CERLS

China Evergreen
Rural Library Service Station

July 27th , 2006

We wish to thank the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, not only for the ATLA Award, but also for this opportunity to meet and exchange information and views with all of you!

Our Mission

To help rural China obtain access to modern libraries by sponsoring high school library centers and providing connections to the community via satellite book stations.

Satellite Book Stations: Resource Sharing

Evergreen High School Library Center

Agricultural Development Zones

Book Stations at Other Middle or Elementary schools

Local Public Library

Others

Evergreen Library Center: Resources

Evergreen High School Library Center

- **Book Collection per Library Center**

   10,000 – 60,000+ Volumes

- **Computer Equipment per Library Center**

   One Server

   2 – 5 workstations

   One Printer

   One digital Camera

   2 – 4 bar code scanners

   One Library Management Software Program

- **Wideband Internet Connection**
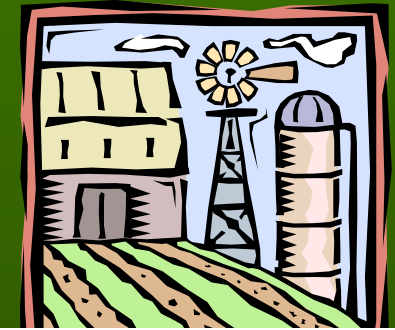
Resources at the Satellite Book Stations

School Book Stations

Agricultural Development Zones

Local Public Library

Others

• Each has its own book collection ranging from a few hundred to 80,000+ volumes, mostly old and outdated.

• Most have at least one computer, printer, bar code scanner and software and Internet connection.

• Can access Evergreen school library Center's bibliographical database from site's computer (updated on a regular basis)

• Requests books from Evergreen School Library which are brought on site on a regular basis (usually every 2 weeks).

One Example of Resource Sharing

<u>Between TongWei No. 1 High School and TongWei County Library</u>:

> This Collaboration was only possible after CERLS received the ATLA Award. CERLS already supported TongWei No. 1 High School library. The Award fund paid for 2 computers at the public library, one printer, bar code scanner and library management software.   The Award funds also paid for 30 computers for the School library's reading room.

- **Sharing Expertise** - Although the County Library has 16 employees, no one is computer literate. The High School has a number of Computer science teachers who were able to install and quickly utilize the library management software. The High School personnel trained the County Librarians in its use. On the other hand, the county library has 3 formally trained librarians and the School has none. Thus, the county librarians can provide expertise in basic library management.

One Example of Resource Sharing

Between TongWei No. 1 High School and TongWei County Library:

- **Sharing Collection -** The County Library has a history of several hundred years and a collection of around 80,000 volumes, mostly outdated. No new books have been purchased for over 10 years. The School library has a collection of only 30,000 volumes, recently purchased with the help of Evergreen. Bibliography data is shared and updated on a regular basis between the 2 libraries. Batches of books are exchanged on a monthly basis.

- **Sharing Readership and time management** – Because the County Library has more space for readers and is open for longer hours (56 hours per week) and since the collaboration with the high school began, the school children's readership has increased to 70% of its total readership. It is informally called #3 School by the students.

Future Plans

Between TongWei No. 1 High School and TongWei County Library:

- We need to **increase the total collection at both libraries**, particularly to include magazines and journals.

- We need to purchase a **"public" library management** software for the county library (it is using the "school" software).

- The County Library has **19 village/town libraries** under its administrative umbrella. They would like to be included as satellite libraries of the County Library.

- **Effective management training** for the library staff has to be developed and instituted. (We are discussing this possibility with Wuhan University).

- **Computes** with Internet connection should be purchased for the County Library's 4 reading rooms.
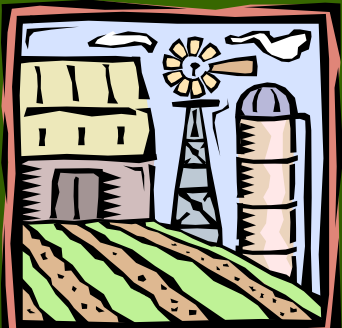
How Many Do We Have?

- We have **5 High School Library Centers** (1 in Qinghai, 3 in Gansu, and 1 in Shaanxi)

- We have **18 book stations** as satellite libraries of these 5 school libraries. 8 are computerized and internet connected, the remainder are scheduled to be by the end of 2008.

- We have **9 additional stand alone school libraries** (2 in Qinghai, 2 in northern Jiangsu, 2 migrant schools in Beijing, 2 in Guizhou and 1 in Yunnan). All have computers and software.

Our Method

- Our High School Library Centers and satellite stations are p**roactive**. Representatives **reach out** into the communities to set up book stations, connect with individuals in the community and generate programs to encourage reading and usage.

- Results are very positive.
  - Access has increased
  - Success stories are becoming known and admired.

One Example of Outreach

Agricultural Development Zones at TongWei, Gansu

• Members of the TongWei Agricultural Development Zone's Book Station visit local farmers. They bring with them a cook book and the mushrooms harvested at the Zone for expansive hotels. They go into the kitchens of the farmers to prepare a mushroom dish according to the recipes found in the book and share a meal with the families. While eating, they mention to the farmers that "methods for planting the mushrooms are in books at the station – just like the recipes used in preparing the dish. Please come and borrow the books free of charge".

• The first batch of 200 books sent to the cooperative by the School library center were all borrowed within a few weeks and the number of books sent had to be increased month by month.

Our Structure

Evergreen is a partnership of 2 entities:

The program arm - CERLS - was formed in 2002 under the wings of the Bureau of Education in Qinghai, mainly by retired educators and professionals. It differs from the usual NGOs in China, in that it was initiated and is operated by individual volunteers in the private sector, not by some quasi government entity. But, all organizations in China must have a government entity providing "oversight".

Fund Raising and coordination with US entities – Evergreen Education Foundation – does the fund raising, locating and contacting of US resources needed for CERLS' programs in China. This is an all volunteer organization.

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Positive Impacts of the ATLA Award

- ## Increase of Resources –

  – **We were able to purchase 3 servers and over 50 computer workstations and a number of printers, bar code scanners, software, etc. with the ATLA fund this past year. (We expect to spend $65,000 per year over a period of 10 years.)**

  – **We were able to host ITIE2006 (Information Technology in Education 2006, funded partly by the ATLA fund), which was held in Kunming this June with over 300 educators and scholars attending from both the US and within China.**

  – **We were able to fund 2 additional school libraries with the ATLA fund.**

Positive Impacts of the ATLA Award, continued

- Increase of Contacts –
  - A number of organizations now wish to cooperate with us in doing joint projects after we received the Award. We just completed co hosting an international conference with Yunnan Provincial Library (ITIE2006) and we are considering a joint project with Wuhan University for next year to provide training for our librarians.

Positive Impacts of the ATLA Award, continued

- ## Increase of Self Esteem –

  – The Award did wonders for our self esteem. All our school administrators, teachers and especially students and librarians contributed to and were proud to be part of CERLS' winning the award.

  – All the volunteers and workers in both organizations (Evergreen US and Evergreen China) were energized to greater efforts and contributions.

Negative Impacts of the ATLA Award

- Some individual donors decided that since we have the funds from the Award we did not need more. They temporarily stopped their contributions.

- We were inundated by time consuming requests for funding all sorts of libraries, many of which were not appropriate to receive our support.

Important Consequences of the Award

- The Award made a difference in the lives of a number of people:
    - Because we have more funds, we were able to purchase more technology, to provide more training, organize more workshops and host conferences. This opened the vistas of high school principals, librarians and teachers and facilitated contacts with the "outside" world.
    - A good number of rural farmers have improved their economic status.

Opening Vistas for Educators

- ITIE2006 provided a platform for educators to exchange their views and present their scholarship. This year, the conference gave an opportunity to all participants to discuss and explore the ethical use of technology.

- The increased access to the Internet and interaction with US teachers have been instrumental in the Chinese teachers developing new teaching techniques as evidenced by their presentations this year in comparison to 2 years ago.

- Students can and are doing excellent research projects using the library materials, especially the Internet.

Improving Lives in Rural China

- Mr. Zhang, a 48 year old, leased space in the Agricultural Development Zone in Gansu, after learning about the possibility from a representative of the book station. He was successful in growing mushrooms after his middle school daughter helped explain the instructions given by a book borrowed at the station. He increased his annual income to around $4000 USD, which is an astronomical figure for the income of farmers in that location.

Suggestions

- **Help establish a forum for exchange of information.**
- **Help us explore our model of cooperation between the different types of libraries in rural communities by:**
    - **Facilitating communications with libraries in other parts of the world who may also be developing different models**
    - **Facilitate access to Expertise in Library Management and technical issues**
    - **Fund development of promising new models**

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Thank you!

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