



EEF Official News Letter
Midyear Issue June 2013

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A Message from the Chairman of the Board

by John Lee



Welcome to our first midyear Newsletter issue. We are delighted to have Ms. Monica Xu, who will increase the frequency of EEF Newsletter so that our constituents will receive more frequent and current information on how their investments of donations and energy have improved educational opportunities in rural areas of China.

In this issue, we will update you on the conference feedback from last year and the workshop that will take place in a couple of months. During last year's post conference tour, I had the good fortune to visit Kaili School where we saw the changes that their administration effected after our sponsored trip to Taiwan. Now, their school library is more open and welcoming to students and staff alike.

Back at the ITIE 2012 conference, I learned that 17 of the 56 ethnic groups do not have a written language. With increasing numbers of young adults heading to cities, the risk of loss of ethnic culture will become progressively greater. We have been able to secure an Oral History expert to share her practices. A July workshop has been planned. The theme is on good practices for creating Oral History. We anticipate that the attendees will learn the best oral history practices so that indigenous students and educators can capture more cultures. This workshop will be held in Kaili School near Guizhou.

Other articles cover facets of the rich and innovative approaches to educational opportunities in arts and sciences. You will read a sample from some of 60 small projects that students and educators carried out by using library resources, doing field trips, collecting artifacts/data and presenting their work. You will also hear about a science initiative that we hope one day will see at least one school participate in an international competition. Perhaps, some of the students that either you sponsored or mentored will be in the team! They just need opportunities to be curious, investigate, create, and follow their passions.

Please join us in furthering education opportunities that change lives. Share with us who you know we should contact and help us provide more opportunities beyond what we can now do.

Small Projects – Small yet Steady Step towards Excellence

by Zhang Yu, China Program Director



Students visiting local culture site

EEF small projects, which were locally initiated and conducted, started in 2009. During 2012, 12 local school and public/community libraries completed 21 small projects, in the areas of:

Reading / Writing

Two English reading projects from Tongwei No. 1 High School and Kaili No. 1 High School differed in focus (theme -based extensive reading versus reading plus listening & retelling), but both were strong in execution and assessment. Interestingly, a common outcome of both projects is a considerable increase in students' interest in English, illustrated by surveys and student case studies, which implies that these projects echo students' inner thirst for interesting and engaging ways of learning.

Inquiry-based Learning

As an example of history study, "Roosevelt's New Deal" project from Huai'an No. 1 High School made DBQ (Document Based Query), an approach learned from a 2010 joint project with Chula Vista School, into full play. The students benefited greatly from the rich reference materials and the teacher's DBQ sheet guiding the analysis.

As two examples of cultural study projects, the "Tianzhu Cultural Study" project from Tianzhu Xinhua Middle School showed that rich and well-organized work products are possible for a first-time team if the teacher puts great effort into organizing and guiding, while the "Four Hermits in Mountain Shang" project from Danfeng High School demonstrated that a local history study project led by an IT teacher can have multimedia and social media tools in play. (cont.P2)



Students interviewing horse breeder Mr. Li

(from.P1) From EEF history and cultural study projects to date, we can see that the lack of critical thinking and research capability are currently limiting the depth of students' inquiry. To cultivate these qualities, systematic training is needed to go hand in hand with the small project practices.

For science projects, a comparison of the "Solar Lamp" project from Danfeng High School and the "Exploring Universe" project from Tongwei No. 1 High School reveals the difficulty that our science teachers encounter in inquiry-based learning, and how EEF may help.

The "Exploring Universe" project uses books and online information as references, without hands-on experiments designed. Students had difficulty in grasping knowledge of this broad topic. The solar lamp project is based on an instructional package that EEF developed and provided to the school. Through hands-on experiments, students learned specific scientific knowledge including energy conversion, and designing circuits effectively. Thus EEF's role in developing support packages (esp. hands-on kit and background reading materials) for science inquiry-based learning is vital.

Community Education

In 2012, community service projects featured partnering with local organizations for reaching out. "Kindergarteners' Family Education" project from Danfeng High School reached out to the local kindergarten to promote parents' awareness and knowledge of early family education. The school librarian helped kindergarten teachers to build the methodology in addition to domain knowledge to carry on the project independently. "Help the Elderly Surf the Web" project from Tongwei Public Library partnered with the Activity Center for the Elderly and offered weekly ICT training classes for 30 avid learners aged from 50 to 81. It leveraged our experience from the Tianzhu farmer ICT training project: Thus, the training contents were made easy to understand and tailored to the trainees' needs. The ICT training is now becoming a regular service of the library.

The small projects have become the main vehicle for schools and libraries to improve their services and for capacity building, by which the rural libraries have made small but steady steps towards excellence.



Student visiting local elderly

EEF's "Walking Horse" Culture Project Goes to Oklahoma

by Zhang Yu

Tianzhu No.1 High School of Gansu Province, located in the gateway to the Hexi Corridor, Northwestern China, started an oral history program in 2009 by recording indigenous multi-ethnic culture as part of Evergreen Education Foundation's library centered program.

In February 2012, teachers and students started recording local "Walking Horse" culture. Due to the needs of the trading caravans, the pony express and the nomadic nature of its local people, the horse carries rich cultural connotations. The Chakouyi (Fork Stage) horse that is good at flying pace (called "walking horse" by the locals), is considered an excellent breed by people in Tianzhu and played an important role in multiple aspects of the local people's lives.



existing literature on this subject, the school oral history team interviewed local scholars, horse-racing organizers, and video taped horse-racing, breeding and training in the field. The team synthesized the meanings and changes of the walking horse culture from the oral narratives of ordinary folks.

A paper based on this project has been accepted by the 2013 Annual Meeting of the Oral History Association, to be held on October 9-13, 2013 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, US.

Center: Walking Horse event scene, 2012.

To compensate for the lack of

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 Guide Star search for: "The Evergreen Education Foundation" in Richmond, CA.
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EEF's Fun Science Projects--- From Solar Lamp to Science Contest

by Rodney Amen, EEF Science Officer

Last year Evergreen Education Foundation put 1000 Solar Lamp Learning Kits into rural high schools. The high school students finished the assembly of the Kit while learning about electricity and solar energy; then the Lamps were sent to off-the-grid areas in Qinghai and Guizhou Provinces where younger students used the solar lamps to study.

We were happy with the outcome of our first "Science in the Library" project. We received wonderful feedback from the teachers and students. Our three main takeaways were: 1. The teachers wanted something more challenging for the students; 2. They wanted something current; 3. A program can be sustainable for every school year. Going forward, we are using the feedback and our experience to create our next program, a Microcontroller Learning Program.

Widely popular in Western countries, the Arduino Project will be used as a microcontroller platform. Arduino is an open-source licensed technology used by students and hobbyists; additionally the software environment is free to use and available in multiple languages including traditional and simplified Chinese characters.

This year's pilot program will ask 3-5 schools to create lesson plans with the contest parameters in mind. These parameters will be: 1. Use the Arduino, learn its programming language and basic electrical circuit components; 2. Use a Chinese version of the book "Arduino Cookbook" as a text; and 3. Propose the logistics plan for the laboratory equipment and supplies.

Meet New Staff — Words from Sun Ximei, Project Development Staff

As a child raised in a low-income, single-parent family in rural China, I had no books to read during my childhood. My dream was to build a free village library for all kids like me who love to read but had no reading materials.

I started to raise money by picking up waste during high school, and my dream was fulfilled during my college time: A small library called "Fall Mountain Book House" was established in my village. Besides book lending services, the library also offers free English classes during school breaks.



I then had the opportunity to participate in a civic library forum, that's how I met EEF. Next, I attended ITIE2012 as a delegate and a volunteer, and joined EEF in March 2013 as Project Development Staff. One of my main responsibilities is to design and evaluate small projects.

News in Brief

John Lee was appointed as a City Library Commissioner

John Lee, Chairman of EEF Board, sworn in on June 12, 2013 by San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee as an appointed City Library Commissioner. This was John's first time city commissioner appointment. John said he was honored and pledged that he would work hard to bring Chinese community to participate in the library as patrons and contributors.

CONGRATULATIONS, JOHN!

These proposed lesson plans should cumulate into a recommended plan for the teachers to implement and help students to work a contest submission. Actual student projects are wide-open choices: The students could



Students love science project

create something practical (example: a traffic light controller), fun (example: an electronic game), artistic (example: interactive art), or just about any gadget imaginable.

Evergreen hopes that a student contest will become an annual event, and lead to participation in international competitions. An even more important outcome will be to help develop future engineers, scientists, and artists.

Come join us by making a donation to Evergreen Education Foundation's Science Programs. You can help us to provide opportunities for rural Chinese students to learn Science and technology.



The ITIE 2012 scene

ITIE 2012 FEEDBACK

by Zhang Yu

ITIE (Information Technology In Education) 2012 with Theme of "Libraries as Community Education

Centers" was held in Hangzhou, China, Nov. 19-20, 2012, co-hosted by Hangzhou Library and Evergreen Education Foundation.

Around 28% of the 250 delegates shared feedback and 96% gave the conference a rating of 4 or 5 using a 1-5 scale. The major strengths mentioned include the overall program design, the quality of the key-notes and the ideas / concepts/case studies they brought, and the networking among overseas experts, grassroots, public and school librarians. Most important valuable insights are ideas/concepts regarding library values and positioning in the modern society. Most important topics participants wanted to discuss more in-depth are service methodology, case studies, and how to develop school library in the current educational context and Curriculum Reform.

Regarding what elements make a session valuable, we've derived 24 valuable tips on the aspects of topics, presentations and discussions, leading the panels, preparing the delegates, translations and the setting.



Delegates mingling at ITIE 2012

“Local Culture and Oral History” — Evergreen 2013 Workshop in Guizhou by Faith Chao, Founder & President

Evergreen is funding 36 small projects, of which 12 deal with Local Culture and Oral History

History of EEF's Workshop

From the beginning when Evergreen Education Foundation was

founded in 2001, our board

of trustees set the training of our teachers and librarians as one of highest priorities. One important way we can help the children in rural China is by helping their teachers and librarians gain resources and knowledge through training and opportunities of exposure to new ideas, concepts and practices and exchanges with their peers elsewhere.

Our very first workshop took place in Qinghai in 2001 with about 60 teachers and librarians attending. Twelve years later, many of these teachers are still with us and we are also seeing many new faces as well. Since that time we have alternated organizing workshops during odd years with mounting international conferences during even years. Each time, we select a different venue with the workshops taking place at one of our Evergreen libraries. Thus far, we have been to Qinghai Province (Xining and Datong), Gansu Province (Tianzhu and Tongwei), Shanxi Province (Qinxian), Shaanxi Province (Danfeng) and Jiangsu Province (Huai'an). We have held workshops on automating the library, on assessment, on reading and using the library to improve teaching, on improving community service, and similar topics.

Workshop 2013

This year our workshop will be held in Kaili, Guizhou Province, with the theme “Local Culture and Oral History”. Though this topic may seem a little unusual for libraries, it grew out of our small projects program. All these small projects have been initiated and developed by local teachers or librarians.

The main reason why this topic is so popular is that most of our rural

schools and libraries are located in areas with large ethnic minorities. As the Ministry of Education in China is requiring that each school initiate courses aimed at practicing inquiry or investigative learning methods, the teachers needed to find local topics that they feel confident asking the students to explore. In addition, our teachers and librarians are realizing that the functions of the library go beyond serving as a repository of books. The library's functions include archiving, preserving and providing access to local culture as well.

Experts for workshop

Evergreen's role is to help these teachers access knowledge about teaching, research and interviewing methodology. We are inviting 2 professors from the University of Wisconsin, Ruth Olson and Louise Robbins. Dr. Olson is an expert on doing research and interviews of ethnic minorities in the US and Dr. Robbins is a dean emeritus at the Library School at Wisconsin. Most of these small projects require the students to do library research, but more importantly they are expected to go into homes in nearby ethnic communities to interview local elders and family members. Our workshop this year will concentrate on teachers learning how to require that students do library and internet research and how to conduct effective interviews. We are also inviting 5 professional groups within China who are currently engaged in oral history projects to participate and provide domestic examples. These include project directors at libraries from Hunan and Jiaxin, professors at Bei Jing University and Si Chuan University as well as researchers working at China's national library organizations.

Exchanges with these groups will expand the horizon of our teachers and provide valuable networking opportunities. We are very proud that Evergreen has a paper accepted by the Oral History Association in the US to be presented at their annual conference this fall. This paper grew out of a small project conducted by a teacher from Tianzhu, Gansu on the culture of Walking Horse of their Tibetan minority. There is no doubt that our efforts in conducting these workshops and small projects are bearing fruit.

From High Tech to High Opportunities

Volunteering for Evergreen Education Foundation has given me the opportunity to leverage my life's work by helping others get opportunities they might not otherwise have.

Imagine this scene: My bus leaves at 8am from my hotel in Zhuhai, China on a one hour journey to our manufacturing partner's factory campus. As a typical American electronics engineer on the way to building the world's most advanced products, I am fascinated when looking out the bus window as it passes thousands of people walking to work. As the bus rolls into the rural countryside, I observe farmers working their fields or moving their goods in ox carts. This is the real China, with ordinary Chinese people. As a 3rd generation Chinese American, my mind drifts off wondering: what if my ancestors had made a different choice a hundred years ago?

Because my ancestors were determined to make a home in a new

by Rodney Amen, volunteer, Board Member

country of opportunity, I have been fortunate to be well educated and employed, and have had the opportunity to work on high technology's greatest consumer products. My experiences have led me to contemplate: Is this all there is? How do I help people?

How do I make a better world? My answer to those questions came when I meet Faith who responded with “I have got just the project for you.” This turned out to be the Solar Lamp Project, which was Evergreen's first large endeavor in their “Science in the Library” initiative.

Our horn honks as the bus makes way through hundreds of factory workers during a shift change. I wonder which ones should be riding in the bus with me. Maybe someday a poor rural student will grow up to wonder the same thoughts! **Evergreen Education welcomes volunteer inquires, email info@evergreeneducation.org.**

