

## The Gansu Team 2015



**The Gansu Team-Jane, Kate and Lawrence** were based in Huining City, Gansu Province which is perhaps one of the poorest of China's provinces, in the far north west of the country. It has a very arid, almost desert like climate as the Gobi desert is not far away! It was relatively cool which was an added bonus for us. The area has a large ethnic minority Muslim community and there was a beautiful mosque near to the Middle School where we were based -and of course it was Eid, the end of Ramadan, while we were there.

We were teaching a modified version of the **Summer English Program for two weeks only**. Our Program was a blend of a **Peer to Peer Program** ( Teacher Professional Development, **Learning English Course** and Speaking and Listening activities) that Amity has trialled before and highlights from the **Daily Life and People and Relationship Modules** in the SEP Tool Kit. The Program was a good blend of workshops, textbook based lessons, a handful of lectures, practical sessions and fun activities. We had the usual 'mock' wedding, the eating of a banana with a knife and fork, Easter and Christmas activities, Shaun the Sheep dialogues, Jazz chants, Lawrence's First Aid Course and lots of exciting topics about western life and culture.

**Our class arrangements** were also very different. There were no Teacher interviews as the **Chinese Teachers were divided into High, Middle or Primary Teacher groups**. Kate primarily taught the High School Teachers, Lawrence the Middle School Teachers and Jane the Primary School Teachers. We had three excellent classes and the **mixed ability classes** worked well. I had a very active class of Primary Teachers who were wonderful and several who had an excellent standard of English.

The Liaison Teachers stayed with us during mealtimes which meant that **we were able to really connect with them personally** in a way in which I have not experienced before. They were particularly helpful and supportive. We had a double birthday celebration also-Kate and Jane both had a birthday in the first week in Huining-and were given beautiful cakes and flowers. Jane's flowers were transformed into a wedding bouquet for the bride.

### **The highlights of our teaching program**

The Primary and Middle School Teachers loved the challenge of **acting out 3 stories with Jane**-The Magic Paintbrush, the Sleeping Beauty and A Squash and a Squeeze by Julia Donaldson. They made their own costumes and props and the results on the final day were very entertaining! The classes loved making Easter and Christmas cards and decorating and filling the plastic Easter eggs with goodies. All of the classes did a Pronunciation Clinic with Jane and practiced difficult sounds with Tongue twisters, jazz chants and famous proverbs.

**Lawrence's** T.V. program, The Price is Right, a treasure hunt game, his first Aid Course, Famous people and his competent leading the wedding service were each a great hit.

**Kate's** Limericks, the writing of dialogues for Shaun the Sheep, making posters, Cluedo, a Doctor, Doctor activity, singing 'I'd like to teach the world to sing' and card games were among the highlights.

We delivered an **excellent and balanced program** with each 'foreign' teacher teaching each of the three classes in equal measure so that each Chinese teacher had a good experience of our different styles, topics and voices.

We had a brilliant two weeks in Huining. It is a very long way from home! Three airplane flights and a four hour road trip each way was tiring to say the least! But this was a very memorable SEP for us. We were truly able to demonstrate 'Love in action' for our Chinese Teacher colleagues.

Jane Coates and the Gansu Team