

Harbin Last Week Summary

By August 11th, 2011

The students spent the week of August 7th in Harbin, which was the last week in Harbin; they are enjoying much of the learning of Chinese language and the culture of the area. This also was the busiest week: they have had to prepare and take the final test. It was time to be ready to say good bye to their host family, school and the city. They had already made many new friends in Harbin and introduced their new friends to American culture as they enjoyed the culture of the area.

While throughout the mornings, classes continued to expand the students' linguistic skills, both spoken and written, the afternoons were spent engaging in activities which served to expand their understanding of regional culture

We were very honored to be hosted by the city of Harbin and Heilongjiang Province

That evening (Monday) and the next evening, the students dined with officials of the City of Harbin and Heilongjiang Province at a traditional local restaurant with “Hot pot” and “Roast Meat”. The officials welcomed us to Harbin and encouraged more cooperation between Heilongjiang Province, the CLCCM and the American Council in the future. All students described their desire to continue to study Chinese, and their desire to support contributions to all areas between the two countries.



Afternoon Activities....

Traditional Chinese painting classes were offered, taught in Chinese by invited school faculty who were very skilled in their arts. The style of brush painting employed was challenging, but with the assistance of Chinese students, the American students were able to better understand both the form of the work and it's meaning.



One of CLCCM/NSLI-Y in local news-“Harbin Daily news”—“I have a home in the Ice City...”

http://61.167.35.147/hb/html/2011-08/07/content_6085647.htm

The visits during this week included the Kong Temple, (孔庙) an important Confucian historical site, beautifully preserved for public use. The area was, as the students have discovered is often the case in China, a mix of residential and commercial spaces surrounding an ancient site. In fact, 1 student's host family home was very close by and she had visited the site with them. all reassembled to visit an active Buddhist Temple and spoke to the Monks about their beliefs and the significance of the site. We were told that Buddhists believe all religions are connected, and we were invited to visit the site's Temples and worship as we choose.



The students then returned to the homes of their host families and prepared for a very emotional last night in Harbin before leaving for our next destination.

The last day in Harbin...

On the final day (Thursday, August 11, 2011) in Harbin, tears flowed as the students prepared for saying goodbye, amidst many invitations to return. As a special surprise, it was freshman orientation day at the High School and many Chinese students greeted the American students warmly, each trying the others' language. It was very evident to all, I am sure, that in many ways, High School students are alike, irrespective of their home country.

During the closing ceremony, Jing Zhang, Director of CLCCM/NSLI-Y gave the 20 books collected from each of our students as gift to the school; the excellent volunteer students representing all students of No.1 high school accepted the gift. The dean of the Foreign Language Department, Mr. Jin Guobai thanked CLCCM/NSLI-Y very much for this and said this will be wonderful resource to the school because students will have the opportunity to read original English books through their English study program by borrowing these books.



Everyone agreed that the time had gone by so quickly; the principal of the school similarly saying that he felt that we had just arrived here the day before. In the morning after a session of reviewing, the students received a final test as a summary of their three-weeks' study. The grades showed that they gained significantly in both language and culture. That afternoon, the school hosted a closing ceremony with both American and Chinese volunteer students, all teachers and most of the host families in attendance. Our students performed several Chinese programs and

played Chinese games with all students involved. It took a long time to say goodbye. Many students (on both sides) and Chinese parents were crying; after three weeks they loved each other like family. Some of our students said this was the longest time they had ever taken to say "good bye" in their lives'. Before we left for the airport, the school invited all of us to a dumpling restaurant and we all enjoyed the dumplings there; according to Chinese culture this indicates that the hosts wish their guests a safe trip.



Travel to Xi'an and Evaluation of Phase I, Harbin stay...

The flight to Xi'an was delayed and during that time the students worked on the evaluation of the first phase of the trip, the visit to Harbin. Several topics came out in discussion which will be shared with Kunming faculty to help them prepare for our arrival and improve the program content in advance.

"...We all are missing the teachers, volunteers and the host families. We love Harbin."

After a busy and sad good-bye from Harbin, we arrived in Xi'an early this morning much later than we had planned. All students cannot wait to see everything in the city..."

CLCCM Team in China