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Adviser 顾 问

彭珮云 PENG PEIYUN

全国人大常委会前副委员长

Former Vice-Chairperson of the NPC Standing Committee

Adviser 顾 问

顾秀莲 GU XIULIAN

全国人大常委会前副委员长

Former Vice-Chairperson of the NPC Standing Committee

Director 社长

Zhang Hui 张慧

Deputy Editor-in-Chief & Deputy Director 副总编辑·副社长

Wei Liang 位亮

Deputy Editor-in-Chief 副总编辑

A Rong 阿榕

Chief Editor 主编

Yuan Kang 袁康

Managing Editor

Kipp Whittaker

Deputy Managing Editor

Andy Peñafuerte III

Senior Editor

Andrew Killeen

Shunyi Correspondent

Pauline van Hasselt

Contributors

Jennifer Ambrose

Ember Swift

Soumya Satheesan

Editorial Consultant 编辑顾问

ROBERT MILLER (Canadian) 罗伯特·米勒 (加拿大)

Director of Sales Department 广告发行经营部主任

壬 XIA WEI 夏巍

Tel 电话

 $5779\,8877$

Legal Adviser 法律顾问

LIXUESEN 李雪森

Advertising Agency

Beijing Agenda Advertising Co., Limited

广告代理

北京爱见达广告有限公司

Advertising Hotlines 广告热线

5941 0368/69/72/77/78/79

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rue Run Media

Managing Editor Kipp Whittaker Deputy Managing Editor Andy Peñafuerte III

Senior Editors Andrew Killeen

Contributors Ember Swift,

Jennifer Ambrose

Shunyi Correspondent Pauline van Hasselt

Intern Soumya Satheesan

Advertising Agency

Beijing Agenda Advertising Co., Limited

广告代理

北京爱见达广告有限公司

Telephone/电话: 5779 8877

Advertising Hotlines/广告热线: 5941 0368/69/72/77/78/79

CEO and Founder Michael Wester

Owner and Co-Founder Toni Ma Head of Marketing Lareina Yang

Marketing Team Mu Yu, Helen Liu

Art Director Susu Luo

Production Manager Joey Guo Graphic Designer Cherry Li

Advertising Designer Summer Zhang

Photographer Uni You

Sales Director Sheena Hu

Sales Supporting Manager Gladys Tang

Sales Team Winter Liu, Veronica Wu,

Olesya Sedysheva, Wilson Barrie, Sharon Shang, Serena Du

Content Marketing Nimo Wanjau

IT Team Yan Wen, Alexandre Froger

Finance Judy Zhao, Vicky Cui HR & Admin Tobal Loyola, Cao Zheng

Distribution Cao Zheng

General Inquiries 5779 8877

Distribution 5941 5387

Editorial 5779 8877 ext. 6693

Contact:

General Information: info@beijing-kids.com

Editorial: editor@beijing-kids.com

Sales: sales@truerun.com

Marketing: marketing@truerun.com

Digital & Content Marketing: DCmarketing@truerun.com

Distribution: distribution@truerun.com Directories: listings@beijing-kids.com

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The beijingkids Board

When AJ Warner is not with his two sons, he's coaching Chinese students on how to get admitted to the top 30 US universities. He also guides Chinese families through the process of sending their child to the US for high school and related homestays. Contact him at ajwarner@ touchdown.org.cn.



Mike Signorelli

Mike Signorelli arrived in Beijing in 1994 as a student and has called China home ever since. He has held several senior management roles over the past 20+ years, including his last corporate job with NBA China. Mike is the founder of Signature Wine, China's first independent subscription wine club. Contact him at mike@sigwine.com.



In Beijing for 11 years, Marianne Daquet has always been passionate about art and education. She founded Atelier Art School 5 years ago with the mission to pass on her strong belief that creativity can change the world. She and her French husband have two daughters. You can reach her at Marianne@atelier.com.



When former CGTN talk show host and mom-preneur Eyee Hsu is not chasing after her two kids or the family dog, you might catch her at a Pilates studio or on TV. She formerly owned Counting Sheep boutiques and will be returning to the US this year. We'll miss her but wish her well!

Caroline Nath

Caroline Nath moved to Beijing as a teenager after having grown up in the US, Canada, France, and India. She is a filmmaker, radio host, Parent Effectiveness Training teacher, founder of Bonne Nani Jams, and an organic food promoter. She has two multi-ethnic and multi-lingual children. Contact her at kulfidoll@gmail.com.



Elisabeth Koch

China's milliner, Elisabeth Koch, arrived in 2007 and hit the ground running with her hats. This TCK has two children who were born in Beijing. While her creations adorn famous heads on the covers of international glossies, Koch gives hat-making workshops in her studio and is kept busy by the kids. Find out more information at www.ElisabethKoch.net



Samantha Zhang

Samantha Zhang spent the past decade working for international corporations but in 2015 she founded JZ-Atelier Jewelry studio. The studio focuses on teaching systematic skills training so students are able to design, select materials, and fabricate their own jewelry. When not working, she enjoys spending time outdoors with her family. Contact her at legendaryzhang@yahoo.com.



Camilla Simoni

Originally from Denmark, Camilla Simoni has lived in Beijing for the last 4 years with her husband and their 3 boys. Before moving to China, she worked as a health visitor, conducting in-house check ups, breastfeeding counseling, and other newborn concerns. After she moved to Beijing, she finished her Master's in Sociology and took part in the startup Challet Baby.



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ON THE COVER:

Joseph H. from ISB's Futures Academy, shows off a lunar rover from their Space Race project last spring. Find out about how ISB and other schools are working hard to implement 21st-century learning concepts in this month's feature.

Photo by Dave's Studio

Necessity Is the Mother of Invention

Educational trends are a major focus of *beijingkids* and the families that use our publication as a tool to learn about what schools are doing in this city. Without our magazine, many would lack access to this information, and it would require a lot more digging for expats to find the right educational institution for their young learners.

Within this domain, few topics have been more fervently discussed than that of innovation, and for a good reason. We want our children to do well in school and eventually be a well-rounded and ultimately employable adult.

At first glance "innovative education" may seem like a simple concept, but believe us when we tell you it is anything but. Many of the ideas for moving forward and changing the ways curriculums are structured are a result of decades of neurological and behavioral study, or trial and error enacted by brave educators wanting to better suit the needs of students in the classroom. As new educational techniques spread, we can't help but watch in amazement and hope that they will soon become an essential ingredient to the learning of the future. It is an exciting and sometimes scary time to be alive as the pressure to remain relevant grows with the advancements being made in areas such as artificial intelligence.

On a lighter note, exploring these topics has been a way for me to gain a deeper insight into these changes so that I can start planning the academic development of my child. Granted he's only nine-months-old, it's never too early to start mulling it over.

These are just a couple of reasons why this issue has been so exciting to work on, and it's the culmination of these revelations and advancements being made that are reinforcing our belief that Beijing is truly an advanced center for education in China and possibly the world. Whether it's the curriculums, facilities, or faculties at these schools, we have it all, and the students here are motivated to use these resources to do amazing things.

This issue explores some of these examples of how and where education is advancing to in the future (p48). Just to give you a hint, it is very different than what we grew up with as kids. Along with this, we explored ways that summer camps are creatively stimulating learning to help prevent that undesirable summer slide (p28), and the merits of holistic child development in a rapidly changing world (p36).

We hope you find this issue as fascinating as it was for us creating it. We can say with some certainty that this won't be the last we will be addressing these topics, because the future is undeniably here today, but will forever also be tomorrow.

Flipp Whittaker
Kipp Whittaker
Managing Editor



Celebrating 10 Years with beijingkids

Sisi Chen had an enormous influence over the direction of *beijingkids* throughout her tenure (2011-15), and her impact can still be felt to this day as many of the ideas she initiated echo throughout these pages almost two years after her departure. Covering critical topics like postpartum depression, bullying, same-sex parenthood, and support for LGBTQ students, it was under her guidance that the magazine continued expanding its scope to reflect the diversity of Beijing's expat community. Now, she's completing her Master's Degree at Columbia University, and currently finishing up a summer internship in sunny Yerevan, Armenia with the Social Protection Section at UNICEF. The project is helping professional members of the global Armenia diaspora connect with local NGOs and communities for mentorship, training, and long-term capacity building, which dovetails nicely with her own experience of being part of the Chinese diaspora. Thank you Sisi for doing your part in building up *beijingkids*, and continuing to make us proud throughout all of your current endeavors.

What's New



The Clown Is Down in Beijing Town

A much-loved clowning classic is coming to Beijing for the first time this month. Slava's Snowshow is the creation of Slava Polunin, former Master Clown at Cirque de Soleil, and this celebrated combination of slapstick and special effects been touring the world since 1993. It's a magical experience for the whole family, and plays at the Tiangiao Performing Arts Center from August 30 to Sept 3.



Mini Maker Faire Returns

Tech fans, teachers, tinkerers, and toy lovers will gather at China Millennium Monument from August 11 to 13, for Beijing's third Mini Maker Faire. Maker Faires began in California in 2006, and are described as "part science fair, part county fair, and part something entirely new". Expect DIY creations, robots, offbeat competitions, and perhaps even to learn something about science and engineering. You can find out more at www.beijingmakerfaire. com (Chinese only.)



Manchester: Even Worse than Beijing at Bike Sharing

Bike sharing has been a mixed blessing for Beijing. While we all welcome the convenience and potential environmental benefits, we're also very familiar with the downside: thoughtless parking, vandalized bikes, and attempts to rip off customers with fake QR codes. One video circulating on social media even showed needles fixed onto saddles with the clear intention of injuring riders; although here at beijingkids, we found it suspicious that the video makers managed to find several such booby traps in just one location, when we've never heard of anybody else encountering a single one among the city's hundreds of thousands of bikes.

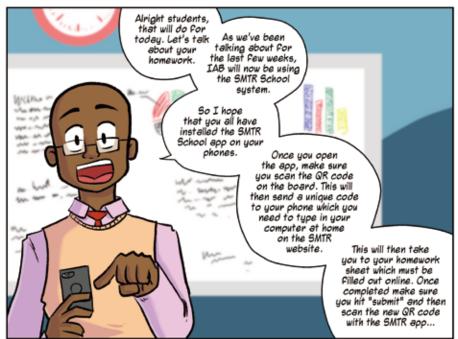
However it appears there is now a place whose citizens are even worse at sharing than Beijingers: step forward Manchester, England. The Guardian newspaper reports that after just two weeks since Mobikes arrived on the city's streets, the "scale of vandalism took [the company] by surprise. It has been far worse than in any of the Asian countries where Mobike operates 5 million bikes."

Not to be outdone, China struck back, as it was reported that an umbrella-sharing startup had lost nearly all its 300,000 brollies in just three months of operation. Undeterred, Sharing E Umbrella have pledged to put another 3 million out by the end of the year. Look forward to climbing past mountains of umbrellas to get to the subway station some time this fall...

Winnie the Pooh: Bear Ban Backfires

Back in April we reported that the government had been forced to deny banning Peppa Pig. Now it's Winnie the Pooh that's facing a crackdown. The issue first arose in 2013, when a photograph of two global leaders walking together was compared by mischievous netizens to a picture of Pooh Bear and Tigger. Since then other images of Winnie the Pooh beside a certain important politician have been circulated, and subsequently banned. Now all searches for the much-loved character (the bear, not the politician) are being blocked. As so often though with attempts to censor the internet, the tactic has backfired, and what was previously a Chinese in-joke has been picked up and reported across the media worldwide, in a classic example of what is known as "the Barbra Streisand Effect."











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AUGUST EVENTS

INN ANNUAL SURVIVAL

Aug 28

All ages. The International Newcomers Network (INN) is hosting its annual Arrival Survival, a must-attend gathering for all newcomers in Beijing. The topics to be discussed will be about safety, awareness of counterfeit money, getting around the city, air and purification needs, health insurance, finance, and even how to avoid the stresses that come along with the new move. INN has been in Beijing since 1994, and is one of the longest-standing all-volunteer expat organizations in Beijing. RMB 75. This event is open to all foreign passport holders. 10am-noon. INN. Capital Mansion Athletic Club, 3F 6 Xinyuan Nanlu, Chaoyang District. 京城大大厦俱荣部朝 阳区新源南路6号3楼. (www.innbeijing.com)

THE DOWAGER AND THE DYNASTY: A WALK AND DISCUSSION AT THE SUMMER PALACE **①**

Aug 5





All ages. On this stroll along the shoreline and hillsides of the Summer Palace, a magnificent creation of Empress Dowager Cixi (1835-1908), we will discuss the life and legacy of this fascinating historical figure. RMB 300 (RMB 260 for members of The Hutong) includes all guide fees, boat ride, tips, and admission tickets. 10am-1pm. Summer Palace. Yiheyuan Lu, Haidian District. 海淀 区 颐和园路

JIANKOU - GUBEIKOU GREAT WALL HIKING AND CAMPING (2 DAYS)

Aug 5-6

Ages 5+. If you love the outdoors, you won't want to miss this epic Great Wall hike that covers two sections of the wild Beijing Great Wall: the amazing wild Jiankou Great Wall and Gubeikou. This hike is level: 3 medium/strong. Follow ChinaHiking on WeChat and get last minute discounts at ChinaHiking Beijing. Day 1 departure at 9.30am, day 2 arrival in Beijing at 7pm. RMB 1,600 (RMB 1,440 for kids 7-17, RMB 1,280 for members, RMB 800 for kids younger than 7). ChinaHiking Beijing. (156 5220 0950, info@chinahiking. cn, www.chinahiking.cn)

DRAGON CLOUD MOUNTAIN AND WHITE RIVER HIKE 2

Aug 6

Ages 5+. Beijing Hikers is giving a fresh take on the White River hike as hikers will skip the commercial end of the White River for a hike over Dragon Cloud Mountain, before joining the river at the big bend that marks the start of the quietest and most scenic part of the trail. RMB 380, RMB 340 (members). 8am-5:30pm. Beijing Hikers. (info@beijinghikers.com, www.beijinghikers.com)

4 DAYS WILD GREAT WALL TREK-KING /CAMPING FROM CHEN CASTLE TO GENERAL XU GREAT WALL

Aug 7-10

Ages 7+. ChinaHiking is having a 45km-trek on a long forgotten and rarely seen wild section of the Great Wall. Hikers will pitch their tents twice on the Great Wall and stay once overnight with a local farmer. This Great Wall trek starts on the crumble staircases of the Chen Castle Great Wall, then continues to the Border Defense Great Wall, and then at General Xu Great Wall. Once you conquer hiking this trail you can truly say you hiked China's wild Great Wall. The hike is level: 4 strong. Follow ChinaHiking on Wechat and get last minute discounts: ChinaHiking_Beijing. RMB 3,300. ChinaHiking Beijing. (156 5220 0950, info@chinahiking.cn, www.chinahiking.cn)

SPORTS BEIJING AQUA WARRIORS **SUMMER SWIM CAMP**

Aug 7-11

Ages 4-16. Agua Warriors Summer Swim Camp is designed to provide competitive and near-competitive swimmers with a great opportunity to improve their overall swimming abilities. The camp is focusing on developing stroke technique, increasing stamina, optimizing turns, and introducing video analysis. Not only is this camp a great opportunity for swimmers to receive high quality training, but it is also a great chance to make new friends and have fun in the pool! RMB 1,600 per child. To sign up, visit www.sportsbj. org/product/aqua-warriors-summer-camp/. Zhongjia Xinyuan Hot-spring Hotel. 200 meters East of Gu Cheng Village, Houshayu, Shunyi District 顺义区后沙峪镇古城村村委会东200米

FLIPS & KICKS PLUS AND KERRY **SPORTS SUMMER CAMP**

Aug 7-11 and 14-18

Ages 4-12. Flips & Kicks Plus in cooperation with Kerry Sports will be continuing with their smash hit summer camp, which will be held at Kerry Sports. This multi-sport camp is filled with fun activities like gymnastics, martial arts, track and field, football, swimming, and basketball. Sport-specific expert coaches and foreign group coaches will ensure that your child's camp experience is both safe and fun! Campers will be divided into two groups: Group A (4-7 y/o) and Group B (8-12 y/o). For more information or booking, contact the Kerry Center (8565 2460, hbkc@thekerryhotels.com). RMB 3,200-4,500. 9am-2.30pm. Kerry Sports. (www.beijingkerrycentre.com/ adventure_zone.html) 1 Guang Hua光华路一号.



PARKOUR CAMP BY IMAGINE

Aug 7-11, 14-18, and 21-25

Ages 7-16. Develop exciting parkour skills by leaping into foam pits, jumping on trampolines, balancing on a slack line, climbing on a bouldering wall, and so much more! Parkour is a great way to build foundation skills for all other freestyle action sports. RMB 700 per day including transport. For more info visit www. imagine-china.com/parkour-camp/. Imagine. (5739 4933, info@ imagine-china.com)

SURVIVAL CAMP BY IMAGINE &



Aug 7-11, 14-18, and 21-25

Ages 7-14. This camp teaches kids the essentials of survival in the wilderness: making fires, building rafts, crossing rivers, making traps and tools, cooking, building shelters, and more. Survival camp takes young campers to the great outdoors to learn what nature has to offer. RMB 750 per day. For more info go to imagine-china.com/survival-camp/. Imagine. (5739 4933, info@ imagine-china.com)



PHOTOS: BEIJING WARREN KAYAK CLUB

SEA TOURING KAYAK TRAINING SUMMER CAMP 4

Aug 7-11, 14-18, and 21-25

Ages 8-18. Beijing Warren Kayak Club is organizing the first kayak summer camp in Beijing. The purpose of the camp is to teach ACA (American Canoe Association) sea touring kayak level 1 and level 2 lessons. Students will learn and master long distance paddling, practice rescue drills, and learn about kayak trips. At the end, the students' learning will be assessed, and their skill levels will be certified by ACA. English is the main language of the kayak summer camp, but the instructors are also capable of communicating in Chinese. (WeChat ID: Kayaking_China, 151 0166 2018, boston5678@ qq.com)



FRENCH IMMERSION SUMMER CAMP

Aug 7-25

Ages 4-10. French Camp Beijing is encouraging new learners in this camp that gives children a chance to immerse themselves into a French language environment through fun activities with native French teachers. Introduce your child to French and experience a new language and culture. RMB 2,500 per week (lunch/snacks included). 9am-4pm. For more information, email frenchcampbeijing@yahoo.com.

PICASSO WORKSHOP WITH **ATELIER**

Aug 14-18

Ages 5-12. Discover the protean oeuvre of Pablo Picasso, a universally famous artist who painted, sculpted, and drew more than 70



years. Explore the birth of cubism, the blue and pink period, the paintings that marked art history, and the portraits of his beloved friends through paintings, sculptures, drawings, linocuts, and pottery. This summer camp is a journey through almost a century of art history. RMB 1,800 per week. 10am-noon (ages 5-8); 1.30-4pm (ages 9+). Atelier Art School. (WeChat ID: atelier_apas, 6416 1614, www.atelier.cn.com). Room 10L, Building 7 (middle entrance), Julong Garden No.68, Xinzhong Street, Chaoyang District. 北京市东城区新中街68号聚龙花园7号楼10L室.

LITTLE TOYS ORCHESTRA -**CHILDREN/FAMILY PERFORMANCE** FROM FRANCE

Aug 23 to Sep 10

Ages 2-6. Two musicians are joyfully leading this unusual orchestra. Their luggage is filled with toys and various odd instruments such as a pink pig, a green pig, a witch, a guitar, a toy-piano, a mandolin, dog toys... all sorts of funny bits and pieces necessary to make fantastic sounds. This concert will take the audience on a magical journey through creativity and music. Make way for an imaginary world! 4-6.30pm. From RMB 180. Ticketing hotline: 134 6654 2185. Tong Production. (WeChat ID: tongtiyan, www. tongproduction.com)

ANATOLE'S LITTLE SAUCEPAN -CONTEMPORARY FAMILY PUPPET **THEATRE**

Aug 24-26

Ages 3+. Adapted from French author Isabelle Carrier's award winning picture book, Anatole's Little Saucepan, this puppet show brings the audience through a child's mental journey of dealing with something unbearable in his life – the saucepan attached to his arm. RMB 180-240. Ticketing hotline: 134 6654 2185. 5-7pm. Theatre M, Oriental Media Center, Beijing. (WeChat ID: tongtiyan, www.tongproduction.com)

ROUNDABOUT BOOK FAIR AT BSB **SHUNYI 2017**

Aug 26-30

All ages. This is probably the biggest Roundabout Book Fair every year held at The British School of Beijing, Shunyi (BSB, Shunyi). Thousands of gently used books for the whole family in many languages and genres. Paperbacks from RMB 10, hardbacks from RMB 20, Kid's books from one kuai! Pick up some late summer and holiday reading at this fair. Every single RMB you pay will directly help a child in need. Aug 26: 10am-3pm (open to the public); Aug 27: 12-3pm (BSB families); Aug 28-30: 3.30-5pm (open to public daily). Roundabout. (WeChat ID: Roundabout666, www.roundaboutchina.com). The British School of Beijing (BSB) Shunyi. South Side, No. 9 Anhua Street, Shunyi District. 北京市 顺义区天竺开发区安华街9号南院. (8047 3588, brenda.leung@ britishschool.org.cn).

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All ages. Come to the courtyard KUCINA Cooking Studio to learn how to make traditional Chinese dumplings. Come by yourself or bring your friends for a dumpling cooking class that features a variety of goodies for all to enjoy. Call to make your reservation one day in advance (150 1133 7590). 10.30am. 44 Liushui Xiang, Dongsi Wutiao, Dongcheng District. 东城区东四五条流 水巷44号



BYLR CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOP (3)

Second and last Sat of every month

Ages 14-19. Join the Beijing Youth Literary Review (BYLR) for creative writing workshops and to learn about blackout poetry, collaborative stories, and much more. 2pm. Free. For more information, follow BYLR on Facebook, Instagram (@beijingyouthlit), and WeChat (beijingyouthlit). #13 Unit 6, Building C, Xiangjiang







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LIVING DIGITAL FOREST AND **FUTURE PARK**

Tue-Sat until Oct 10

All ages. 'Living Digital Forest' is an exhibition of twelve digital works, which includes 'Future Park', an interactive, dynamic playground where kids can explore, experiment, and play. More details about the exhibition can be found here: http://team-lab.net/e/beijing/. Follow Pace Beijing's WeChat (ID: pace_service) to buy a ticket. RMB 80 (weekdays), RMB 150 (weekends). 10am-6pm. Pace Beijing, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District. 朝阳区酒仙桥路2 号798艺术区8502信箱

VOLUNTEER FOR ROUNDABOUT

Every Mon-Sat

All ages. Roundabout is a charity store whose proceeds pay medical costs for orphans, sheltered housing for the elderly, warm blankets, food, and other basic goods for those in need. Roundabout aids a wide range of people here Beijing through their numerous charitable offering, but they rely on volunteers to help sort through the large amount of donated goods that they receive. So drop by and help them out by checking puzzles, assembling games/toys, separating stationery items, testing electronics, dressing dolls, and assembling furniture/tents etc. Donating your time will make a huge difference to so many lives including your own. 9.30am-5.30pm. Roundabout. (WeChat ID: CHOWLZHOU, 150 1018 7653, chowlilyzhou@yahoo.com). Yuyang Road West, Off Anhua Road, Shunyi District. 众爱商 店, 顺义区榆阳路

THE BOOKWORM'S WEEKLY SCIFI **BOOK CLUB**

Every Thu

All ages. Join The Bookworm's weekly SciFi Book Club to talk about your favorite science fiction short stories! At each meeting you get a chance to read and discuss a short story. Some of the authors chosen so far include Greg Egan, Iain M. Banks, Cory Doctorow, Andy Weir, Liu Cixin, Peter Watts, Neal Stephenson, Ted Chiang, and many others. Free. 8pm. For more information, contact Olga via WeChat ID: Merukaba. The Bookworm. Building 4, Nan Sanlitun Road, Chaoyang District.

SAFARI SONG TIME (3)

Every Fri and Sat

Ages 3-18 months. All babies - from the quietest to the most vocal - love singing and rhymes! It stimulates their brains and development, and makes them happy! Bring your little ones to The Bookworm and take them on a fun safari where they can learn songs and rhymes from around the world. RMB 60 per child. 10.30-11.30am. The Bookworm. Building 4, Nan Sanlitun Road, Chaoyang District.



Want to share your new arrival with our readers? Email a photo (at least 1MB in size) of your little one with their full name, nationality, birth date, hospital, and parents' names to editor@beijing-kids.com. Due to space constraints, we will only publish photos of babies born in Beijing after October 1, 2016.



Thomas at AmCare Women's and

Children's Hospital.

September 29, 2016 to Feaky Qian and

Dominic Xu at BC Women's Hospital.



ocial media was in the news recently when Harvard revoked admission offers to at least 10 of their students for "obscene Facebook messages" which were deemed both racist and sexually offensive.

The norms around the use of social media have yet to be clearly defined, yet over recent years the explosion in the use of these platforms has continued to stretch how people use their devices and how and to whom they communicate. In addition, there have been recent pushes by the likes of Facebook and other providers to seek out and eliminate alternative or fake news. But I digress.

For the most part we assume that what we write and to whom we communicate on a daily basis is part of our freedom of speech. The texts we send, the pictures or articles we post, we believe are within our rights. We also assume that those posts are protected by our security settings. We assume too that when we belong to a group, moderated or not, the sharing of ideas, beliefs etc... is contained within that group.

Harvard's reaction clearly shows that regardless of what people may think about the privacy and security of social media, even within a moderated group, people are watching and reading. Most schools have an Honor Code.

It is important to consider, on a personal level, what is your need for social media. Why do you have it and what do you really want people to see? A colleague states the following: "Treat your social media accounts as though they are billboards on the interstate. Don't post anything you don't want the world to see. Moreover, be conscious of language, ideas or images that others might be using in conversation with you as they can be perceived of a reflection of you and your values" (Peter Van Buskirk). In other words, don't just assume that people can see what you have posted, but trust that they will.

But it is not just Harvard or schools that are interested in what you post. Future employers are also investigating potential employees. Why? Well, it all comes down to values and morals. Like schools, companies have a culture and image they wish the public to see. As a member of a school or company you are a member of that community and also a representative of that school or company. That organization expects that by extending an invitation to join them that you believe in the ethos of that organization. It is not just about a degree or a

We have all, at times, become a bit lax about the material or messages that we send. So some words of caution:

- 1. Trust that someone unintended will be looking, from school admission representatives to Human Resource managers.
- 2. Don't post pictures of yourself doing anything illegal or otherwise illicit, such as underage drinking. While you may consider these behaviors okay, others may not.
- 3. Check to see what friends may be posting to your accounts and discard anything that may be deemed inappropriate.
 - 4. Be aware of what is considered "online Bullying."
- 5. While not the same, but certainly something to be aware of, through sites like Zillow and LinkedIn, Financial Aid officers at universities can now access financial documentation that may affect Financial Aid awards.
 - 6. If you wrote it, posted it, it's yours! Even if it is meant in jest!

Technology today has created a sense of separation from a larger social context. But the reality is messages travel faster and wider than ever before. Just consider the idea of going viral. No doubt that intent of the person posting was to their group of friends. But friends have friends who have friends and so on. The Six Degrees of Separation from Kevin Bacon are truer today than ever. Technology has made the world a much smaller place and definitely much more connected than Six Degrees.



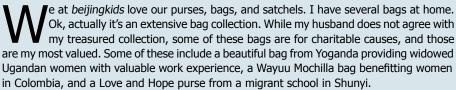
About the Writer

Hamilton Gregg is the founder of Hamilton Gregg International Educational Consulting and has worked in education since 1985. He helps students and their families understand their personal and educational needs and find the right school to meet their requirements. If you are a student or parent who would like to ask Gregg a question on our blog, please email webeditor@beijing-kids.com for a referral. Visit his website at www.hamiltongregg.com

A Bag To Do Good

Springsations, unique and wonderfully made bags with purpose

By Pauline van Hasselt



When I recently saw a dear friend with an eye popping bag, I immediately needed to know where she found it. She told me at a recent market, and that it was made by Springsations a social enterprise working with single moms in Beijing. We at beijingkids wanted to know more, as supporting these families in a difficult situation while buying bags is one of the best ideas ever.

Springsations started as a work program where moms and other women could gain training and find employment suitable to their skills and aspirations. A former employee of theirs came for help when just three months pregnant, and from this Springsations then decided to turn this wonderful place into a safe space for mothers who have been rejected by their families. Springsations now also has a shelter for single mothers and their young children.

Munchkinland is the space for the kids where they learn to read, write, and play while the mothers work. "It's a place where dreams come true and lifetime friendships are made. There's fun, games, songs, dancing, and toys galore, but most of all, lots of love." Having a safe space for the children is such a relief for the mothers working on these outrageously cool satchels.

The owner explained "Springsations is more than a bag company; it is hope for the future to those who come to work here. When workers come to work at Springsations, they start with the basic cutting, and taping. They do some of the basic chores, like cleaning or running errands until they get to know us and start to share their gifts and talents with us, and then we look for jobs that fit their personality, gifts, and abilities and then provide training. At Springsations, we recognize that everyone who walks through our door has gifts, talents, and special things they can bring to the table"

The bags are well made, and sturdy with very happy and colorful fabrics. The designs are versatile and there is a size suitable for a variety needs. These bags are great for shopping, traveling, and even diapers. I for one am very excited to get my hands on a fashionable new bag from this company (don't tell my husband), while doing some good in the process. For more information visit their website www. springsations.com.



his time at beijingkids, due to it being the "Innovative Education" issue, we decided to pamper a teacher instead of a mother. Teachers are the core of the Beijing school community and the reason kids want to come and learn. Teachers have the very hard job of dividing their attention over multiple kids and making sure their development is on point, and most importantly making sure that the kids are healthy and happy.

Jule Schimann moved from Germany three years ago with her husband to the exciting city of Tianjin. Schimann, who was a therapist, found a great job at House of Knowledge (HOK) working in the nursery with toddlers from one-and-a-half to three years old. Her husband works in Tianjin and Schimann works in Beijing, and together they divide and conquer. The couple spends time together on the weekends exploring both cities.

We meet at Go's Vari Hair Boutige, the new work place of stylist Wendy Wang. The salon is luxurious and has a spacious feeling. Wang and Schimann have a meeting to see what will be the best look for Schimann and they agree on a short cut. Shimann never had a short hairstyle before, so she is quite exited; they also opt for some highlights making sure she stays brunette but adding a little oomph.

Following the makeover, Shimann was surprised at how great she looked with short hair. The kids in the classroom were stunned, and gazed at her with big eyes following this major style change. When she met her husband the following weekend at a restaurant, he was also speechless and said "I can't believe how good short hair can look."

Go's Vari Hair Boutique Guangcai International Mansion 18-30 Gongti xilu Chaogyang District 朝阳区 工体西路 光彩国际公 寓底商 18-3号 Daily 11am-10pm (8530 6505)

Products Used

Meishowiem Face Powder Cazador Face Powder Bobbi Brown Lipstick Salmon Max Factor Black Mascara MUA eye shadow Elisabeth Arden eye shadow





STEP 3 Wendy styles Jule's hair in different ways showing the versatility of the new cut





STEP 2 Wendy adds a few highlights to Jule's short hair to give it more depth



STEP 4 Jule gets makeup applied to complete the new look



Enlightening apps for the school year

By Soumya Satheesan

or those looking to feed their brains with the knowledge and challenges that they crave, check out the following free apps that will help keep your thinking skills sharp and ready for the new school year.



Games

Lumosity

Scientists and game designers have come together to develop this brain training game. Lumosity is a simple online tool that allows anyone to train core cognitive abilities, such as memory and attention. Challenge your brain with more than 30 different games and puzzles, and track your score to help you improve or see how you compare with others. Free to download on iOS and Android.



Have you ever shied away from learning chess, because it seems like too much of a difficult game? This app will boost your confidence by giving you various forms of support on your chess-learning journey. Lessons and videos teach you everything you need to know about openings, endgames, tactics, attacks, and strategy. You can solve tactical puzzles to develop your intuition about the best moves to make, or you can play against others or the computer to strengthen your overall skills. Free to download on iOS and Android.



Language Help

HelloTalk

HelloTalk is an app that you can use to learn languages by chatting with native language speakers from around the world. Choose from over 100 languages and become instantly connected with native speakers. This app offers many language learning tools such as voice-to-text, transliteration, translation, and grammar correction, which will help you pick up the language faster and more efficiently. Free to download on iOS and Android.



ChineseSkill

Similar to the well-known Duolingo, ChineseSkill is a game-based app that makes learning Mandarin a whole lot more fun. The lessons are available in the form of mini-games that test your listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills. The lessons are also split into bite-size pieces that cover topics such as greetings and introductions, shopping, travel, food, dating and flirting, and many more. Free to download on iOS and Android.



edX

edX offers online courses from the world's best universities and institutions including Harvard University, MIT, Tsinghua University, Microsoft, and The Smithsonian. Anyone who loves learning will benefit from the plethora of courses in subjects like programming, calculus, and business, which will fit into even the busiest of schedules. Free to download on iOS and Android.



Brilliant

Are you looking to improve your math and science skills? Then this "brilliant" app is for you! Master subjects like chemistry, number theory, and computer science through conceptual quizzes, written by mathematicians and scientists who are passionate about teaching. Free to download on iOS and Android.



Online courses

Khan Academy

Whether you need extra homework help or you are just passionate about learning, Khan Academy offers videos, interactive exercises, and in-depth articles to help you learn math, science, economics, humanities, and more. You can also find lessons to prepare you for the upcoming SAT, GMAT, or MCAT. This is one of our personal favorite learning tools, as the lessons are easy to understand, and the exercises do a great job of reinforcing the main points. Free to download on iOS and Android.



Fun for kids

Scratch Jr.

Children as young as five can learn the basics of coding with Scratch Jr, an app designed by researchers at Tufts University, MIT Media Lab, and Playful Invention Company. This programming language is a simplification of the more famous Scratch language, as it is suitable for children who have yet to strengthen their reading skills. The objective of this app is to snap together different programming blocks to make adorable characters move, jump, dance, and sing. This app is not only perfect for teaching kids how to code, it is also great for improving their problem solving, design, and creativity skills. Free to download on iPad and Android tablets.

Health Tech

It's a brave new world

By Kipp Whittaker

n days of yore, the closest thing we had to health tech was a rusty old scale sitting in the corner of our bathroom or one of those classic mercury thermometers that could be easily manipulated with the lightbulb technique. After reading this article it should be very apparent Lithat we have moved lightyears beyond these not necessarily outdated, but vastly improved upon tools. It seems like every week we read about some new tech that has emerged providing you with a new problem that needs to be addressed through technology. Here, we've assembled a handful of items that we feel could enhance your Beijing experience and your human experience in equal measure, helping to make a more healthy and positive you through technology.

Muse Brain Sensing Headband

Stress comes with the territory of living in a city of over 20 million people like Beijing. Meditation can be a useful way of cutting through the noise to find relaxation amidst the chaos, but it can be helpful to have something like this Muse headband to guide you through these mental exercises. With its seven EEG (Electroencephalogram) sensors placed along the scalp, the Muse brain sensing headband measures your brain activity in real time and alerts you to calm and stressed moments, and then guides you through a series of exercises so that you may train yourself to identify distractions. Knowing how and when stress is triggered will give you a better idea of how to counteract these feelings with calming techniques, including guided mediation or breathing exercises.

Where to buy: Taobao.com Price: Starting from RMB 2,500





Awair Air Quality **Monitor**

Until recently, having access to a device that could calculate your weight, body mass index, and fat percentage was a rarity. But now they seem to be popping up all around, but this example from Withings also includes a couple extra features like heart rate, temperature, and air quality monitoring to sweeten the deal. These features, along with it being able to log eight family members' data on an app makes this a very useful tool for monitoring the physical condition of everyone in the household.

Where to buy: Taobao.com Price: Starting from RMB 1,300

Withings Smart

In Beijing, we are no strangers to air quality monitoring systems. It comes with the territory as they say. But while we don't lack in helpful monitors that tell you whether or not it is safe indoors or out, we do lack in the monitors that provide other helpful information about the air quality in your abode. The Awair does just that, and it isn't just a clever name. Along with providing you with real-time data about particle matter in your apartment, it also presents info about humidity, temperature, and carbon dioxide levels. This can be essential if you have breathing or skin problems, and there is also a list of presets you can choose from including pregnancy, beauty, wellness, and sleep that provides helpful information about what you need to do to achieve these optimal levels for your living environment.

Where to buy: Taobao.com Price: Starting from RMB 1,600



PHOTO: TAOBAO, JD.COM

Philips Avance Centrifugal Juicer



day can wreak havoc on your back and spinal arrangement. But yes, there's tech for that as well. What a wonderful time to be alive. The Lumo Lift measures what you consider to be the perfect posture and allows you to keep track through pairing it with the app on your smartphone and be notified through a vibration whenever you deviate from this position. Just place the device under your shirt, below your collar bone, using the magnet and calibrate it to your desired posture. It can be a little bit of an annoyance, as it will vibrate whenever you aren't sitting or standing straight, but so is your mom when she examines your spine to check if you have scoliosis. For people with chronic back pain the Lumo Lift could be a game changer, not to mention that better posture helps you breath more efficiently, increases blood circulation, and is proven to make you look and feel better about yourself.

It's no surprise that sitting at your desk all

Where to buy: Taobao.com Price: Starting from RMB 600



Lumo

Withings Thermo: Smart **Temporal Thermometer**



Imagine a thermometer that requires the most minimally invasive method available to check your body temperature within seconds. That's exactly what this is. Using numerous sensors all you have to do is place this against your temporal artery and it automatically finds the hottest point to take its measurement from. Based on age, fever history, and symptoms the Therma App will give you an advanced interpretation, along with educational information on proper medications and dosages. Not only is this impossible to cheat with the old, hold it up to a lightbulb method, but it also connects directly to your smartphone for tracking this information.

Where to buy: Taobao.com Price: Starting from RMB 600

So there is this fad, and we're not sure if you've heard about it yet. It's called juicing. Not to be confused with what is commonly associated with the bodybuilding community, but the act of juicing fruits, and filtering out all of the unessential items so that you are receiving pure nutrition. People around Beijing and beyond are making a small fortune for providing fancy bottled juice cleanses, but maybe you didn't know that a DIY approach could likely save you buckets of money. There are plenty of resources on the internet on making and developing a perfect juice plan that is catered to your own needs and this item from Philips could be a great start towards achieving that.

Where to buy: Various online stores Price: Starting from RMB 1,800

his hotel in the heart of Sanlitun has what is likely the most entertaining dining experience we have ever seen. Think about it, having a luxurious three course meal while the kids are not destroying the environment. Instead the whole family is entertained by an interactive show projected on their plates.

The experience begins when you are seated in a private dining area at the CHAR premium steak house at the Intercontinental Hotel in Sanlitun. The windows are blinded, providing a dimly lit ambiance, and we await the chef to explain to us the menu. As he arrives, walking on the table you might think why would the chef walk on top of the table? This is because he is small, very small. The little chef and his adventures are projected on the white table cloth, like a fun 3D movie on the table.

Each diner has their own little chef, and the plate is set on the middle of the ocean as he comes on a motorboat to prepare the fish soup. Tossing pieces of fish inside and chopping some octopus to add to the soup, while we sit and watch in wonder.

Soon after, the real soup arrives and we devour it with pleasure after seeing how the chef prepared it. The kids are transfixed with the little chef and we hold our breaths to discover what he's up to with the next course. A grill soon takes the stage at each diner's place setting and the little chef grilles





us some veggies and our steak. It's entertaining to see him cook these foods that are about 20 times bigger than our little microchef. Our real steak then arrives and we devour the delicious cut of meat.

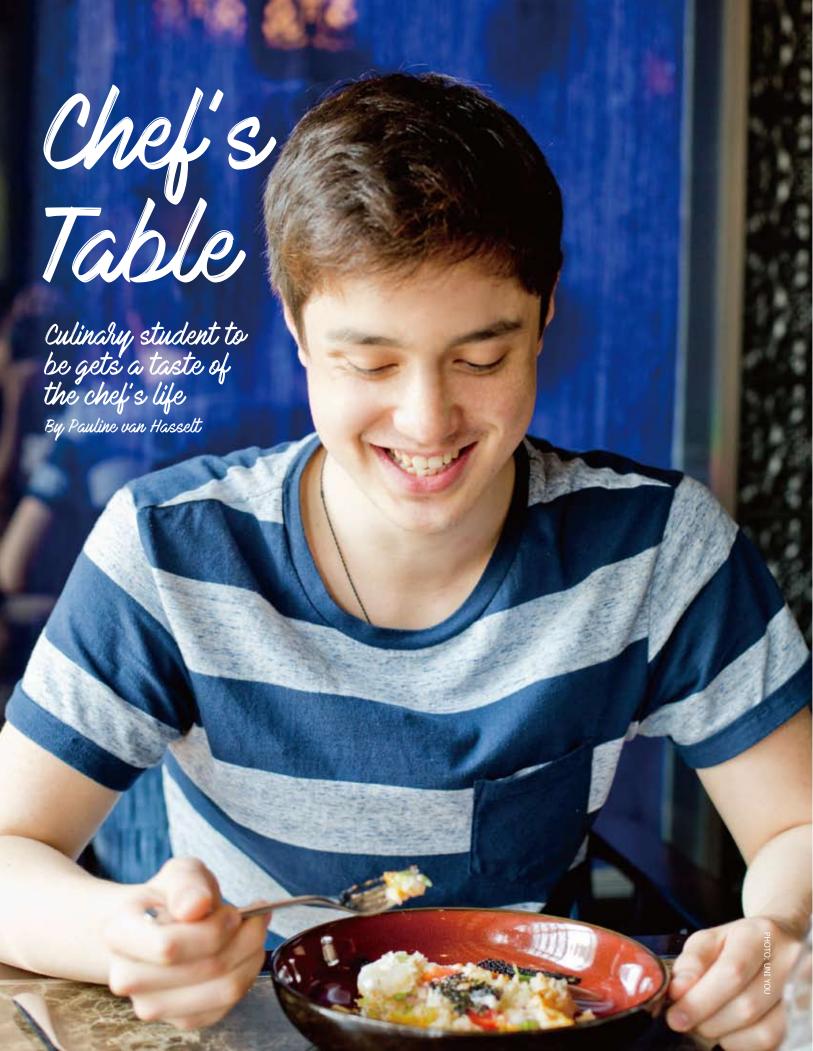
The kids were raving to get the little chef back to the table, and he then returned surrounded in a snowy landscape to build our dessert. He then mixes us up some ice cream from his artic surroundings and we can't help but wonder how we will ever go back to a "normal" restaurant with our kids after they've had this interactive dining experience?





CHAR Dining Room and Lounge Daily 6.30-10pm. InterContinental Hotel, Topwin Mall, 1 Sanlitun Nanlu, Chaoyang District 朝阳区三里屯南路 1号 (8516 0062)





Iready accepted into the business in culinary arts program at Le Cordon Bleu in France, we invited Giacomo Li for a lunch at one of the best Italian restaurants in Beijing. Giacomo just turned 18 and graduated from Beijing No. 55 High School. When we spoke to him, his passion for food and cooking was tangible. When he was around ten years old he started watching his mother cook and from here a chef was born. His half Italian, half Chinese heritage also helped with his passion for food. Giacomo will start his adventure in Paris at the end of September, and to prepare him, we gave him a taste of some of the fine dishes Chef Nello and Chef Manchia have created at MIO, located inside the Four Seasons Hotel.

MIO is an award-winning Italian restaurant with an extravagant interior. The original twist of the culinary delights cooked for us made us wish we were 18 again starting culinary school and learning all the tricks of the trade. We sat in the private area for an exclusive lunch consisting of four courses. We started with a Panzanella Salad. This is a simple Tuscan salad, but these chefs have taken it to another level, by adding seared shrimp and smoked cod roe mayonnaise. The budding culinary student commented that the charcoaled part of the bread was phenomenal.

We then continued with a Black Garlic Lobster Piadina, a very original take on the Chinese *jianbing* prepared with Chinese, Mexican, and Italian influences. We were both wowed by this dish, and Giacomo thought it was very original and would never find this dish anywhere else. He said, "if I could cook something like this I would be very pleased with myself." We then ate Giacomo's favorite dish of the lunch, an Iberico Pork Neck with Radish. The pork was so soft and juicy, and it was hard to imagine that this was the neck of a pig. We all savored this plate without saying a word, which means it was the star of the lunch.

The dessert was also a best seller of the restaurant, a Chuao Milk Layered Chocolate Cake with Sea Salt Ice Cream and a generous portion of truffle shavings. Chef Nello Turco and Chef Joel Manchia join us while Giacomo eats his dessert and speak with the eager teenager about life in the kitchen.

Following the meal, we set off for a tour of the kitchen and Chef Turco explained how things were set up in hotels, and what kind of cool cooking gadgets they get to work with. The chefs at the hotel then offered Giacomo an internship with the restaurant before he starts school in the fall, which could be just the ticket to set him apart from the other culinary students in Paris. It's easy to see that life in the kitchen is hard and the hours are very long. This is not a career choice easily made, especially as Giacomo tells me that becoming a chef is a profession that is a bit frowned upon in Chinese society. For him, to be able to follow his passion in Paris is a dream come true, and we can't wait to see where this journey takes him.











Daily 11.30am-2pm, 5.30-10pm Four Seasons Hotel Beijing, 48 Liang Ma Qiao Road, 100125, Chaoyang

garden is a great resource to learn about wildlife, nature, and where our food comes from. Some of us were lucky enough to grow up with a garden behind the house, even though when I was growing up I never fully appreciated it. Having a special place to see things grow and bloom is rare, especially in Beijing. Unfortunately, this city does not have a lot of backyards, so we must make do with the gardens and parks, in our compounds.

But somewhere in Beijing there is a "secret" garden, hidden on a school campus. Ivy Bilingual Schools involve their kids each year with this flourishing garden space on the school grounds. Planning the garden and cultivating seeds, the children of the school are involved in each step of turning this area into a lush source of nourishment.

The design of the garden is created using natural shapes and walkways, allowing the kids to explore every corner of the garden. The children start by sprouting their potatoes during the winter months and then eventually plant these in the garden when the stem vegetables outgrow their cups. Each class has its own little lot and the kids treasure these plants.

There are many novel ideas that went into creating this garden. Beijing is a dry city, so the students and teachers had to find a solution for this. The garden community layered straw on the ground which helps lock in the soil and create a micro ecosystem. Students also save up rain water in buckets to water the plants later, providing these young minds with a little lesson on water conservation. There is also a compost bin to recycle fruit peels and other items, which will be used for many of the vegetables growing here, like tomatoes, cucumbers, aubergine, peppers, potatoes, beans, and herbs.

Now, the school garden is in full bloom and during outside play hours, classes visit the garden to take care of the plants and observe the nature they created. The kids water their plants, harvest vegetables, and maintain garden logs to record the growth of their plants.

When participating in the Nurseries for Nurseries 2017, the French Embassy and Wedome awarded the Ivy garden with the prize of outstanding vegetable garden design. It's great to see their hard work hasn't gone unnoticed. So along with growing vegetables, it appears that Ivy Bilingual Schools are also cultivating young minds with a passionate interest in nature.



















CREATIVE SUMMERS

How art and theater summer camps combine learning with fun

By Andrew Killeen

"School's out for summer..." But not forever, unless you're Alice Cooper. As we reported in last year's June/July issue, children are at risk of losing significant amounts of learning over the summer months, and teachers often report that much of the fall semester is spent getting students back into the swing of school.

Yet our kids are under increasing pressure to achieve academically and are at risk of missing out on their childhoods. Besides, a substantial body of scientific research shows that play is a vital aspect of a child's development. In a 2012 report titled "The Importance

of Play," Dr David Whitebread of Cambridge University wrote: "There is very clear evidence that children's cognitive development and emotional well-being are related to the quality of their play, and a number of studies have shown that individuals who are not well developed in these areas are not playful."

How can parents square this circle, and prevent summer fallback, while still allowing their kids to enjoy those precious weeks of leisure? One increasingly popular approach is summer camp.

Traditionally summer camps involved kids staying away from their parents for days or

even weeks at a time, sleeping in tents or dormitories, and taking part in outdoor activities. There are still plenty of these options available in and around Beijing, but many camps now offer daycare only. This is a more affordable option, as well as being more suited to younger children and parents who miss their kids being around.

However parents will be rightly concerned about the quality as well as the affordability of their child's summer activities. To find out about the educational value of day camps, we talked to two of Beijing's most respected providers.

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Marianne Daquet came to Beijing from her native France 11 years ago, having been brought here, she says, "by chance." In September 2012 she set up Atelier Art School.

"When we first opened it was like me opening a small school, giving classes myself, until I found a teacher willing to work freelance," she tells us. "We had a small offer dedicated mostly to the expat community.

"Later I spent more time thinking about what to teach and how to teach, how to make a difference here in Beijing. Now Atelier is evolving into a comprehensive educational project. We're targeting more Chinese fami-

"Meanwhile the older kids [age 9 to 12] are doing Fablab classes. They're working on same subject, but the classes are oriented on engineering and science, they do experiments. The first Fablab was about Leonardo da Vinci. It got the kids trying to think about how to change things, make them move, while at the same time being an artist and staying creative.

"In the afternoon the younger kids don't have a class, and the older kids go to art class."

We ask about the profile of kids attending the camp.



lies, and we've expanded to two branches, in Sanlitun and Shunvi.

"We're passing on art education in a very specific way which is unique in Beijing, teaching children to create, to think, to be openminded, to develop an open mind.

"We're quite passionate about it!" she laughs, and that passion is apparent when you talk to her.

We ask her what a typical day at the Atelier summer camp involves.

"We have two classes in the morning," she says. "The younger kids, age 5 to 8, have a two hour art class which is thematic, with a different theme each week. Every year Adeline comes up with new ideas!"

Adeline Parrot has been working at Atelier for three years, planning the classes. Daquet tells us more about the themes she has developed for the camps.

"Last week we entered the world of David Hockney. This week it's about traveling into space. Next week it's history, going back to the Middle Ages. Sometimes we go to the jungle through the eyes of Henri Rousseau, 'Le Douanier'... The camp has a strong art basis, and a strong history basis.

"It depends on the week," Daguet tells us. "Early in the summer they're more or less all from international school, then later in the summer we have kids from public schools. We teach in English so they need a certain level to follow the classes."

Do children from different backgrounds integrate and communicate, we wonder?

"We come up with the subject," Daquet says, "but they have to work together, and think together. It's good for them because

they don't all have the same experience. We guide them through the classes, but team building happens naturally. We don't do any formal icebreakers, that's not a French thing! But they all work on the same subject, and we ask them to get involved, to think, react. Soon enough they will all work together, discuss together."

But is it harder for

children from Asian cultures to understand the context of western art?

"When we did the Roman Empire with younger kids, all Chinese, they were like 'what are you talking about?' But if you talk about castles and knights, they all understand that. Then we talk to them about architecture, about Gothic and Romanesque styles, about stained glass... All the classes are planned and written. Adeline prepares a long introduction, it's really precise; like a history and art class at the beginning."

We ask Parrot how she helps children relate to art from past centuries.

"I explain it to them like a story," she says, "and try to make bridges between the art and their life. I have a lot of pictures to show them, and videos, and I keep it simple. I never have problems with the historical aspects."

But the children learn more than art and history, Daquet tells us.

What do kids learn from the camp, other than artistic skills?

"What they will also learn is what is at the core of all our classes: to be creative, to react to the subject, to think critically, to develop independence through the way they work which is unique here in Beijing.

"They might say 'I cannot do it' – we say 'yes you can' – and at the end they will be so proud. One group of 5 to 7 year olds made Viking longships, and at the end they were 'wow, I did this,' and we say 'yes, you did it by yourself.' It's a big part of they way we teach here, getting them to do things on their own. There are the visible things that they learn, and then the invisible things which are so important."

We see the pride she talks about when we visit the class. What's your favorite artwork which you've made here, we ask 6 year old Oliver?

"Jackson Pollock Milky Way!" he announces enthusiastically. He takes me over to a big spatter painting, with drops of paint representing the stars, and explains to me how he did it using a toothbrush.

"Some of the points can glow," he says.





Most of the art classes teach traditional, low-tech methods such as this, Dacquet tells us, but the Fablab is a different matter. Here kids get to use a 3D printer, a milling machine, and computer-aided design to produce their creations.

"For the Middle Ages theme they made a castle. The kids worked on the design with Sebastian. They decided the shape of the castle, he added accessories like the drawbridge. He also designed a catapult, and they worked together to create it.

"We only opened Fablab in March, it's all new. Next year we will try an architecture class, that will be interesting with a 3D printer."

At Fablab we meet Finn, Oscar, Theo and Benjamin, who are keen to show off their creation.

"We're making a rocket," they tell us. "It's actually going to launch!"

"What's the best thing about Fablab?" we ask, and they respond with a volley of different reasons.

"I like rockets!"

"I like to make new things."

"We get to ride on skateboards."

"They allow us to use tools usually only grown ups use."

However when we ask whether Fablab is learning or fun, the answer is unanimous: "Both!"

Fablab is only a few months old, but Chris Verrill of the Beijing Academy of Performing Arts is a veteran. Originally from San Francisco, he's been running Theater Camps for 11 years now, and has been involved in theater for "thirty-something years," he tells us, "the last 12 here in China. I've done 75 shows, a

couple of thousand performances..."

His background also helps him maintain the educational value of the camps.

"I spent time in the US working for PBS, doing educational TV," he says. "Sesame Street is the most researched show on television. They research not just how kids watch TV, but how they learn from it. All the Muppets that the kids love are designed to teach a specific lesson. So for example with Grover, the lesson is it's OK to make mistakes.

"I've taken from that experience all that thought on how to make something entertaining and also educational. I love entertaining kids then sneaking in the education so they don't even notice. It's also true that kids learn through music, which is why music is an important part of educational theater, and language learning."

And for Verrill education is the driving purpose of the summer camps.

"The show at the end of the week is not the point; the point is the educational process. We could buy sets and they'd look prettier, but we like the kids to be invested and then they learn."

He sees this as being what makes his approach unique in Beijing.

"In the US there would nothing unique about what we do, or in the UK. These are programs we have lifted lock, stock, and barrel from ones I did in the US. But the mere fact that we've brought it here is cutting edge. When we did our first show no one else was doing this.

"I've been to other drama programs and you walk in and the sets are beautiful, but the children didn't do it themselves. They have no vested interest in the creation of the sets. We're focused on the learning process and not on making kids look pretty on stage.

"In each show we have six song and dance numbers, so that's 12 items all together. Chinese schools will put the same time into just one dance. Our musical directors come with four songs done, the other two the kids write. Is it good? Sometimes it is! But even when it's not the kids learn. Every morning we have the kids come in and we say, what do you want to learn today?"

He shows us the board where they have written their goals for the camp on Post-its. "My camp goal," one child has written, "is to have fun, make new friends and speak more loudly!" The theme of fun is a recurring one, and is encouraged by the camp organizers.

"We want them to be learning and having fun," Verrill says. "This is their summer vacation, so we want to make sure they come to





us and have fun for a while because they deserve it."

The children spend their day in eight classes lasting 30-45 minutes each, learning not only performance skills but also set design, costume, lighting and stage management. We ask Verrill about the wider educational benefits of the camp.

"They learn typical theater things," he says, "like teamwork and confidence building. Imagine if you're 8 years old standing on that stage [the camp takes place at Harrow School] and trying to get your voice to the back of the room. You can give them a microphone and they'll sound better, but they don't learn.

"They spend a fair amount of time learning how to project. 99 percent are not going on to become actors, but the fundamental skills they've learned will help them. They'll be able to walk into any room and project confidence."

The children also help each other to build that confidence, Verrill tells us.

"One of the things we do is we assign an older child to be the mentor of a younger child. The older learns by teaching, the younger gets individual attention. The teaching assistants are frequently doing one on one work, if at 6 the kids are having difficulty reading or remembering their lines. We love taking the shy children and making them less shy."

As well as confidence, the children are developing their creativity.

"On the first day of costumes we ask the kids, 'what's it supposed to look like? What colour is the tree?' Then we say, 'What about a purple and blue tree?' There's no wrong answers; it's art, so be creative."

Verrill sees a cultural difference in children's response to this challenge.

"When we tell children we they can paint

a blue tree, westerners go for it straightaway. The Chinese kids take a bit longer, but by the end of a two, four, or six week program they're on board. It's inherent in human nature and the kids get it... and their parents love it."

He's also seen significant changes in the profile of children attending the camp.

"It's open to children aged 6 to 14, but for this camp we don't have a single 14 year old. It skews lower, we have lots of 6, 7, and 8 year olds. Educational theater is like that everywhere, and it always skews more toward girls than boys. It's true for adults too: in the main stage shows women out number men two to one.

"Our kids come from all round the world. We did a late audition for kids coming in from the US and Hong Kong, who are spending their summer here. When we first started it was all expat kids. Now, with the dynamic and make up of expats in Beiing changing, the kids and audience are overwhelmingly

Chinese."

They haven't changed the fundamentals of their approach though, but pitch it at a level appropriate to the children's ability.

"We have beginning programs and intermediate, and we hope to launch an advanced program," Verrill says. "Everything's in English, the production, the teaching, and so on. If there's something they're not understanding, we'd have put them in beginning camp. Which is good, because I can't speak Chinese!

"We try to choose shows which are pretty accessible. Everybody knows the story of Snow White, and the next camp we're doing The Three Musketeers; people know that too."

But Verrill is optimistic about the future of theater in China.

"When we first started this 12 years ago people didn't even know that this was an art form. They didn't understand the whole concept of what theater was. So for many of the kids this is their first experience, their parents had to research and find us. But one of the wonderful things that's happening in China is that in the past two or three years, the government has really changed fast how they value performing arts in education.

"As China does, when it embraces something, it usually does it full throttle."





PHOTOS: DAVE'S STUDIO

Chris/李思坦 What was the biggest earthquake in world history? And how strong was it?

The largest earthquake in the world was in Chile in 1960, it was magnitude 9.5!

Stella/李昕宇 Where is the safest place to be in an earthquake? If indoors, you should find shelter under a door frame or sturdy table. If outdoor, make sure to stay far from electric cables, houses (risk of roof tiles falling) or trees.

> **James /**何沅东 Who can predict earthquakes? Animals, scientists or others?

Nobody can predict earthquakes, unfortunately. What we can do however is to be prepared for it. By that, I mean, build safer structures and know how to respond. Scientists, on the other hand, can predict where large earthquakes are likely to occur based on the movement of tectonic plates and the location of fault zones. They can also guess when it may happen by studying past earthquakes and detecting where and how much pressure is building along fault lines. Interestingly, but not scientifically proven, animals have been shown to predict earthquakes, by for example being able to detect the release of gas and charged particles that may occur prior to an earthquake, and then escaping their usual habitat.

Chris /辛亿 Are there ways to warn people an earthquake is about to happen?

GPS stations are present in most seismic zones, and more in populated areas than remote areas of course. These stations continuously measure Earth's movement. They record by how many millimeters or centimeters Earth moved, and can also show us that many small events are occurring which could be a sign of a big one coming. Also, sensors near seismically active zones can detect seismic waves and alert nearby cities through early warning systems.

Martina/李悉曼
How long do earthquakes last?
That depends on the magnitude of the earthquake. The largest earthquakes may last up to 1 minute but most earthquakes last between a few seconds and 30 seconds.

Sweetie/孙甜甜
How does an earthquake cause damage?
Actually, damages are caused by structures like buildings or roads that are not strong enough to resist earthquakes. When an earthquake happens in the wild for example, you will only see cracks on the ground, or fallen trees.

Julia/刘一萱 Foreshocks, main shocks, aftershocks---what are the differences?

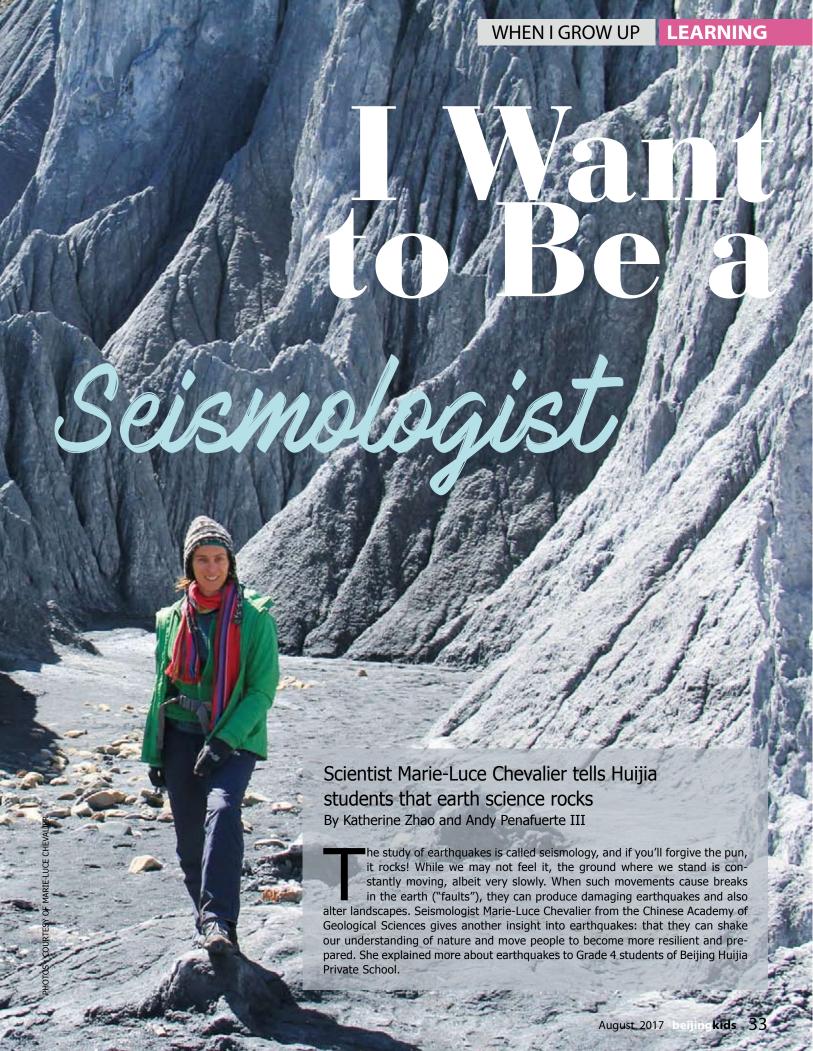
Foreshocks are earthquakes generally of smaller magnitude and they happen before the big one called the main shock. Aftershocks are earthquakes of smaller magnitude which happen after the main shock, all in the same area of course. However, sometimes, the aftershock can be almost as big as the main shock: for example, the earthquake that struck Nepal in 2015.

What does an earthquake feel like?
You feel the ground shaking if the magnitude is strong enough. You will probably also feel dizzy since your feet are standing on something that is moving! If indoors, you can also hear the earthquake. I've been in a M5.6 earthquake in California and what struck me was the very loud noise coming from the ceiling, as if many people were moving chairs above your head.

Taylor/罗云 Where do earthquakes usually occur?

Most earthquakes happen along what scientists call "plate boundaries." The most seismically active zone is located around the Pacific Ocean and is called the Pacific Ring of Fire, where approximately 90 percent of earthquakes occur. Most active volcanoes are also present along the countries and territories across the Pacific Ocean (Japan, Indonesia, and Alaska, among others).

James/石岩成 What should we do after a strong earthquake? Check yourself for injuries and get help if needed, then help others when possible; move to a safer location if necessary. Move out of coastal areas in case of tsunamis, away from bridges, electric wires, and stay out of damaged buildings.



Grade 4 and 5 BIBA Students Fill This Month's Blank Canvas



Cindy Li, 11 (China)

"The buttons are round and bright like lollipops." I chose this topic because I love candy! I cut out one picture of a button and repeated it, changing the sizes and the colors. It's not perfect but it was my first digital collage, and I am proud of it.



Ingrid Fu, 9 (China) and Zoe Qi, 9 (China)

We were inspired by a rainforest full of snakes, trees, bugs, and flowers, so we made many different patterns with these shapes. We made sure we had lots of greens and blues because there are so many plants there and it rains a lot!

Stephanie An, 11 (China)

First I wrote with a simile – "The opera singer's voice is as croaky as a frog" – and made a digital collage. Sir Froggy, as I call him, has his notes all jumbled up in a pile and is unable to make a sound that is worthy of being heard!





Dora Liu, 10 (China/Canada)

This picture shows a dream of mine. I've always imagined that the blue sky could change into the ocean. I used six different pictures to make this collage. It was a bit challenging to connect the sky and the water even though they're both blue!



Sofia Ning, 10 (China) and Tina Liu, 10 (China)

Our theme was the ocean because we love to swim, and we love fish! We mixed colors and based our shapes on things you can find like fish, shells, seaweed, bubbles, and sea stars. We chose complimentary colors – blue and orange - to make it look bright! We love our project!



Katarina Dou, 11 (China)

The giraffe's neck is so long that his head is out in space. I love looking at pictures of the universe. I searched for different kinds of animals to collage with the Milky Way, and thought it would be fun to put in a giraffe because they are so tall.

Lucy Qiao, 11 (China)

In this digital collage, I compared the setting sun to an orange. Putting the sun in front of some clouds but behind others was the hardest part, but I think it looks pretty real.



Justin Zhang, 9 (China) and Joey An, 10 (Korea)

We chose our colors to match the African savanna. We made patterns by repeating colors and shapes with Amaziograph, an iPad App. We digitally mixed colors and used the same ones in each design. We love the patterns we made!







give their attention to something is different from the educational model developed in a different era.

According to British author and educational speaker Sir Ken Robinson, traditional education systems follow a "manufacturing model" based on industrialization: linearity, conformity, and batching people. In a talk at a TED conference in 2010, he challenged educators worldwide to revolutionize the way education is viewed, saying that ideas and concepts should meet the demands and circumstances of the current century. [2]

"We have to recognize that human flourishing is not a mechanical process; it's an organic process," he says, explaining that education should be patterned on the principles of agriculture. "[While] you cannot predict the outcome of human development, all you can do, like a farmer, is create the conditions under which they will begin to flourish."

Resistance to Change

Shifting educational paradigms is no easy feat for schools, let alone for teachers and parents. For one thing, Gregg says traditional educational systems cannot cope with the way 21st century citizens and students focus, as they are constantly fed with information in different ways and different time frames.

Then there's the issue of resistance in the education sector, as pointed out by scholars worldwide. Dr. Tarek Razik, former head of school at the International School of Beijing (ISB), believes that while teachers are open to change and committed to bringing the best to

their students, the very profession of teaching requires them not to fail. ""You're asking me to teach in a different way, but I've never done it that way.' Or, 'Okay, there's a better way to do this. What if it doesn't work?' [Teachers] are afraid to show vulnerability, but we all need to be able to show vulnerability as we learn new things," he says.

Other causes of opposition include when the traditional roles of the teacher and the student are challenged, or when the reforms promote "mechanization," resulting in the "dehumanization" of the educational process, or when the innovation is complex or fails because of ignorance, [3] or when the disruption in the status quo triggers "feelings of insecurity" that "are regarded as an attack on professional competence and identity." [4]

Razik mentions that parents find it difficult to deal with the reforms because of the difference to the way they were educated. "Almost everybody's been to school and many of our parents are extremely successful. They, therefore, are hesitant to do anything different. Forget about the whole child, forget about how happy my child is. More homework, more tests, more quizzes, more academic rigor. More successful." At least this is what many traditional parents think, he says.

"Humans are typically resistant to change and particularly when it comes to drastic changes," Gregg says, "and parents have to let go of the model they grew up with. For an educator to change totally, they have to rethink how to teach. And for people who get the ability to utilize technology to inspire minds, that's the ticket [to success.]"

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Sparking Innovation in Education

Many schools worldwide, including in Beijing, have begun combining multiple methods and strategies to advance innovative education systems, which the World Economic Forum (WEF) says can "provide the next generation with the skills of the future." The WEF has also encouraged leaders to use approaches which can spark innovation in education.

Education for the 21st century does not only use technology as a platform to teach. Rather, it focuses on developing the highly valuable skills and abilities needed in a rapidly changing digital society. [cross-reference to feature schools?]

Gregg explains that innovative education is a setting which combines theory and practice, allowing students to utilize information through experiential or project-based opportunities. While these learning methods have been used for a while, recent approaches have adapted them specifically for the 21st century, personalizing the learning experience of an individual.

Experiential learning, according to Keystone Academy, is "the deep learning that occurs through direct experience of doing. Keystone's curriculum dedicates an Experiential Learning Program (ELP) week for students from Grades 4 to 10 to learn outside their campus."

"ELP is arranged sequentially across the grade years and linked thematically to the arts and architecture of China. All travel experiences link to what [students] learn in school and help [them] build community between students, teachers, and [their] surroundings," Keystone says.

Humanities teacher Xuebin Wang said innovative educational activities at Keystone are not just about technology, but also exploration and reconstitution of culture. "Innovative education seems like a 'charming phase' but in my mind, we shouldn't let innovation make education fashionable [or trendy]. I let my students use technology just when it's necessary."

In his Grade 6 class, for example, Wang lets his students re-create historical stories through cartoons. Whereas in his Grade 7 class, pupils compare strides in Chinese history and culture to current events around the world. Students taking up his Chinese Civilization class learn not only about their roots, but also why they are world citizens and what they can do to cooperate with other people in addressing global issues like climate change, pollution, and violence.

On the other hand, project-based learning provides an opportunity for students to progress their skills and acquire knowledge by working on an "authentic, engaging, and complex question, problem, or challenge" for an extended period of time. [5] In Beijing, one of the schools that make use of project-based learning is ISB, through its Futures Academy program.

"We start in Grade 7 because the kids are mature enough to do a lot of the off-campus things that we want to do. We still do parts of the Futures Academy in all grades. But to have the kids really do what we want them to do off-campus, be independent learners, there needs to be a level of maturity," says Razik.

He explains that in most innovative educational approaches, including the project-based learning approach, teachers are viewed as a facilitator who helps students go through the processes in solving

challenges or problems. But while learners are given autonomy, Razik says they still need to be taught and work under the standards and framework set in the program.

Oftentimes, mainstream education doesn't teach other necessary ideas and skills for children, and that is what after-school programs fill in. But as well as using technology as an innovative approach to boost kids' learning, after-school programs should help students make "conscious choices" in the role technology plays in their life, according to Mike MacKinnon, director at The Learning Center (TLC).

"The key is in helping students develop first the analytical tools that are applicable regardless of whether they are on- or offline, and then teaching them how to use that knowledge when they are online," MacKinnon says, adding that students who have mastered these tools should be able to address problems and critical issues by engaging in discussions and using available tools to research and develop solutions.

Personalizing Education

Making basic education, let alone innovative educational approaches, available to everyone is a big challenge for governments and educational leaders worldwide. Technology can solve part of that big problem, though the future looks uncertain because of, again, the rapid changes in digital society. For example, the introduction and use of groundbreaking technologies and devices in education has excited our imaginations in how learning is developed or personalized, and how it prepares citizens for life outside school.

Robinson, at his TED talk in 2010, said that there are many models that can be used to reform and transform education, but learning grows on a personal level. "It's about customizing to your circumstances and personalizing education to the people you're actually teaching.

It's about creating a movement in education in which people develop their own solutions, but with external support based on a personalized curriculum."

Gregg argues that personalized education is interesting, but doing it on a systematic and massive level will make it "technologicalized," opening a "potential to miss kids where they are." He goes further to explain that technologies like artificial intelligence and automation can go as far as boosting learning experiences, but they don't have "humanity or the cognitive ability, or the sensibility to understand what everything is."

Among all these changes, it's still up to the parents to choose the best educational opportunities for their children. "I think parents must be completely open-minded and try to understand what education means from all points of view and the multiple ways that it can be delivered, and understand the value of character development and how it happens," Gregg says.

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Empowering Tools

How technology can help both kids with special needs and their parents

By Andy Penafuerte III

hildren with disabilities, according to UNICEF, are among "the most marginalized and excluded groups in society," often regarded as "inferior," which puts them at risk of discrimination and being misunderstood. Global estimates put at least 93 million children worldwide with some form of disability, and that they are likely to have lesser access to medical services or attend school.

Various intergovernmental organizations and enterprises worldwide have invested heavily in special education research and programs to provide these children with the care and assistance they need, including rehabilitation. While traditional services like face-to-face therapy or consultations have worked in the development of children with disabilities, new strides in technology offer more promising results. One such advancement, PenguinSmart, is an online service that "empowers" parents to lead their child's rehab. We caught up with its CEO, Amy Kwok, to explain more.

How important is rehabilitation for children with disabili-

Depending on the type of delay, many of these children will need one or more types of developmental rehab therapy (e.g. communication, occupational, physical) and perhaps even special education support to realize their full potential. These rehab sessions are generally not one-off or short-term classes that can "fix" a child in two weeks, but commonly require months or even years depending on the specific condition.

One of the key problems to providing children with the care that they need is limited access to expertise. The traditional model for developmental rehab is consultation-based, with children meeting regularly and in-person with a trained therapist. Unfortunately, therapists are often concentrated in big cities and can only support a limited number of people in a given month. While these problems are global, they are especially pronounced in China, with official estimates conservatively pointing to a shortage of over 300,000 rehab professionals.

What are the groundbreaking technologies that schools, homes, and other institutions worldwide have recently grown to rely on to help children with disabilities?

In the field of communication rehab, which impacts 80 percent of all developmentally challenged children, the new global trend that experts are pushing is a shift from "expert-led interventions" to "parent-led Interventions." Research has shown that parents who are trained and equipped can be just as effective – and in some cases even more effective – in helping their kids as professional speech pathologists. This is innovation in both mentality and model, shifting from a mentality of outsourcing care to the experts to "doing it yourself." The challenge, however, is in how to provide customized guidance to parents at a large scale.

New tech advances make this possible. With mobile devices, parents can now do developmental evaluations from home and upload high quality videos for remote therapists to determine the appropriate rehab plan for a child. Plans can be pushed to parents online, while machine learning technology can constantly tailor every family's rehab plan behind-the-scenes based on parent feedback and data collected. Therapists can oversee this whole process online, freeing them up to act as trainers who are available for video consultations as needed. By incorporating a parent-led model assisted by technology, we estimate that we can enable a therapist to oversee 10-15 times more patients than they traditionally could.

How do children with special needs benefit from using these tools as well as parent-led rehab?

Developmental rehab is a race against time. The earlier a child starts rehab and the more frequently they are trained against the challenges, the more likely their physical body will adapt and improve functionally, even if the child continues to be affected by the underlying condition or disease.

One benefit of a tech-enabled parent-led rehab model is early evaluation and detection. According to one study in the US, over 70 percent of parents with a communication-delayed child do not find out until nearly age 6, after they have already missed the best window to help. If they could do a quick and easy developmental evaluation at home, however, these parents could potentially find out years earlier and not lose precious time.

Frequency also matters. Imagine a Down syndrome child who does not know how to express certain concepts by putting two words together, and it takes her 50 tries before she can get it right. She may be encouraged to try 5 times during a single therapy session. However, if that is the only time she is encouraged to try, then it would take 10 sessions over several months before she can pass the threshold and actually express herself. Imagine how much faster she could reach 50 if the stimulation training were done regularly at home - during play time, during family time, and before bed - because her parents knew what to do and proactively encouraged her.

How do these tools prepare children with disabilities for the future?

Tools that facilitate parent-led intervention for communication delays actually address one of the major determinants of school readiness and learning capacity. This model aligns with the way cognitive and social development happens before school age, when young children learn best from their parents rather than from strangers/teachers. Studies have shown that communication delays affect not only academic performance but also emotional health and self-esteem.

To what extent can technology be used to teach children with special needs? What are some of the technology's limitations in the classroom or at home?

Most experts would explain that parent-led intervention works best when it comes to helping children be immersed in communication cues and subsequently picking up how to express themselves - accumulation of vocabulary, emotional cues, the use of grammar, and interpretation of context. This works with children with intelligence disabilities, autism, cerebral palsy, overall delays from premature birth, and simple communication delays. Even for the non-verbal children, there are ways to incorporate augmentative and alternative communication methods, such as simple sign language, picture-based cards and chat board, into family daily communications to help the child better connect with their family members.

On the other hand, as most people would not know how to explain to another person how to pronounce hidden sounds like "g, h" let alone where another did wrong, challenges related to physical anatomy that requires training another to listen and differentiate sound, such as stutter, lisp, pronunciation issues related to complex muscle atrophy, requires more specialized training and technique to intervene, and is more effectively done by the therapists.

How does technology make teachers and parents more confident in their ability to interact and contribute to the development of children with disabilities?

Online services such as PenguinSmart are empowering parents to directly contribute to their child's rehab to a level that they previously could not. In communication rehab, we combine expert insight with the power of machine learning to help parents understand where their child is developmentally and how they can start helping today.

One key benefit to parent-led rehab for caregivers is that it takes away the helplessness that parents often feel and empowers them to directly contribute to their child's improvement. Such engagement also helps build a stronger emotional bond with their special needs child, replacing the sense of guilt and disappointment that many feel for not discovering the condition earlier or being powerless to help.

Parents who have used the PenguinSmart platform say they are now more appreciative of the small wins their children makes, and they are also more reasonable, objective, and calm when facing their child every day. They have also reported greater peace of mind knowing that they are being guided by trained experts, and appreciate that the service helps them weave rehab into their daily interactions with their child. Lastly, they have seen a rise in the intentionality of interactions with their child, which is actually something our online communication development evaluation service analyzes and gives suggestions for.

What are the things that technology will not replace in your field?

In the field of communication rehab, you will probably not see machines replacing speech language pathologists in the near future. The elements of artificial intelligence technology are not yet sophisticated enough to imitate a human who can simultaneously observe, assign meaning to actions, and make a judgment based on a number of variables. Moreover, rehab is a people business that involves emotional connection and trust. Instead, technology will be used to magnify the reach of the speech pathologist and to automate tedious tasks. For example, digital word counters can be used to passively understand the state of a child's vocabulary, and image recognition technology can be used to cut down the amount of time that therapists spend counting eye contact when observing a child.

Biography Information:

Amy Kwok, MBBS, MPH, is cofounder and CEO of PenguinSmart Parenting established in 2014. She studied, worked, and lived in Beijing for 8 years until 2012. As a medical doctor from Peking University and a public health practitioner from Harvard University, Kwok focuses

on children's health and wellness. Her

previous job was designing and implementing health diagnoses decision-tree apps for village nurses and community health workers in developing countries such as India, Mali, and Tanzania. If she wasn't a CEO, she would be scuba diving or playing with children. You can reach her at amy@ mypenguinsmart.com or WeChat at 启儿宝 (Qǐ er bǎo).

Learning Power

How moms from different cultures see academic achievement for their kids

by Andrew Killeen

Amy Chen, originally from the US, has been in Beijing for six years, brought here originally by her husband Adam's job. She works as General Manager at the local office of a US software start-up called Bluestacks. She and Adam have a son Matthew, age 17, and daughter Rachel, age 13, both of whom attend Dulwich College Beijing (DCB). Matthew recently demonstrated his academic prowess by writing and publishing his own book, Easy as Raspberry Pi, which explains how to program a simple computer to access "the internet of things."

What expectations do you have of your child(ren) academically, and how do you communicate your expectations?

I adjust my expectations based on children's unique characters and talents. I have two very different kids: Matthew has a broad range of interests and wants to get involved in many activities, while Rachel is more quiet and prefers to stay home. For Matthew, I urge him to prioritize and focus on a few to get the best result. For Rachel, I encourage her to stay active, get out of her comfort zone, and to try sports and other activities so she can be more open-minded and overcome her fears. I have high expectations for Matthew as he is very smart, and will have much lower expectations for Rachel as she is still working on her shyness.

Do your children do any extra schooling or have personal tuition?

Not regularly, but if our children show interest in something and want to learn more, or need to have better understanding of something that is not taken care of by their school teachers, we'd make arrange-

How much homework do your children do? Do you think it's enough, too much, or too little?

Matthew has a lot of homework which is common for Year 12 [Grade 11]. International Baccalaureate (IB) is very demanding, requiring students to have six activities and study six subjects, with three of them at college level, plus an extended essay on a topic from one of the subjects. We made a choice for Matthew to take IB to prepare



him for a top college in the US. Rachel has about one hour homework each school day, and the amount is about right.

Do your children ever compare themselves to other students in their class, favorably or unfavorably? If so how do you respond?

Matthew almost never makes comparisons, but Rachel does it often. I am always telling Rachel that she only needs to compare to her own past, to be sure she has made progress and tried her best. This is much more important than how she compares to others.

Do you think it's more important for your children to focus on the things they're good at, or catch up on their weaker areas?

I think it would be great if they can do both. I'd encourage them to work on personal projects in the area that they are good at, and improve the weaker areas to an acceptable standard unless it is an elective subject.

How would you respond if your children told you they didn't want to go to college?

I would ask them what they want to do if not going to college. What is the chance of them finding a job they like without having a college degree? How do they plan to support themselves?

What's the best thing teachers have done for your children's education? And the worse?

Teachers provide a stable platform for kids to learn in a set environment – but it is not very flexible. When kids have questions, they often feel uncomfortable asking them in public, and they are not confident enough to schedule a one-on-one session with the teachers. Many kids still have problems with authorities.

Should education be focused on preparing children for their future career, or for life more generally?

A holistic education should help kids to prepare for life more generally, including developing intellectual curiosity, the ability to learn on their own, the ability to work with teams and independently, and the ability to communicate with others.

Do you hope that your children will do better than you did academically?

Of course we all hope our kids will do well academically, and avoid making the same mistakes we made when we were young. However, each child is unique and some are good at it, some are not. I'd encourage them to do their best. In my case, Matthew is definitely doing better than me (he got a full score on the ACT) and Rachel is not (at least, not yet!)

WEST MEETS EAST PARENTING

Keya Mu came to Beijing after graduating, because, she says, it's "a place full of possibilities and opportunities." She's been quick to seize those opportunities, having founded her own company, Yeguo Jewellery. She also loves the way Beijing is such an international city, while preserving her beloved Chinese style. She's married to civil servant Lei Zhao, and they have two children, Elsa (4) and Chloe (2).

What expectations do you have of your children academically, and how do you communicate your expectations?

Sometimes when I look at my two little girls, I imagine the academic success they will achieve in the future, although it doesn't really depend on my wishes. I wish for my older daughter to become an architect who will design many famous buildings. I wish for my younger daughter to become an actress who will play in many great works. But I won't express such wishes to them. I only tell them "do what you love."

Do your children do any extra schooling or have personal tuition?

Elsa also studies drama and horseback riding after class.

How much homework do your children do? Do you think it's enough, too much, or too little?

I think deciding on the amount of homework has much to do with the personality and studying habits of the kid, and the guidance of time management from parents. To begin with, different personalities result in different perceptions of the amount of homework. Take my older daughter, for example: she could spend a long time on reading and drawing. She has an innate concentration on things. She loves to solve problems. If she can't write well now, she will practice until she can do it better. Therefore, she is not sensitive to the amount of homework because she will finish it somehow. As for my younger daughter, she is more active and athletic. It's more difficult for her to focus on things. So the same amount of homework might be no problem to my older daughter, and too much to my younger one. Secondly, studying habits have a direct influence on the amount of homework they can take. Should they finish homework first thing after school, or should they play until the last minute before they have to start doing their homework? Should they finish the difficult or the easy part first? Should they do their favorite subjects first or leave them to the end? Last but not least, parents should guide kids to manage their time effectively.

Do your children ever compare themselves to other students in their class, favorably or unfavorably? If so how do you respond?

Kids like to compare with each other, especially girls. Some common comparisons between kids are not worth mentioning. For instance, my daughter has always been the youngest kid in class, the fact that there is nobody younger than she is makes her unhappy. There are other comparisons that get me thinking. Showing-off between kids is one example. It occurs fairly commonly that her friends tell her: "My dress is prettier than yours," or "Your drawing is not as good as mine." She is not happy about this. When the comparison is superficial, I will just help to guide her away from bad feelings. Unfriendly comments from other kids is another example. One day she was crying, and told me: "XXX said I am not beautiful". In situations like this, it requires communication and guidance, such as telling her what beauty is, letting her understand that being polite is beautiful, helping others is beautiful, and finishing homework is also beautiful.

Do you think it's more important for your children to focus on the things they're good at, or catch up on their weaker areas?

I'm in favor of focusing on strengths. We have wasted plenty of time on catching up on our weaknesses, with very slim results. It's really difficult to be good at everything! In the education field, there is a theory called "Multiple Intelligences". Simply put, it means that every child is good at something different: music, language, sport, logic, nature,

space, relationships, introspection... each individual is unique! As for the academic success we have previously discussed, strengths are surely to be paid more attention to. It's not hard to discover a child's strengths, but it's hard to show understanding to a child's weaknesses.

How would you respond if your children told you they didn't want to go to college?

I think if she had the courage to confess to me, she must have already thought of thousands of reasons to convince me. So if someday she comes up to me and tells me she doesn't want to go to college, I will choose to listen and thank her for letting me know, because at least she wants to talk to me about it. If she does convince me, I would give her a year of experience, to live the life she wants. But I won't be supportive if she wants to give up college completely. Because besides study, college life itself is important. Moreover, whether she chooses to stay in college or not, she should have the persistence and ability for lifelong study.

What's the best thing teachers have done for your children's education? And the worse?

The best experience is with a drama teacher, whose use of language and way of interacting influenced my kid greatly. She has also inspired us parents. It was wonderful! The worst was a piano teacher who made my girl cry and lose interest in piano by using old-fashioned and boring teaching methods. This was our worst education experience by far.

Should education be focused on preparing children for their future career, or for life more generally?

Education focusing on future careers is preparing children to be bourgeois, while education focusing on life is preparing children to join the social elite. Therefore, I think the essence of education is to tell you the way everything works, to make you understand the world and yourself.

Do you hope that your children will do better than you did academically?

I hope my children will be more accomplished academically than I am, because they are living in a more diverse society, where there are more abundant resources and more options in education.



Former CEO mentors teenager son to find his passion and purpose

By Andy Penafuerte III

oday's generation has so much of everything that acquiring skills and connections has become a less painstaking endeavor. But the glut of choices nowadays becomes a distraction that challenges the way we focus on our capabilities and priorities. We might find it difficult to answer, "What's your passion?" or "What's your purpose in life?"

Definitely, things were different several decades ago and knowing your passion was not a priority, especially when the world was undergoing a revolution in ideologies and lifestyles. "Back then in Hong Kong, we were talking about survival," said Benby Chan, a retired banker and a father of two. "It's a transitional place. My parents migrated to Hong Kong in 1949 and they never thought of staying there for long. For us, as long as we work hard, we'd live."

Survival Is the Name of the Game

Chan found interest in scouting when he was a child as it was his father, a school principal, who encouraged him to join extra-curricular activities. He became a "badge hunter" because of his desire to get badges on different scouting achievements and stay ahead of his peers. That, however, derailed him in his high school studies, and soon after he failed several academic subjects. While survival was the name of the game, Chan kept his mind open and invested his time in studying. In the end, it paid off. He got accepted at Oxford University but eventually turned it down in favor of a scholarship at Hong Kong University.

While in college, Chan also worked for the government to earn a living. After graduation, Chan embarked on his career as an investment banker, first in Hong Kong, then in the US, Europe, and ultimately in China in 1993. In that year, he met his future wife at a hotel in Beijing where she worked. They married a year after and welcomed their children Sarah in 1997 and Daniel in 2000.

Chan said his children are lucky to know their passions despite the many distractions nowadays. Part of it, he said, was his family's privilege because of his extensive network that helped open a lot of opportunities for both children. Sarah, now a sophomore at University of California, Los Angeles, has found an interest in global studies and marketing. Meanwhile, Daniel juggles his senior year at International School of Beijing (ISB), college applications, and his budding film career and charity work.

Despite being an investment banker by profession, Chan has mentored Daniel by providing him with the essential tools of the trade he got from his years of experience: business wisdom and eloquence.

Making up the Lost Family Time

The relationship between Chan and his protégé son seems rosy, but that's not always the case. When Daniel was younger, Chan was at the peak of his career in the banking industry as a vice-chairman and CEO of a listed company. Family time seemed like a weekly appointment for him. "He hardly saw me unless during weekends. Basically he was always with his mom. There's some sort of shortcoming in the sense that his mom needed to accompany him at public events. Unfortunately, I was not around."

At times when Chan was on the other side of the globe and had to call his wife to check his kids, she would tell him to wait for her call instead. Or when after Sunday dinners with his family he needed to leave for work, Sarah would cry. "[At these moments] I realized, 'I need to do something more to make it up [for them]."

Chan left the banking industry in 2009 to focus on his family. He never left business, however; he opened an investment firm and a restaurant chain in Beijing. But his business interests were different this time. "At times my father has been telling me to be good and we should try helping other people. The only reason today that I still want to make money is to get more resources to help other people," Chan said.

This would soon drive the way Chan's children viewed their passions. "My dad taught me the importance of kindness," Daniel said, adding that after having a taste of community service several years ago, he made friends with a lot of different people whom he never thought of making connections with.

A Pleasant Surprise

Last year, Daniel spent his summer in Costa Rica where he helped out with the conservation of birds. On the sideline, he spent time with a local tribe that had no proper water supply. There he met a lot of people who helped him know what happiness was. "They told me, 'You should enjoy life, live in the moment,' because a lot of times I am looking only at the surface." That experience inspired him to kickstart a fundraiser for the tribe and over the course of four months, he raised USD 17,000.

"That was a pleasant surprise," said Chan, "...we wanted him to do service, obviously. But we didn't expect him to come back with a sort of legacy or contribution. We were happy to see the momentum he has created and the work that he built. To us it's very encouraging and for him it's a very good start."

Daniel continued, "I feel like my dad gave me the opportunity to expose myself to a lot of these activities which have taught me these lessons. At the same time he's also transferred a lot of skills in terms of communication."

Lifting Yourself by Lifting Others

Chan continues to mentor Daniel and helps him with his college applications. In the meantime, Daniel is honing his skill in filming, undertaking projects where he can gain a commercial foothold such as an upcoming documentary to promote the tourism of Sierra Leone. Daniel also maintains a website (http://www.danielchanfilms.com/) where he publishes photos and films of his projects including "We the People," his charity venture for underprivileged children in Sierra Leone.

"Pursue your passion and you will be able to achieve something in your own way," Chan said, explaining that by keeping an open mind, one will find what interests them. His protégé son believes that it is not about having remarkable achievements or stellar records on college transcripts. "Rather, it's having something that you desire, strive for, or believe in. I feel that by lifting and helping others I actually lift myself and find my purpose in life," Daniel said.



Turning your kids into lifetime learners one day at a time By Ember Swift

his is my daughter's question to me every Wednesday afternoon when she has half a day off from her kindergarten at the French International School. It's a mystery to me why they only mandate half-days for the little ones mid-week, but I'm lucky enough to have a freelance schedule that I can control. I've made it work. Now, Wednesday afternoons are when we play "the student game."

In this game, I pull out various work sheets or alphabet games from my stash usually reserved for my actual collection of private students. You see, one of my freelance jobs is being a home tutor and many of my students aren't much older than my five-year-old daughter. Testing out learning materials on my child whose native English is already better than my students' English is, well, great for me. A nice bonus! And, since my daughter's education is mostly happening in French, this weekly ritual is helping me take some responsibility for giving my kid a basis in English too.

But, let's not misunderstand my role here. I firmly don't want to home school my children. I love my kids very much but I also love my time away from them. Honestly, even though there are rewarding moments in these Wednesday afternoon sessions, I find them sometimes trying.

You see, my son is still at home full-time. He's only 3 and starts kindergarten in the fall. So, if the materials I pull out aren't "fun" enough, both my kids complain. And their different levels of knowledge and abilities also create conflicts. If she can complete a task but her brother can't, then my son gets frustrated. Or, if her brother's activity is more "fun" because "he gets to do more coloring" (for example), she immediately voices her dissent. It is a constant negotiation.

But she is learning. Slowly. She knows all her letters and can tell me what sounds they make. Though she has limited patience with reading activities, she expresses bubbling joy when she deciphers a word.

All in all, I take this position: I'm her mother, not her teacher. She has teachers at school and will have many more as the years pass by. For now, I offer fun weekly sessions in the way of "student games," but I don't push.

In my opinion, the same way that all able-bodied babies eventually learn to walk, all kids placed into a school system will eventually learn to read, just at different rates. We can monitor their progress to make sure they're on track, but we, as parents, shouldn't be stressed about making it happen sooner than later. Once they learn, this skill isn't going to magically be unlearned. I am not even a little bit worried about her. One day, I predict I will have trouble tearing her away from her book to join us at the dinner table. I look forward to that problem.

"One day, I predict I will have trouble tearing her away from her book to join us at the dinner table. I look forward to that problem. "

Until then, I let my kids lead. If she wants to play the "ABC Games", we play those. The "Numbers Games"? No problem. If she wants to read a book together and then talk about it, we do that. And everything she wants to do, her little brother wants to do too, so it's perfect. My goal is to keep both my kids excited about learning for as long as possible—hopefully their whole lives. It must be fun, not work. Ever.

Because, after all, it's called "the student game." They're our Wednesday afternoons of learning fun in whatever way they play out.



About the Writer

Ember Swift is a Canadian who has been living in Beijing since 2008. She has a daughter, Echo (5), and a son Paz (3). She spends a lot of time on stages making original music, writing blogs and columns, doing voice over work, and advocating for vegetarianism, LBGTQ rights, and multilingualism. (www.emberswift.com).

lmost nine years ago, when finances and geography combined to preclude enrollment of my children Myles and Brigid in schools in Changping, our family made the commitment to homeschooling. I have chronicled this part of our life a few times in the pages of this magazine, most recently in the 2014 School Choice Guide. Using phrases like "education adventure" to describe our approach, I have tried to keep my kids interested in learning for learning's sake.

At the beginning of this "education adventure," I enthusiastically researched curricula and teaching methods, hoping to provide my kids the most creative, cutting edge instruction I could synthesize. I aspired to make extensive use of online resources like Khan Academy and virtual coursework.

"The idea of freeing our homeschool life from the unbearable weight of paper felt like a victory long before the battle had begun."

Further, paper would be banished, or at the very least severely limited, in my innovative homeschool of the future, as all work could be completed on digital media of some sort. The idea of freeing our homeschool life from the unbearable weight of paper felt like a victory long before the battle had begun.

Once I was in the thick of it, actually working on educating my older child, I made a few difficult and humbling discoveries. One was that while I was able to piece together a sampler pack of educational philosophies, it would never be close to perfect for me or my son and eventually my daughter. Sometimes we would have an immediate hit, like how well my son took to Singapore Math. Other times I would flounder a bit, like my still ongoing quest for the right English grammar program.

However it was my attempt to escape paper-based learning that was the most futile of my early ambitions. It seemed so diametrically opposed to my wanting to give my kids a leg-up on their 21st century lives. However, I kept returning to the efficacy of paper media over digital for certain tasks. My kids simply remember content better if they read it in a paper book rather than an ebook or webpage. The physical act of turning pages seems to help their brains process and categorize information.

For learning spelling and grammar, I found copywork, out of fashion in American education since the decline of the one-room schoolhouse, to be an effective exercise for both of my kids. It doesn't take many hand-written repetitions for my kids to be ready for the dictation test, but it still involves paper.

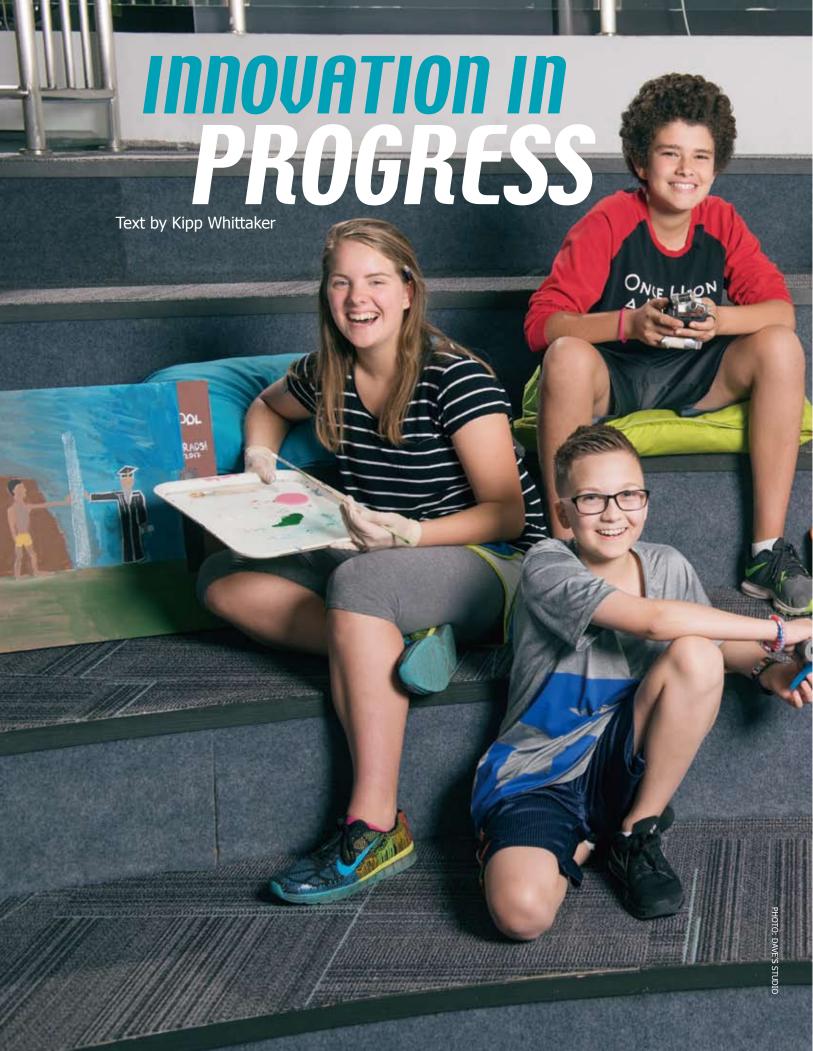
And further in my radical departures from the high-tech education I thought I would be providing my children, I have discovered that handwriting, and cursive in particular, was much more important than I would have believed at the beginning of this "education adventure." Cursive is increasingly out of vogue back in the US as most schools have abandoned it in favor of emphasis on keyboarding. However, cursive remains an efficient (and even beautiful!) method for taking notes, composing first drafts, and rehearsing copywork.

We have not become complete Luddites, though. Some of my early techy plans have come to fruition. The kids have taken some online classes with remote teachers guiding their work, and Myles often checks ebooks out of our hometown library when our own collection is inadequate.

Both kids even have been working on elementary coding as well. While they both have learned a few visual programming languages, Brigid has taken more to Logo, a textual programming language developed decades ago by the University of California at Berkeley. Like the cursive copywork that fills part of her days, her preference for Logo is a throwback to a previous century. Our "education adventure" has a clear vintage bent.

Sometimes the old ways are the best ways

By Jennifer Ambrose







We sat down with the Deputy Director at WAB, John D'Arcy to talk about what sort of innovative education techniques are being implemented at Western Academy of Beijing (WAB). Little did we know just how passionate he was on this topic.

Soon after getting settled in for the chat, we pressed record and listened as his ideas just poured out for nine straight minutes, uninterrupted. He started it all off by putting things into perspective for us by introducing the current sphere of education, and why it's been so slow in adapting to the needs of today. So here it is, your comprehensive introduction to some of the major ideas and concerns that are laying the current foundation for the next wave of trends in innovative education.

Engaging the community to stimulate the education of tomorrow

ohn D'Arcy: In some ways what's happening in education happened in most other industries 20 or 30 years ago. As technology impacted our lives, people were expected to lead their own learning for their jobs, and nobody was going to tell you how or what to do, so you needed to just create it. That's the nature of work now.

With education, we've been able to avoid that disruption that has happened in most other industries because we are working with pretty precious cargo, our students, and it's important not to just adopt fads or things that look good to push the institution of learning faster than it has the capacity to handle. So we've been slower. But now it's here, and teachers, schools are no longer really in a comfortable place to say we're not going to change. We're not going to innovate. Parents are expecting it, kids are expecting it, and teachers of quality are expecting it. So it behooves us to do so.

The great thing about WAB and probably some other schools in Beijing is that we actually like it. We are really excited about it. We started asking parents, students, teachers, our board, how can we better realize our mission of core values, and how can we better prepare our kids today to be more successful in the future? So we went to all the stakeholder groups and got all this feedback, and what was interesting but not surprising in hindsight is that they kind of had the same beliefs. This is that we want our students to be capable. We want them to be engaged, knowledgeable, and skillful, but not at the expense of their holistic development, not at the expense of them becoming people who can make the world a

better place, and not at the expense of them being people who care. We aren't just going to drive towards high grades at the expense of developing kids who are not holistically well-balanced.

We want to create a school that suits the needs of every single learner, but what does that look like? Currently, many schools as you know, aren't designed for every single learner. They're designed for the average 8-yearold or the average 15-year-old, and that has always been a broken model. It has always rewarded kids who learn more quickly, and by Friday who gets it. Those kids who don't fully comprehend, it doesn't matter because they are starting the new thing on Monday.

What we've had so far is an organization of education where kids have been moved up through the model having only partially completed knowledge development. So they move forward on partial knowledge, and then they begin to develop a belief system about themselves as learners, believing things like I'm not good at math, I'm not good a drawing, I'm not good at writing. We have institutions of learning that have developed in many people the belief that they're not good at stuff, as much as they've developed the capacity for what they're good at.

I think the conversation now in education is how tragic it is that we who pride ourselves in learning have developed people who don't believe they're good at what they're doing. So we need to change that so that it's no longer about whoever learns it best by "Friday" is going to get the best score, because we know from research that sometimes the kids who struggle the most with the learning actually get it better, and the kids who it comes to easily forget it more quickly.

Realizing that learning is messier than this concept of whoever gets it on "Friday," we decided that we need to change it up so that "Friday" is no longer what we're using to measure kids. What we're saying is, what do you need today. For example, you all need to learn how to read, you all need to learn how to write, we need numeracy, and what do you need to get there? We also should recognize that we all need something different because each of our brains are as different as our faces and they learn differently. It's not about making sure you meet the curriculum and then judging you against this curriculum; it's making sure we know who you are as a learner so that you can be successful with the curriculum.



It's a huge mind shift. So how do schools work then if it really becomes about individual learning? Schools have been talking about a thing called differentiation for a while now, and so the idea is in your classroom you need to differentiate between groups of kids. The reality is we struggle with it. Teachers struggle with doing that really effectively because still "Friday" is the test day and it's really hard for a teacher to manage 20 kids and differentiate to meet all of their needs. So we need to come up with an educational system that allows kids to have access to the resources that they need, to get the content they need, and to develop the skills that they need.

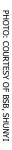
In many places, in the 70s open classroom spaces were supposed to fix education, and it didn't work. What happened was teachers just started getting plants, bookshelves, and sofas and dividing up their spaces. Because all they did was change the space, but not the relationship of teachers to the learning or the kid's ownership of the content, it didn't work. They didn't change the curriculum, and they didn't change how people were organized. They didn't change the expectation of what school was. All they did was change the space. Some people have changed the curriculum, but they haven't changed the space, or some have changed what the notion of teaching is but none of the other things.

At WAB what we're doing is we recognize that it's a whole ecosystem. We work within the features of our spaces, our time, physical spaces, our curriculum, our assessment practices. They're all the features of our ecosystem. All of them have to be redesigned if we're going to be successful.

So our work leads us to engage everyone in the community, parents, students, teachers, board members, in moving this massive thing forward, so that it all stays aligned, so it's all in sync, and it better meets the needs of every single student.

After we had picked our jaws up from the floor following this illuminating talk, we had a much better understanding of what was in the pipeline for WAB, and any other school that wanted to remain relevant throughout the 21st-century. Whether it were things that WAB are currently in the process of implementing or trends in innovative education that are bound to happen, D'arcy had a lot to say on the subject.

That being said, changes like this are a lengthy process and these shifts in innovating sometimes come slowly. We felt this transcript was a worthwhile window into the mind of someone who is a big proponent of these changes and drumming up the support necessary to enact these concepts, in big and small ways, steadily throughout the WAB curriculum.





GROWING MAKERS

BSB, Shunyi's approach to 21stcentury learning is producing the leaders of tomorrow

ritish School of Beijing, Shunyi (BSB, Shunyi) is a wonderful example of how project-based learning can be implemented in a variety of ways. Throughout the school this new approach is engaging students in new ways of learning, which will help them meet the increasing demand for well-rounded learners and the unknown requirements of employers of the future.

Andy Puttock, former principal of BSB, Shunyi and now educational director of Nord Anglia, explained: "For us, project-based learning is about students gaining knowledge, skills, and understanding through projects over an extended period of time, which are multi-disciplinary and that they investigate and respond to problems and challenges which are real world, authentic, and complex. So it takes students and teachers out from their comfort zone."

> One difference we discovered in the way that project-based learning is being implemented at BSB, Shunyi is that in primary school it is used in most lessons, giving these early learners the responsibility of coming up with ways to gain proficiency in core subjects by tackling real world problems. This in our opinion is a concrete way for students early on to understand the benefits of learning rather than it being an abstract activity, to which there is no apparent purpose. This can be an especially daunting time for early learners. If they are given the freedom outside of the classroom with their homework to develop themes and problems to solve in their own time, instead of just using the "complete section 3 of chapter 12" approach, then the effects of nightly homework can

become immediately tangible and more appreciated.

The fact that independent and project-based learning is slowly becoming the mainstream in educational institutions around the globe does not mean that the current system is necessarily broken, but in many ways it is in need of some modification to adapt to the new requirements of life in the future.

To this Puttock's response was that "the true marker for change in educational systems around the globe will come from what top companies are looking for when they are hiring." These requirements for future workers subsequently trickle down from these companies and are fed into universities, then secondary, and primary schools. For young learners, thinking about your child's career and their future employability might seem a long way off, but it's never too soon to start preparing children for the very different world ahead of them, and tech companies are leading the way in mapping out this unknown future.

When Puttock first arrived in Asia four years ago, this wasn't the case and exams and grades were still the primary focus. But, recently he believes there has been a big shift taking place, and educators the world over are beginning to favor new methods that have been making a significant difference in creating the confident and creative employees of the future.

Whether it be in primary school, International Baccalaureate (IB), or the STEAM program, project-based learning concepts are actively being incorporated to grow the next crop of engaged learners. One recent success story demonstrates how presenting students with real world problems in the project-based learning framework is changing things for the better. Nord Anglia Education has just formed a partnership with UNICEF, and they are working with them to help develop their United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Each year now, they'll be setting a challenge based on these goals which include ending poverty, ending hunger, ensuring healthy lives, achieving gender equality, and conserving and sustaining our oceans.

Tildie, Helen, Sunny and Sabrina, a gang of four brilliant IB students, decided to join in the effort of helping Grade 9 and primary



school students develop projects based on these Sustainable Development Goals for UNICEF's High Level Political Forum 2017. Like all IB students, they needed to complete a Creativity, Action, Service (CAS) requirement, and their supervisor for this very open-ended aspect of the curriculum told them that there was a great opportunity to represent Nord Anglia Education at this UNICEF conference at the United Nations in New York City.

With their combined past experience in Model United Nations and the debate team, they were the perfect addition to help guide the younger students. They worked closely with their schoolmates and developed ideas to creatively respond to these issues related to hunger and health. One was learning about compost bin systems and building one on campus, while the primary school kids created a garden on campus to grow vegetables to be used in the school's cafeteria.

What started as a simple but worthwhile assignment has turned into a life-changing experience for these students and brought them to the UN, from July 10 to 19. This unique opportunity gave them a platform to contribute to the discussion and influence policies at the highest level. While this sort of cooperation between Nord Anglia and the UN allows students to use their project to learn about these important issues affecting countries worldwide, it also takes these concepts outside of the classroom to provide a channel

for young people to communicate ideas and influence policy makers from around the globe through organized debate.

Out of the 87 students present at the forum, Sabrina was selected to address the UN, along with a small handful of other students from other Nord Anglia schools. They presented their ideas on ending hunger globally, along with a plan for how Nord Anglia Education will continue in aiding these development goals in the years to come. Sabrina described how working with this project has shaped her in becoming more aware of these global concerns: "One of the main things is that it has helped us realize the importance of these international issues. So by looking at the sustainable development goals we had to do research, and we had to talk about it, and we also had to cooperate with younger students about it, so it has helped raise awareness about these topics within ourselves concerning these issues and what we can do to help."

As active members of BSB, Shunyi's Model United Nations, when they return to school in the fall they plan on using this experience to create a Model UN summit at the school. This will help build another studentled experience that is sure to benefit all who are involved, continuing the enrichment of the student population with the authentic, real world experiences which are the basis for a 21st-century education.



pon entering the Futures Academy (FA) at the International School of Beijing (ISB), it seemed like something between an art class and a science lab, and a far departure from the classrooms we grew up in as kids. There was no "sage on a stage" or giant overwhelming blackboard, just a room filled with tech, circular tables, and happy kids. We were very impressed with the colorful and creative atmosphere that filled the room, as students looked very focused, working intently with a variety of the tools that they had available to them ranging from laptops, 3D printers, audio equipment, and cameras.

> Now going into its fourth year, FA has a lot to be proud of as it begins the 2017-18 school year, bringing more

students into the mindset of 21st-century learning. But, like all movements in education or elsewhere, the ISB Futures Academy started as an idea: an idea based on wanting to give students the ability to become the architects of their own learning, and encouraging them to experience a different form of education that is equally about developing proficiency in academic standards as it is about learning to be creative problem solvers.

While they were by no means the originators of this concept, as other schools in Beijing and around the world have also started to implement both project- and experiencebased learning, ISB had the support from parents and faculty that was necessary to begin in 2014. As Dr. Tarek Razik, ISB's Head of School, put it; "the atmosphere was right for a change."

But, with over 1,700 students and 150 teachers at ISB, we were curious about how a redesign like this was initiated. After all, it was necessary that ISB created a program which didn't completely negate the standards-based curriculum, but would rather complement and reinforce it, by providing a testing ground for educational practices which could later be integrated into the entire school. Also, it was evident to the founders of Futures Academy that if they decided to implement these new learning concepts throughout the entire curriculum, it would have taken years of planning to introduce, and probably be met with some skepticism.

If they chose to start the new way of learning in primary school, there's a chance that the maturity needed for this kind of academic freedom had yet to surface in the student. On the other hand, if it were started too late, then maybe the benefits wouldn't have enough time to take hold, especially with the added pressure of IB and college prep. That's one of the reasons why they chose to start with Grade 7.

So far, with each year the program has been gaining traction and is currently at 88 students in Middle School, and ten students in Grade 9. If the student decides to stick with FA, the complexity and nature of the project-based curriculum mature along with the student.

A day in the life of an FA student is usually broken up into three blocks (90 minutes each), and two half-blocks (45 minutes each). Two-thirds of these full blocks are spent in FA developing projects, and the other is either in Art or PE. The half-blocks, which occur before and after lunch, are when students do their enrichments (Chinese, orchestra, robotics, etc.) with the rest of the middle school. As for the core subjects such as math, science, and humanities, these are all integrated into the projects, though in a less linear way than students are typically accustomed to. So while the rest of the middle school may teach unit 1-6, FA will mix it up a bit to better integrate these lessons into the student's projects.

Jazzy, a Grade 8 student said; "We integrate subjects into our projects, but it's not like 'turn to page 80,' it's more about finding things as they relate to the topic of your project." So while at first glance it may seem that life as an FA student is a huge departure from the standard, these subjects are just presented through more creative and less conventional methods. After all, the plan is not only to gain mastery of core academic subjects but also to engage with individualized learning which is specific to the student's passions and interests, helping the act of learning to become a more organic process.

One of the essential ingredients of FA, we were told, is something called L21. This is in many ways the academic backbone of ISB that exists in their framework from Pre-K3 to Grade 12, and attempts to layer purpose and vision on top of academics. FA has a particular focus on these concepts, that range from communication and collaboration, creativity and innovation, global and critical thinking, and leadership responsibility. It's combining these ideas with academic standards, technology, comprehensive assessment, and various types of learning, including project based, experiential, and even learning on a more social and emotional level that ISB believes will help prepare students for the challenges of the future.

Whether it be their Capstone Projects where they explore sustainability subjects relating to Beijing's hutongs, or Futures Public Radio, which is a platform based on the National Public Radio (NPR) model where they learn the basics of podcasting and journalism, their projects are firmly rooted in this L21 framework while making sure a firm grasp of the core curriculum is maintained. Subjects like math, science, and humanities are integrated into these projects, but using a less linear approach, and expanded upon by the flexibility that is required by both personalized and experiential learning

One Grade 8 student we talked to put it neatly by saying, "In science, if we have a



theory we have to prove, we make a claim and if it's incorrect, the teacher won't tell us. She just says 'think what you think is right, and use the evidence that you've found from the lab or from research and prove your claim.' Since we're finding our own answers, it's in our minds more clearly, and it stays there."

Students explore their respective topics with guidance from their teachers, gather data in the field, and probe further to connect their projects to other areas of study. This allows them to get to know their topic, while learning essential skills like writing surveys, interviewing experts, and using the information they have gathered to write a complete analysis of the subject which they will eventually have to defend at the project's conclusion. To us, this

sounded more like something from a university dissertation rather than a middle school classroom, and we were quite impressed by the level of independence these young students were working at.

It takes a certain kind of teacher to be able to encourage students in such a way, without just delivering them all of the necessary knowledge straight from a textbook. It's this kind of teaching style that makes the FA program stand out, as they not only help to deliver individualized learning through regularly checking up on progress, but also connect students with experts to further enhance the level of expertise of these projects. That's why they are referred to as "facilitators."



Dr. Tarek Razik explained, "As a teacher it used to be 'here's the knowledge, I'm going to give it to you, and then you're going toggle it back to me on a test'. But now as a facilitator what I'm going to say is 'here's what I want you to be able to do, now how can I help you do that?' While the teachers still need to teach to the standards, how that happens is up to them." This puts a lot of added responsibility onto the teachers to make sure the students are delivering, but also it allows them to be creative and use every tool at their disposal to make this happen.

This in particular has helped the school to receive input from the teachers on ways that it can further benefit students. Using Futures Public Radio and the grant they recently received as an example, FA facilitator Aaron Moniz talked to us about the motivational factor that comes with ISB actively working to support creative methods to give kids real world skills and hands-on opportunities with technology. He said; "For example, let's take an individual with a learning difference. Maybe writing isn't necessarily their forte, but if they know that they can get their hands on a camera and they can do the audio, and instead of getting quotes that they've embedded from research they get quotes that are imbedded from a student and they clip it into a video and organize it into a visual essay. Then they are able to express even more than they would be able to if they were asked to write an essay. The more we teach other teachers how to use this kind of technology the more it actually expands what our teachers can do and what our students can do."

This is how FA became what it is today, an incubator for new ideas about education. Less constrained by the old status quo, the program has become a testing ground for new ideas and teaching methods, which has provided these young minds an alternative way to learn, not to mention a first glimpse at the curriculums of the future. Only time, and full-on implementation of this educational style, will tell if this is the actual direction of 21st-century learning, but from our observations at FA we are excited about the possibilities.

SCHOOL NEWS

International schools in Beijing reach out to the community



YCIS Student Charity Dinner Raises RMB 12,000 Year 12 students at Yew Chung International School of Beijing (YCIS Beijing

led the school's annual Incandescence Charity Dinner on June 22. The charity event raised over RMB 12,000 for Dew Drops Little Flower, a local charity that provides care for disabled orphans.



HIS Students Help Build a New Playground

Hope International School (HIS) kicked off its first fundraiser, The Playground Project, on May 31. In one month, students, parents, the board, and staff rallied together and raised RMB 150,000 to build a K3-K5 playground and new recreational equipment for all the students.



Harrow Beijing Den Day Success

Harrow Beijing's Den Day 2017 was a resounding success, raising over RMB 50,000 for homeless children. The idea behind Den Day is to use a fun and creative activity to learn about a very serious world-wide issue. In the process, the Harrow Beijing Lower School Houses built six magnificent and resourceful dens.

Shining Community Star



"Project Nightingale" Founder Recognized at **CSR Awards**

Dulwich College Beijing (DCB) student Tony Liang (center, sitting) was the only student who received recognition at the recent Corporate Social Responsibility Awards, organized by the British and American Chambers of Commerce. He was awarded for starting Project Nightingale, a community project to teach music to migrant children. Tony was featured as one of the Shining Community Stars in our April 2017 issue, "Hands Together." See the story behind his project on the online version of this article.



Year-End Celebration at 3e

3e International School Kindergarten and Elementary students held a yearend celebration to bid farewell to their Lido Campus in preparation for their transition to 3e's new Elementary campus in Chaoyang, a shared collaboration with Lycée Francais International Charles de Gaulle de Pekin.



Clear Future for WAB's Duck Lake

The Western Academy of Beijing (WAB) community came together in 2016-2017 to begin the process of cleaning up its iconic Duck Lake. The WAB Gala, a group of parents, and a dedicated student club raised funds to ensure the sustainability of Duck Lake and transform it into a unique learning resource on campus.





Beijing No. 55 Goes to Italian Manzoni Language School Teachers and students of Beijing No. 55 High School visited to Italian Manzoni Language School from May 26 to June 4 for friendly exchange activities. Beijing No. 55 has been working with the Italian school for years, helping to promote intercultural and bilingual communication through student exchange programs.



3e Field Day

3e International School celebrated the end of a wonderful 12th school year with its annual Field Day Sports Fair on June 16. Families had fun playing together at various sports stations including golf, tennis, bowling, hockey, horse riding, and many more.







PHOTOS: COURTESY OF BEIJING NO. 55 HIGH SCHOOL,

high-resolution photos (at least 1MB each) to webeditor@beijing-kids.com by August 17



YCIS Beijing's End of Year Concerts

The Yew Chung International School of Beijing (YCIS Beijing) community celebrated its students' musical accomplishments with a trio of outstanding concerts featuring students from Years 1 to 12. The celebration featured an eclectic mix of instruments and performances, including traditional orchestras, jazz and rock bands, dance routines, and even Chinese drumming.



BSB, Sanlitun End of Year Ceremony and Year 6 Graduation

Primary students at The British School of Beijing, Sanlitun (BSB, Sanlitun) had their End of Year Ceremony at New World Beijing Hotel on June 19, in which they got to review all the wonderful things that happened throughout the year. After this, Year 6 and their families stayed and celebrated their graduation from Primary School.











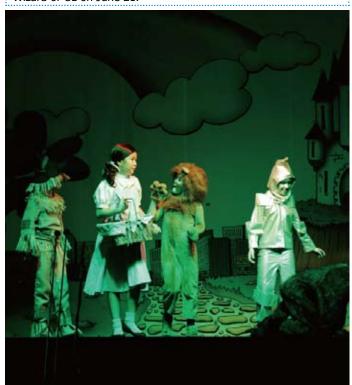


BSB London Trip 2017

A group of students from The British School of Beijing, Shunyi (BSB, Shunyi) visited London for the first time for a true taste of British culture. Art teachers and students took part in a workshop by The Shakespeare Company, visited various galleries, and enjoyed sightseeing in London.

2017 Harrow Beijing Pre-Prep Drama Production

Harrow Beijing hosted the 2017 Pre-Prep drama production of The Wizard of Oz on June 21.







PHOTOS: COURTESY OF HARROW BEIJING; BSB, SHUNYI





BCIS Creates a World of Loops!

The Secondary School building of Beijing City International School (BCIS) was turned into a canvas to celebrate Arts Interdisciplinary Unit (IDU) Day on June 2. Students from Grades 6 to 9 let their imaginations run wild, exhibiting paintings and holding jaw-dropping performances that received much applause. All this was done under the interesting theme of "Loops."



ISB Spring Fair 2017

International School of Beijing (ISB) hosted its annual spring fair on May 21, in which hundreds of visitors enjoyed a fantastic day in the sun filled with delicious food, unique shopping, excellent entertainment, and fun games and activities for the whole community.











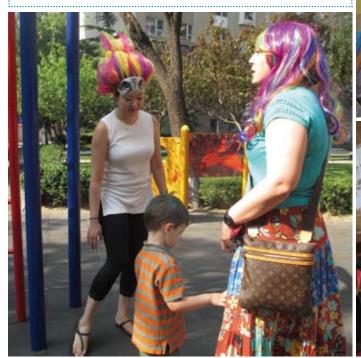
BIBS 2017 Family Fun Day

Beanstalk International Bilingual School (BIBS) hosted its annual Family Fun Day on May 20 to welcome in the sunny summer for children and families. Its PTA and student council raised over RMB 15,000 for charities like New Hope Foundation.



AnRic's Crazy Hair Day

It's important to be creative, a risk taker, and it's even okay to be a little crazy sometimes. AnRic Little Montessori Room (AnRic LMR) held Crazy Hair Day in May to help children embrace risk taking and encourage creativity. Children, teachers, and even some parents came to school sporting wacky hairstyles.







PHOTOS: COURTESY OF BIBS, ANRIC LMR



YSA Open Day

Parents, students, teachers, and staff of Young Starter Academy (YSA) gathered together on May 7 to mark the opening of YSA's new school site at Upper East Side (阳光上东). The day was filled with lots of fun and interactive activities and heart-warming experiences shared from old students' families.





Chances ECE Center Opens in Guomao

Chances Early Childhood Education Center opened its doors to guests, parents, and kids on June 16 at Beijing Yintai, in partnership with inKids Play Park. Senior officials at Yusheng Yintai Business Management Company, inKids, Sunrise Group, and a popular kids TV program hosts graced the inauguration.









