

Ulanhot Inner Mongolia - Phyllis Merritt

We are safely home from China with another summer of great memories.

This year's assignment in Ulanhot, Inner Mongolia, yielded 100 Chinese English teachers who made their way into our hearts. They gave up their summer vacation to be a part of the Amity Summer English Program. Some started teaching again the day after we left.



The last week sped by, with morning lessons and afternoon specials on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and a Talent Show that included the teachers and what we hoped would be our forgettable "Chicken Dance." Alas, with the invention of cell phone cameras, our exploits made it to Shanghai before we got there for Debriefing.

Our students had true talent however, and included songs like "Scarborough Fair" as well as a mesmerizing Mongolian cup dance, songs from a Chinese opera, "When You are Happy and You Know It" (in three languages), and a Jazz Chant by my entire class (Go! Blue Stars). Few of the students knew each other before they arrived--all became friends before they left. A dance troupe was formed as well as singing duets. They remembered in the final speeches my aside, "You are English Teachers and English Teachers can do Anything!"



Thank you for your prayers and interest. I am happy to say that no Mongolian hospitals were visited by any team member, no classes missed, and the team worked together for the good of the Chinese English teachers AND had fun learning about this cool and wonderful part of China that includes the only Buddhist Temple to Genghis Khan in the world.

A special gift at the end of the Summer English session were the fans hand lettered by our Teaching Assistants which included our class members' names in Chinese, Pinyin, their English name, and name printed in Mongolian. (Thanks Lynn for locating these for me in Nanjing!)

We were privileged to attend the 6,000 member church in Ulanhot three times and hear all three of their choirs and meet the first Mongolian male pastor in China. The services left a lasting impression on all of us as we worshipped in English and they in Chinese. We also attended church in Shanghai and sang: "Jesus, Keep Me Near The Cross," and "The Old Rugged Cross."

Following are quotes from my students that summarize their thoughts and attached is the speech presented by Jessie on the final day. She alludes to many of our lessons, even the idiom, "going to bat for."

Love,
Phyllis

This is the most meaningful vacation I have spent since I graduated from university. With the help of four American teachers, I not only improved my listening and speaking, but also learned some skills of attracting student's teaching attention in class. The majority of teaching methods used by the teachers are of great benefit for my future teaching career.
Candy

Before this study, I was too shy to speak in public. English is a bridge which brought all of us together this summer. Thanks for all the help. We improved more this summer. Lotus

On the first day of class, I only know Rainbow. You made many roll-calls, so gradually I can tell all of their names, then we became friends in class and after class.

The most important achievement for me is that I can think in an English way. I'll learn from you, using the simplest words and sentences to express the meaningful idea. That's wonderful. Hannah

I have spent a special and wonderful summer holiday. I've learnt many things, such as American culture, how to improve Listening, speaking . . . But the most useful thing for me is learning some new method to make my class more fun. Many interesting games that we played will interest my students. Jackie

Dear Phyllis:

I'm so happy to hear from you and glad to know you're back home. I still cannot believe that you left and now we are in different countries. It's just like a dream. But when I look at the lovely gifts from you, I realise that you were here with me and we spent an unforgettable summer.

To be honest, I didn't like the Summer English Program in the beginning because I would have no days off, but when I saw you work so hard and passionately, you earned my respect. And now, I am trying to use some of your teaching methods in my class and I think it works well.

Thank you, Phyllis, for teaching us many useful things and leaving us precious memory. I miss you.

I hope we can keep in touch with each other. loving you Lexi



This summer Phyllis has come to our beautiful Ulanhot to help us with oral English. Language always comes along with culture. We learned American culture with English practicing. Angela

I learned a lot from you. Interest is the best teacher. So if you are interested to learn English, you will find many ways to teach well. Selina

On July 11, I came to study English in No. 1 Senior High School. There are four English teachers coming from America. They came here to help us improve our spoken English and listening ability. On the first day, I was very nervous because I was afraid that I couldn't understand what Phyllis said. Fortunately, Phyllis spoke English slowly and I could understand most of what she said. After that, I became confident in myself. Day by day my listening ability has improved a lot. But there was a big problem for me, which is that I am very shy. I am afraid of talking with these four English teachers face to face. Even though I had some good ideas or thoughts, I just kept silent unless I had to state my opinions or express my ideas. I know if I continue doing like that, I can never improve my spoken English. So I made up my mind to change it. From then on, I can talk with them gradually. To my surprise my spoken English has improved a lot in the past 19 days. Thanks to their help, I can overcome my shyness and can stand in front of my teachers and classmates to express my thoughts and sing songs. The four teachers' hard work and optimism encouraged me a lot. They also set a good example for me both in life and work. Betty



In these 20 days, we all learnt a lot. I think the biggest harvest is teaching method. Every class your preparations are very perfect. We admire you very much. Your smiling is so sweet, Every class your smile always around us. You give us power and sunshine. We all love you very much. I learn more new games, Thank you very much. Susan LeeAnn