

High Standards And Student Rights

I teach for a British company that runs ESL schools all over the world. Their facility here in Yuxi is housed in a Youth Palace, a complex dedicated to extracurricular activities for young people. There's a playground, a pool, music studios, and a couple of language schools.

Ours is the only English school in Yuxi to employ native speakers – and it charges accordingly. Still, the one-child policy ensures that nearly every student has two parents and four grandparents behind him or her exclusively, so there is no shortage of families with the means and the will to invest in their children's schooling.

On Wednesday evening, I bike to school, greet my British colleagues, and sit down to grade a stack of exams. Standards here are very high. Ten of my students score 100 percent on the test, but my academic manager talks with me with obvious disappointment about the one who got a mere 85 percent. I try to imagine such a conversation occurring in an American school. I can't.

My class tonight is an upper primary group. These kids have already had a full day of regular school (including English class), but are now here at 6:20 p.m. for 100 minutes of supplemental instruction.

We review the week's grammar and vocabulary and practice it with a series of games. The students run and tag flashcards I have posted around the room. They throw sticky balls at words written on the board. They play hot seat, where the odd man out has to identify a vocabulary word before the game can continue.

My Chinese teaching assistant is wonderful and does a thousand things to help the class run smoothly. Nevertheless, one student persistently acts up, playing the class clown to the amusement of his classmates. After giving him several "teacher looks," I stop teaching and tell my TA to ask the miscreant why he is talking out of turn.

The kid is sullen for a moment and then replies to the TA. She translates for me: "He says Chinese students have rights." The misbehavior ends, but I think about the socio-political implications of his statement for days.

Class ends and I clear the room quickly because a group of older students is waiting to use the room. They will be here until 10 p.m. Chinese students may or may not have rights, but they surely study much harder and longer than their American counterparts. I haven't decided yet if that's good or bad.

– James F. Trumm

You can read more about Jim's experiences of living in China and see his photos at www.jftrumm.com.

That's Village Life

The Volunteering, Giving Nature Of OH

YOUTH SERVICE DAY ... More than a dozen members of Ottawa Hills Youth-to-Youth (Y2Y) participated in Global Youth Service Day (GYSD) April 12. GYSD is the largest annual international service event dedicated to service by children and youth. Each year, in more than 100 countries, millions of youth come together in service to improve their communities.

Ottawa Hills Y2Y volunteers helped pick up trash and debris along University Trails. Youth volunteers included Sara Abdouni, Sam Assi, Joe Boesel, Grace Dunbar, Nic Durfee, Jon Durst, Christian Heindenreich, Neha Kazmi, Connor Muse, Rumer Ochoa, James Schwann, Sam Shockey, and Eli Zinck. Chaperones and adult assistants included Y2Y coordinator Julie Boesel, Chris Dunbar, Jen Muse, and Kim Shockey.

FOURTH GRADER DONATES HAIR ... Campbell Streak-Jensen, son of Mark and Caroline, recently made a donation that will have a significant impact on the lives of children he doesn't even know. Campbell had been growing his hair for the last two years, and recently had 10 inches of his hair cut off to donate to Locks of Love, an organization that makes real-hair wigs for children experiencing long-term hair loss from a variety of medical diagnoses, including cancer.

Zoo Preschool

The Toledo Zoo's preschool center is now accepting applications for the coming school year.

The year runs from September through mid-May. Three-year-olds meet two days each week, while four-year-olds meet three days each week; morning or afternoon times are available for both age groups.

The school is open to three- and four-year-olds and is licensed by the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services.

For more info, visit toledo zoo.org/preschool, or call 419-385-5721.

SPECIAL OLYMPIAN ... OHHS graduate James Wimmers participated in the Special Olympics State Basketball Tournament March 21 at Bowling Green State University. After two hard-fought games, James' team, the Lucas County Eagles, came in fourth overall in the Adult Division III of the state tournament.

SCOUTS WORK AT OAK OPENINGS ... Ottawa Hills Boy Scout Troop 27 held their annual Spring Weekend Camping Trip the weekend of April 11. Mid-way through their nearly 15-mile bike ride, 23 Boy Scouts and 4 adult Scouters stopped to participate in a service project designed to clean up trash and other debris along the Wabash-Cannonball Trail at Oak Openings.

GIRL SCOUT WEEK ... Ottawa Hills Girl Scouts in March celebrated Girl Scout Week with a father-daughter dance and collected donations for a local charity. This theme of this year's dance was The Wizard of Oz, and the recipient of the donations was The Beach House Family Shelter in Toledo. The Girl Scouts collected toiletries throughout the week and at the dance and then delivered everything they collected to The Beach House on March 20.

ARBOR DAY AND EARTH DAY ... Girl Scouts from Ottawa Hills celebrated Arbor Day (April 25) and Earth Day (April 22) in conjunction with Global Youth Service Day by planting saplings at Swan Creek Metro Park. On April 12, seven Ottawa Hills second and third grade Girl Scouts planted five different types of tree saplings throughout Swan Creek Metro Park. Girl Scouts who participated were Meg and Kate Bode, Emma Cole, Cassie Davis, Libby Hagenbuch, Lila Smith, and Keelie Wimmers.

– Sabrina Peters-Whitehead

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