

## **Report on China Trip as a Youth Ambassador**

**By Brian Wen**

The experience I had this summer was incredible. It was one of the most fantastic opportunities of my life. Spending two weeks in a foreign country without my parents has taught me invaluable lessons on responsibility, kindness, and trustworthiness. Making a tremendous number of friends while visiting the different cities in China and enjoying the hospitality of my hosts were only a few in many bonuses of going on the journey. Along with these, we as ambassadors were always continuously exchanging a lot of our cultural backgrounds and ideas for theirs. This trip to China was one of the most beneficial adventures I have ever undertaken, and it has only done me good.

First, the preparation before the trip allowed me to be ready for what was to come and learn some tips and rules about staying in another country. The teachers and chaperones were extremely helpful, caring, and considerate. They helped the six of us bond together and know one another better. This would prove extremely useful later on, as we had to trust and look after each other in multiple circumstances. The pre-trip explanations and itineraries also helped us know what we would do each day, and what to expect after each event was complete.

Next, traveling to and from Beijing was very entertaining; the plane had plenty of movies, music, and food. Most of us got to sit together and discuss what would happen once we landed and continued on our way in China. We were not only interested, we also learned many essential procedures in the airport and security such as how to fill out a transportation form, and getting parental letters notarized. When we arrived in Beijing, we had a very pleasant and extraordinary tour guide named Macy. Along with giving us useful tips and advice on what to do, she also helped us in need when we were feeling sick and forgetting our belongings. She assisted us until we left for Jinan, and then once again when we returned to Beijing.

Finally, the trip itself was beyond comparing. Some examples that highlight our trip include climbing the great wall, visiting the forbidden city, touring a youth arts palace, bargaining in street markets, seeing Confucius's home, and of course living with our host families in Jinan. We walked through a museum of China's ancient cultures, sat in at a tea ceremony, took a day of Jinan middle school, and watched multiple martial arts performances. Riding rickshaws, vans, and bullet trains were just some of the methods of transportation we encountered. Also, my amazing host family brought me to the Jinan Olympic Center to play many sports with me. Last but not least, both my hosts and I received a lot more knowledge on our different ways of life.

In conclusion, I would not have traded anything for going on this trip to China. I made many friends that I still talk to, even today. Learning and experiencing so many things was a wonder that only this expedition could have shown to me. The enormous amount of activities we did had a positive impact on me that I couldn't have acquired anywhere else. From my host family alone, I learned an abundance of skills on hospitality and self-control. Just in general, visiting another country is a fantastic experience, but to do so with new friends and an always caring host family is definitely spectacular.