

Hello,

My name is Kaylee Doty and I am a senior at Western Sierra Collegiate Academy. In June 2019, I received a \$1000 scholarship through Jinan-Sacramento Sister Cities Corporation (JSSCC) and went to China with seven other students. I had a wonderful trip. I would like to thank everyone who made it possible and share some of the highlights from my experience in China.

For part of the trip, all of the Sacramento students stayed with different host families and explored Jinan. At first, I was nervous about how my stay with the host family would be. Especially considering that I'm not exactly fluent in Chinese, I knew there would be a communication barrier and wondered how we would overcome that. But actually, I had a great time with my host family, and communication wasn't too difficult (thanks to Chinese-English dictionary apps and Google Translate). My host family was incredibly welcoming and accommodating. They took me to lots of interesting places like traditional neighborhoods, shopping centers, and museums, and let me try lots of different authentic Chinese dishes. But aside from going shopping and sightseeing, my favorite part of the host family experience was getting to know them and learning about their lives. I found out that my host mom was fairly fluent in Japanese because she lived there for a few years, and that my host dad is an architectural design professor. I had a great time with my host family, and I was sad when my stay with them ended and I left to visit some of the middle schools in Jinan.

Touring the middle schools in Jinan was definitely one of my favorite parts of the trip. We participated in lots of engaging activities related to Chinese culture and got to know some of the students. At one of the schools, we designed qipaos (traditional Chinese dresses) in art class, played games with students during P.E., recited tongue twisters in music class, and also learned a little tai chi from one of the teachers. One thing I noticed when we first arrived at the schools was that a lot of the students were eager to get to know us, which felt very welcoming. I enjoyed talking to them about school life, our favorite shows, and other topics related to pop culture. From talking to the students, I noticed how different Chinese and American schools are. For example, at the schools we visited, students were allowed to go home for lunch, and after lunch there was a designated nap time. In America, students are supposed to stay on campus for lunch, and naps are not permitted. Also, the middle schools we went to had dormitories for students who live far from campus; generally, students in America do not live on campus until they are in college.

I thoroughly enjoyed my time in China and I'm very grateful that I had the opportunity to go on this trip through JSSCC. Everything was well-organized and there were so many amazing opportunities to learn more about Chinese culture and practice speaking Chinese. From going on this trip, I've learned that, while there are many cultural differences between China and America, the people in these two countries actually aren't that different. I hope that in the future China and America can build a strong friendship and learn more about each other. Thank you for your generous donation to JSSCC, which allows students like myself to experience a new culture and create wonderful memories.

Thank you,
Kaylee Doty