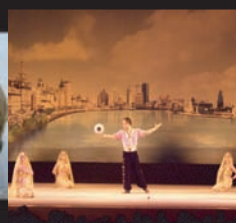




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ProjectsAbroad



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## Editorial Note:

Welcome to Projects Abroad China,

The weather in Shanghai is unpredictable in the midst of these changing seasons. One day it's pretty cold others it's pretty warm. The warm days would be better if the subway stations hadn't cut off the A/C system.

For the volunteers that will be joining us, make sure you are prepared for China's ever changing weather. Light jackets, sweaters and hoodies are the way to go here, as we anticipate China's chilling winter. This is all in our efforts to make your stay here in China a comfortable and amazing one. We look forward to giving you the full Chinese experience and the beginning of worldwide friendships from our weekly socials and various outreach events.

In this month's issue, you will read three different experiences from three volunteers; Malvika Kumar from India, Jim Björkman from Sweden, and Amy Birch from the UK. This month's feature is about the River of Hearts last clothes sorting party, which was a big success.

Check out our Facebook group 'Projects Abroad China'. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at [DennisBridgeforth@projects-abroad.org](mailto:DennisBridgeforth@projects-abroad.org).

## River of Hearts

Once again we participated in a River of Hearts (ROH), sorting party. On November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2011 ROH had their last sorting party of the year, which meant total chaos. Over



the last five months the River of Hearts organization collected clothes from all over the city, so 15 of us showed up to lend a hand. When we arrived at the location it was total mayhem, there was clothes, toys, bags, shoes, boxes and people everywhere. As soon as we found the organizer of the sorting party she put us right to work; all but one

of the females with Projects Abroad helped to sort the clothes, while they put all the guys outside to do the lifting, due to the lack of men at this event. One of the female



volunteers decided she was going to join the guys with the manual labor, she was consistently, moving bags a lot heavier than others, but that didn't stop her from manhandling the bags. I wasn't the only one that was impressed by her work ethics.

After working hard for a couple of hours they provided us with lunch, before it was time to load the trucks (yes trucks). The guys and girl stacked umpteen bags and boxes outside, as the day went on the clouds got a little darker and everyone knew what that meant. While eating lunch it started to rain definitely not a good thing, because the bags that we stacked outside were similar to potato sack bags. So we ate quickly and got back to work, we loaded until we couldn't load anymore (a truck and a half later); talk about an exercise! The bags and boxes of clothes, shoes, toys and miscellaneous was sent to the XinJiang province which it located in the Northwest part of china. Over all we had a day filled with good causes, good people, a work out and food; this has to be ranked number one on good times.

"Projects Abroad participated by sending about 15 strong and dynamic young people. They worked hard at loading the truck and showed their dedication and commitment to make a difference in China once again" ROH.

## My Experience in Amazing Shanghai

### Malvika Kumar

(Business, 3 months)



Shanghai. There are infinite words to describe this city but very few will do it justice. My main reason for choosing Shanghai as a destination was to try to figure out why the entire world was chanting "China! China! China!"- I knew it was known for its vast business opportunities which apparently lurk everywhere, but I wanted to see it for myself, and I wasn't disappointed.

When you first step out from the airport you are taken back with the sounds, smells and the unfamiliarity of it all which soon becomes so familiar that you wonder how you'll go without it. The city itself is amazing. At night the famous skyline lights up and you can stroll around the Bund, taking it all in. You name it ---Shanghai has it. It also has a rich well preserved cultural side where you can spend many a Saturday exploring its little lanes so there is something for everyone. The Projects Abroad experience is something which is hard to rival.

The staff organizes weekly get-togethers to make you experience all the flavors Shanghai has to offer; from hotpot restaurant experiences, to painting the walls of an underprivileged school to crazy karaoke nights. I would also say the kind of friendships you make here, just by going through all of this together, are hard to beat!

The placements also broaden your horizons as you adapt and develop new ways of working to match your cultural surroundings. My placement was in one of the top universities in the world where I worked as a Research Assistant and assisted in a consultancy project for Intel, Bosh and Dow. Not only was it interesting, but all my colleagues were so helpful and friendly and made me feel at home. My favorite part of my experience was teaching 1st graders English at the migrant school every Friday. They would get so excited to see me and call me "teacher mal". I have actually never seen kids so eager to answer my questions! The school showed a completely different side to Shanghai; one away from the glitz and glamour. When you were at school, it felt like you were in real China, with little shops and street food places crowding the school, children running around and an air of hustle bustle.

I'm definitely coming back to this city!

## Unforgettable Memories in Teaching

**Amy Birch**

**United Kingdom  
(Care & Teaching, 2 months)**

Hi, my name is Amy and I have spent 2 incredible months here in Shanghai!! As soon as I stepped off the plane, the weeks have flown by leaving me with some unforgettable memories; the places I've visited the variety of food I've tried, and above all the people I've met and worked with. It's truly been one great big experience.

I spent my time volunteering at Ziluolan Primary School. When I first arrived, I was quite nervous as I have never really had much experience teaching before. I hadn't needed to be. The staff was so warm and welcoming and the children were always excited to see me. After the first couple of days, I felt like I had been working at the school for years.



Throughout my time at the school I taught English and Art to grades 1 through 5. Initially I focused my time teaching English. I experimented with my lessons trying out new techniques and ideas to try and make them more interesting and exciting for the children. Once I found a particular style of teaching that worked, I stuck with it. When I progressed to teaching art lessons I applied a similar technique and even though it was a bit more challenging and time consuming, the excitement and enjoyment that both the children and I received from each lesson was just so worth it!

Recently myself, and another teaching volunteer, Lisa, have been working on some projects with the school. We have been teaching some children from grade 2 an English song (Old MacDonald Had a Farm) for them to perform to the rest of the school. Shall we say the children are more than excited, especially when they saw that they were dressing up!

Another project that we have been focusing our time on is the Art classroom. We had both noticed how unexciting the room appeared to be and especially as art is a visual and inspiring subject, we thought we could do something to change this. Working closely with the head teacher and other volunteers from Projects Abroad, we redecorated the whole space. I have to say, I taught my first art lesson in the new classroom today and it was such a joy to see the children interacting with the space.

I am writing this now realizing that I have one more day left at the school and only 5 days left here in Shanghai. Shanghai, is nothing you can really imagine until you are actually here. Not only have I had a fantastic work placement, but also a fantastic social life too.

My experience in Shanghai would not have been the same without my roommates and the other volunteers. I really enjoyed meeting new people from all over the globe and exploring all that Shanghai has to offer. From singing Elvis Presley's classic, Hound dog, in a typical Chinese karaoke bar to having High Tea and champagne at the famous Peace Hotel, I can't believe that there is still more I need to see and do here! One of my most memorable moments here is drinking a glass of wine in the Shanghai World Financial Center in the evening over looking Shanghai's colorful and exciting skyline.

# My Happy Life in Chengdu

## Jim Björkman

Sweden

(Teaching, 1.75 months)

I have been doing the Teaching program in Chengdu for roughly two months now and its amazing how attached I have gotten to the students and co-workers as well as the other volunteers. It really feels like a great big family and, although two months



seemed like quite a long time, it seems it has flown by here because there's always something to do. Chengdu is an amazing city with beautiful parks, lots of sights to see and if you enjoy food you could not want for more here. While being and remaining vegan in China seemed quite daunting at first I feel it is, and was, doable and I shall say vegetarians will have no problems at all

finding plenty of delectable food.

The city also has, believe it or not, a very vibrant and interesting art scene, with many a fine painter and artist born and, or active in the city. There are several art galleries such as the ones on Fangqie Jie, Gallery A and Gallery K, and many more. I unfortunately only found time to visit a handful of them all. There are also museums like the Chengdu Museum of Contemporary Art, or MOCA, located in the very south of the city, 3 blocks south of the Century City Metro stop. Address: Tanfu Software Park C1. I highly recommend it to anybody visiting, not only for the amazing exhibitions, that are all free of charge, but it is also a chance to find a nice and tranquil oasis were one could filter out some of the noise of the city.

# Volunteers' Corner





## Blind walks

On most sidewalks in Shanghai there are raised marks, which last the length of the sidewalk. These raised marks are normally located in the middle of the side walk at times they can be quite annoying because it's not level with the rest of the walkway. When I first arrived to Shanghai I wasn't really sure why sidewalks had these raised areas. One evening after dinner a friend and I were walking it was raining really hard. The rain created some minor sidewalk flooding, so my friend said when it rains, she walks on this elevated area to keep her pant legs from getting wet. Call me naive, but I thought that made so much sense.

From that day onwards I figured the marks on the sidewalk were for rainy days, to help your pant legs stay dry and for extra grip, so you will not fall, made sense to me. I've even seen them in the subway station; I knew these weren't to keep your pant leg dry. So, I just gave up trying to justify these raised marks that seem to be everywhere and just looked at them as some sort of extra grip walkway. Recently I found out that these raised marks are not for rain, in fact they are for the blind. Who would have ever thought it, I was so amazed. It made just a little more sense than it being used to keep you dry and for grip. After a few days I realized, that I've been here for a year and a half and never seen a blind person. I mean when I think of visual impaired, I think of maybe Blind Canes and seeing eye dogs, both which I have never seen here maybe because they have these markings on the ground.

# China Inside and Out



# Social Activities In November

<b>November Social Events-2011</b>			
DATE	TIME	PLACE	PROGRAMME
Saturday, November 5	10am-2pm	Shanghai United International School	River of Hearts
Saturday, November 12	10am-4pm	Zi Luo Lan	Operation Art Room
Wednesday, November 23	8pm	Yuxin Chuan Cai Restaurant	Cottons (Anting lu)
Tuesday, November 29	7:30pm	Shanghai Theatre	Acrobat show

## Social Media Links

**Join our official Facebook Group: Projects Abroad China – The Official Group**

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/projectsabroad.china>

**Read our monthly newsletters.**

<http://www.projects-abroad.co.uk/volunteer-destinations/china/newsletters-from-china/>

**See what is going on with Projects Abroad! Read our Country Blog!**

<http://www.mytripblog.org/pg/groups/2859/china/>