

LINKING US AND CHINESE SCHOOLS THE CHINA SCHOOL PROJECT

By Paul Hurteau

For US K–12 classrooms studying China, the China School Project provides a unique opportunity to explore the Middle Kingdom and interact directly with students who live there—without leaving the classroom. The project links partner classes in the US and China through curriculum-based online travel; e-mail Q&A exchanges; physical exchanges of student artwork and music; and Study Partnerships, which culminate in exchanges of student-made picture books or videos. The mission: to build cross-cultural understanding and friendship through the arts and technology in a curriculum-based format.

To accomplish this, Project Director Paul Hurteau (from the US) and Project Coordinator Cai Li (from China) travel to various regions of China to visit participating schools and places of interest, such as the Great Wall, the Forbidden City, and the site of the Terra Cotta Warriors. Along the way, they create E-Travel Logs, which simulate their travels, and a series of curriculum-based, password-protected Web adventures featuring Chinese students. Through these, participating US classes travel to China electronically and meet the students they are interacting with. Meanwhile, a network of teachers and WorldTeach volunteers teaching in participating schools in China work with Chinese students to complete project exchanges. Project Facilitator Robin Ambrosino manages the US office, acting as a liaison between the traveling project team and participating US teachers and coordinating project mailings. In 2003, despite being limited by the SARS outbreak, the China School Project linked over fifty US and Chinese classrooms, involving schools in Shanghai, Dali, Lijiang, and Yantai. In 2004, thanks to a \$3,000 grant from the Rotary Club of Shanghai, the project team also completed a Silk Road swing, visiting Dunhuang, Xiahe, Sangke, Lanzhou, Xi'an, Beijing, and Linxia. Another seventy US and Chinese classrooms participated. With a Challenge Grant from the Freeman Foundation, available in the fall of 2005, the project team hopes to expand the project significantly and involve hundreds more US and Chinese classrooms over the next two years.

Detailed project information is available online at www.ccproject.org. An online registration form (which also summarizes participation options) is at www.ccproject.org/register.html. Inquiries may be sent via e-mail to robin@ccproject.org. Upon registration, participating classes receive detailed project guidelines, a project timetable, and a username and password for accessing the online resources and an online Classroom Package for teachers.

The China School Project is part of the Creative Connections Project, which also includes the Latin America School Project and the Africa School Project. Since 1999, the Creative Connections Project has linked over 1,200 classrooms from forty US states and ten countries. The Creative Connections Project is a sponsored project

of the non-profit New York Foundation for the Arts, funded by registration fees and a small grant from The Avery Arts Foundation, and supported by WorldTeach, Inc. of the Harvard Center for International Development. The China School Project also receives funding support from the Shanghai Rotary Club and the Freeman Foundation. ■

Editor's Note: Readers should be aware that participation in the China Project involves modest charges that vary with participation level.

PAUL HURTEAU is a former New York State High School English Teacher and the Director of the Creative Connections Project. He has taught English in Kenya and the Ecuadorian Amazon Rain Forest and has worked in schools in the Amazon, Namibia, China, the Galapagos Islands, and the Canadian Arctic to complete project exchanges with US partner schools. When in the US, he conducts Arts in Education residencies throughout New York State.

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