

# Pudong CampusTALK Pudong CampusTALK

## CHINA, ALIVE! Beijing, Tianamen Square and the Great Wall

By Crystal Lee, Grade 7

This year, Grade 7 students had the opportunity to experience one week in Beijing, a bustling city overflowing with millenniums of incredible Chinese history and culture. We admired the beautiful landscape of the Great Wall, gazed upon the golden roofs and magnificent structure of the Forbidden City, searched the historical recesses of Tiananmen Square, and explored a variety of other amazing activities handpicked by our teachers.

The city thrilled us with a martial arts performance, and the following days only yielded an even more exciting schedule. Passing priceless clock-towers and statues, we studied Tiananmen Square with curious eyes, and we pondered on its extensive history, the area immense for the age in which it was built.

The Forbidden City was an overwhelming presence as an unbelievably vast complex, leaving us in awe at its intricate designs and astounding artifacts; the buildings were left intact along with much of its irreplaceable regal history.

The Great Wall of China was complete with underground chambers and secret in-dents, where, long ago, an archer would curl or a watchman ready his torch. We were amazed with the scenery via peak on the Great Wall, and forgot our weariness from climbing as a soft mist settled over the horizon; the majestic mountains commanded our attention, the sky tinted a soothing blue. We completed the hike feeling exhausted, but refreshed.

China, Alive! has been an amazing and exciting journey with an exhilarating itinerary. Not only were we able to immerse ourselves into a city incredibly rich with culture and valuable historical significance, we were also able to collect a brilliant memory full of enjoyment as a remarkable trip not to be forgotten.



## CHINA, ALIVE! Guilin and Yangshuo: Students harvest greens, visit a school, and go to Yuzi Paradise Art Park

By Eli Weiss, Trip Leader, Grade 8 Science Teacher

As usual, the 8th grade trip to Guilin and Yangshuo was a huge success. A week later students are still talking about how great of a trip it was.

This year we decided to balance the adventure activities that are always a great experience with some rich cultural experiences. New additions to this year's trip included visiting the Yuzi Paradise art park outside of Guilin, interacting with a local farming family and harvesting greens that students later learned how to cook, a tour of a small village, and an extremely successful first visit to a local school outside of Yangshuo.

Eighth grader students prepared in advance for the school visit by planning activities, writing letters and packing bags of supplies for the students. We visited the school in two groups and after both days students and staff were glowing from the experience. After formal greetings upon arrival at the school, our students formed groups with the local students. In these groups students had a chance to talk with each other and our students led a variety of interactive games. It was amazing to see these students interacting with each other and it seemed that all of the students lost track of time during these activities.



The second component of the school visit was service-oriented. In the last hour at the school our students were involved in three meaningful activities to give needed supplies to the school. One activity was the donation and assembly of six computers and monitors that had been donated by SAS staff and parents.

The second service activity was the building of desks and chairs for a full classroom at the school. Our students worked hard to assemble these items and they will be a great improvement in contrast with the worn wood benches that currently are used throughout the school. Our goal is to outfit at least one new classroom each year.

In the final service activity students painted a wall and created a colorful mural to decorate the school yard and show their friendship with the students in Yangshuo.

Both the funds for the desks, chairs, and the paint were built into the cost for the trip and these activities allowed our students the opportunity to give to a school that has a fraction of the resources of SAS. This year's 8th grade trip was a fantastic opportunity for both students and staff to learn and grow together outside of the normal routine and the new additions to the program made it even more meaningful.

**Top:** Grant Gustafson and Micky Wong visit with school children; **Bottom:** Students gather for a photo op on the Great Wall.