

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."



Wang Sigi "Katty"
Favorite activity in China: TV and computer games
Favorite activity in America: Chatting with our host family
Favorite American food: Spaghetti
Cultural difference you've noticed: In China, we like to eat hot and flavorful food. There are more sweets here. Also people like cold water here - room temperature in China.



Chen Yu "Mary"
Favorite activity in China: Reading
Favorite activity in America: Trampoline and sleeping (We have many activities here and feel tired.)
Favorite American food: Pizza
Cultural difference you've noticed: Americans pay more attention to hands-on practice (such as welding), and we learn about things from a book.



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.



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



Gao Anjie "Summer"
Favorite activity in China: Sports and reading books
Favorite activity in America: Going for walks
Favorite American food: Spaghetti
Cultural difference you've noticed: Daily life in America is more relaxed. In China, we have much things to do every day.

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 preceded Shelley as Grant School District superintendent.

They said the long-term 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 China.



Huang Bijie "Jessica"
Favorite activity in China: Walking, time with my parents
Favorite activity in America: Trampoline and shooting
Favorite American food: Soup
Cultural difference you've noticed: People line up in places such as the water park (and are polite)



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: Salad
Cultural difference you've noticed: Eating habits - using forks instead of chopsticks

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

The Chinese students are in John Day for a few

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 red-light 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 very gracious," she said. "You can tell when you said it wrong - they laugh, and we laugh right along with them."

Holliday Land & Livestock

Ken & Pat Holliday
Jennifer, Nate, Max & Oliver Ginzton
Nick and Kate Holliday
Ben, Chandra, Clyde & Silvie Holliday
Matt Curtis & Ryan Williams



Celebration of Life
August 15th at Holliday Park
Potluck lunch from 1pm-4pm

Come help the Springer Family celebrate the life and achievements of
Roger Neil Springer
Supplies and drinks will be furnished.

MILLER COORS BREWING
"Blue Jeans and Country Dreams"
Echanis Distributing Company
Your local Beer & Wine Wholesale for over 45 Years

... and other fine beers and wines
Call Bob Blake anytime at 541-575-1170

J.C. Oliver, Inc.
J.C. Tinka Alec
"Blue Jeans & Country Dreams" A2

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

There are endless benefits to becoming a volunteer. Whether you can donate hours or minutes, you are valued. Join us on August 20th at 5:30 pm at The Outpost in John Day to learn how your special skills can help Grant-Harney County CASA.

GRANT-HARNEY COUNTY CASA

PAINT RECYCLING MADE easy

Do you know where to recycle your paint?
There are now more than 150 PaintCare sites in Oregon where households and businesses can recycle unwanted paint, stain and varnish all year-round, including this site in John Day:

JOHN DAY TRUE VALUE
161 E Main St
(541) 575-0632

TO FIND OTHER DROP-OFF LOCATIONS:
www.paintcare.org
(855) 724-6809

All PaintCare sites accept up to 5 gallons per visit. (Some take more.) Please call ahead to confirm business hours and ask if they can accept the type and amount of paint you would like to recycle. Leaking, unlabeled and empty containers are not accepted.

Hearing Clinic

Schedule an appointment today
(541) 382-3100

Thursday, August 13th • 10:00 am - 4:00 pm
Serving all of your hearing care needs:

- Hearing Evaluations and Screenings
- Hearing Aid Sales
- Hearing Aid Service and Repairs
- Tinnitus Counseling
- Custom Hearing Protection

Blue Mountain Hospital
Visiting Specialists Plaza
135 Ford Road, John Day, OR 97845

central oregon
HEARING AID CENTER
www.centraloregonhearingaids.com

Dennis Sell, HIS

- The very latest hearing aid technology
- Affordable pricing with financing options
- Backed by our commitment to serve the needs of our patients and the community