



Evergreen Education Foundation Newsletter

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December, 2005

Dear Friends and Supporters,

It is hard to believe that we are already entering our fifth year at Evergreen. Looking back on the past four years, we can be very proud of our achievements. At this time, I would like to share some of these with you.

We have established three modern school libraries using computer information technology in Qinghai, three libraries in Gansu, (two of which are host libraries, each with four satellite libraries), one in Shaanxi, one in northern Jiangsu and two libraries in Beijing at schools for the children of migrant workers. As we are preparing this newsletter, four additional modern libraries are being started, two in Guizhou (Please note Bai Fan's article below.), one in Yunnan and one in northern Jiangsu. In total, we now have twenty two libraries. This also means that we have provided training for all of the librarians at these schools. In fact, training is an on going activity and one is about to start in Tianzhu, Gansu for twenty two librarians.

At each of these schools, scholarships are also awarded to students who are expected to do volunteer work at the libraries. It is a source of great satisfaction to all of us at the foundation that we already have scores of graduates among the students that we have supported now going on to higher education. This year, two of our supporters are sponsoring ten students to attend colleges or universities and of course, Evergreen is supporting all those students going on to study at Normal colleges or universities. One of our greatest joys, when we conduct field visits, is to see the happy faces of these children who otherwise would not be able to attend school, much less going on to universities.



Our students in Shaanxi.



Our students in Gansu

We firmly believe that providing programs that encourage the use of libraries is just as important as providing the libraries themselves. And, teachers must be included along with the students. One of Evergreen's first programs is to provide workshops for teachers. And, of course, we had the "My Hometown" competition and exhibits in 2003 that generated a great deal of interest amongst students and teachers alike. Our most ambitious project to date was the hosting of the International conference on Information Technology held in Beijing last year. Around two hundred educators attended from both sides of the Pacific ocean and some went so far as to claimed that it was a life altering experience. Encouraged by that success, another conference will be held next year in Kunming. (Please note Geoffrey's article below.)

This year, Evergreen entered into an extraordinary relationship with Patten University. We now have a beautiful office, donated by the university. (Please note Alicia and Jingyi's article below.) We have also began cooperating with the Dream Corp, a student volunteer group comprising of university students in the US going over to teach English in China during the Summer. (Please note Zhou Jin's article below.)

I think that perhaps the highlight of these past four years was our China Evergreen receiving the Access to Learning Award from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. It was the confirmation of the importance and the extent of what we have accomplished in providing information resources to rural China. This award has spur us to greater efforts and we hope even greater contributions in the future.

Faith Chao, President

**Evergreen Organizes ITIE2006 Conference
By Geoffrey Liu**

Encouraged by the great success of its first international conference on Information Technologies in Education in 2004 in Beijing, Evergreen is organizing the conference again, this time in Kunming, the provincial capital city of Yunnan, and with a theme on the ethical, moral, and social issues related information use. It will take place from June 19 to 21, 2006.

You probably recall from our earlier newsletter article that a team of Evergreen staff made a trip to Yunnan in early 2005. Some initial contacts with local organizations were made during that trip in preparation for the conference. Then during the summer of 2004, Professor Geoffrey Liu went to Kunming again to tie some loose ends and finalize local arrangements. Through their effort of interaction and negotiation, the Yunnan Provincial Library, the Information & Archives Institute of Yunnan University, and the Provincial “Concern for Next Generation” Working Committee agreed to co-host the conference and are now working hard to ensure the conference’s success.

The provincial library will serve as the conference site and has already published the conference “Call for Paper” for paper in the fall issue of Yunnan Library Quarterly. Yunnan University will be responsible for collecting, peer reviewing, and selecting submissions of conference papers and presentations from Chinese educational professionals. The “Concern for Next Generation” Working Committee is coordinating conference-related affairs with Chinese government agencies.

Like last time, Evergreen will sponsor representatives from all of the Evergreen project schools to attend the conference in Kunming. We expect that more than 350 educational experts and professionals (at least 300 from China and 50 from the United States and other countries in the Pacific Region) will gather together at the conference to exchange ideas and perspectives on ethical and social issues of information use. No doubt that the conference will become another milestone of the Evergreen course.

For the Happy Faces---Trip to Guizhou ***By Bai Fan***

This past September, I had the privilege of joining two Evergreen Sponsors on a trip to Guizhou Province in southern China for the purpose of evaluating and ultimately choosing two schools to benefit from our Evergreen projects. The trip was successful, and Evergreen has made the decision to start library projects at schools in Zhenyuan and Kaili with the financial help and active participation of these 2 sponsors. Though it wasn’t always easy, traveling over rugged terrain in mountainous areas never is, our trip was deeply rewarding. Seeing the faces of young people who are eager to learn and who will directly benefit from the work that Evergreen is doing here is very gratifying.

Altogether we traveled several hundred miles overland, stopping at a variety of towns and villages along the way. Our entire trip included such locals as Guiyang, Kaili, Huangping, Zhenyuan,

Leishan and Rongjiang. While all of these places held our interest, the transportation itself was quite an adventure as well. The road was especially treacherous as it was etched right into the sides of a high mountain. Fear of landslides from one side and of tumbling 3000 feet downward on the other, left all in the party extremely happy to arrive at our destination.

In the end we settled on two very promising schools to be included in upcoming projects. The trip was rewarding for me in many ways, but in particular in working with our two Evergreen sponsors. (I will call them Chang 1 and Chang 2). Both of them demonstrated a commitment and determination to set the highest standards in conducting our work here. Despite becoming physically ill at one point due to harsh conditions and our rigorous schedule, Chang 1 pushed ahead, putting her work first and greatly contributing to the success of the trip.

As I have said, this was a very successful trip. I am gratified to have been a part of it, and to be a part of Evergreen’s continuing projects throughout rural China. I hope that in the future Evergreen will have the opportunity to bring more of its sponsors on trips of this nature so that people can see with their own eyes the kind of impact our work is having. was really impressive.

Dream Corp Votunteers at Evergreen Schools ***By Zhou Jin***

The volunteer work in Gansu this summer came out to be a great learning experience to me. Grown up there, I have been to lots of places in China. However, this is my first time to Gansu, and this is my first time to see the true rural poverty, and most importantly, it is at such places, I found an unbelievable passion of living from the local inhabitants, and an unbelievable desire for knowledge from the younger generation.

Part of our mission was to do some volunteer English teaching in two local high schools, one in Tianzhu County and the other in Tongwei County. My team arrived in the school in Tianzhu quite late in the evening, but I was shocked that by 10pm all the students were still in their classroom studying. I was later told that because of the extreme competitiveness to get into universities, all students, accompanied by their teachers, were virtually always at school from 6am till 10:30pm. I attended the best high school in Guangzhou, a metropolis in south China, but I would honestly say that no more than 20% of my schoolmates work as hard as the students in these Gansu schools. But the university acceptance rate in Gansu schools are nonetheless much lower—even for the best school in Tongwei County, still no more than 20% of students can go to university. While the lack of qualified teachers might well be a reason, I would honestly blame the flaws of the Chinese educational system, in particular, deemphasizing the rural schools.

In the second day in Tianzhu, I spoke for a whole day—seven English classes from the morning till the evening for the Senior Grade 1 students, then a presentation to the Senior Grade 2 students. My voice broke, but I simply could not resist the enthusiasm from the students and the teachers. For most of the

local people there, they had never been to any places outside Gansu, and quite a few of them had never left the county. For them, U.S.A. seemed just as far as Mars, and none of the students had heard one single English sentence outside classroom. All of a sudden, my teammates and I became the superstars of the school and the whole county, and more importantly, we all felt that we were so valuable that we should spend every minute doing something meaningful and helpful to the local people, especially to the students. We received such warm welcome first because there were no almost no true English teacher there—all the old generation teachers in the school picked up their English all by themselves from the dictionary, thus were not able to speak out, and the young generation teacher who did receive some formal English education in schools were very shy themselves when speaking English, needless to say facing students. That said, the English knowledge of the local teacher should still barely suffice for teaching students for the matriculation exams, a very grammar driven test. However, it was just impossible to spark the students' interest in English through such teaching.

My team was virtually with students all the time, even at nights. During the two weeks in Tianzhu, not only did my team teach all the English classes for Senior Grade 1, but we also held various discussion panels both for the students and for the teachers, we taught some economics classes for those students who were interested, we introduced all sorts of games that people in the West play to encourage the use of English outside classes, and we showed the movie "A Brave Heart" with only English subtitles—which was the first English movie for the majority of students.

At some point, I came to realize that teaching English vocabulary or English conversation might not be the most effective way I could spend my time in class, but rather, I tried to use simple English to convey what the life would be like in America, in Britain, and maybe just in other big cities in China. I told my personal story of going from a normal high school in China and one who never thought of studying abroad to become an international student who have received generous scholarships to study in Britain and America. I also told a seemingly legendary but true story of one friend, who is an orphan, successfully striving his way to a America university from a rural village in Sichuan all by himself. I strived to open up the horizon for the rural inhabitants. Had I been able to leave one thing for my students in Gansu, I would hope that it was not some English, but the true courage to strive for betterment in their lives, probably outside Gansu.

Tongwei, the second place that my team spent two weeks at, is one of the 41 poorest counties in China. Unlike Tianzhu, which is a minority autonomy substantially subsidized by the government these years, Tongwei was the poorest land I had ever walked onto. While my team was not fully involved in the English teaching due to the schedule conflicts with exams, we spent more time and got to know much more about the local students in Tongwei.

During one student home visit, I was shocked by the fact that the student spent only about 20 Yuan per month for all expenses.

With that amount of money, it was not even possible to have rice for meals. And indeed, she brought the cheapest pancakes back from the countryside every time she went back home. In order to pay for the rent, she spent a few hours everyday for tutoring job. Whenever there was a school vacation, even just a few days, she went home to help family for farm works. With all these, she still managed to excel in school, and was always ranked the top three in the whole grade.

Among all others, I met students who are orphans, or whose father suffering from cancer and the family assuming lots of debt, but all of them made such great effort and held on such firm determination to go to universities. All the students I met truly understand that just by going to school, they were already the most lucky ones, because many of their peers, even though with the dream and ability to study, did not have the opportunity because of family poverty. During the two weeks in Tongwei, I could not be impressed more by their diligence, and the determination well exceeding that of their ages. Like in Tianzhu, my team tried to incorporate the outside world into our English class teaching, we led various activities everyday after class for students who were interested, and most importantly, we took students into the few internet café in town, teach them how to use emails. For most of the students, the 2 Yuan per hour charge for using the internet was just luxury and almost none of them had ever used internet before. So we used our spare money set up a small internet-fund to pay for the students who wanted to use email, and had one of the students in charge. For each student who came to our email workshop, we help him to set up an email account, taught him how to send and receive mails, and finally asked him to send an email to each of us by himself.

Today, when all my teammates are studying / working in America, we are still in touch with quite a few Tongwei students through email. And from what the students tell us, all the teachers and students in Gansu miss us a lot, and all are hoping to see another team, if not us, to go back Tongwei in 2006. As part of the Evergreen project, we visited and conducted survey in all the major local libraries in Tianzhu and Tongwei. The project by Evergreen to sponsor the library books and equipments were very much appreciated by all the receivers. For most of the library sub-stations, especially in Tianzhu, significant progress had been made to label and barcode the books, and to promote the use of new library books to the local inhabitants, not only the students. However, because the school leaders worried the abuse or not returning of library books, the new donated books could sometimes become inaccessible for students. There were rumors in Tongwei that students needed to pay a certain deposit for borrowing any books, which was just not feasible for most of the students.

The summer in Gansu has been a rewarding life-time experience for all my team members. And we all share the same view that we have to go back there again, to see the people and the land...

(Evergreen Note: These volunteer students left all of their remaining spending money as small scholarships to seven students who had difficulties in paying their tuition.)

New Evergreen Office
By Alicia Liu and Jinwei Yu

One day, mom told me, "Alicia, Evergreen has a new office. You can go to the office to help me pasting stamps on envelopes." I was very excited, "Mom, are there any other things in the new office? Are there any kids over there? Will Christina be there working with me? Are there any butterflies? Are there any flowers for my garland?"

Mom tapped on my nose and said, "That is a secret. You should find out by yourself."

I was looking forward to the day that mom could bring me to the new office.

It was a cloudy day of March. I went to the new Evergreen office with mom! Mom told me that this office was donated by Patten University. I had no idea about this university. But, I really liked the big green lawn where I could run around freely. There were a lot of little flowers on the lawn that I could use for a nice garland. (But, Mom told not to pick the flowers as they are there for everyone to enjoy.) Around the lawn, there were several trees blooming. I liked the little pears in the tree after blooming. Aha, there were fountains with a huge lion head at the middle. Below them, there was a pool with clear water. I liked to play with water at the edge of the pool. Just that time, I saw a butterfly flying over the rose bed. I came close to play and talk to her. It seems that she was playing hide and seek with me because she didn't fly very fast and didn't leave me. Mom said she couldn't fly very fast because the humidity in air was too high which damped the wings of the butterfly. However, I still thought that she knew I was her new friend and liked to play with me.

I was shocked when I entered the office. As I thought, there should be a lot of drawers with paper, envelopes and stamps for me. But, what I saw was a big mess. Some pieces of cloth were spread on the floor randomly. A lot of buckets, trays and brushes were piled on the big table in the middle of the room. And more, there was a ladder in the office! I couldn't believe that this was the office.

I heard a man came in and talked with mom. I raised my eyes. There were two lines of shinning teeth in the blue staff. I dared not to move a single finger. The feeling was kind of familiar. Where I have had before? While I was thinking, the man show me a big smile, "I am Bruce." And white teeth were shinning. Suddenly, I realized what was in my memory. I pointed to him and shouted out, "You are Bruce the Shark!" Yes, yes, it was my favorite Bruce the Shark in "Finding Nemo". Just like him. However, this Bruce is a man. While, kind of like the Bruce the Shark. He was strong and big, wearing a big blue coat. He showed lots of white shinning teeth when he smiled. And he made good friends with me, a pretended Nemo. I called him Uncle Bruce.

Uncle Bruce was remodeling the Evergreen office. He was a magic person. He could change the color of the room and knew how to make shelves. He had a magic bag. Can you believe the magic bag saved a little brush that was special to me? I peeked

inside, there were lots of treasures, but I had no idea what they were. Uncle Bruce said those were not for kids so I didn't touch them. Today, Uncle Bruce would change the office into peach color, his favorite color. We tried to learn how to do it. My job was to change the spots where big brushes couldn't reach using my little magic brush, such as corner and edge. I worked full of joy because this job was very important and fun. I had sharp eyesight that made me find the unchanged spots immediately. Even it was just a needle top size. I couldn't stop though I felt itch on my nose and tired in one of my legs. I kept on my searching until I heard laughs from Uncle Bruce and mom. They were pointing at my face and laughing. I looked down myself, there were peach paint everywhere on my clothes. I thought my face must turn into peach too. Just when I was ready to cry, Uncle Bruce said, "You looks like a little peach." Em, it was not bad to be a little peach. But, I was not little anymore. "I am going to be five in June." Uncle Bruce hugged me, "Yes, you are a five-year-old-peach." I like this name, five-year-old-peach,

It was very dark outside when we took a break. And I could hear thunder coming very close. I covered my ears and hid in my mom's arms. The rain was poured down with loud noise. With a glance outside the door, I saw some white staff jumping on the ground. Mom said, "Oh, it's not rain. It's hail." "Hail? What is hail?" Wa, thousands of white beans bouncing up and down, like dancing on the ground. I picked one and held in my hand. It was cold and melt soon. The flowers in the trees were falling down like snowing. I jumped up and down too, "It's hailing! It's snowing!"

I really didn't want to go home when the weather turned good and job was done. There were too many attractive things here. Mom promised to bring me here next time. And she said that I might meet Christina, Faith, John, Uncle Chau, Auntie Susan, and of course, Grandma Yu then. I just couldn't wait.

The Evergreen office is really a magic place. I love Patten University. I love Uncle Bruce. I love the new Evergreen office.

Your Views and Suggestions are Important to Us.

Please let us know your opinions and any suggestions for improvements. To find out more, please visit us at our web site:

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