

MONGOLIA: Balancing nomadic culture and modernization

continued from B1

they were finished. When we didn't understand something (every word he said) he would say it slowly, gesticulating one of the limited nouns he could be referring to. We'd eventually nod in assumed understanding and he would continue on with his wild tales of last year's eagle festival, or the time he tied a rope around his daughter and lowered her over a cliff to capture a snowy owl.

For one of our stops, we visited his wolf pups, captured recently so that their scent would keep other wolves away from his sheep, goats, cows, yaks, horses and camels. He would teach the wolves to hunt and once they were older he would take them far away and release them.

Eventually, the setting sun and dropping temperatures sent us back inside where his wife and two older daughters were happily chatting, around a large pot heating on the mature fired stove.

After a tea and diary product based refueling, we headed back outside at the insistence of Aikush. She beckoned us to follow as she demonstrated her complete mastery of the seemingly barren steppes that she had explored and learned from for her entire life.

In a few weeks, she would be heading to stay in a village several hours away for her first year of elementary school and was happily enjoying the last little bit of time she had in an environment where she was comfortably in control.

She wandered around with us cluelessly following, a piece of twine she found among a few animal bones and the skeleton of a ger seemed to give her direction.

Aikush led us up the hill and picked up a mostly dry cow pie, which she placed in my hand. Her grave expression told me that it was of utmost importance that I kept hold of this specific turd among the thousands around us.

The fresh tufts of grass Aikush gathered were my sister, Sara's, responsibility. Next, she walked up to a rock that must have weighed half as much as her, grunted as she deadlifted it and walked it over to my dad.

A rusty zipper that looked to have been sitting out since the last nomadic family decided to set up camp there distracted her briefly while she placed it on her open vest, imagining being able to zip it up. Aikush gently placed the zipper in my mom's hand and then continued to lead us up the hill. Able to ignore our questions and protests at home and dinner got further and further away.

After a few more slow minutes of trudging up the hill at altitude, we reached a large marmot hole. Aikush put her tiny hand out, requesting the cow pie from me which I had discarded the first time she turned her attention from me, her disappointment was unmasked as I jogged down the hill to find the exact poo she had selected.

Impatiently she watched as I struggled back up the hill, my lungs urging me to take a break but my pride refusing to disappoint this 5-year-old. As soon as I returned she took the pie out of my hand, and placed it over the hole for size. She then delicately removed a chunk and left it over the marmot den with just enough space for a marmot to poke its head out. Around the hole, she placed the noose, tying the other end to the rock, the tasty tuft of fresh grass far enough away from the hole that a curious marmot would have to stick its head fully through the noose to reach the morsel. Once set up, Aikush wasted no time admiring her trap. Instead, she excitedly rushed to show us another corner of the valley before her mother yelled for her to bring us inside for a utensil-free feast.

It's tough to wrap up my experience in Mongolia after spending the majority of the last six months there. It is a vast sparsely populated country with an epic and proud history including the Hunn nomads, the empire of Chinggis Khaan, rule by Manchurian China, a communist alliance with Russia, and almost thirty years of democracy. Mongolia has a fantastic juxtaposition of nomadic culture and modernization and is doing an admirable job of preserving its history and traditions while trying to keep up in a quickly changing world. Climate change, technology, and an increase in population are making the nomadic lifestyle, once practiced all around the world, a scarcity we must preserve to maintain our connection with our planet.



AYUSHA walks with her father.



KYLE and his sister, Sara, who visited Kyle in Mongolia with their parents, Tim and Jenni Donahue.

Submitted photos



CHOICES in the Ulaanbaatar market. The city of Ulaanbaatar is the capital and largest city of Mongolia, and serves as the country's cultural and business center.

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Have a Happy, Healthy Winter!

When the weather outside turns frightful, it gets harder to get your much needed exercise.

Moving around keeps you healthy and feeling good. Give these safe and fun indoor activities a try and let us know what you think!

WINTER HEALTH TIP: Hydrate!
If it's cold outside, you might not feel thirsty. However, it is important that you keep drinking water throughout the day. A good reminder is to drink a glass of water each time you go to the bathroom.

How many differences can you find between this boy and his reflection?

Juggle with balloons. They're a great way to start juggling. Start with two, then try to add a third and a fourth!

WINTER HEALTH TIP: Limit Screen Time
The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends parents limit their kids' screen time to two hours or less a day. How much time do you spend in front of a screen each day? Computers, TV, phones ... it all adds up. Keep track for one week and try to do less and less each day. Can you keep it to less than two hours a day?

SCREEN TIME TRACKER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
HOURS	HOURS	HOURS	HOURS	HOURS	HOURS	HOURS

Wash Your Hands Often!
Exercise keeps you healthy. Remember to wash your hands throughout the day. Visit kidscoop.com/scrub-squad/ to find a Kid Scoop video and printable activity pages that help make hand washing fun!

Starting up top at "GO," can you find your way through the gaps in these bubbles all the way back down to this little boy?

Kid Scoop Puzzler

Unscramble each of the mixed-up words.

When should I wash my hands?

- after playing DISTOUE
- after using the STROMORE
- before eating or KONCOGI
- after petting SANIMLA
- before and after visiting a sick DRFNEI
- after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
- after taking out the RATHS

Standards Link: Reading Comprehension: Follow simple written directions.

Let's Talk: With your family, discuss things you can do to be healthier in 2020. Come up with a plan to eat healthier foods, get more exercise and spend fun time together!

Double Double Word Search

Find the words in the puzzle. How many of them can you find on this page?

E	W	H	E	E	N	L	E	G	I
S	H	T	C	F	E	T	T	N	L
I	S	E	N	V	A	S	I	I	P
C	A	W	A	R	I	S	M	V	R
R	W	R	D	L	N	I	E	O	E
E	T	Y	T	S	T	O	R	M	T
X	H	W	E	A	T	H	E	R	E
E	T	H	I	R	S	T	Y	E	N
R	E	D	N	I	M	E	R	R	D

Standards Link: Letter sequencing, Recognized identical words. Skim and scan reading. Recall spelling patterns.

FROM THE Kid Scoop LESSON LIBRARY

Healthy Feels Good!
Everyone feels better when they eat right, exercise and get plenty of rest. Look through the newspaper for things that are good for your body. Choose three or more that appeal to you.

Standards Link: Health: Students recognize and practice positive health behaviors.

Write On!

Write Words Wonderfully
Write a sentence in which most, or all of the words start with the same letter.

Kid Scoop FIT & FUN

Hand Exercises
Now that your hands are nice and clean, they could use a little exercise. Try these:

Stretch & Squeeze
Spread your fingers out as far as possible. Feel that s-t-r-e-t-c-h? Now squeeze them into two tight fists. Repeat 10 times.

The Big Reach
Stand with your feet slightly apart. Reach your hands up, up, UP as high as you can. Now bend and reach for your toes. Repeat 10 times.

Helicopter Hands
Extend your arms straight out, level with your shoulders. Slowly start twirling your arms in a circular motion. Spin them faster and faster for 60 seconds.

Pat on the Back
Hold your hands out in front of you. Reach over your shoulders and pat your back for 30 seconds. Cross your arms and try again. Do this for 30 seconds. You deserve a pat on the back!

Standards Link: Physical Education: Use a variety of basic and advanced movement forms.

The Kid Scoop book for puzzle lovers!
A great gift idea! Order from your local bookstore, Target.com, BarnesandNoble.com or Amazon.com today!