



OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF PROJECTS ABROAD

CHINA

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EDITOR'S NOTE



Hello everyone! Welcome to the spring of Shanghai and the March 2013 issue of our newsletter!

It was such great weather during the first week of March. Sunny, warm and with breeze, we really couldn't expect better! After breathing spring for a week, the weather quickly soured into the 20's. However, be more optimistic, the lovely sunny day will be back within a week.

It is going to be especially difficult this issue to sum up my editorial within one page in the newsletter as there is so much that going on. As a start, the first week of March saw the influx of no less than seven volunteers within four days! This has of course had a big effect on the volunteer community, bringing a new lease of life to the shared flats and social events.

In this issue, we are going to share two wonderful volunteer stories: the first one is from Pepijn Mollman – a Dutch volunteer who participated in our Sports Project at Sport of Life. And Rupinder Chana, a British PRO volunteer, recounts her experience at her Teaching placement at Dynamic Kids. And we get a special report from Zaynab about the Clothes Sorting event which we had on 2nd of March with River of Hearts. Last but not least, there is a new project update from Chengdu office - Animal Care Panda Project!

We hope their experiences will provide you with a bit of the variety of projects available here in China, and we sincerely hope these stories will encourage people to join us here too! Meanwhile, if you are interested in what's going on here, you can always check out our Facebook Group, 'Projects Abroad Shanghai, China – The Official Group' for more photos or stories; or email any queries and comments to china@projects-abroad.org

If you would love to share your story and experience in China, you can also get in touch with me at suzieli@projects-abroad.org

Hope you have a great month and enjoy the spring days!

Suzie Li
Information Manager



Rupinder Chana (British PRO volunteer, Teaching Project)



As a professional teacher who has had more than 10 years of teaching experience, Rupinder Chana signed up with Projects Abroad as a PRO volunteer and was placed at Shanghai, China.

Rupinder has never been to far-east Asia, the teaching project for her was not only an opportunity of teaching in another school but is also a brand-new cultural experience. "You always have to keep learning in order to enrich your own life and the lives of the people you work with," Rupinder said "Otherwise you can become quite stale in what you do." Compared with researching information or watching documentaries, she considers experiencing as the biggest part of learning. "I can tell my children something from a book, but when I lived in that culture, my experience will be more meaningful."

In her one-month volunteer project of Teaching, Rupinder worked in a Children's Learning Center. "As well as teaching, my role involved running several training programs for the teachers here at the Learning Centre." Rupinder provided an insight of British styles and methods of education to the Chinese Children's Learning

Center by introducing systems in England. This also included creating child-friendly classroom displays. With the arrival of the Chinese New Year celebrations, Rupinder has been working on the New Year performance as her main task for the last week of the project. "We have kindergarten performance based on the arrival of the spring festival and the elder children have been working on Shakespeare play based on 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'."

Teaching in China was an eye opener for Rupinder, and gave her a different outlook on the education system in China. "Every time you volunteer, it opens up so many doors and forces you to see things through a new perspective." She said "I would like to develop my experience of teaching within other cultures as well building on my understanding on different teaching styles that are used. I don't think this project will be the end, I will definitely continue doing similar projects".

As her first experience of China, Rupinder was very impressed by Shanghai. "I love my time in Shanghai!" She refers to the most memorable experience being the people she interacted with. "It is not only the Chinese people or people in the school; it is also the other volunteers who come from other countries. They are what enrich the experience"

"Embrace the culture, the style, the traditions and the opportunities that come your way." Rupinder's advice for future volunteers is to immerse themselves in the culture. "If you want to experience it, you have to be part of it."

Pepijn Mollman (Dutch volunteer, Sports Project)

Van 20 november t/m 19 januari heb ik verschillende sportprojecten gedaan in de wereldstad Shanghai. Deze stad telt een bevolking van meer dan 20 miljoen mensen! Daarom was het zeker even aanpassen in het begin. Vanaf minuut 1 op Chinees grondgebied is het een mentale achtbaan aan nieuwe dingen die je meemaakt: de stad, huisgenoten, accommodatie, de social events, het uitgaan in Shanghai, de cultuurverschillen, het vrijwilligerswerk, enzovoort. En veel mensen in China spreken geen Engels, waardoor communicatie vaak via gebarentaal gebeurde. Natuurlijk maakte dat de belevenis alleen maar uitdagender en mooier!

Mijn werk op de Zilualon school was een mooie ervaring. Ik beleefde er de cultuurverschillen heel intens; de manier van lesgeven, de kleding, het eten, de Chinese normen en waarden, en de school zelf waren heel anders dan wat ik gewend was. Het is een school die ik niet snel meer zal vergeten en het sportproject daar heeft op mij het meeste indruk gemaakt. Elke dag had ik 3 tot 4 klassen waarbij het de bedoeling was dat ik assisteerde bij de gymlessen en wat voetballes gaf aan jongere kinderen. Ik kreeg de vrijheid om zelf wat oefeningen te verzinnen en te introduceren tijdens de sportlessen op het sportveld. Les geven gebeurde in gebarentaal gecombineerd met wat Engels, waarbij ik probeerde wat basis voetbaldingen uit te leggen, zoals passen en stoppen met de binnenkant van de voet. Het mooie hieraan is dat de kinderen het stukje bij beetje leren en je ziet dat ze verbeteren. Wanneer het regende was buiten voetballen geen optie. Op die momenten gaven we Engelse les.

Verder gaf ik ook voetbal les via Sports for Life, een kleine Britse organisatie die verschillende sportlessen aanbiedt aan expats in Pudong en Puxi. Samen met John en David, twee 25-jarige kerels die uit Liverpool kwamen, stond ik elke



dag weer ergens anders in Shanghai met expat kinderen t/m 12 jaar te voetballen. Op die manier zag ik een wereld van verschil tussen de levensstijl van de rijke expats bij Sports for Life en die van de arme lokale bevolking op de Zilualon school. Een groot contrast...

Over het algemeen werkte ik elke dag van 15.00 - 18.30 uur, behalve op zondag. Hierdoor had ik genoeg vrije tijd om andere dingen te ondernemen in Shanghai. Vanaf de eerste week heb ik veel andere vrijwilligers leren kennen, mede door de social events van Projects Abroad; uiteten, bowlen, lasergamen of andere activiteiten stonden allemaal op het wekelijkse lijstje, en we kregen ook meteen allemaal een Chinees telefoonnummer zodat we al snel reisplannen maakten met elkaar. Ik heb me dan ook geen enkele seconde in die twee maanden vervuild!

Hartelijk dank Projects Abroad voor deze geweldige belevenis! Het was een fantastische tijd en ik kan het zeker iedereen aanraden!

Zai Jian!

River of Hearts Clothes Sorting Event



River of Hearts is a charity program run by the Community Centre Shanghai, where foreigners and locals living and working in the city graciously donate their second hand clothing and items at various drop-off locations in and around Shanghai. River of Hearts throw sorting parties every year at International Schools in Shanghai where volunteers from different companies and organisations get together to help sort through the donated clothing and items to distribute to the needy in different locations across China.

Projects Abroad is proud to have regularly lent a hand at River of Hearts sorting parties since 2010. On Saturday 2nd March 2013, a team of Projects Abroad volunteers took part in the first River of Hearts Sorting Party of 2013 held at the SCIS International School in Puxi. Despite the bitter cold weather, about 180 volunteers showed up to help making this sorting party a successful event. Everyone kept busy sorting through and bagging clothes, toys, shoes and sending various items to be sold in the infamous “Buy a Mile Bazaar”, proceeds of which help towards shipping costs.

This kept everyone busy until lunch arrived,

which included pizzas donated by Melrose Pizza company, cakes from Shanghai Young Bakers, Waffles from the Hiking Group and coffee and pastries from the SCIS school. Delicious!

After lunch, it was time for us to work our muscles helping carry boxes onto the loading truck. Thanks to our volunteers and all those who took part in this event, River of Hearts were able to send 260 bags and 193 boxes to Yili in the Shandong Province. An amazing effort!



The 10-wheeler truck has now arrived in Linyi, Shandong province (which is about 584 km from Shanghai) and will take a full year to distribute the clothes to the needy. We thank our volunteers for helping to make a difference to the lives of people in Linyi and look forward to taking part in the next River of Hearts event this summer!

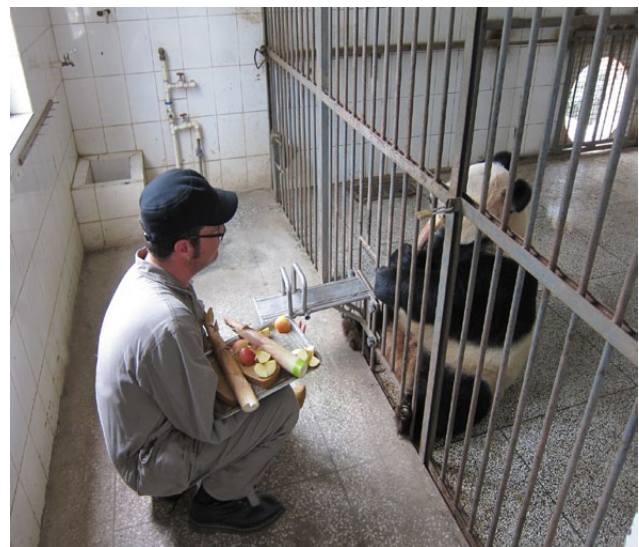


Photo from Alessandro Mazzi

This month here in Sichuan, Western China we were very happy to begin Projects Abroad's first Panda Project. I'm a panda lover myself (can anyone not be a panda lover after they have seen a giant black and white teddy bear sitting around eating bamboo like they're drinking a beer on the couch), not least because I believe it is so important to ensure that we never lose the diverse and beautiful natural world that we have been so lucky to inherit. I was therefore very pleased for us to be a part of this effort to keep the amazing species from extinction and to add to the national and international awareness of the importance of this plight.

Volunteers taking part in this project will accompany keepers in the day-to-day tasks that come with providing

a comfortable home for the pandas. This might include chopping up and preparing the food (which may be a quite literal 'shedload' of bamboo), cleaning out the enclosures (which may be a quite literal ... well, another load of <cough> processed bamboo) and monitoring their behaviour to ensure the good health of the pandas. In this time volunteers will have the opportunity to come close to a rare and wonderful species, to learn about their behaviours and way of life, and be a part of the Chinese efforts to



Volunteer-Adrian Lowe was feeding panda (the enclosure is only a temporary place specifically designed for feeding)

educate and preserve the species, all the time surrounded by this spectacularly beautiful forested environment.

Pandas have for many years now been



Adrian Lowe was preparing meals for panda lent to other countries by the Chinese government as a form of diplomacy gift. I also enjoy the idea that Projects Abroad will become part of the long-standing tradition of this wonderful animal providing a cultural bridge between China and the outside world. Volunteers who come here to look after the furry bear penguins will become part of this history. Whilst here, volunteers will make new Chinese and international friends, engage with Chinese culture and return to their own country with a strong sense that, no matter where you are from in the world, there are certain values which we all share. These



Photo from Alessandro Mazzi

values are embodied by the innocence, friendliness, and sense-of-fun that we see in the panda's furry essence.

—— Kevin Dennis
Regional Director (Chengdu)

PHOTO PAGE



Date	Time	Place
Saturday 2nd March 2013	9:00 am	River of Hearts
Clothes Sorting event with River of Hearts		
Thursday 7th March 2013	5:00 pm	Yu Xin Cuan Cai
Spicy Sichuan dinner in Yu Xin restaurant!		
Friday 15th March 2013	6:00 pm	Hao Le Di
Karaoke night! Let's rock and roll!		
Sunday 24th March 2013	2:30 pm	Shanghai Kung Fu Center
Learning a bit of traditional Chinese Kung Fu!		
Thursday 28th March 2013	8:00 pm	Orden Bowling Center
Bowling night with group of volunteers!		

Upcomming Holidays

Qing Ming Festival Holiday:

Thursday 4th April to Saturday 6th April