

MCF

WINTER
2018
VOL 2//
SEMESTERLY
NEWSLETTER

J

U

journeys

INSPIRE AND BE INSPIRED

N

Y

COPYRIGHT © MCF CHINA 2018. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

journeys

INSPIRE AND BE INSPIRED



FOUNDER'S MESSAGE

As we are nearing the end of our first semester, it gives me great pleasure to say that MCF has already started focusing on and organising for the coming semester. As always, there are a number of organisations/sponsors that I would like to especially mention for their commitment and support.

MCF has worked closely with Beijing City International School for the last 7 years in the organising of their Christmas Bazaar and also the Hilton Hotel Beijing for the past two years. In both cases, this has been a great partnership and a huge success! Last semester, MCF provided health checkups for more than 480 children. This semester, MCF is targeting over 500 children to receive checkups. My gratitude goes also to BSB Sanlitun and Shunyi for their continued support as well as to all the volunteers and teachers who have contributed their valuable time to work with us this last semester. We, as MCF, are on a continuous journey aiming at providing opportunities and encouragement to underprivileged children.

As always, there are a number of other organizations and individuals not mentioned here who have given generously to help MCF achieve its goal. My apologies for not listing you here by name, but your participation in the Foundation's work is nonetheless a major factor in what MCF has achieved, and it goes without saying that my appreciation to you all for your generosity is second to none.

I hope you All have a wonderful 2019!

Helen Boyle



Helen Boyle
Director and Founder

SEMESTER STORIES

GETTING CREATIVE WITH BEIJING BUDDIES

BY ALEJANDRO SOBRERA

Every Saturday morning MCF has been hosting Creative Kids, a class designed to stimulate the children's artistic curiosities and get them interested in creating new things. These children will typically arrive to the school around 10 in the morning excited for the morning's activities. Volunteers will review English vocabulary and sing English songs with the children to get them to practice their speaking abilities. Afterwards the kids are instructed on how to do a craft where they are highly encouraged to add their own creative twist and make it on their own. The children love being able to put things together and add their own personal touches.

One week for example, we made tigers out of construction paper, but one student decided to make a cat while another decided to make a train! The crafts we make range from putting together a pinwheel out of string and cardboard to creating a Christmas tree from construction paper and pipe cleaners. The average age of the students in this class is five years old, so sessions can get quite loud and difficult to handle. However, our volunteers come every morning with bright enthusiasm and big smiles, ready to take on the day's challenges. Personally, working alongside MCF volunteers showed me not only how dedicated they were to their work, but also the passion that drives them to reach out towards the community. Teaching the children new skills was a very enjoyable experience that I looked forward to every week.

The volunteers will typically join the children in making the crafts, and some even seem to have more fun than the children. For their part, the students love being able to put things together and add their own personal touches. Ultimately our goal with these sessions is to give students a chance to express their creativity through their own unique creations.



MCF SEMESTER IN REVIEW



MORE THAN 80
INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERS



10 DIFFERENT
SUBJECTS TAUGHT



480 HEALTHCHECKS
COMPLETED



WORKING WITH
14 SCHOOLS IN
BEIJING AND THE
SURROUNDING AREA



4000 HEALTHCHECKS
COMPLETED TO DATE

A SEMESTER WITH FAN FAN

BY PAOLA CALAMITA

I am Paola, a young graduate from Italy, who moved to Beijing in order to improve my Chinese and also teach English to kids. I knew that I also wanted to intern or volunteer at an NGO during my time in Beijing, as I always wanted to know more about how non-profit organisations work in China. I joined MCF as it was an opportunity for me to grow both professionally and humanly in an NGO whose values aligned with my own. During my Summer internship with MCF, I developed a new infant education curriculum which would then be used at the beginning of the Winter semester. Thanks to the summer activity sessions, I also had the opportunity to work closely with the children.

I was very doubtful of myself when Lorna first asked me if I would be willing to teach English to Fan Fan, as I did not have any kind of experience with children diagnosed with cerebral palsy. However, with Lorna's encouragement, I decided to step out of my comfort zone and try my best to teach Fan Fan. My sessions with Fan Fan started in September and took place once a week. Our English lessons were held in the horse stable where Fan Fan has his riding lessons. These lessons are thanks to the help of another NGO called Horses Offering People Enrichment (HOPE), which helps Fan Fan to improve his physical condition and movement with very good results.



Though doubtful of my abilities to provide for him at first, Fan Fan's smile, willpower and his fortitude were a source of inspiration for me, making me feel comfortable and confident with the situation. During our English lessons, I used different materials in order to keep Fan Fan curious and focused. Each time I prepared flashcards, games and songs; he particularly loved the plastic hammer that he had to use in order to guess the right answer by hitting the correct flashcard. We would conclude lessons by having lunch together with other volunteers from HOPE and Fan Fan's family, enjoying the amazing food that Fan Fan's dad would prepare for us. To him we were neither teachers nor volunteers, we were his friends, and for a child of Fan Fan's age it is important to feel included.

Finally, I think that Fan Fan benefited from these lessons not only because he had the opportunity to learn and understand a new and important language, but also because these kinds of activities were useful to stimulate his brain and logical thinking skills.

I'm back in Italy now but remember my time with Fan Fan and MCF with fondness and I hope to return one day and catch up with how the organisation is doing as well as what progress Fan Fan, an amazing little boy, has made.

MCF & BCIS 2018 CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

BY CHAD KRESSER

For the 9th straight holiday season, MCF teamed up with Beijing City International School and other generous sponsors to put on its annual Christmas Bazaar to ring in the season of giving.

2000 visitors had over 80 vendors, activities and games to choose from as they made their way around the bazaar. MCF sponsors BlueStar AMG, Globalcare and TopGlobal IT ran activities and gave out prizes, while long term supporter David Evans, from the Royal Society of Chemistry, ran the ever popular Fun With Science stand and our volunteers ran games and activities including Spin the Wheel and Creative Kids, which gave children a chance to create their own Christmas ornament.

The raffle was a big part of our fundraising total as visitors bought tickets for their favourite prizes, including popular baskets such as Debauchery, which featured vouchers and swag from popular eateries and bars including Jing A, The Local and Paddy O'Shea's. Boxing Cat Brewery offered a bucket of prizes that was literally overflowing with merch and vouchers, but there were prizes for all the family too with giant boxes of lego and Ganges vouchers as well as TRB Hutong vouchers, Hutong cooking classes, Parwaaz chutney and more for the foodies out there!

On top of all this we had some great performances on the day, not least from our MCF students who performed Christmas Carols under the watchful eye of the BCIS-MCF Kids' Club who have been teaching them every Saturday and their hard work really paid off. Well done to both sets of students!

The MCF & BCIS Christmas Bazaar is always a fun event for us and we were so pleased to see so many of our long term sponsors, vendors, supporters and friends attend the event and do what they could to make it so special. A final mention goes to our hardworking volunteers who helped plan, organise and run the event and without whom it could not have happened.

Thanks in part to the outpouring of generosity from the Beijing community, this year's event will be used directly to providing healthcare and educational services to the city's disadvantaged children. We'd like to thank the Beijing community and our sponsors for truly embracing what this time of year is all about. Merry Christmas and happy holidays from MCF!



Special shoutout to our Christmas Bazaar sponsors!



MCF TEACHER TRAINING GETS UNDERWAY

BY LORNA SNUGGS

MCF has always taken its education programmes seriously, and this is shown every week as we teach over 450 students a range of subjects in fun and engaging lessons at nine schools across Beijing. In MCF English we teach communicative English focusing on students' speaking and listening skills, while in our Kids' Club classes, international school students teach a wide range of subjects including music, art, science and dance.

Our aim in these classes is to give MCF students a chance to improve vital skills, learn new things and get a better sense of what they can do in order to give them a more comprehensive education, after all, subject knowledge isn't all education is for.

Pulling this together week after week, semester after semester, however, is a big task and our session coordinators, teachers and Kids' Clubs work hard to make their classes better. Every week, Marc Vanderjack, MCF's Curriculum Developer, and myself review lesson plans, give tips to teachers and offer feedback to around 50 teachers to support and improve the classes on offer to our students.

Until recently though, there was one key component missing and that was the ability to offer proper training to all our teachers in order to improve their classroom experience and, consequently, that of our students. This Autumn, however, has seen the start of two training programmes that have already been beneficial to our hard working volunteer teachers.

In November, Marc started training sessions for our MCF Kids' Clubs at both Beijing World Youth Academy (BWYA), the very students he oversees at an MCF school every Saturday morning, and the Canadian School (CISB). Both sets of students came in to school on a day off in order to complete the training, and this just goes to show how committed they are to their volunteer work.

In the training sessions Marc focused on lesson planning to better equip them with the foundational skills necessary to create a good lesson. This combined with his week by week feedback has seen a vast improvement in their lessons and their confidence.



At about the same time, MCF recruited a new volunteer who just happened to be a professional teacher trainer! Jonathan started with us in November and very quickly offered to train our MCF volunteers in basic English language teaching techniques. The training took place at the Hilton (thank you, Hilton!) and around 20 volunteers gathered for a two hour training session that covered topics including creating an English language environment, with Jonathan teaching our volunteers some Spanish in the process.

January and the new semester will see a continuation of both training programmes and my thanks goes to Marc and Jonathan for their expertise, time and hard work, as well as our volunteers for giving up their time to help make MCF's education programmes better and better.



INTERN SPOTLIGHT BY AMY CHAN

It takes a lot of dedication to be an intern, especially an MCF one. Being an intern not only means attending events, managing merchandise booths, and being part of teaching sessions, it includes so much more behind the scenes work. As a former intern myself, I have had my fair share of balancing commitments while putting my best work towards MCF. We hope that this new section in our newsletter will give readers a glimpse about MCF intern life as well as encourage future interns to join us at MCF! Read below about MCF intern life through the eyes of Tim and Alejandro, our Winter semester interns!



TIM LU

Prior to his internship with MCF, Tim was an active events volunteer for nine months! Learning about MCF through other volunteers, he was inspired by the mission MCF had towards enriching the lives of disadvantaged children in Beijing. Not long after volunteering, it was Tim who approached Lorna and discussed the opportunity to take up an internship at MCF! It is definitely not easy studying law and working at the same time, but Tim was able to contribute tremendously towards MCF through his work of translating MCF media files from English to Chinese. Apart from this, Tim also frequently helped out at weekend events where he attended bazaars, ran MCF stalls, and also sold MCF merchandise as a way to raise money for the organisation. Working at MCF gave him the opportunity to take a bit of time off from school work and meet new people. Of the things Tim will miss when his internship comes to an end, it would definitely be the opportunity to meet people of different countries and cultures. Thank you, Tim, for your hard work with us throughout the semester! We hope you had a fulfilling internship at MCF.

ALEJANDRO SOBRERA

Alejandro joined the MCF Intern team prior to the beginning of the Autumn Semester. He is currently on a year-long study abroad program with Peking University. Hailing from California, moving to Beijing was an experience that he knew would give him some of the most memorable experiences of his life. It was MCF's mission to support disadvantaged children that attracted Alejandro to take up an internship with MCF. As an intern, he helped out greatly in developing a new range of MCF merchandise as well as attending Saturday morning teaching sessions and helping Lorna make coffee! Attending Saturday morning sessions allowed Alejandro to learn more about how MCF makes an impact towards the community. Being able to see the behind the scenes of MCF and how they are able to impact different parts of Beijing is something that Alejandro cherishes greatly from his time with us. Although he will be leaving us at the end of the semester, we are grateful to have had him as part of our team! We hope the rest of your time in Beijing will be as fun and exciting!



EVENTS VOLUNTEER OF THE SEMESTER

Volunteer of the Semester is our section where we celebrate our tireless and committed volunteers who take their passion to a different level. We welcome everyone to nominate a volunteer by emailing Lorna at lorna@mcfchina.org.

GET TO KNOW CHAD KRESSER

Chad is a man from a small town in America with a big heart towards serving our community here in Beijing! He has been working in Asia for the past eight years and currently going into his ninth! Chad has been one of our long-serving volunteers and has also supported MCF through many of our events! Find out why he loves working with MCF below.

What/who inspired you to join the Migrant Children's Foundation? And what's your volunteering task?

When I lived in the US, volunteering in the community was always a part of my life that gave me a great deal of satisfaction. For the first 4-5 years I lived in Beijing I found myself working long hours and not really engaging in the community that I was living, so I reached out to a friend who worked at The Beijinger and she introduced me to MCF and all the good work it's been doing. For the last couple years I mainly help secure sponsors for some of the larger MCF events (as well as do whatever Lorna tells me to do on the event day).

How does volunteering complement your life in Beijing? What did your friends say after knowing you were volunteering with MCF?

Especially in a city like Beijing, it's easy to look around you and be tempted into thinking that you don't have enough. Not enough success, money, or positions. That someone else just next door has it better. For me volunteering lends perspective to how fortunate I am. I don't talk about volunteering too often to my friends, but when I do they're always supportive and often ask to learn more.



Chad hosting this year's Christmas Bazaar

EVENTS VOLUNTEER OF THE SEMESTER (CONT.)

So how did you manage your time? And how did volunteering at MCF change your view of Beijing/China?

The work I do for MCF tends to be focused around seasonal events, so there's a natural ebb and flow. During the week work occupies most of my time, so weekends tend to offer more time for MCF activities. I think MCF gave me a greater understanding and appreciation for some of the social issues that are facing such a large country (in terms of population) going through modernization.

What are the best memories you've had with MCF so far?

Most recently I helped out with the MCF BCIS Christmas Bazaar. At the event we had all kinds of children performing, some sang Christmas songs, but others performed Taekwondo. Indian curry was served alongside a vendor selling hot chocolate. I loved that the event brought people from all walks of life together.

If you have something to tell an aspiring volunteer, what would it be?

I think aspiring volunteers need to keep in mind that small acts of kindness and contributions of time can have huge impacts to peoples' lives. It's easy to look at the problems of the world and be overwhelmed, but the reality is that small actions can have big impacts.



Chad hosting the 2017 BCIS Christmas Bazaar!

EDUCATION VOLUNTEER OF THE SEMESTER

MEET LAURA GRANT

Originally from South London, Laura moved to Beijing three years ago after being posted by the British Embassy. Laura has a passion towards teaching the children and we are grateful to be working alongside her. Read more about what she does below!

What/who inspired you to join the Migrant Children's Foundation? What's your volunteering task?

The UK has an engrained culture of volunteering. It's part of our national fabric as typified by the London 2012 Games Makers. One of the first things I did when I arrived in Beijing was to research volunteering opportunities. MCF jumped out as it offered an opportunity for me to deploy my existing skill set in a setting where I can make a direct impact on children's education. I've mainly been teaching English. I also spent 6 weeks coaching some students for a public dance performance; having fun but also building confidence and acquiring performance skills.

So how did you manage your time? And how did volunteering at MCF change your view of Beijing/China?

It's been really easy to manage my time; I just have to remember to set my alarm to get up early on a Saturday morning. All the lesson materials are prepared in advance so as long as I have read the lesson plan, I can focus on giving my all in the classroom.

Through MCF, I've seen a completely different side to Beijing which has increased my understanding of contemporary Chinese society. It is one thing to read articles about sociological trends but quite another to gain direct experience of working with individuals in migrant communities over a sustained period of time. Volunteering with MCF really is an example of "people-to-people links," it's just as important as business or governmental contacts in building meaningful connections across borders.



Laura reading to her students

EDUCATION VOLUNTEER OF THE SEMESTER (CONT.)

Were there any specific events/projects/sessions you helped out with? If so, could you share a bit about what you learned and enjoyed?

Every week, we spend 15-20 minutes reading a class story. I love watching the students' enthusiasm grow as they master new vocabulary and try to guess what is going to happen next. Sometimes they fight over who gets to hold the book. Hint: we could do with multiple copies of the same books so that the kids could have one each.

What are the best memories you've had with MCF so far? How have your expectations been met during your time with MCF?

I have loved all of it. I hope that I've not only improved the students' English language attainment but also broken down cultural barriers. I have learnt a lot from the kids and my Chinese teaching assistants too. Recently, I was able to combine my personal experience with my professional role by enabling a group of British parliamentarians to visit an MCF class in action. I hope that this will shine a light on the great work that Helen and her team are doing.

How does volunteering complement your life in Beijing? What did your friends say after knowing you were volunteering with MCF?

I spend most of my working day in formal meetings or answering e-mails / writing reports at my desk. It's really refreshing to spend some time at the weekend doing something completely different. I've also met a wide range of other volunteers, from China and beyond, who have enriched my social life in Beijing.

My UK friends are not at all surprised that I spend my free time volunteering for MCF; most of them are active in the UK voluntary sector in one way or another. Some Chinese colleagues are quite curious about the concept. The latest World Giving Index indicates that 7% of China's population participated in some form of voluntary activity in the past 12 months. I've met lots of young Chinese university students volunteering their time through MCF so I'm sure this percentage will continue to increase in the future.

If you had something to tell an aspiring volunteer, what would it be?

Go for it! Lorna is very welcoming and can find a suitable outlet for your skills, interests and level of commitment. Volunteering with MCF will definitely enhance your time in Beijing, connecting you to a community, outside of most foreigners' professional or social contacts, for whom this city is also a temporary home. Don't let the opportunity pass you by.



Laura's students learning how to dance

SPONSOR OF THE SEMESTER

HILTON BEIJING

With the semester coming to an end, we look back on the events and contributions our partners have made that has allowed MCF to continuously give back to our community in Beijing. We are proud to announce that this year's Sponsor of the Semester is none other than our long-time partner and contributor, Hilton Beijing. One of our most active partners of MCF, Hilton Beijing has been home to some of MCF's yearly events as well as a platform that allows MCF to serve the community.

The past five years has seen Hilton Beijing work with MCF to provide educational outreach events, where students can learn about Earth Day, the Solar System, and much more! Hilton Beijing also welcomes students for a Career with Hilton Day, allowing students to learn about the hotel

management industry and the parts that make up a first-class hotel. Thanks to Hilton Beijing, over 250 children have had health checks provided for. We are also grateful for the hospitality Hilton Beijing has shown by inviting children MCF supports to attend their annual Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony.

MCF is grateful that Hilton Beijing was inspired by our drive and mission towards enriching the lives of disadvantaged children in Beijing. It is an honor to be working alongside them and we hope that this partnership will continue to grow over the next few years. Together, we hope that MCF and Hilton Beijing will continue to provide and create more ways to give back to the community. Once again, a big thanks for all the effort and generosity Hilton Beijing management and staff have shown MCF.



Guests at the Hilton Festive Fair



Children attending the Career@Hilton

PARTNERS OF MCF



Beijing City International School • Beijing World Youth Academy
 Canadian International School Beijing • Dulwich College Beijing
 Hyde Academy • Korean International School in Beijing •
 The British School of Beijing Sanlitun • The British School of Beijing Shunyi •
 Yew Chung International School

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

We at MCF would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all our sponsors and partners for their contributions during the Winter Semester 2018. Your generous financial contributions as well as volunteer partnerships have allowed MCF to continue educating the disadvantaged children of Beijing and providing for them. We hope that through working with MCF, you have also gained a deeper understanding about disadvantaged communities in China and how we can continue to give back to the city in which we live.

Interested in partnering with MCF? Drop us an email at admin@mcfchina.org

VOLUNTEER WITH US AT MCF

As we look back on the semester at MCF, we are grateful for the volunteers who have been with us through countless events and have helped us along the way. As we bid a repeated heartfelt goodbye to those who are leaving Beijing, we would like to take the time to invite new friends to join us on this journey.

At MCF we are always looking for fresh faces with a passion for helping others and inspiring others along the way through internships, volunteering at events, and participating in weekend sessions. With the departure of our current interns, Alejandro and Tim, MCF is also currently looking for interns who would like to be a part of the team! We hope to see you in the Spring!

Feel free to drop us an email at: volunteer@mcfchina.org



MIGRANT_CHILDRENS
_FOUNDATION



CHINA_MCF



MIGRANT
CHILDREN'S
FOUNDATION



MCFCHINA.ORG/BLOG/



ABOUT MCF

Founded in 2009, MCF is a non-profit organisation that works with migrant communities in Beijing, China. The organisation is staffed by a dedicated team of long-term volunteers who organise events, manage MCF's education and health programs and maintain relationships with migrant schools.