



Official Newsletter of Projects Abroad



CHINA

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Xin 新 Nian 年 Kuai 快 Le 乐! (Happy New Year) and welcome to the February 2013 issue of our newsletter!

The weather has been insane here in Shanghai this last month. February started off with a couple of days of temperatures in the high 14's. After wearing spring clothes for an afternoon, the weather quickly soured. Since then it's been raining non-stop.



Even though the weather is bad, it's been a great month from the social aspect with lots going on. Not least because of the arrival of the Chinese New Year; this year will be the year of the snake. The actual New Year's Day took place on the 9th February, but the whole week (and even the week that follows) tends to be considered festive and there has been a great atmosphere about the city of Shanghai.

I am so glad that we have lots of great stories to share with you in this issue: Emily Pow from Australia experiences at the Dental Project in Ruijin Hospital and Teaching Project at Zi Luo Lan School, and Gregory Brown also from the Australia recounts his experience at his Journalism placement at China Business Focus. Moreover, we have a wonderful story from Machteld van Werven from the Netherlands about her Law Project in Chengdu.

We hope their experiences will provide you with a bit of the variety of projects available here in Shanghai and Chengdu, and we sincerely hope these stories will encourage people to join us here too! Meanwhile, if you are interested in what's going on here, you can always check out our Facebook Group, "Projects Abroad China – The Official Group" for more photos or stories; or email any queries and comments to china@projects-abroad.org

If you would love to share your story and experience in China, you can also get in touch with me at suzieli@projects-abroad.org

Hope you have a lovely month and happy Chinese New Year!

Suzie Li
Information Manager

VOLUNTEER'S STORY

A Dutch volunteer Machteld van Werven's time as a Law intern in Chengdu

People always ask, "Why China?" Honestly, I do not know why I chose to do an internship of three months in a law firm in Chengdu, China. But looking back on the past few months, I am really glad that I have done this, because I have had an amazing time with the other volunteers and a wonderful experience at the law firm. I would definitely recommend everyone to do a volunteer project in China. For me, as a Dutch girl, everything in China is different from Europe. The food, the people, the language, the habits, the humour, the way of life and I could go on and on... And this is what makes China exciting. I have met a lot of nice people, and not only foreigners! I have tried food I would normally not eat in the Netherlands, like rabbit head, duck stomach and insects. And I have made a brave attempt to learn some Chinese.

At the law firm I have been working on a few cases. Drafting contracts, modifying contracts and doing research were some of the day-to-day activities. But after work, there were also the occasional KTV moments, the housewarming parties of colleagues



or the dinners with everyone. This has turned my three months into a great time! I did not only have the chance to experience the atmosphere at a law firm in Chengdu, but I have also had a lot of fun during the past three months. Hopefully I will have the chance to come back to Chengdu in the near future.

VOLUNTEER'S STORY

An Australian volunteer Gregory Brown on his Journalism Placement at China Business Focus Magazine:



Well what can I say about my one month in Shanghai?

My placement was a journalism internship at the business magazine China Business Focus (CBF). It has a Chinese language version for the local market as well as an English version that is largely aimed at an Australian audience.

Basically, it was the perfect way to gain practical experience. From start to finish, I almost felt like another journalist at the company. On my first day my supervisor gave me about five magazines to read to get a vibe of what sort of stories CBF does. The next day we talked a bit about the magazine and then I was immediately given two stories to write. I then suggested another story and he liked the idea so I was straight to work on that as well! My workload was basically what I could handle, so they were always happy to hear about ideas for stories that I could contribute. Although only a few people at CBF spoke English, everyone was helpful and friendly, and my supervisor was happy to help with any queries I had.

The most difficult thing about the internship

was getting interviews. I speak no Mandarin so I couldn't just pick up the phone and call someone to get a quick comment. As a result, the majority of my interviews were written responses to emailed questions. This takes time and persistence because often experts are reluctant to spend a long time writing responses. For people who are considering doing a journalism internship, when in pursuit of emailed responses I suggest you: write specific questions in the email; tell them you have a deadline and need the responses in two days; tell them why it is important that that particular person provides a comment to the story. And then just send emails to as many suitable people as you can find.

As for the city of Shanghai: strap yourself in! With 25 million people, Shanghai's hustle and bustle is the fuel that makes it one of the most exciting cities in the world. For me, Shanghai really comes alive at nighttime. The city has endless buildings that display Vegas-esque lighting, which is most breathtaking when viewing the business centre from the opposite side of the river. Restaurants are great. Obviously the traditional Chinese food is good but Shanghai's cosmopolitan nature comes out with array international restaurants, such as Thai, Japanese, Italian, Vietnamese and the rest. And like every great city, there are plenty of good places to go for a few drinks (and then a few more). Although I would say Shanghai is more of a vibe city than a sightseeing one, there are still plenty of photo ops. Highlights for me were: the observatory floor (level 100!) of the World Financial Centre; Jing'an Temple; and Yuyuan Gardens.

FEATURE

La Trobe University student uses her holiday to make her mark at Dental Project in China



Emily Pow, a 20-year-old Bachelor of Health Sciences in Dentistry/Master of Dentistry student from La Trobe University in Australia, decided to take time out during her holiday to volunteer. She found out that Projects Abroad offered the program that she was seeking and decided to travel to China for one month to volunteer at their Dentistry Project.

She had lived in China for two years with her family when she was a child, and she was disposed to witness changes in the Shanghai. Moreover, it was also a great opportunity for her to learn Mandarin, as she thinks the language could provide an enormous help to her if she meets Chinese patients in her future career.

Emily worked in the Dentistry department of a public hospital

which has more than 3000 staff. "My daily tasks were following my supervisor and observing surgeries, as well as joining in on the department



Emily Pow (right) with her supervisor (left)

meetings. Once the director of the Dentistry department took me to visit several private dental clinics, it was a really good opportunity for me," Emily said. "I saw different methods of treatment in China, some of them are different from what we do in Australia."

She also mentions the whirl of dentists' work, "Compared with the patients, the number of doctors is much less. Thus, every doctor needs to treat more than 30 patients per day, which is doubled compared with Australia." In order to help her supervisor work more efficiently and make patients feel more comfortable during the

treatment, Emily helped to set up operating tables as well as provided assistance during surgeries.

Emily went above and beyond her volunteering duties by providing a dental knowledge workshop for the kids at Zi Luo Lan School. Emily organised some in-class activities for the workshop to make it informative as well as interesting. "I hoped that the kids would have fun while learning how to protect their teeth, and could convey this knowledge to their friends, as well as family."



Emily with students in Zi Luo Lan school

While in Shanghai, her life was very busy, "I worked from 8:00am to 5:00pm and then had Mandarin class after," Emily said. However, she did have spare time to explore the city and travel around Shanghai with her roommate. "My roommates were really nice and we planned to spend my last weekend in Hangzhou after my placement finished!"

Emily enjoyed exploring and experiencing the culture while she was in China, even picking up a favourite food, "I love all kinds of dumplings! The food here is amazing. I never tasted anything bad while in China."



Emily with students in Zi Luo Lan school

Emily encourages people who are going to volunteer in future, "Just be open to everything and to experience and enjoy the cultural differences."

PHOTO PAGE



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SOCIAL CALENDAR

