Exchanging ideas and culture

By Angel Carpenter Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY - Google Translate has been a useful computer tool for some local families hosting Chinese students for the past three weeks.

It's helped 11 students, ages 15 to 17, and two teachers from Shiquan in Shaanxi Province, China, communicate with their host families in the John Day area.

The students have been busy, taking a few lessons in Spanish, art and welding at Grant Union Junior-Senior High School; horseback riding at the Southworth Ranch in Seneca; jet boating on the Snake River; touring Eastern Oregon University (EOU) in La Grande; and visiting the water park in Boise.

Grant School District No. 3 Superintendent Curt Shelley, assisting the visitors, said the students and teachers are enjoying their stay

Speaking of the students, he said, "They're loving the freedom to make individual choices, and they're very polite, respectful and appreciative - there are a lot of people vested in these kids (parents and grandparents) and backing this experience."



Chen Yu Wang Sigi "Katty" "Mary" Favorite Favorite activity in activity China: TV and in China: computer Reading Favorite games activity in Favorite activity in America: America: Trampoline Chatting and sleeping (We have with our host many family activities here Favorite and feel tired.) American Favorite American Spaghetti Cultural food: Pizza difference Cultural difference you've noticed: In you've China, we like noticed: Americans to eat hot and flavorful food. pay more attention to There are hands-on more sweets here. Also practice people like (such as welding), cold water and we learn here - room temperature about things from a book. in China.

food:

Holliday Land & Livestock

Ken & Pat Holliday

Jennifer, Nate, Max & Oliver Ginzton

Nick and Kate Holliday

Ben, Chandra, Clyde & Silvie Holliday

Matt Curtis & Ryan Williams

Eleven students and two teachers are also staying with host families in Baker City with Baker School District Superintendent Mark Witty overseeing the group there. Witty preced-



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

The Chinese foreign exchange students gather outside Grant Union Junior-Senior High School in John Day last Wednesday. The group planned a trip to Jack Southworth's Seneca ranch for lunch and horse riding that day. See more photos at www.MyEagleNews.com.

ed Shelley as Grant School District superintendent.

They said the longterm goal is for Chinese students to attend Grant Union for the 2016-17 school year.

The hope is the students will go on to pass the Gaokao, China's national college entrance exam, and return to attend EOU, or another U.S. college of their choice.

Part of the envisioned plan includes some Grant Union students eventually visiting Shiquan for about two weeks.

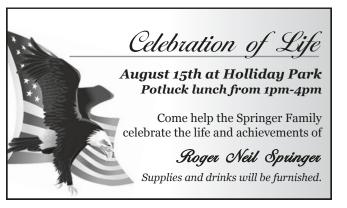
The idea for the foreign exchange program began when Witty participated in an administrator job-shadow exchange with Dong Cai'an, an elementary school principal from Shiquan.

Dong visited John Day for 10 days in January, and Witty spent 10 days in Chi-



Huang Jiale "Thompson" Favorite activity in China: Soccer and basketball Favorite activity in America: Hang out with others and visit with them Favorite American food: American food: Salad Cultural difference difference you've noticed: you've People line up noticed: Eating habits in places such - using forks as the water park (and are instead of chopsticks

na in March. While in China, Witty



had a close view of the students' rigorous schedules.

He estimates only 55 percent of Shiquan students make it to high school (for grades 10 through 12). The rest move on to jobs that don't require higher education

High school students begin their day at 7 a.m. for exercises together and have classes until noon. After a two-hour break, classes continue until 5 p.m. followed by a tutorial from 7 to 10 p.m.

"If they're a senior, they'll have study hall with teachers at the school on Saturday and all day on Sunday," Witty said.

Witty said he and Dong see wisdom in the planned exchange program for the opportunity it will give to all the students involved.

"Ultimately, it allows our students to get a picture over time," Witty said. "For the Chinese students, it's a good way to see how Americans actually live and an opportunity to practice English. We get a similar opportunity to be exposed to another culture and ultimately to recognize that we're very similar our hopes and dreams are similar.'

Witty said he and Prin-



"Summer'

Tang Yulun "Jerry' Favorite Favorite activity activity in China: in China: Basketball. Sports and computer reading dames Favorite activity in America: Basketball Favorite American food: Hamburgers and sandwiches Cultural difference vou've noticed: In China, the environment is more polluted, in America it's a good environment.

books Favorite activity in America: Going for walks Favorite American food: Spaghetti Cultural difference vou've noticed: Daily life in America is more relaxed. In China. we have much things to do every day.

more days before traveling to San Francisco to see the sights then fly home.

They will visit the Grant County Fair this week.

Susie and Jason Snyder, of John Day, have had their college-age children home this summer and are hosting three Chinese boys from the exchange program.

"We are having a ball with them," said Susie.

Their family recently invited friends Bill and Lori Wyllie and their two Chinese girls over for a spaghetti dinner.

"They were out playing hide-n-go-seek and redlight green-light," Susie said. "We sat out on the deck, and everybody had a great time; they're very energetic and open to trying new things."

The two families have made plans to hike Strawberry Mountain and visit Ritter Hot Springs together.

Susie said she's been learning some Chinese words for "please" and "thank you," as well as others.

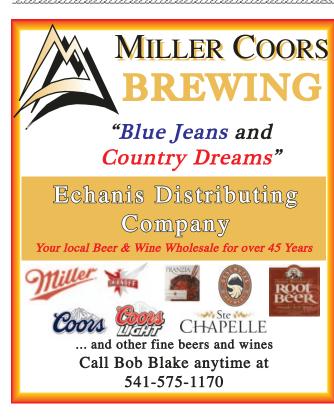
They've been verv gracious," she said. "You can tell when you said it wrong - they laugh, and we laugh right along with them."

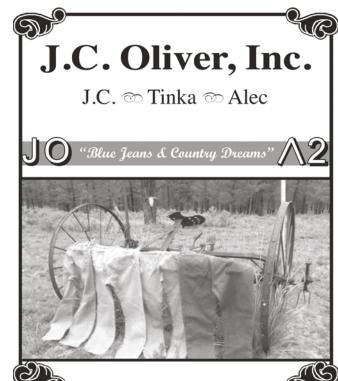


Soup

Cultural

polite)





cipal Dong developed a friendship and a trust and from there created the exchange program.

The Chinese students are in John Day for a few

> "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." - Helen Keller

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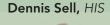
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