

March 15, 2007

Looking back, what has been accomplished in the past year is truly outstanding. 2006 was a watershed year, when many of the seeds planted have now taken root and are proliferating. Florida now has over 45 (non-heritage) schools offering Chinese instruction. I would like to highlight some of accomplishments:

GRANTS/HOSTING PROGRAMS. Florida out-performed in the number of award recipients.

FLAP grants for critical languages. Florida received 9% of the national award total of \$12.9 million dollars. Schools in Miami, Ft. Lauderdale, Largo, Orlando and Tampa all received awards.

TCLP Host Program. 10% of the awards offered, and the only private school selected, was to the Pine School.

NAIS/Han Ban Host Program. Florida received 16% of teachers offered. Schools participating are the Cushman School, the Pine Crest Schools and Admiral Farragut School.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. Last Fall, two Chinese teachers associations were established in Florida.

FFLA. The State Foreign Language Association has announced a chapter for Chinese teachers. Current president is Cheng-mei Rothschild of the Bolles School (rothschildl@bolles.org). The annual meeting will be held next October, in Orlando.

CLTA-FL. The national Chinese teachers association opened a local chapter in Florida. Current president is Monica Shang of the distance learning station in Palm Beach (shang@palmbeach.k12.fl.us). The inaugural workshop was held at FAU in January. A second workshop, with Han Ban instructional participation, will be held at FIU, on April 7th.

Membership applications to follow.

CHINESE STATE COMPETITION. Less than one year ago, a small group of teachers organized the first state competition, under Cheng-mei Rothschild, which was held at the Bolles School in Jacksonville. Six schools participated. This year, on March 30th-31st, the second competition will be held at the University of Florida. UF is Florida's leading university for Asian studies. This year, 16 schools are participating in the event. The event is being sponsored by the Chinese Consulate, World Language Advocates and UF.

This year, we will hold a reception /dinner for our teachers on Friday evening. We hope this will promote contact and support amongst the group. If any teacher, whose students are not participating in the competition, is interested in attending the event, please contact Cynthia Chennault at UF (cchenna@aall.ufl.edu)

CHINESE CONSULATE. After his initial visit to Miami area schools last May, Consul General of Education, Mr. Weiping Zha, returned to Florida last Fall for

a full weeks visit. We visited a wide variety of educational institutions and I would like to thank all the schools which participated in hosting us. They include: Gulliver Prep School. The entire senior administrative staff, department heads and language teachers.

Miami-Dade Public Schools. Supt. Dr. Rudy Crew, Asst Supt. Antoinette Dunbar, Dr. Joanne Urrutia, Director of Languages, Ass. Supt. Carmen Marinelli and a number of school principals and teachers.

University of Miami. Chairs of both the Language and Marine Sciences Depts., as well as the Director of International Student Exchange, and representatives from the Business school.

The Pine Crest School. Again, all senior staff, language department heads and their Chinese teachers.

The Pine School. Headmaster James Cantwell and Chinese teachers.

University of Florida. The Provost, the Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the Dean of International Studies and the Chair and faculty of the African Asian Department. Additionally, Min. Zha hosted a reception for Chinese teaching professionals in Miami. Finally, he visited some heritage schools in Tampa. It was quite a trip!

QINGDAO DEVELOPMENTS. In addition to Consul Zha's involvement with our Educational institutions, various other parties have been involved in the development of closer ties with Miami's sister city. These include:

1. City of Miami. Last February Dr. Peng Lu, of FIU, and I met with city officials to develop plans for the introduction of Chinese culture to Americans by featuring the city of Qingdao at the Miami Book Fair. Over 200,000 people attended the fair, held in mid November, and the exhibition was a great success. Qingdao sent a delegation of 14, led by Mr. Ren Qunxian, the Vice Chairman of CPC Peoples Congress Standing Committee to meet with Mayor Manni Diaz and other city officials. Participants from Qingdao included representatives from the Cultural Office and Foreign Affairs Office as well as members from various trade and publishing entities.
2. Qingdao Delegation. A group of 6 educators, from the cities of Qingdao and neighboring Jimo came to the U.S. in late August for meetings in Washington, University of Pennsylvania and Miami. The delegation was led by Deputy Director of the Qingdao Municipal Education Bureau, Mr. Sui Zhi Qiang. Meetings were scheduled with both our educational officials as well as city officials. Unfortunately, the Mayor's Office was forced to cancel at the last moment due to the hurricane scare.
3. WLA trip to Qingdao. Armed with introductions from Consul Zha and Peng Peng Lu, I spent the month of September in Qingdao meeting with various officials and visiting a number of schools. The two most senior officials, Deputy Directors Mr. Sui and Mrs. Han Shu Li, are both very interested in developing exchange programs with our schools. They understand that our schools are just beginning their Chinese instruction and are open to the many various proposals we discussed. I stressed the desire for our sister schools to develop long term arrangements. To achieve this, he suggested that when our Head of Schools trip is finalized, he will organize a number of interested

schools in Qingdao and have our two groups meet first socially, to discuss each schools objectives with exchanges, so that similar minds will hopefully connect. Apparently the Chinese are having the same problems we are in sourcing teachers and are interested in teacher exchange as well. We even discussed the idea of summer camps. Of course, I was thinking of our elementary students, Whose families may be enticed to vacation on the beaches of Qingdao.

Mr. Sui, always mindful of the importance of school exams, thought it a wonderful idea for his middle and high school students.

4. Ocean University of China. I also met with the Director of International Studies, Mr. Xu Jiahai. Ocean University, located in Qingdao, has a number of schools but is especially renowned for its Marine Science department. A few years ago, the government elevated Ocean U. to national stature, hence the title. Mr. Hu is also interested in both student and teacher exchanges. We spoke recently and he is delighted to report that the university has recently been awarded scholarships for study abroad. I would like to report that Ocean U. currently has a number of international students from a large number of foreign countries.
5. UM. Another senior level delegation of educators, including the Vice President of Ocean University, met with officials of UM in November of 2006.
6. Miami. Deputy Director, Mrs. Han Shu Li, is coming to Miami in May. She will be meeting with both our city and education officials. The objective is to sign a letter of cooperation by both cities, to give their blessing to future exchange programs.
7. Head of School trip to Qingdao. The stage has been set. What I need from all of you is a response of interest and timing. In order to offer you the itinerary outlined by Peng Lu (see itinerary on site www.wlaflorida.com), including meeting with Han Ban officials, we will need a minimum of 12 participants. Obviously, the larger our delegation is, the more impact it will have. Peng has confirmed either October of 2007 or next Spring, in March of 2008. I have forwarded school brochures from all the schools visited with Consul Zha last May and October. If any others are interested in forwarding your school information, please send it to me. Finally, I will be sending out a DVD on the city of Qingdao. Please share this with your students, and even their parents, to develop interest. I have a limited number of copies and can only send one to district schools. I will use the same contact information used for sending the Han Ban book samples.

LOCAL CHINESE COMMUNITY. This past year we have also been successful in building bridges with the Chinese population in south Florida. First, with the Chinese Cultural Asssocation, headed by Peter Liu. Mr. Liu is interested in bringing Chinese culture into our schools as your programs develop. His group is responsible for organizing the annual New Year's festival.

More recently, with Mr. Dan DeCarlo of the Kongdan Foundation, whose weekly "South East Connections" will keep us aware of events in our area. Dan's group is also interested in developing ties with the city of Qingdao.

In closing, I would like to draw your attention to one of the presentations at the ISSA Conference held in January. Michael Furdyk, co-founder of TakingITGlobal.org, has developed a global on-line community for young people that engages hundreds of thousands of youth in over 200 countries and territories world-wide. He has accomplished this in one year. I will outline the possibilities in a follow up email. If enough schools are interested, Mr. Furdyk has agreed to come to Miami for a presentation. I have also sent this information to all the education officials I met with in Qingdao for their review. Please let me have your comments.

Thank you,

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