

赛乐川：我们在剑桥中文学校为北京的民工子弟学校一台新饮用水过滤器募捐

The Water Project Alex Saich August 11, 2010

Every year, Winchester High School along with Primary Source organizes a trip to the Dandelion Migrant School outside of Beijing, China. Winchester High School students are given



the opportunity to stay with the students at the migrant school for a week, teaching them English while learning about Chinese culture at the same time. Mrs. Harvey, a teacher and the head of the social studies department at Winchester High, first helped coordinate the trip 5 years ago with Primary Source and the principal of the school, Ms. Hong Zheng. By staying among the students, the volunteers from Winchester High gain a unique insight into their way of life and the hardships that they have to endure. The program has continued for several years now, and a bond

has been formed between students from Winchester High School and those of the migrant school.

The students at the Dandelion School come from all over China, and are given the rare opportunity to receive a well-rounded education for relatively little money. The school is for children of migrant workers in Beijing who come to the city hoping to find better work. Many students come from extreme poverty, finding the living conditions at the school much better than at home. Despite this, however, the school still lacks many basic and essential accommodations needed to survive. During our stay last year, for example, Ms. Zheng, informed us that both of their water purifiers had recently broken down. The water at the school doesn't meet the regulations set by the Chinese government, and contains very high levels of copper, iron, and other heavy metals. On top of this, their water also contains very high levels of bacteria. Last year, Mrs.



Harvey and Mrs. Kangas discussed this problem with Principal Zheng and the Water Project took form. The fall of 2009 is when the idea for this project really took hold and when planning began. Every year Mrs. Harvey and Mrs. Kangas are the two teachers who accompany the volunteers to the Dandelion School, and they like to do something beneficial for the students there. This year the teachers and students decided to raise money to help them buy a new water purifier. On our trip last year in the summer of 2009 our accompanying science teacher, Ms. Zhou, tested the tap water and found that the

acidity level was shockingly high. Principal Zheng told us that the cost for a new water purifier would be about \$5,000 each, and that the school would need two of them.

Starting in early spring of 2010, the Winchester teachers and students going to the Dandelion school that summer began brainstorming and working on ways to raise money for the two water purification systems. Leading up to the annual trip in July, our students met weekly



every Monday night to discuss fundraising options and to develop lesson plans for our eventual trip. It was at these meetings where we came up with the idea and designed the plan to hold a ping pong tournament at Winchester High School in an effort to try and raise money; students would come and pay an entree fee at the door to compete in the tournament and enjoy Chinese food. Everyone involved did a tremendous job in helping to set up the tournament. Students and teachers alike helped after school to set up ping pong tables that

various people had generously donated for the night. One student's parents even went so far as to buy a brand new ping pong table just for the event, which was planned to be auctioned off later. The tournament was to be held in the cafeteria of the school and in total we had 5 tables set up

for playing. The Sichuan Garden restaurant in Woburn also graciously donated all of the Chinese food for the tournament (enough for 100+ people) for free. The tournament took place in late May, and everything was in place for a great evening. Mrs. Harvey had set up a projector in the cafeteria with a slideshow of pictures from the school to promote or cause.

The students at the Dandelion School also designed beautiful postcards from hand for us to sell, which we laid out for people at the tournament. On top of that, many parents also kindly donated raffle items such as gift cards and show tickets to be auctioned off. All in all the tournament was a huge success; 64 competitors



played in it and over 100 people showed up to support the cause. Everyone loved the food and atmosphere and people found out a lot more about the Dandelion School and their problems. The Winchester Star, the local newspaper, was also extremely helpful; they wrote an article about the trip in early June, and another article about the ping-pong tournament and its success. These articles were very important in spreading the news about our project and it brought in more donations and help. All in all we raised about \$1,600 that night, a third of all the money we needed and a lot more than we thought we would get.

After a while the group got in contact with the Cambridge Center for Chinese Culture, a Chinese language and culture school located Waltham, MA, who were also instrumental in raising money for the project. The Principal of the CCCC, Mrs. Kai, found out about the Dandelion School and our project and met with our group. She was very eager to help out as well. With her help, the first ever Student Committee was set up at the Chinese school in early March

which worked tirelessly until the school year ended in late June. These students met weekly and came up with donation ideas for the Water project. The committee was very productive for a fledgling group, setting up donation boxes throughout the school with information about the project and organizing bake sales in order to raise funds. The committee organized several bake sales throughout the spring, making food at home and bringing it to sell for donations during school hours. The committee worked hard right up until the Winchester group left for China in June, raising \$450 for the school in China. We also elicited help from a group of students from Harvard University, who heard about the project through mutual friends. The prospect really excited them and the students will be going to the Dandelion School next March.



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Before the students and teachers were to leave in late July, a lot more funds were needed

in order to get close to reaching our goal of \$5,000 for one water purification system. Many generous teachers around Winchester High School donated a lot of money out of their own pockets for the cause. A booth was also set up at the annual Winchester Town Day selling more postcards from the Dandelion school and asking for donations. Finally, students on the trip and their parents also gave graciously to the cause. In total the project garnered almost \$4,000. Although we fell short of the target, we're still proud of the money that we earned and the people at the Dandelion School are very grateful for all of our hard work. With a few more donations Principal Zheng can get one of the two water purification systems that it needs. Winchester High and the Dandelion School have also been talking to companies in China in the hopes of securing a water purification system as a donation from one of these organizations. Hopefully the school can install their water systems as soon as possible.

