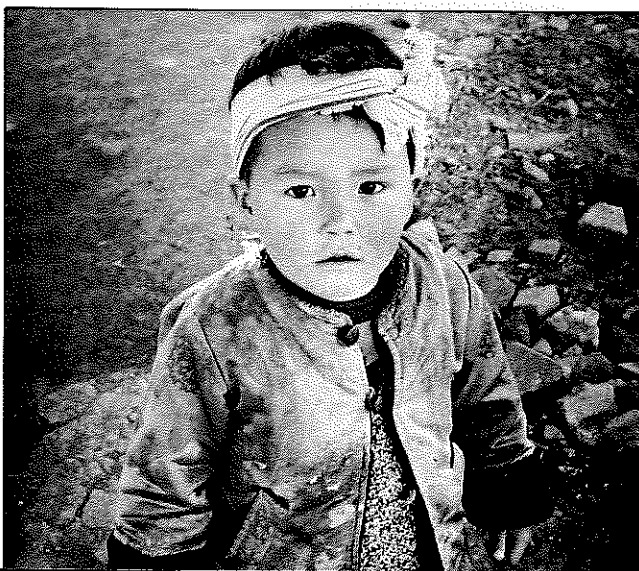
Of course, with time and searching, they arrived. The response, according to the Pauleys, was overwhelming.

"We walked up to the wooden gate in front of the main door and about thirty kids rushed up and shouted, 'Americans! Americans!'" said Robin. "And then more kids came running down the hallway—all crowding the rail and reaching out to be held. It got to us," he said.

Mr. Kim appeared and gave Robin and Cathy a tour of the two-story white building ringing with the sounds of children. Some, he explained, had been left on the doorstep at night, while a few others—only hours old at the time—were brought in after having been found in the city's trashbins. Some, too, were child abuse victims before finding safe haven in the orphanage.

Mr. Kim may well be the only father figure they will ever know. A kindly, diminutive man beginning to bend with age, he shuffles about the premises in his sandals on his way, perhaps, to bathe and feed a newborn goat in the stable out back or to hoe in the garden ripening with vegetables for his orphans. In time, the Pauleys would discover that he is a devout Christian, who rises at four each morning to pray for an hour before beginning his self-appointed chores.

"I think he's a saint," Robin said. "Some people have a misconception that he'll put you to work if you go



**ABOVE:** A view of the rear of the IImag Won orphanage. **LEFT:** The questioning eyes of an orphaned Korean boy reveal a need to know that others care.

with  
grow that we  
Robin Pauley  
earlier this  
Cathy, are  
human story  
Pauley's  
element—we  
special time

nursemaid  
the struggles  
by, it is  
reach by  
in the room.  
than six, all  
girl with the  
is somehow  
worthy of  
Down's  
ing in her own  
of the IImag  
Kunsan,



**ABOVE: Mr. Kim and his son, Dr. Kim, Kook Yung, check the children for possible medical ailments. RIGHT: Father and son treat a minor wound.**



down there. He doesn't. He treats everyone like an honored guest. No matter if you visit once, or a hundred times, he is grateful for the fact that you are there."

Inspired by the Kims and their affection-starved orphans, Robin and Cathy began visiting the Ilmag Won every Saturday, spending the afternoons playing with the children or talking to Mr. and Mrs. Kim about projects to work on. A couple of times Robin and Cathy took some orphans to the base bowling center and bought them lunch.

"They were so cute," said Cathy, "so wide-eyed and staring at everything. They hardly ever get out, so even the bowling alley was like the edge of the universe to them."

Because Kunsan AB is an American enclave of sorts, where everybody seems to know just about everybody else, knowledge of the Pauleys' interest in the orphanage soon spread. And the fact that they saw and talked with much of the base population during breakfast, lunch, or dinner in the dining hall helped get the word out, too.

"Cathy is bubbly and likes people," said MSgt. Stark. "She is really something. I've never seen her 'down'; she is one of those people who make you feel good just to be around. Everybody loves the heck out of her and she seems to love everybody back."

Soon, Sgts. Jan and Bill Russ and Barb and Mike Calhoun were trekking to the Ilmag Won with the Pauleys. Robin and Cathy also enlisted the help of SSgt. Adolph "Radar" Steiner, a special friend who carries on the Ilmag Won project now that the Pauleys have separated from the Air Force.

"We dragged Radar to the orphanage on his first visit," Cathy said. "All the time he was saying, 'No way! I hate kids!' Well, we just laughed. We got him down there and put a little baby in his arms. He fed her a bottle and afterwards she put her arms around his neck and fell asleep. That was it: He lost it right there. He's been going there ever since."

With so many helping hands suddenly available, a project to paint the orphanage was begun. The

squadron commander, Capt. Larry Young, led the way by pitching in with a brush. Later, when the main ceiling began sagging dangerously and commercial bids went out and came back with estimates that were too expensive, Robin took leave and began working.

He rolled up the floor and welded out the iron gratings below, then poured cement. The ceiling was jacked up and a main support beam put in place. Then he scrounged some linoleum and put in a brand new floor. By doing it all himself, Robin undoubtedly saved the Ilmag Won thousands of dollars, money the home didn't have.

The hours Robin spent on the project didn't affect his job performance, not in the least. "Robin is very dependable," MSgt. Stark said. "If I needed something done, he's one guy I learned in a hurry to ask. And he's handy—he can do most anything."

Robin and Cathy were, indeed, valuable assets to the Ilmag Won. "The Pauleys are special to us because they took the time to share their hearts," Mr. Kim said.

There were other Americans, though, who did the same. Christmas rolled around and six airmen from Osan AB to the north requested and received permissive TDY to travel through Korea playing Christmas carols. The part-time musicians spent three days in Kunsan and visited all the orphanages, including the Ilmag Won.

"The tour was really fantastic," said Robin. "The Kunsan public affairs office arranged a full itinerary for the musicians and I took time off to be the guide. They played their hearts out—even on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. At the Ilmag Won there was a roomful of about seventy kids singing along to 'White Christmas' and 'Jingle Bells,' in Korean.

"Toward the end of the show the band struck up 'Here Comes Santa Claus' and boom! there he came through a side door, passing out candy canes. Naturally, the kids were enthralled. Everyone there really had

the Christmas spirit that year."

Although Christmas is the time of year when many people traditionally make money donations, there is at Kunsan AB a network of people that continually provides the orphanage with about a hundred dollars a month. The bowling teams, for instance, put a quarter in a can every time a member knocks down nine pins and fails to pick up the spare. Then, too, there are collection cans at most

public places on base. Also, all the coffee clubs from the various offices donate everything above cost to the orphan fund.

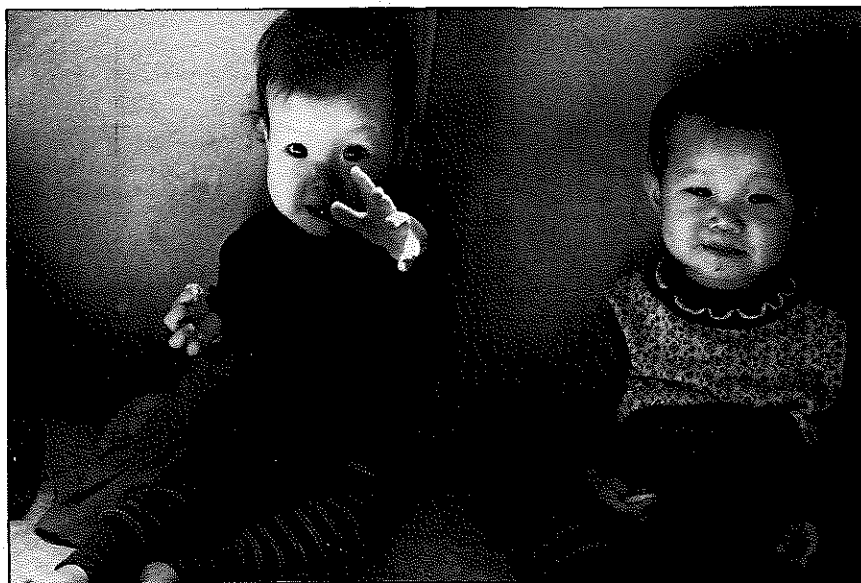
The biggest donation either Robin or Cathy ever handled was a \$20 bill; the rest came in quarters, dimes, and nickels. "But it adds up," Cathy said. "In the ten months we've been here, I'd estimate Robin and I have taken more than a thousand dollars to the Ilmag Won."



**ABOVE:** When the weather turns cold, courtyard games move indoors.

**LEFT:** Infants receive care from adult helpers, some of whom were also orphans. Nursemaids work at the orphanage in return for food and lodging.

**TOP TO BOTTOM:** Visitors are objects of curiosity to this child. Dr. Kim visits the orphanage at least once a week to help his parents care for the youngsters. Two of the children display a typical interest in the photographer's camera.



Another type of donation comes in boxes from the States. Many married couples who were stationed at Kunsan—and in some cases adopted a Korean child—send toys or clothing. When the boxes added up, the Pauleys would take them to the Ilmag Won.

Robin and Cathy noted that others are actively helping local orphanages. A secretary on base, Marina John, is one. "I wrote to some of my friends in San Antonio and New Orleans," she said. "The friends in San Antonio told some of their church friends, who immediately started a project to make stuffed dolls and animals for the kids for Christmas. And the friends in New Orleans sent numerous boxes of children's clothes throughout the year. They have all received pictures of the kids and everyone has fallen in love with them and will continue to send clothes and toys."

The reaction to the letters nearly overwhelmed the Pauleys. "Next thing we knew," said Cathy, "a flood of boxes was over here, all packed with clothes, stuffed dolls, and coloring books. It's heartwarming to know people from the States would do that."

To Robin the reason he and Cathy got so personally involved is simple: "The kids motivate me. Their energy is incredible. All they want is to be hugged and held. Well, I've got the time to do that," he said, leaving out the fact that he did much more for them than mere hugging and holding.

The effervescent Cathy added that "at first you focus on how everything looks so sad and grim. But if you keep going back, you notice that the orphans are happy. Sure, it'd be nice if they had a family—but they do have each other. The big kids look after the little ones, even the girl with Down's Syndrome. I just hope we were able to add to their happiness a little bit."

To Robin and Cathy Pauley, who took the time to find the Ilmag Won when few others could or would, the gate of the orphanage was the main entrance to the hearts of the children inside. From there they could reach out and embrace a hundred tiny lives.