

Beijing's essential international family resource

beijingkids

December 2015

Plus: Our seasonal events roundup, cookies for Santa Claus, and crafts at MSB and Ganeinu

Let it Snow

Winter activities for every age group

No Strings Attached

Harrow Beijing's a capella group spreads holiday cheer

The Joy of Giving

Beijing's parent volunteers



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Happy Holidays
and
Happy New Year

Wishing you and your family the merriest holiday season,
and a safe, healthy, and prosperous 2016



from all at

beijingkids

DECEMBER 2015

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ON THE COVER:

Little Kai Parsonage (9 months) lives at Season's Park with his English dad Ross Parsonage, China operations director at Schmitt and Orlov, and American mom Theresa Pauline founder of Taozi Tree Yoga. Pauline's Yoganda Project produces bags handmade in Uganda providing employment to local women. She is also a yoga teacher and parent blogger for *beijingkids*. Baby Kai both looked and acted angelically for our photoshoot, luckily sandwiched between two naps.

Photography by Dave's Studio



WOMEN OF CHINA



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The *beijingkids* Board



Lana Sultan

Lana Sultan has been in Beijing with her husband, son, and daughter since 2013. Prior to that, she lived in Saudi Arabia, the US, the UK, and Spain. Lana is the author of four children's books and is currently working on her fifth. Contact her at lana.sultan@gmail.com or visit www.lanasultan.com.



AJ Warner

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 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.



Sara Wramner-Wang

Over the past 20 years, Sara Wramner-Wang has worked in various senior management positions at companies like Ericsson, Ikea, and Oriflame. She is currently the director of sales and marketing and head of admissions for EF Academy International Boarding Schools' Asia operations. Contact her at sarawramner@hotmail.com.



Catherine Bauwens

Catherine Bauwens is a mother of two; Robin (age 6) and Coralie (4) who both attend Candian International School of Beijing (CISB). Bauwens is managing editor of the French magazine *Pekin Infos*, is working on a documentary movie (together with her husband), and writing a science-fiction novel.



Eye Hsu

When CCTV talk show host and mom-preneur Eye Hsu is not chasing after her two kids or the family dog, you might catch her at a Pilates studio, one of the Counting Sheep boutiques, or on TV. Find out more about the baby and maternity retailer she co-founded at www.countingsheepboutique.com.



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.



Celine Suiter

Celine Suiter has been an expat for the past 17 years; from South America to Asia via Europe. This is her second posting in Beijing where she lives with her husband and two children. She likes making new friends, trying new restaurants, and visiting new countries. She documents her crazy life in Beijing and beyond with a picture a day at aTotalTaiTaiTale.tumblr.com

Want to Join?

If you think you'd make a valuable contribution to the *beijingkids* board, email editor@beijing-kids.com.



Taking part in the Christmas pantomime, center-stage with pigtails, age 5

The Most Wonderful Time of the Year

Here at *beijingkids* the Holidays start in late Autumn, before we put the November issue out. Magazine editors are time travelers. We live in the future, at least eight weeks ahead of the rest of mankind. In our world it's been Christmas since before Halloween. This suits me just fine: I love the holidays and I always will. You'll never get a bah or a humbug out of me. December is the glowing heart of winter, the time of year when we indulge children (actual and inner), make time to pamper and spoil our loved ones, take stock of the year past, and plan the twelve months coming. What's not to love?

So, I'm all good with a marathon season. It's always been this way for me. As soon as I could follow the most basic instructions I was enrolled in our local community Christmas pantomime. Beijing Playhouse have done an awesome job bringing the magic of panto to our city in years past. If you've caught one of theirs you'll know panto is a raucous, fairytale-based, family-friendly form of comedic, musical theater, and it always features crossdressing cast members. Yep, it's got something for everyone! From age 3 and up, I was singing, dancing, and delivering my lines. Everyone in our locality was either in it, backstage, or watching it each year. It was a completely free activity that kept us out of the house, rehearsing, and having fun every winter, and just like December magazine, it started in October.

And the music didn't stop there. Christmas hymns resonate with memories of joining the adult choir as a preteen. Squashed together with the other *altos*, I sang mysterious Latin words in four part harmony; the choir's melded voices floating through incense-thickened air over bowed heads, crib, and candles ablaze. You can read all about Harrow Beijing's student choristers on p38. While Jennifer Ambrose explains why she prefers to return home for the holidays on p47.

If last month is anything to go by, we are in for a long cold winter. Make the most of the snowy outdoors and try a winter sport (p54); find plenty of ways to make holiday memories with your family (p32); or on the coldest of days try your hand at our holiday crafts (p34). Santa is in for a big treat if you follow our recipe for holiday cookies on p28, and we've got your feasting covered: check out p30. Finally, we speak to three inspiring volunteers about their experiences giving hope and help to others through their charitable work on p50. I'd like to say special thanks to my team, contributors, readers, and all the kids and grownups we've interviewed and worked with this past year. Happy Holidays and Happy New Year to everyone!

Aisling O'Brien

Aisling O'Brien
Managing Editor





December Events

Wed, Dec 9

Winter Fayre at Harrow Beijing



All ages. Join in the yuletide cheer and enjoy a spot of shopping at the annual charity Winter Fayre. There'll be snacks, a warm welcome, and live performances by students. Free. 2.30-4.30pm. Harrow International School Beijing (6444 8900)

Thu, Dec 10

WAB Dance Showcase



All ages. From contemporary to lyrical jazz, WAB students will dance their hearts out to a variety of numbers. Free. 7-8.30pm. Western Academy of Beijing (5986 5588)

Fri, Dec 11

HIS Christmas program



All ages. The HIS music department performs their production of Danell Bemis' *Remember the Baby!* RMB 120 (reserved tickets); general ticket - RMB 60 (adults), RMB 50 (students). 7-9pm. Hope International School (wood.kaliya@hopeintlschool.org, johnson.jennifer@hopeintlschool.org)

Sat, Dec 12

The Hutong's Winter Fayre



All ages. As per tradition, The Hutong hosts the last Christmas Bazaar of the season, and this year's theme is "warm-winter." With plenty of hot drinks, snacks, and last minute gifts on sale. Free. 11am-4pm. The Hutong (6404 3355, 59 0104 6127)

YCIS Beijing and Roundabout China's Charity Book Fair



All ages. YCIS Beijing hosts Roundabout China's book fair with 100% of all proceeds from purchases donated to help children in need. Don't miss out on this opportunity to pick up some new books for your children and help a great cause at the same time. Free. 9am-1pm. Yew Chung International School of Beijing (enquiry@bj.ycef.com)

Sun, Dec 13

Kids Run Charity Bazaar



All ages. With booths run by children featuring books, toys, baked goods, games, and more. Organized by Ganeinu International School and Menorah Academy of the Capital Middle School (MAC). Free. 11am-4pm. Dini's Restaurant (8470 8238 ext 200, ganeinuinternational@yahoo.com)

1 Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus: Auditions



Ages 6+. In 1897 8-year-old Virginia O'Hanlon wrote to the editor of the *New York Sun*, "Is there a Santa Claus?" and the reply has been part of American folklore for more than 100 years. This Christmas, Beijing Playhouse holds a one day performance on December 19, with auditions held December 13. All proceeds go to Maple Women's Counseling Center. RMB 80 (show), free to audition. 10.30am (auditions) and 7.30pm (performance). 77 Theatre (artsforagoodcause@charityreaderstheatre.org)

Mon, Dec 14

Hanukkah Show 2015



All ages. To celebrate Hanukkah, Festival of Lights, students from Ganeinu International School and MAC will perform a variety of



songs and skits followed by special Hanukkah food and craft projects. Free. 9am-noon. Ganeinu International School and Menorah Academy of the Capital Middle School (8470 8238 ext 200, ganeinuinternational@yahoo.com)

Teacher Parent Communication/Managing Behaviors in Classroom/Teach English to Young Learners



For adults. An informative three-day workshop from December 14-16. Participants receive a certificate from Beijing Normal University. The workshop focuses on teacher parent communication, managing behaviors in the classroom, and teaching English to young learners. TBC. 9am-3pm. International Montessori Teaching Institute (8949 6877, 185 0061 7806, enquiry@imti-china.com)

Tue, Dec 15

2 WAB High School Drama



All ages. WAB high school students perform one-act plays and an original student piece on two days December 15-16, 7pm. Free. 7-9pm. Western Academy of Beijing (5986 5588, wabinfo@wab.edu)

Thu, Dec 17

Art Salon: Ron Burns



For teens and adults. This workshop teaches step-by-step how to paint Rob Burns' "Kitten" at Element Fresh in Lido on December 17, Blue Bridge's Chaowai Studio and Maan Coffee in Wanliu on December 24. Registration required. RMB 240. 9.30am-12.30pm. Blue Bridge International Education (8256 5788, 5947 2275, 5900 0270, eng.bluebridgeedu.com)

Thu, Dec 24

Christmas Eve Dinner Buffet at VIC Restaurant



All ages. Eat to your heart's content with Chinese and international favorites to usher in the festive season. Free flow champagne, house wine, local beer, fresh juices, and soft drink. RSVP required. RMB 698 net for one person, RMB 990 net for three persons (family package includes 2 adults and 1 kid), RMB 1,800



Want your family-friendly event to appear in our February issue?
Upload it at www.beijing-kids.com/events by **January 8**.



net for five persons (family package includes 4 adults and 1 kid).
6-10pm. Sofitel Wanda Beijing (8599 6666)

Fri, Dec 25

Christmas Supper with Live Jazz at Brickyard



All ages. Enjoy a Christmas feast at Mutianyu Great Wall. Mingle with other adults as the kids make cookies. Registration required. RMB 238 (adults), RMB 128 (Kids 4-18 and university students with ID), free (kids under 4). The Brickyard Inn and Retreat Center at Mutianyu Great Wall (6162 6506, <https://yoo-pay.cn/event/02098872>) See p30 for more dining options.

Thu, Dec 31

New Year's Eve and New Year's Day at The House of Dynasties



All ages. Say farewell to 2015 and hello to 2016 with food from around the world. RSVP required. RMB 1,200 per person, RMB 1,500 (inclusive of wine). Prices are subject to availability and 15% service charge. Rosewood Hotel (6536 0066, beijing.din-ingreservations@rosewoodhotels.com)

Vienna New Year Concert 2016



Ages 7+. The annual Vienna New Year Concert in the Great Hall of the People is the most musical way to bring in the New Year. Make sure you get your tickets on Damai in advance as they sell out fast. RMB 120-1,680. 7.30-9.30pm. The Great Hall of the People (400 610 3721)

ONGOING

3 Learn to Ride: Snowboarding Trips



Ages 5-10. Sports Beijing has teamed up with Jundushan Mountain Resort and Burton Snowboards to offer snowboarding trips on December 6 and 13 and January 17 and 24. RMB 1,100. 9am-4pm. Jundushan Mountain Resort (info@sportsbj.com, www.sportsbj.com)

Art Salon: Wayne Thiebaud



Ages 5-10. Want to be an artist for a day? In this workshop led by international artists, you will learn step-by-step how to paint Wayne Thiebaud's sumptuous *Assorted Cakes*. December 10 (CBD), December 13 (Maan Coffee in Wanliu). RMB 240. Blue Bridge International Education (8256 5788, 5900 0270, eng.bluebridgeedu.com)

HoK Christmas Camp 2015



Ages 3-6. This five day, English, German, and Chinese speaking Christmas camp has holiday activities such as arts and crafts, writing letters to Santa, and more. Available at both Victoria Garden and Quanfa Campuses, from December 14-18. RMB 2,200/week (full day), RMB 1,720/week (half day with lunch), RMB 1,350/week (half day without lunch), RMB 200/week (transportation). 9am-3.30pm. House of Knowledge International School and Kindergarten (6538 1389, admissions@hokschoools.com)

Christmas Holiday Workshop



Ages 8+. Using the famous story *The Odyssey* by Homer, kids create their own picture book, using a DSLR camera to capture characters and scenery, then laying out their artwork at Atelier's Sanlitun studio. From December 14-18. Registration required. RMB 3,200. 10am-4pm. Atelier (6416 1614, 132 4018 4908, contact@atelier.cn.com)

Christmas Workshop: Charlie and The Chocolate Factory



Ages 5+. Pack a toothbrush as this workshop brings the famous sweet filled Roald Dahl's classic to life through papier-mâché, candy making, and more. December 20-24. RMB 500 (deposit). RMB 1,500. 10am-noon (ages 5-8), 1.30-4pm (ages 9+). Atelier (6416 1614, 132 4018 4908)

4 Santa's Toy Factory



Ages 4-10. Kids create a wide range of arts and crafts by making Christmas toys from December 21-31 (excluding weekends) in Blue Bridge's CBD and Lido campuses. Price is per day: RMB 250 (half day and no food included), RMB 450 (full day and food included). 8.30am-3.30pm. Blue Bridge International Education (5900 0270, 5947 2275)

Ski Camp with Imagine.



Ages 7-14. Kicking off December 21 on weekdays during winter break (January holidays apply), kids learn or improve their skiing skills with qualified English-speaking ski instructors from Imagine. at Huaibei Ski Resort. Registration required. RMB 800 per day (includes ski passes, equipment, lunch, and lesson), RMB 150 per day (transport). 10am-4pm. Huaibei Ski Resort (www.imagine-china.com/ski-camp)

Christmas Workshop: Alice in Wonderland



Ages 5+. Using Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* for inspiration, kids make a clock, learn papier-mâché to make the Cheshire cat, build an army of cards, draw butterflies, and more. Classes are December 27-31. Registration required by December 25 at 6pm. RMB 500 deposit needed. RMB 1,500. 10am-noon (ages 5-8), 1.30-4pm (ages 9+). Atelier (6416 1614, 132 4018 4908, contact@atelier.cn.com)

SAY HELLO TO BEIJING'S SMALLEST

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 September 1, 2015.



Amy Liu

Chinese and Lithuanian. Born on Jul 19 to Angela Liu and Rokas Liutkevicius at Beijing Amcare Women's and Children's Hospital.



Yumi Zhao

Chinese. Born Jul 22 to Michelle Zheng and Steve Zhao at Beijing Amcare Women's and Children's Hospital.



Xiao Dong and Xiao Xi

Chinese. Born Nov 2 to Lei Shi and Yisheng Zhou at Beijing Amcare Women's and Children's Hospital.



Zoey Jessee Liu

Chinese. Born Jul 14 to Michelle and Caleb Liu at Beijing United Family Hospital.



Mumu and Niannian

Chinese. Born Oct 27 to Xiaoxuan He and Bin Wang at BAODAO Healthcare.

Meet the Teacher: Larissa Young from CISB

by Yvette Ferrari



Canadian Larissa Young of CISB

Larissa Young is in her first year teaching at the Canadian International School of Beijing (CISB). The Canada-native taught first grade in Muscat, Oman for two years before changing to her physical education (PE) position at the middle school at CISB. She teaches PE for grades 6-8, teaches English as an additional language (EAL) to Grade 9 and 10 students, and is a homeroom teacher for Grade 8.

What was your favorite subject when you were a student?

My favorite subject was physical education. I loved getting out of the classroom.

What did you want to be when you were a kid?

When I was younger I wanted to be a marine biologist, because I love being in the ocean, and my family was always visiting Canada's west

coast. As I progressed in school and began being on sports teams, I started thinking about careers in athletics. I began coaching and working sports camps, which helped me to realize that I enjoyed working with children. In the end, I decided to pursue physical education, with a minor in social studies and am really glad I did.

How would you describe your teaching style?

Group-oriented and activity-based.

What do you find most rewarding about teaching?

Being able to see student's progress from where they were at the beginning of the year to where they are at the end of the year. As a teacher you have the ability to make a child feel important and successful, no matter what their abilities are, and help guide

them into making positive decisions. I believe one of the most rewarding parts of physical education is giving students an opportunity to succeed, when they might not be in their other classes.

A previous student of mine with Down Syndrome was struggling socially and academically in her classes, but she and her parents really wanted her to remain with her peers. When she first came in to my all girls PE class, she was accompanied with an aid, and struggling to listen and follow directions. It was obvious she wanted to participate in physical education, but at the beginning would just do activities with her aid. The girls and I really wanted her participating with the class. They would sit with her and assist her with instructions, even when I did not ask them to. To ensure she saw consistent success, during games she was a neutral player, so anyone could pass to her. Seeing how happy she was during those classes, and how the girls were interacting with her was amazing and one of my most rewarding teaching memories.

What's something most people don't know about you?

Mascots make me nervous.

What was your favorite book growing up? What are you currently reading?

Growing up I loved anything by Robert Munsch, especially *Stephanie's Ponytail*. Right now, I am currently reading *Winter of the World* by Ken Follett and *Salt, Sugar, Fat* by Michael Moss.

Where do you like to go on holiday?

Anywhere that is hot and has a beach!

What's currently on your playlist?

Shania Twain

How do you like to relax on the weekends?

I enjoy being with friends, any kind of physical activity, and trying to see more of Beijing.

Meet the Teacher is a beijingkids blog series designed to help the Beijing community learn more about international school teachers. If your school would like to participate in the series, please email the school editor at yvetteferrari@beijing-kids.com



WHAT'S HAPPENING IN BEIJING



Olympic Fencing Champion Inspires Keystone Students "Not to Give Up"

As part of Keystone's "Inspiration Series," 2008 Olympic fencing champion, Zhong Man spent a few hours with the school community. He shared his life story with a packed audience in the Keystone Academy's Performing Arts Center, narrating an experience of successes that came from not giving up, and learning from failures. Keystone's student fencers eagerly imitated Zhong Man's footwork and strike poses, as he patiently demonstrated his tactics and strategies. Keystone Academy invites experts and top professionals, like Zhong Man, to give students the opportunity to be inspired to live their dreams.

Three DCB Students Achieve Top Results in Two Subjects

Dulwich College Beijing (DCB) student Lesley Zheng placed first in IGCSE computer science, while Silvia Shen and Simone Zhao shared top place in geography. Over 61,000 examination entries were made in mainland China in 2015 and only over 100 students were identified as winners.



YCIS Beijing Achieves Outstanding Results in 2015 World Education Games

Students in Year 5 at Yew Chung International School of Beijing (YCIS Beijing) achieved exceptional results in this year's World Education Games competition. A semi-annual online event, this year's competition had over 6 million students and 20,000 schools in 159 countries take part. YCIS Beijing students placed 55th in the world in literacy and tenth in math, a huge achievement when considering the huge applicant pool. Special congratulations are also in order for Noah Killeen, who placed 94th in the world in science.



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF KEYSTONE, DCB, AND YCIS

Want your news to appear in our February issue? Email it along with a high-res photo (at least 1MB) to webeditor@beijing-kids.com by **January 8**.

BCIS Terry Fox Run

After holding its 11th Terry Fox Run on October 22, Beijing City International School (BCIS) announced that since 2005 it has raised more than RMB 1.1 million for cancer research. The run included students from all school sections, from the Early Childhood Center through to the secondary school.



Sanfine International Hospital Extends Opening Hours

Sanfine International Hospital has extended its operating hours and is now open from Monday-Saturday 8:30am-5:30pm. Sanfine is located in the heart of Sanlitun, across from the worker's stadium. Offering general medicine, pediatrics, dental, gastrointestinal, cardiovascular, TCM, diagnostic, cosmetic and women's healthcare, Sanfine boasts an unparalleled range of leading edge equipment and facilities as well as highly experienced doctors on staff.

WAB's Beverly Tan wins BISPS

WAB student Beverly Tan won the Beijing International Schools Poetry Slam (BISPS) at The Bookworm on Saturday, November 14. Australian slam poet champion Luka Lesson inspired the event, which featured students from six international schools.



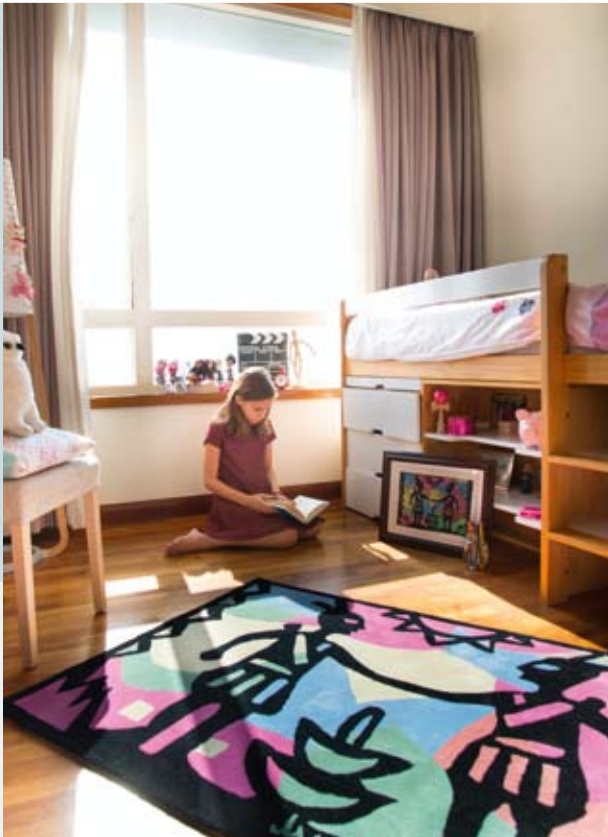
ISSCC Ski Competition Weekend

International Schools Snowsports Championships China (ISSCC), is an opportunity for students to experience a slalom race over a weekend organized by Imagine. The annual event for 7-18 year olds will be held on March 4-6, and includes professional training from expat ski race coaches, and a range of competitions. Participants are encouraged to sign up early to avoid disappointment, and to avail of free competition entry (usually RMB 500) by booking before Christmas Day. For full info and for free competition entry before Christmas, head to www.imagine-china.com/ISSCC

The Very Thing

Turn your child's drawing into a unique toy or rug

by Aisling O'Brien





New Zealander Graci Kim has lived in Beijing for the past 18 months, working as a diplomat at the New Zealand Embassy. This past August, she began a social enterprise, My Thingymabob. "Championing children's well-being is at the heart of everything My Thingymabob does," says Kim. "That's why all profits for 2015 will be donated to Childfund."

Kim had the idea for her business while doodling in her notebook one day. "I remember thinking 'Man, if only that monster could come to life – that would be the best thing ever!'" she says. Kim set about building her inspiration into a custom cuddly toys business. Soon after, she expanded her product range to include bespoke hand-tufted rugs made from 100 percent New Zealand wool so that drawings could come as homewares. Next year, My Thingymabob will introduce synthetic wool rugs for a more affordable but equally unique addition to the home.

"Whether you're 5-years-old or 60-years-old, there is something truly magical about witnessing your drawings come to life," says Kim. "If you're the type to let your imagination run wild, this might be a great way to exercise those creative muscles. If your child or friend loves drawing, My Thingymabob makes a memorable gift."

Kim thinks there is something universally powerful about dreaming something up, and then witnessing your imagination come to life in tangible form. She believes it teaches children that anything is possible.

To order, customers send My Thingymabob a photo of a character that their child (or they) have drawn, and then My Thingymabob turns it into a full 40cm tall cuddly toy. The order process for rugs is almost the same, but customers must also choose from rectangular, square, circular or free form, in four sizes: doormat (1m long), bedroom feature (1.5m long), living room feature (2m long), or spacious room feature (2.5m long). It takes up to three weeks to handcraft each toy or rug.

The toys are not inexpensive, but then they are one of a kind. They cost RMB 800 each (USD 129) each. Readers can use the discount code 2015TOY to get USD 30 off each toy order, if ordered before the end of December 2015. Rugs cost from between RMB 1,500 (USD 250) and RMB 4,800 (USD 800). Readers can use the discount code 2015RUG to get USD 150 off each rug order, if ordered before the end of December 2015. Shipping is free for 2015. Orders can be made on the website and credit cards are accepted via Paypal. To make payment via Wechat Wallet in RMB, please first complete the order on the website then add Kim on wechat (ID: gracikim) to arrange payment. My Thingymabob also offers Gift Cards.

My Thingymabob

(info@mythingymabob.com, wechat:gracikim)
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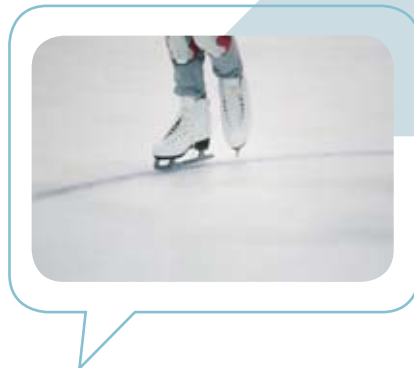
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Ice Cold

Chill out with a birthday party at Le Cool

by Sijia Chen





Creating ice for hockey and ice skating isn't as simple as pouring water on the ground and waiting for it to freeze. Achieving a perfect flat consistency involves successively pouring and leveling thin layers of chilled saltwater (which has a lower freezing temperature than fresh water) over a period of several days. Before that, the water must be purified to remove oxygen and trace minerals – two elements that can make the ice too hard or too soft to skate on.

In Beijing, only one center can lay claim to having an ice rink designed by CIMCO Refrigeration, the Canadian company responsible for installing 80 percent of the National Hockey League's (NHL) facilities. That center is Le Cool in Guomao. Cheesy name aside, the 800sqm ice rink uses environmentally-friendly CIMCO technology that saves on energy costs and reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

Luckily for winter babies, Le Cool can be booked for birthday parties. A full day (9am-10pm) costs RMB 15,000 without any limits on the number of attendees. A one-hour party costs RMB 1,800 and includes skate rentals; these can only take place outside regular opening hours. The guest limit may vary according to age; call Le Cool for details.

Birthday parties aren't supervised, but instructors can be booked for an extra RMB 690 (up to ten students). All ice skating coaches are certified by the US-based Ice Skating Institute (ISI), a trade association that oversees all aspects of the ice skating industry. English speakers are available, according to the front desk. Note that birthday parties must be booked at least a week in advance.

Self-catering is your best option. Though the rink is located in the basement of China World Mall, there are few dining options around – or, indeed, anything other than luxury clothing stores and high-end



chocolate shops. However, The Sweet Spot by China World has three locations within the mall, offering cakes and a wide variety of other sweet and savory baked goods.

Le Cool 国贸溜冰场

Regular admission: RMB 30 (Mon-Sun 10am-6pm), RMB 40 (Mon-Thu 6-10pm), RMB 50 (Fri-Sun 6-10pm). All prices reflect 90 minutes of skating time. RMB Daily 10am-10pm. B2/F, China World Shopping Mall, 1 Jianguomenwai Dajie, Chaoyang District (6505 5776) 朝阳区建国门外大街1号国贸地下2层 www.lecoolicerink.com



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Bright and Shiny

Linsey Crisler glitters at
Z Hairdressing

by Aisling O'Brien





Linsey Crisler and her husband Kenneth Jackman both work at the US Embassy in Beijing. They moved here in January 2013, with their three children; sons Caleb (age 9) and Isaac (7) who attend Yew Chung International School of Beijing (YCIS), and daughter Claire (3). The family plans to stay in Beijing for the holidays and celebrate with friends. "My favorite thing about the holidays is the music," says Crisler. "I love going to concerts and performances and hearing it piped into stores and restaurants. I feel like every year I start smiling from the moment I hear the first bars of 'Jingle Bells!'"

Before our makeover, Crisler's hair is in a completely natural, virgin state: she has only had it colored once before, 15 years ago. Her hair is naturally curly, and she finds it very difficult to find a good stylist, even back home. "I had one good hair stylist in DC, and he moved," she laughs. "Now I just have it cut once a year. When it gets long enough to pull back in a pony tail, I know it's time to get it cut."

Fellow American Clayton Olsen is creative stylist at Z Hairdressing, is also American, and his friendliness and thorough consultation really put Crisler at ease. "Linsey is a super active mom, I want to help her replicate the salon look easily at home," Olsen says. So before beginning the restyle, he applies a Keratin smoothing treatment. "Beijing has dry and polluted air, and keratin treatment adds a strong layer of proteins to protect the hair shaft and reduce curl and frizz," he says. The treatment will last three to four months and make Crisler's hair much more manageable.

Olsen chooses a palette of cool-toned browns to cover Crisler's gray and compliment her skin tone. He uses Inoa color which is oil-based and ammonia-free, perfect for someone new to color and unsure of skin sensitivities. As Crisler's hair is already quite short, he plans to keep the length and add some soft layers.

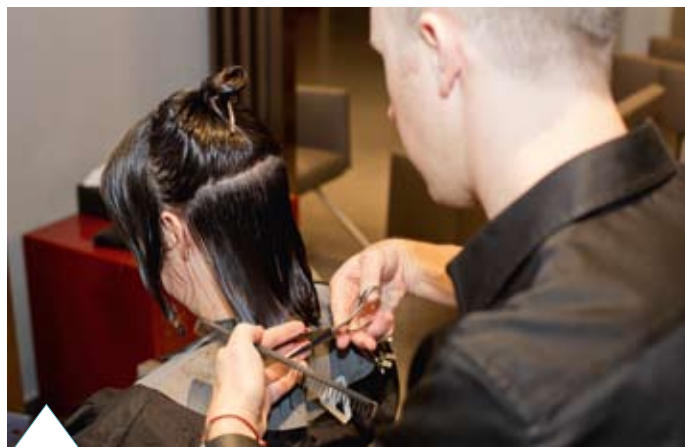
Crisler is delighted with her new look. "It was nice to be surprised, and pleasantly so. I feel like a better version of the real me. My hair feels amazing and I love the color. It is an attainable transformation, I can duplicate the look on my own, and that's really important," she says. "I'm busy, like all moms, and my beauty routine is low on my priority list. I didn't want the result to be anything drastic, I was just hoping to see an enhanced version of my regular self and I am very pleased with the results."

She also really enjoyed the process. "[Olsen] in particular was terrific. He had great ideas and his execution was perfect. I would certainly go back and am planning to."

Z Hairdressing

Daily 10am-9pm. B1-003, Building 5, 8 Xindong Lu Complex, Chaoyang District (8424 4533)
朝阳区新东路8号院5号 楼B1-003

Get the Look:



1 Olsen evens the ends, and adds some texture. "This cut would have had an entirely different effect on her previously tightly curled hair," he says.



2 Hair is sectioned and painted with levels cool-mid and lighter browns for dimension, adding more depth and shine while also providing full gray coverage.



3 Ka Wah, makeup artist, cleans, moisturizes, and applies foundation. He applies eyeliner, brushes mascara deeply into the eyelashes, and shapes Crisler's eyebrows. "Fuller, stronger eyebrows can accentuate the eyes or balance your jaw line," he says. He finishes with a bright lipstick, which he recommends as an easy way to improve the appearance of winter skin tones.



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Got a question?

Dr. Melissa Rodriguez is a naturopathic doctor and mother of two, who works at Beijing United Family Hospital. To find out more, check out her website at www.drmelissarodriguez.com

Milk: It Does a Body Good?

Many of us believe that dairy is a required food group, and that we must consume two to three servings a day to get sufficient calcium. Commercials in North America tell us: "Milk, it does a body good," but does it really?

Calcium is a mineral that is important for healthy teeth and bone formation. It is also needed for muscle contraction and many other functions in the body. Calcium is contained in milk but it is also found in many other foods including dark leafy greens such as spinach and kale, nuts and seeds (especially almonds), white beans, and tofu.

In my practice I work a lot with food sensitivities. Many people are sensitive to dairy, eggs, and wheat (specifically gluten). Milk in particular can cause a lot of phlegm and mucous, which is why it can be implicated in different conditions, from sinusitis to frequent ear infections to asthma. I once had a 6-year-old patient who constantly had a runny nose, and for months on end his mother thought he had a cold. After six weeks of avoiding all dairy products his nose stopped dripping, as if a tap had been turned off. Almost a year later his nose started to run again. His mother discovered he was regularly eating yogurt at school. Once he stopped eating it, his nose stopped running.

Humans are the only fully grown mammals that drink the milk of another species

Some people suffer from a dairy intolerance. An intolerance is when someone cannot digest a particular food, for example many people of Asian descent are lactose intolerant. This means they do not have the enzymes to breakdown milk in order to digest it. This can cause issues such as bloating, gas, and even abdominal pain.

As a naturopath I really believe that nature teaches us how to live our lives. If we look and listen carefully to the laws of nature, we can learn important life lessons. For example, let us look at the purpose of milk. A cow produces milk to feed her offspring. The calf drinks its mother's milk, which is perfectly suited to its digestive system and contains all the essential nutrients for the calf's development. It should be noted that humans are the only fully grown mammals that drink the milk of another species. If anything we should be drinking breastmilk!

Interestingly women from Japan and China have less incidence of osteoporosis than women in the West who consume large amounts of dairy products. This could be because the calcium in milk is not very well absorbed. Traditionally Chinese and Japanese women do not eat dairy, though of course this has started to change in recent years.

The bottom line is that we must listen to our bodies. If dairy doesn't sit right with you, then don't eat it. Look for other sources of calcium in your diet. There are many!

Nasal Rinsing

Our nose has several very special tasks. It warms up, moistens, and cleans the air we breathe before it reaches our lungs. When there is nasal obstruction due to mucus or inflammation we are forced to breathe through our mouth. This will then cause cold, unclean, dry air to be sent directly into our unprotected lower airway. If we breathe in this manner for many hours we immediately feel how dry our mouth gets and before long we may develop cough and perhaps even an infection of the lungs.

The inner surface of the nose and throat is coated in by a rug like surface covered with cilia that are continually moving to sweep away and clean anything that should not be there. When we are exposed to air pollution, cigarette smoke, or even cold air our cilia are paralyzed; this reduces our ability to fight off infection and self clean the inner surface of our nose and throat.

After being outdoors on bad AQI days you should rinse your nose

How does Saline Nasal Rinse help our health?

Irrigation with salt water increases the number of beats per minute of the cilia in our nose and throat, improving the self cleaning feature of this inner surface.

Washing the nose with salt water also has a direct effect of removing thick mucus and any pro-inflammatory particles from the nose.

Need more info?

Dr. Dorothy Dexter is a family medicine physician at Beijing United Family Hospital. She has several years of clinical experience, and speaks English and Spanish. Contact her at dorothy.dexter@ufh.com.cn.



When should you use a nasal rinse?

When you return home after being outdoors on bad AQI days you should rinse your nose before going to sleep to remove any particles that may have been caught in your nose in spite of wearing a mask.

If you develop thick mucus due to allergy or infection it is especially important to remove the mucus regularly to avoid bacteria growing in the mucus collection.

Whenever a child is breathing with their mouth due to nasal obstruction with mucus this demands immediate action. We must irrigate their nose with salt water and if they are unable to blow out the mucus, we must suck it out with a suction device such as a suction pear or Nosefrida.

Which kind of nasal rinse is best?

There are many kinds of nasal saline bottles. Studies have shown that the most effective devices are those that irrigate the surface with liquid saline, not just a misty spray. If you choose to use a mist spray you should repeat the spray until the surface is completely wet and you are able to blow out the liquid.

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Skin Deep

TCM, Ayurveda, and Western medicine tips to ward off dry skin

by Sijia Chen



Alex Tan

If this is your first winter in Beijing, we have bad news for you: expect tight, itchy, flaky, and possibly cracked skin. The city's humid continental climate is influenced by a major polar air mass called the Siberian anticyclone, which brings cold, dry, and blustery winters. Radiators and other heating systems can aggravate dry skin by stripping humidity from the air. In addition, new expats may be struggling with imbalances caused by changes in diet, culture, sleep patterns, and work or school situations.

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)

When Stefania Rosso relocated to the capital in 2008, she experienced a flare-up of acute dermatitis on her eyebrows, chin, and scalp. Though she had had the condition in her native Italy, it was compounded by all-over dry skin and mild eczema on her hand and leg.

After a frustrating regimen of cortisone creams and scalp lotions, Rosso decided to see a traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) doctor. "I liked the idea of TCM since I was living in China. It [saw the patient] as a whole, not only the problem," she writes from Ningbo, where she now lives.

At the initial consultation, Rosso filled out a detailed form with various questions about her health, then got her pulse and tongue checked. The doctor prescribed a herbal formula called *buzhong yiqi* (补中益气) containing ginseng and astragalus, a herb with antibacterial, antioxidant, and anti-inflammatory properties. The name of the tonic translates roughly to "tonify the middle and augment the *qi*." Rosso also started using a cheap body lotion called *Biaoting* (标婷), which could be found in most Chinese pharmacies.

She also took up "dry brushing," a practice in which a brush with firm, natural bristles is gently dragged over bare skin in long, sweeping motions before showering. The strokes start at the feet and always follow the direction of the heart. Dry brushing is designed to stimulate the lymphatic system and exfoliate dead skin. Though proponents claim it also reduces cellulite and eliminates toxins, there is no scientific evidence to back this up. Nevertheless, Rosso started to see improvement in her skin after using these combined measures.

In TCM, dry skin is usually attributed to a deficiency in yin, one of two essential forces that makes up *qi* or life energy along with yang. Any imbalance in yin or yang can result in adverse health effects; TCM aims to restore the balance of these two forces.

"Think about a natural environment with [yin] imbalance: the desert," says Chinese medicine expert and Straight Bamboo founder Alex Tan. "Environments like Beijing are cold and dry in winter. Think about Tibet or Mongolia or Scandinavia. [Natives of these places] generally eat more meat, fatty meats, dairy, porridge, root vegetables, soups, and stews. We should adjust our diets to be more yin-nourishing and with age, we should temper our schedules to be more yin-building."

In practical terms, yin-building measures may include TCM treatments like acupuncture, *guasha* (scraping), cupping, or herbal prescriptions depending on the nature and severity of the problem. The biggest yin builder is sleep, so it is crucial to assess the timing, duration, and quality of a patient's rest cycle. Treating children for dry skin follows a similar process, except that that children's skin issues are much more likely to be of digestive origin. In this case, diet and rest are key.

"One of the great yin builders in TCM is to have soup, porridge, or stews with your meal," says Tan. "Bone broth, seaweed or mushroom are best." That said, yin foods can be difficult to digest and overindulging in them can create "dampness" in the body – in other words, an accumulation of fluids that can manifest as excessive mucus, phlegm, or congestion.

To counteract winter ailments, Tan recommends getting more sleep, going to bed early and rising later, showering less frequently, reflecting more than producing, taking hot foot baths at night, and dressing like the locals with a pair of *qiuku* (thermal pants) at all times. "Warm feet and a cool head is the key to happy digestion, strong *qi*, and strong blood," he says.

Ayurvedic Medicine

According to Ayurveda, an ancient holistic health system from India, the key to skin type lies in the *doshas* – *vata* (space and air), *pitta* (fire and water), and *kapha* (water and earth) – or life energies within each person.

"Since everyone has a different balance of elements, we naturally have a different balance of *doshas* too," explains Irina Glushkova, an Ayurvedic consultant who makes her own line of customized, natural skincare products. "*Vata dosha* produces dry skin. The *doshas* also have a yearly cycle, which we experience as the seasons."

"Beijing this time of the year, from the beginning of November until the end of February, is under *vata dosha* – cool, dry, windy. This climate

"I wanted to have products that I felt good about using on my kids – without any harmful chemicals that might get absorbed into their systems and that I wouldn't mind them touching or licking off their hands"



Irina Glushkova

brings out similar types of changes in all of us. We develop dry skin, dry lips and feet, dandruff and other dry skin problems."

All skin conditions – including acne, eczema and psoriasis – are caused by accumulated *ama* (toxins). In Ayurvedic medicine, the first step is to detoxify the body and balance one's diet. However, lasting change can only result from making changes to one's lifestyle.

"The Ayurvedic concept is that health and disease are holistic – that is, whatever happens in one part of the body happens to the whole body," says Glushkova. "Any physical or psychological symptom of imbalance indicates an imbalance in the body-mind unit."

In the winter, she recommends massaging sesame oil into the hair and body before going to bed. This can also help children settle down and sleep better. Olive, almond, peanut, castor, and avocado oils are also suitable for winter.

Glushkova cautions against using coconut oil because of its cooling nature. In Ayurveda, it is commonly used to treat symptoms associated with *pitta* imbalance such as inflammation and high blood pressure. "If you love coconut oil, it is better to mix it with other oils during the winter before applying it to your body or hair. Add a selected essential oil to balance the *doshas* and nourish the skin. Essential oils that are good for dry skin include sandalwood, cardamom, nutmeg, jasmine, rose, geranium, neroli, and vanilla."

Glushkova also warns against using essential oils on children without first consulting a doctor. Not everyone can apply pure plant oils directly to the face, as these can be very heavy. Instead, she suggests a balanced face cream made with hydrating substances like macadamia oil, avocado oil, amaranth oil, beeswax, vegetable glycerin, ceramides, lecithin, or phytosterols.

Glushkova started making her own skincare products after changing her lifestyle through Ayurveda; she became a vegetarian, and started to learn about the chemicals and other harsh ingredients in beauty and household products.

Because her products are made fresh and do not contain preservatives, they must be kept in the fridge. Glushkova says that her ingredients – including organic oils, essential oils, beeswax, flower wax, vitamins, natural extracts, and antioxidants – are 100 percent natural and sourced from all over the world. Her product line encompasses moisturizers, serums, eye and face creams, body lotions, shampoos, conditioners, hair and face masks, and hand and foot creams.

Western Medicine

Irina Glushkova is not alone in making her own skin products. When San Francisco native Aimee Ng moved to Beijing over 11 years ago, she developed severe dry skin that cracked and bled. The condition was caused by the combination of dry winters, indoor heating, and frequent hand-washing required by her former job as a preschool teacher.

In addition, her three children – now 4, 2 and a half, and 1 – had had sensitive skin since birth, developing red rashes in response to even minute amounts of detergent residue on their clothing. Her older son started to experience particularly dry skin in the winter and sometimes scratched at it until he bled and developed scabs.

Ng started to make her own lotion bars based on a recipe from a blog called One Good Thing. "I wanted to have products that I felt good about using on my kids – without any harmful chemicals that might get absorbed into their systems and that I wouldn't mind them touching or licking off their hands – without paying for expensive commercial natural products," she says.

After seeing a different recipe on the same blog, she tweaked the formula to be creamier and easier to spread. Her family uses this particular recipe – a 1:1:1 ratio of beeswax, coconut oil, and extra virgin olive oil – to this day.

"In warmer weather, it is very easy to scoop out with your fingers. When it is colder, it hardens up a bit, but I've found that if you just use the back of your nails to scrape the surface of it a few times, you can rub it between your palms for a few seconds and that heats it up enough to make it easy to rub on."

Ng buys the coconut oil and extra virgin olive oil from Costco whenever she is in the US, though she says the ingredients are easy to find in Beijing. She also used to bring back the beeswax from overseas until her mother found it being sold for much cheaper on Taobao. Though it seemed less refined than the beeswax she used to get in the US, the cream turned out just fine with a light, pleasant scent.

Choosing a good moisturizer can be tricky, especially for children's sensitive skin. "My rule of thumb is [a white moisturizer] without fragrance and that is hypoallergenic," says Dr. Jayne Zierman, head of the pediatrics department at Oasis International Hospital.

"Other factors to consider are the form of the moisturizer and the frequency of application. Lotions are mostly water-based and hence good for summertime while creams and ointments are good for winter and especially dry skin. Moisturizer should be used once per day to maintain good hydration, then increased in frequency if the skin condition gets worse."

Though there is still a lot of debate over what causes chronic conditions like eczema and psoriasis, there appears to be a strong genetic component to these diseases. In 2006, geneticist Irwin McLean and pediatric dermatologist Dr. Alan Irvine discovered that individuals lacking a protein called filaggrin were at a higher risk of developing eczema, rhinitis, and asthma.

It is important to identify the factors that trigger or worsen chronic

skin conditions and take measures to avoid the triggers. "Eczema and psoriasis are lifelong conditions without cures, but their symptoms can be controlled and managed," says Dr. Ziermann.

Though anecdotal evidence shows that shower filters may alleviate hair and skin dryness, she is cautious about recommending them. "There are studies that show they are quite beneficial for [a segment of the] population, but they are still under investigation," says Dr. Ziermann.

However, there are other reasons to consider installing shower filters. Sources like the US-based Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the American Journal of Public Health report serious health risks – including a higher risk of cancer – from inhaling or absorbing chlorine and its byproducts through the skin from shower water.

See the sidebar for useful tips on avoiding dry skin this winter.

7 Ways to Avoid Dry Skin

- 1 Take shorter, warm showers.** Though it may be tempting to crank up the water temperature in the morning, hot water strips the skin of its natural oil barrier. Limit showers and baths to 5 to 10 minutes, then pat dry and moisturize.
- 2 Use sunscreen.** Though UV rays are strongest in the summer, that does not mean you should skimp on sun protection during the colder months. Cover up, use a broad spectrum SPF 30 sunscreen, dress in layers, and use a lip balm with SPF 15 sunscreen.
- 3 Moisturize right.** The simpler the moisturizer, the better. Good choices include petroleum jelly, mineral oil, and unscented body lotion. Those who like rich moisturizers can choose a product containing shea butter, ceramides, stearic acid, or glycerin. Moisturizer is best applied after a shower, when the pores are most open and moisture is most effectively trapped. Remember to moisturize your hands every time you wash them.
- 4 Buy a humidifier.** These little home appliances add moisture back into the air – a must-have for any heated environment. Buy one for each room if possible. Test humidity levels with a device called a hygrometer; aim for at least 50 percent. Cheap hygrometers are available on Taobao for RMB 15-20; search for 湿度计 (*shīdù jì*).
- 5 Avoid harsh soaps and toners.** Use gentle facial cleansers, shower gels, and soaps with added moisturizers, oils, or fats. Avoid products with deodorants, antibacterial detergents, fragrance, and alcohol.
- 6 Wear breathable fabrics.** Choose natural fibers like cotton and silk. Wool, although natural and warming, can irritate even normal skin; if you wear a wool sweater, layer a gentler fabric underneath.
- 7 Drink lots of water.** Do not forget to hydrate from the inside out. Do as the locals do and drink hot water (热水, *rèshuǐ*), a practice rooted in traditional Chinese medicine. Too much cold accumulation in the body can weaken the immune system and cause poor circulation, digestion issues, cramps, and abdominal pain.

Sources: WebMD, Mayo Clinic, Organic Olivia



Dr. Jayne Ziermann

Resources

Oasis International Hospital

Pediatrics Department Chief Dr. Jayne Ziermann speaks English, Tagalog, and German. Mon-Sat 8.30am-5.30pm (some clinics open from 8.30am-12.30pm), daily 24hrs emergency care. 9 Jiuxianqiao Beilu, Chaoyang District (400 UR OASIS) www.oasishealth.cn
朝阳区酒仙桥北路9号

Straight Bamboo

To learn more about TCM practitioner Alex Tan and Straight Bamboo, visit straightbamboo.com.

Vedic Life

For a free Ayurvedic consultation, contact Irina Glushkova at 139 1180 9671 or add "Irina GL" on WeChat. As of print time, Vedic Life had a website in the works: www.vediclifeshop.com.

A Step-by-Step Guide to Dry Brushing

www.mindbodygreen.com/0-12675/a-step-by-step-guide-to-dry-skin-brushing.html

One Good Thing

The blog posts that Aimee Ng based her homemade moisturizing salve on:
<http://www.onegoodthingbyjillee.com/2012/04/make-your-own-lotion-bars.html>
<http://www.onegoodthingbyjillee.com/2013/05/diy-all-purpose-healing-salve.html>



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Bavarian and German Cuisine at Paulaner Bräuhaus

photos by Dave's Studio, text by Sally Wilson





A selection of ice cream (RMB 28 per scoop)

Beijing's most popular microbrewery, Paulaner Bräuhaus is also an award-winning restaurant, crowned Best German 2015 in the *beijinger* Reader Restaurant Awards. Serving traditional Bavarian and German fare, dishes include sausages, pork knuckle, sauerkraut, and goulash. There is a separate kids' menu which includes tomato soup (RMB 38), Kempinski cheese burger with fries (RMB 58), breaded prawns (RMB 68), plus pizza and pasta dishes.

Our hungry diner is UK/German 9-year-old Lily Copeland, a Year 5 student at Dulwich College Beijing. Lily has been living in Beijing for five years. Her favorite foods are lasagna and fajitas, and she loves ice cream! Today Lily samples a selection of dishes from their a la carte menu, including Frankfurter sausages served with traditional Bavarian style potato salad (RMB 88), deep-fried breaded Camembert with cranberries (RMB 128), and a selection of breads and pretzels with home-made spreads (RMB 48).

The sausages are "proper German sausages" and a big hit with Lily. "The potato salad is really good too, with lots of bits of bacon," she says. Lily dives into the basket of breads, which pair perfectly with the liver pate and a tangy sour cream spread. The breaded Camembert has a crisp exterior crumb encasing soft and flavorful cheese. For

dessert Lily samples the premium ice cream from the kids' menu (RMB 28 per scoop). Her favorite flavor is the strawberry. "It has real strawberry pieces and is so tasty!" she exclaims. To drink, she enjoys a fresh cranberry juice.

The restaurant seats 264 indoors, with décor that lends an authentic *bräuhaus* atmosphere. Outside, make the most of the expansive beer garden. Service is fast and efficient, with wait staff dressed in traditional outfits. All prices are subject to 15 percent surcharge.

From December 1 the Kempinski Ice Rink at Paulaner terrace will open up, with huts serving *gluhwein* and hot chocolate. Why not welcome in the festive season with some hearty winter dishes in Paulaner, before taking to the ice.

Family-friendly facilities:

The restaurant is non-smoking throughout. There are ample high chairs available. The restaurant has clean, Western-style bathrooms with soap and toilet paper.

Paulaner Bräuhaus 普拉那啤酒坊餐厅

Daily 11am-1am Kempinski Hotel, 50 Liangmaqiao Road, Chaoyang District (6465 3388 ext 5732) www.paulaner-brauhaus.com/beijing/home 朝阳区亮马桥路50号凯宾斯基饭店

Kempinski Ice Rink

Daily from December 1 2015 to March 1 2016. Public ice skating Sunday to Wednesday 9am-9pm, Thursday to Saturday 9am-12noon, 3pm-6pm. Open for events Thursday to Saturday 12noon-3pm, 6.30-10pm.

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Santa's Cookies

The Hardemans make M&M treats for Father Christmas

text by Aisling O'Brien,
Chinese translation by Abby Wang



We've had some healthier recipes in the magazine of late, but we recognize that Santa is one of the hardest working people in the world. Although he may be a little husky, he needs to keep his energy up at Christmastime. International School of Beijing (ISB) is a family affair for our bakers, the Hardemans. They moved here from Canada four years ago for mom and dad's jobs at the school. Megan, is a physical education teacher; Mark, is deputy head of school; daughter Sydney (age 8), and Samuel (4) are students there.

Megan loves traditional holiday baking. She makes her mom's recipes: Canadian favorite Nanaimo bars, gingerbread men, and

shortbread. She often uses Pinterest for recipe inspiration, and found these Santa cookies from lecremedelacrumb.com on the site. Megan cautions our readers to pile these cookies high, and watch them carefully. Making them thick and keeping them soft and underdone really brings out their rich, buttery chewiness.

The Hardemans are heading home to Canada for the holidays, excited to spend time with friends and family, and have fun in the snow. Santa already has their holiday destination locked into his GPS. Sydney is hoping he brings her a ping-pong table, and Sam would like a new bike. While Megan says if she has been a good girl, she'll be opening up a new iPhone 6+ on Christmas morning.

Santa's Cookies *Makes 18 cookies***Ingredients** 成分

12 tablespoons butter, softened
12汤匙黄油, 软化
¾ cup brown sugar 四分之三
杯红糖
¼ cup sugar 四分之一杯糖
1 teaspoon vanilla 1茶匙香草精
1 egg 1个鸡蛋
2 cups flour 2杯面粉
13.4oz box instant Oreo
cookie pudding mix 13.4盎司
奥利奥饼干速溶布丁粉

1 teaspoon baking soda
1茶匙小苏打
½ teaspoon salt 半茶匙盐
1 cup semi sweet chocolate
chips 1杯半甜巧克力片
1 cup Reese's chocolate
peanut butter chips 1杯Reese
巧克力花生酱碎片
1 cup red and green M&M
candies 1杯红色和绿色的
M&M巧克力糖

Instructions 做法



1

1. In a food mixer, cream the butter, brown sugar, and sugar for 1-2 minutes until fluffy. Add vanilla and egg and mix well. 在容器中混合黄油、红糖, 搅拌1-2分钟直到混合物呈轻盈蓬松状态。加入香草精、鸡蛋 拌匀。
2. In another bowl whisk together flour, vanilla pudding mix, baking soda, and salt. 在另一个碗中混合面粉、香草布丁、小苏打和盐。

3. Gradually mix dry ingredients into wet ingredients until incorporated. Stir in both kinds of chips. 慢慢搅拌成均匀的饼干面糊, 拌入两种碎片。
4. Preheat oven to 350F. Mist a baking sheet with cooking spray. Roll about 1 tablespoon of cookie dough into a ball and place on the greased baking sheet. Gently press the M&Ms into the cookie dough balls. 烤箱预热至350华氏摄氏度(约176摄氏度), 在烤盘烘焙纸上喷一点点水, 挖1汤匙量的饼干面糊到烘焙纸上, 轻轻按入几颗M&M巧克力糖。



3



5

5. Bake for 9-12 minutes until cookies are set but still slightly underdone. Allow to cool for at least 10 minutes on the baking sheet. Transfer to a cooling rack to finish cooling completely. Store in airtight container at room temperature. 烘烤9-12分钟, 此时曲奇已成型但仍湿润。在烤盘上冷却10分钟后, 将饼干转移到冷却架上。完全冷却后的饼干可以在室温下的密闭容器中储存。



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'Tis the Season to Get Feasting

From do-it-yourself to dining out

by Sally Wilson

Chestnuts roasting, hams smoking, and mulled wine glowing. It's that time of year for festive feasting, and foraging around Beijing looking for traditional foods and seasonal treats. Here's a roundup of where to find the best turkeys and mince pies.

Turkey and Ham

The practice of serving large, stuffed fowl for Christmas has been going on for centuries, with turkey proving to be the mainstay. A Christmas ham is a traditional dish of cured and sometimes smoked ham, either baked or boiled.

Where to buy?

Beijing's international supermarkets and butchers will have turkeys and hams for sale during December, most turkeys will be imported and sold frozen. Be sure to order any meats super early. Prices for frozen turkeys range from RMB 49-78/kg. Hams are sold boned or boneless, and prices vary according to the type of ham. Here's a round-up of the main stores; **April Gourmet, BHG Market Place, Boucherie Michel, City Shop, Jenny's, Schindler's, and TooToo Organic Farm.**

Cakes, Breads, and Puddings

Buche de Noel is one of many traditional cakes and breads enjoyed at Christmas. As the name suggests, it is of French origin and literally translates as "Christmas log," referring to the traditional Yule log.

Panettone is the Italian egg-enriched bread with sugar, honey, raisins, spices, and candied peel, traditionally presented at Christmas.

Stollen is sweet bread from Germany, made with wheat flour, white sugar, butter, eggs, dried fruit, and marzipan (almond paste).

Gingerbread and ginger cookies feature prominently on Northern European Christmas tables.

Mince pies, not to be confused with minced meat pies, are pastry pies filled with a mixture of dried fruit, nut, sugar, spice, and suet.

Christmas pudding (aka plum pudding) is a rich and dense fruit pudding, which traditionally contained charms, such as silver coins, symbolizing good luck for the New Year.

Where to buy?

Most of the international supermarkets, plus cafés including **Kempi Deli, Paris Baguette, Jamaica Blue, and Tous le Jours.**

Ikea sells frozen blocks of gingerbread dough, so you can make your own cookies and a gingerbread house for you to assemble and decorate.



Spiced Wine

Mulled wine, *glühwein*, *gløgg*, or *glögg*, whatever name you prefer, the main ingredients are essentially the same. Red wine served warm with spices, which can include cinnamon, cardamom, ginger, cloves, citrus, and star anise.

Where to buy?

Ikea sell bottles of *glögg* and most international supermarkets sell all the spices you need for mulling wine yourself.

Catering and Dining In

For those who want to enjoy all the trappings of Christmas dinner in the comfort of home, there are catering options that will happily do all the hard work for you.

April Gourmet

Order a whole or half a turkey RMB 120-150/kg. They also provide the entire meal, including turkey, stuffing, potatoes, cranberry sauce, vegetables, and gravy from RMB 750-1,299.

Harry's Kitchen

Catering for all occasions and featuring Western, South Asian and Middle Eastern specialties. Christmas menu includes turkey, gravy, stuffing, cranberry sauce, mashed, roasted, or gratin potatoes and a selection of vegetables. For desserts, there's mince pies and Christmas pudding. Contact (5686 4641, 139 1169 0944, harryskitchen@hotmail.com)

Kempi Deli

Beijing's most famous European-style delicatessen, will have a variety of home-made Christmas cookies and cakes plus freshly prepared Christmas goose, traditional turkey, and honey glazed ham. Contact (6465 3388 ext. 4227, restaurant.beijing@kempinski.com)

Lily's American Diner

Whole roasted turkeys for RMB 109/kg, sides RMB 25/person which include homemade stuffing, mashed potato, sweet potato, vegetables, cranberry sauce, and gravy. Contact (131 4642 7090, 136 8152 4886) www.LilysAmericanDiner.com

Village Café

Pre-order all your Christmas delicacies then pick them up ready for your oven or piping hot ready to serve. Whole turkeys, hams, smoked salmon, Christmas cake, and stollen. Contact (6410 5210, villagecafe@theoppositehouse.com)



That's the Spirit!

Seasonal activities to embrace

by Nimo Wanjau



Tis the season of sharing, the season of giving, the season to find an excuse to indulge in pleasures that can only be truly appreciated during winter. Here are activities to try out, or make a tradition of, with your loved ones.



Lights, Lights, Lights

Malls such as **Sanlitun Taikooli, Solana, Parkview Green, Indigo**, and more will be transformed into a photographer's heaven with fairy lights, trees, and decorations adorning open spaces. The malls have restaurants, cinemas (*Finding Dory* and *Star Wars* will be showing), and of course, shopping to while away the time. As well as serving up delicious Christmas Day lunches, the lobbies of many hotels such as the **Hilton Beijing Capital Airport, Conrad Beijing, EAST hotel**, and more will be transformed into winter wonderlands. Tuck in on the big day, or simply visit to buy a cup of hot chocolate or mulled wine and relax to the Christmas muzak. For more information on dining out, see p30).

PHOTOS: INFOMASTEN, OTHALAN, ROANOKECOLLEGE, AND ANDREWMAJONE (FLICKR)

Cooking Classes

Fill the air with the sweet or savory smells of baked goodies or roast chicken after attending one of the cooking classes available at **Kempinski Hotel Beijing** by Roma and Kranzler's restaurant chefs on December 12 (Christmas cookies) and 19 (Christmas dinner). **The Hutong's** Winter Holiday Bakes classes will teach participants how to make pumpkin cookies, apple spice muffins, and gingerbreads (December 27). All through December, **EAST Hotel's** Domain has a gingerbread do-it-yourself kit that can be ordered and assembled at home, under with guidance by Chef Grace on Saturdays.

Markets, Fayres, and Bazaars

Shop, eat, drink, and raise money for worthy causes at the last remaining markets and fayres such as the Winter Fayre at **Harrow Beijing** (December 9), **The Hutong** (December 12), and the Kids Run Charity Bazaar at **Dini's Restaurant** (December 13).

Winter Camps

If going home or to an exotic location isn't an option then sign the kids up to three, four, or five-day camps to keep them busy for a few hours and having fun doing creative activities. **Atelier**, **Blue Bridge International**, **Imagine.**, **Sports Beijing**, and **House of Knowledge International School** and **Kindergarten** are all offering camps. Most have half day or full day options making them flexible enough so kids can try out more than one.

Choirs, Concerts, and Ballet

You won't find door-to-door caroling here in Beijing but there are numerous concerts at schools, hotels, and concert halls. The German



Choir Beijing (Deutsche Kantorei Peking), the Madrigal Choir Beijing, and the Bach Orchestra team up to perform the Christmas Oratorio by J.S. Bach at the **German Embassy School**, **The Canadian International School of Beijing**, and **Kempinski Hotel Beijing** on December 6, 12, and 13. The Egg, official known as the **National Center for the Performing Arts** (NCPA), has concerts all month long featuring NCPA's Chorus (December 24), NCPA World Classic Opera Gala (December 25) and Beijing Symphony Orchestra's *Happy New Year* on December 20. Tickets can be bought on damai.cn. Kiev Ballet bring *Swan Lake* to the Great Hall of the People on December 30. Pick up a tune to hum for the rest of the holidays.

Religious Services

Beijing has eight Catholic churches; **the Eastern Church** (Wangfujing Catholic Church), **Western Church** (Xizhimen Church), **Southern Church** (Xuanwumen Catholic Church), **Northern Church** (Xishiku Catholic Church), **St. Michael's Church**, **Nangangzi Church**, **Pingfang Church**, and **Dongguantou Church**. Christmas Eve mass is usually early in the evening while Christmas day has morning and evening options to attend.

Other Christian expat churches such as the **Beijing International Christian Fellowship** (Liangmaqiao, Wudaokou), **River of Grace** (Wangjing), **Capital Community Church** (Shunyi), will also be holding services.

On December 13, to celebrate the eighth night of Hanukkah, attend the annual giant Menorah lighting on the roof of **Bet Yaakov Chabad House**.

And Outside...

Ice Festivals

Ice festivals such as the **Longqi Gorge** and **Yuyuantan Park Ice** and **Snow Festival** all begin in January and dates aren't released until later on in December but these are the two places to enjoy seeing the ice sculptures on a much smaller scale than Harbin, and in far closer locations.

Skiing and Snowboarding

The season for outdoors skiing and snowboarding is here and Beijing has numerous locations to try such as **Beijing Huaibei International Ski Resort**, **Beijing Xueshijie Ski Resort**, **Nanshan Ski Resort**, **Beijing Yuyang Ski Resort**, **Jundushan Ski Resort**, and more. Many locations won't have English-speaking instructors, but will have a good selection of rentable gear for both kids and adults. Many of the resorts are an hour's drive or more outside the city, making the slopes a good option for weekend getaways. *For more information on winter sports see p54*

For details on all businesses listed, please see our online directories at www.beijing-kids.com/directory. For detailed event information see www.beijing-kids.com/events



A woman with long dark hair and a young girl with blonde hair and blue glasses are smiling. The woman is holding a lit candle in her right hand, and the girl is holding a lit candle in her left hand. They are both wearing colorful, patterned sweaters. The background is a colorful, abstract painting with green, yellow, and red patterns.

Christmas Candle

Light up with MSB's
kid-friendly craft

by Aisling O'Brien

PHOTOS: ZEUS

MSB Art Teacher Vivian Gao and student Rosalin (age 3) and show us their finished candles

We arrive at International Montessori School of Beijing (MSB) on one of the coldest days of the year so far. Along Jingmi Lu falling autumn leaves and snow have been churned together into a green-tea colored slush, but inside MSB it's evident the students are enjoying their winter wonderland; a giant snowman's body sits on the astro-turf pitch waiting for his head. We warm up with a hot cuppa, before heading to the art classroom to meeting English-born student Rosalin (age 3). It's the end of a long school day, but Rosalin is focused, meticulous, and self-sufficient as she crafts. She even takes out a tiny dustpan and brush to clean up some spilled wax beads.

Beijinger Vivian Gao has worked in various roles at MSB for ten years. "First I was a teaching assistant, then pre-school music teacher, and now I'm the pre-school art teacher," she says. Gao tells us that all of the materials for this craft can be sourced on Taobao.

Rosalin tells us she has big dreams for Christmas; she is hoping Santa will bring her a "big flying princess." Let's hope this candle lights Santa's way.

Estimated time:
30 minutes

• Crystal wax (warmed in hot water)

Suitable for:
Age 3+ (adult supervision required)

Materials

- Red, green, and white wax pellets
- Short sized candle wick and wick tab
- Shot glass
- Glitter



Instructions



1 Place the wick in the wick tab and center in the bottom of the shot glass.



2 Layer the wax pellets in bands of color until you reach the mid-point of the glass.



3 Pour the warmed crystal wax into the shot glass, almost filling it to the brim.



4 Decorate with glitter.



Hanukkah Wall Hanging

A treat for every day of
Hanukkah with Ganeinu

by Aisling O'Brien

We meet 8-year-old Grunia Freundlich in her classroom at Ganeinu International School, the Jewish day school that her mom Dini founded. Dini, along with her husband, Rabbi Shimon Freundlich, helped establish Chabad's office in Beijing in 2001, since adding a second Chabad House, the Jewish day school, a community center, and a kosher restaurant. Ganeinu, the only Jewish day school in northern China, is open to the entire Jewish community and focuses on introducing the traditions and heritage of Judaism and Israel.

Grunia and I share our birth order, she is the second-youngest child in a family of six. We met previously when sister Chava was featured in our Food for Thought column. Competence at a young age seems to be a given with the Freundlich children: we doubt we've ever seen anyone craft as fast as Grunia. Her teacher, Israeli-born Chani Raskin, agrees. "Craft and practical work in the classroom is an everyday part of school here," says Raskin, "But even so, Grunia is particularly quick!"

Estimated time:

30 minutes

Suitable for:

Age 6+ (adult supervision required)

Materials

- 1 9"×12" felt sheet
- felt squares in assorted colors
- glue gun
- paper stencil shapes (Star of David, dreidel, candle, menorah, etc.)
- alphabet stickers

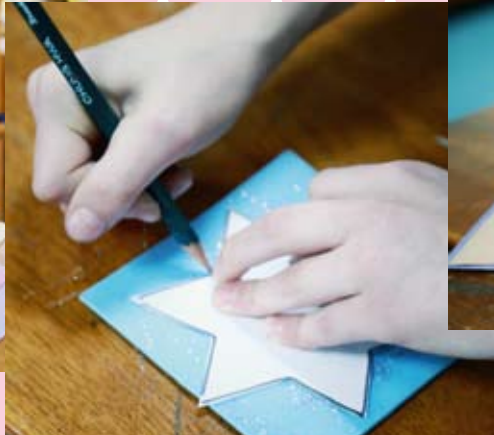
- pencil
- scissors
- decorative string
- straw



Instructions



- 1** Glue eight felt squares to the larger felt sheet. Only glue the pockets on three sides.



- 2** Place the paper stencils on top of the felt and trace around them with a pencil. Cut out each shape carefully.



- 3** Glue a shape (for example a candle, or dreidel) to each pocket. Attach the alphabet stickers spelling out your holiday message. Decorate with other elements, such as the Star of David, or menorah with candles.



- 4** Glue the decorative string around all four sides of the blue sheet.



5

- Thread the decorative string through the straw, and tie the ends in a bow. Glue the straw to the back of the larger blue felt sheet. Fill the pockets for each night with Hanukkah gelt, chocolate coins, or little gifts.



TALENT

is good

PRACTISE

is better

PASSION

is best

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF HARROW BEIJING

Tiger Nie and Karen Fu, two members of Harrow Beijing's auditioned a capella group, April Canentes

No Strings Attached

Harrow International School Beijing's *a capella* group spreads holiday cheer

by Yvette Ferrari

"I really look forward to singing carols as the harmony oftentimes provides a soothing effect, especially after a very stressful term of college applications"

Growing up in a Southern California beach town, school choir was a mandatory part of our curriculum in primary school. We students dutifully learned the requisite songs, and performed them for our parents and wider community during the holiday season. I can still remember my eclectic fourth grade chorus teacher Mrs. Hoops standing off to the side of one of our Christmas concerts at our local mall, passion in her eyes, hands waving gleefully, while us kids belted out our best rendition of "Here Comes Santa Claus". Despite the ever-presence of palm trees and warm, salty air, the Christmas carols stuck in my head for the entire month of December marked a sure sign that it was, in fact, the holiday season.

Choir performances – and the familiar tunes that often accompany them in the wintertime – can evoke a sense of nostalgia for those of us living outside of our home countries. Music is a special way we expats feel connected to our origins, regardless of where we're from or how far we are from loved ones. Fortunately, many international schools in Beijing carry on the choral tradition as music departments put on concerts and performances of their own year-round. At Harrow International School Beijing (Harrow Beijing), for example, the Carol Concert is a school-wide event featuring students from upper and lower schools, the school's show choir, an auditioned *a capella* group (called *Apri Canentes*), a staff choir, and even includes audience carols in the festivities.

Beyond performances of the seasonal variety, my own interest in choir waned as I entered adolescence. Admittedly, I opted not to continue choir once it was no longer required. While we're not all going to be the next Celine Dion, choir can give kids and teens that like to sing the opportunity to express themselves in a unique way and is a great way to build confidence. Indeed, Jenny Finch, director of music at Harrow Beijing, explains that singing at the school is promoted as an important part of everyday life in which everyone can participate.

"We don't expect every student to turn into the next opera or pop star, but we do try to encourage them to believe in the voice they have and learn how to use and develop it so that it is the best it can be. Singers are made, not born," she says.

We spoke to two *Apri Canentes* students on how the music program has shaped their time at Harrow Beijing, about their upcoming Christmas performances, and the role they see music playing in their futures.

Do-Re-Mi

17 year-old Tiger Nie (China) has been a part of *Apri Canentes* since Year 10, however he has also played in the school's jazz band, as well as participated in Harrow Beijing's show choir and orchestra. His vocal type is a tenor. While Tiger says he appreciates many different genres, he prefers singing folk music and playing rock and metal on the guitar.

Karen Fu (China) is also a part of Harrow Beijing's *a capella* group. Additionally, the 17 year-old provides support for a Year 4 music class and plays cello with the string group of the school's chamber ensemble. Her vocal type is mezzo soprano and her favorite music to sing is religious melodies with *Apri Canentes*.

What are the unique points of the upcoming Christmas concert? Do you get nervous?

Tiger: The Christmas concert is one of the biggest music events at our school. Personally, I really look forward to singing carols as their harmony oftentimes provides a soothing effect, especially after a very stressful term of college applications. I don't feel nervous psychologically before a show; I am always enthusiastic about performing, but I occasionally get stomach cramps afterwards, which tells me my body was nervous. I overcome this after effect by eating and chilling with band mates.



Apri Canentes performing at Harrow Beijing's recent Sing Out Concert

Tell us about the music curriculum at Harrow. How have you grown in the last four years?

Karen: There are three parts to A-level: performing, composing and theory, and listening/analysis. It is interesting to see how I have developed; I found Bach chorales really hard last year, but now I can do them really fast and I have learned how to sing in harmony. [My music teacher] Mr. Staalberg is really good at explaining the techniques of music – he can demonstrate and improvise the parts on the piano. I have also been given lots of leadership opportunities, such as taking responsibility for concerts.

Tiger: You have to be well balanced in all three parts rather than focusing on one. I've grown through opportunities to sing. I auditioned three times for *Apri Canentes* so had to improve my skills in order to avoid being rejected a third time. I have really improved in my singing – I'm more aware of tone and pitch.

What have been the highlights of your experience in the music program?

Karen: FOBISIA (Federation of British International Schools in Asia) Music Festival. They gathered loads of people from British schools in Asia and we had three days of intense rehearsals before performing. This gave me an opportunity to work with students I hadn't met before and perform music that we don't have the instruments for in [our] school.

Tiger: Playing in [my first] jazz band. I play the guitar and occasionally the double bass in the jazz band. We played at many school events, concerts, and the Harrow joint concert with Harrow London where I accompanied the show choir for one song and played two standards with the jazz band. It was a memorable experience because it was the first time I performed outside of our campus since I joined Harrow from New Zealand. My improvisation on the track "Oye Como Va" is one of the best live solos I had ever played. It was great to see the



It wasn't perfect, but it did the job, as bass is of paramount importance to any genre of music. I have always been the bandleader, gathering musicians, setting up rehearsals, and arranging music.

Karen: When I started A-level, I didn't really have time to practice, but as music is still part of my A-levels I had to make time. This made me organize my homework time better.

Do you think musical talent is inherent or learned?

Tiger: Learned. When I was in Chinese primary school in Grade 4, I scored 0 in music, the lowest score in Beijing. Now I am doing Music at A-level and am on course to gain a high grade.

Karen: Learned. I don't think I am very talented, for example, because I don't have a very good sense of rhythm. But I have learned to overcome this by using various techniques. I wasn't in choir in primary school because I failed the really strict audition in Year 3. Music was a regular part of the curriculum but we only sung, there was no theory.

What has being a part of the music program at Harrow meant to you?

Tiger: Music allows you to make friends with lots of interesting people; it's a different way to socialize. [It's been an] integral to my development of music theory and musicianship – music history is really interesting and gives me a better understanding of how music has developed through time.

Karen: I have met people who I wouldn't meet if I didn't take part in the music program.

Will you continue studying music in university?

Tiger: Music will be my minor at university in the US; I plan to major in chemistry. I have applied to lots of schools, my top three being University of Chicago, Yale, and Northwestern. I chose to carry on my music studies because it's fun, and it has always been an important part of my life and I would like it to always continue.

Karen: For one university that I have applied to, the course combines music and psychology. For the others schools, music is not part of the course but I still intend to participate in music activities.

How can music education be improved in China?

Karen: It would be great if there were more workshops open to the public available in Beijing so that we could mix with a wider community of musicians.

Chamber Orchestra from Harrow London joining our school orchestra in that concert, though I was not in the orchestra at that time. I joined a year later when I picked up the double bass.

Singing at the Ritz-Carlton for Christmas [the last two years] with *Apri Canentes* was also memorable. These are great opportunities to showcase the results of our efforts and represent our school in a public event. The best part though? We get a free buffet!

What kinds of challenges have you encountered?

Tiger: Forming [my own] bands at Harrow. [We play] classic rock, country and alternative rock bands. We play at almost every school concert and outdoor events such as the Autumn Fayre. We never really had a bass player so we had to develop different ways around that using different performers. I convinced a guitarist to fill in on bass, but this friend migrated to Australia soon after. One keyboard player offered to split the keyboard with the lower register playing a bass guitar sound.



Year 11 soloist Angie Kim



I Want to Be a Drummer

Alex Morris marches to the beat of his own drum

photos by Dave's Studio,

text by Yvette Ferrari

Professional drummer Alex Morris's philosophy when it comes to music is to bring something positive to as many people as he can. At only 26, the Arizona native is accomplishing just that, having played in venues all over the world and even appearing alongside Ray Charles alumnus Marcus Belgrave and jazz great Robin Eubanks. Morris is a graduate of the prestigious Oberlin Conservatory of Music in Ohio, where he studied jazz and American classical music and was awarded both the Conservatory Dean's Scholarship as well as a Conservatory Initiative Grant for Supporting Imagination and Excellence. These days, Morris' gigs are mostly with Asian pop acts – including a stint on Chinese Idol – but he still finds time for his first love, jazz, and leads his own projects in the US and China. Morris describes having what he calls a “bass drum moment” to Grade 9 students at Beijing World Youth Academy and explains why exactly he had a framed photo of Patrick Stuart on his nightstand in college.

From left to right: Hannah (age 14), Alex Morris, Ben (14), Isaac (14), and Nicole (14)

"Try to do the best job you can with where you are at"



Ben, South Korea, 14
Why did you start drumming in the first place?

I was always banging on things, a friend of the family's gave me some drumsticks, and then my parents got me a drum kit. It becomes clearer why I'm doing it as I do it longer. There's something powerful about it.



Hannah, 14, South Korea
What's your favorite song to play on the drums?

The song that comes to mind is "My Sharona"; it's a great song. Nancy Brown and the Fantastic – a band here that works the bar scene here – do it amazingly well. Every once in a while when I'm not on the road, I can do those gigs and we'll play cover tunes. The reason those songs are played by bands all over the world is because they're amazing. As far as jazz music goes, I love playing the slow sad ballads.



Caitlin, 14, China
What's been the best experience of your career?

Seeing the energy of the first big gig. It was for Taiwanese pop singer Tsai Yilin, on her "Myself" tour in 2012. I had a "bass drum moment;" realizing what music can do to people viscerally and really understanding and feeling it. There's a book written by a great composer called *The Poetics of Music* about spiritual things that happen through music, but to actually see it for yourself is a really important moment as a musician.



Ethan, 15, China
Were you afraid for the future before you became successful?

Not so much in the past. When I started getting things is when started becoming afraid of losing them. This isn't the healthiest way to go and it's something I deal with on a personal level. Again, music-wise I try to go feet first in everything – I just try to do it.



Nicole, 14, China
What is your ambition in life as a drummer?

To play the best music as I can play for as many people as possible. That might change in the future. I might try to spend more time discovering what exactly the music I want to play is. But right now I look at the opportunities I have and I look at my feet. If you're wondering where you're supposed be in your career, look at your feet and try to do the best job you can with where you are at.



Michael, 14, China
How do you push past feeling like you're in a rut or playing something you don't necessarily love?

Fear is huge. I have heard from a lot of musicians that they would have an opportunity and just wouldn't take it because they thought they weren't good enough or ready enough. I think one of the aspects of working in music is that there's a constant sort of self-criticism that can turn really negative sometimes. I'm not a pop musician, I'm trained as a jazz musician and to have that opportunity to play big stages was terrifying to me. I'm an incredibly fearful person by nature so I have to do things everyday to keep that in check. One thing is to try as hard as you can to be of service to whatever opportunity you can.



Pederson, 15, South Korea
Who is your role model?

One is my mentor Billy Hart. If anyone wants to learn about drums, he's one of the guys. The way he leads his life is very interesting. The other one would be Captain Jean-Luc Picard from *Star Trek the Next Generation*. I actually had a picture of him framed on my bedside table for about two years in college. My mother had me watching that [show] as a sort of moral instruction and it stuck. I loved it.



Sam, 14, South Korea
Do you have a woman in your life?

I have an amazing woman in my life and we've been living together a couple years. My teacher has said that it's incredibly difficult to keep a family together as a professional musician, being on the road and being away from home a lot. But I'm trying hard. She's also an artist, which is great because we both work at night and we're both freelancers. That's a big thing so we can coordinate vacations a little easier.



Linda, 16, China
What made you confident you wanted to be a musician?

To be completely honest, sometimes I wake up and I'm still not sure. Earlier this year, I briefly toyed with the idea of putting this aside and studying math! I really had this discussion with myself for an extended period of time. Someone with great wisdom in the musical community told me you can't control where your career goes as a musician. The minute you start controlling your career, it's not going to work. As far as having utter certainty that this is what I'm meant to do, I do not have that and it gets shaken a lot.



Angelina, 14, China
Have you ever been in a conflict with your parents about your career?

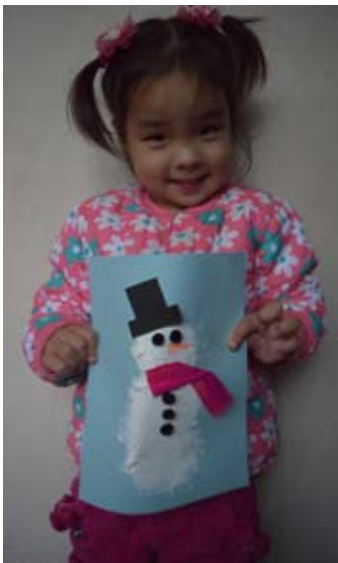
I made it clear to my folks that this was a craft profession; that there are certain skills that if I learn well, I'd be able to make a living. You don't need to play with Brittany Spears to pay rent. There are great musicians who are completely satisfied with their lives that don't play big gigs. My parents come from science backgrounds but they are both lovers of music. I'm really fortunate to have encouraging and supportive parents.

Students from Bethel China fill December's Blank Canvas



Jake, 5, China

I want to grow a beard like Santa.



Faith, 3, China

I love playing in the snow and making snowmen.



Robbie, 5, China

I like sticking my tongue out and tasting snowflakes.



Joel, 5, China

I am so proud of my star. I'll put it on top of our Christmas tree.



Caleb, 6, China

I love making crafts and using fluffy and sticky things.



Quinn, 7, China

Green is my favorite color and I love having paint on my hands.



Petra, 5, China

I like looking at shiny things.



May, 5, China

I love snow angels. I can't wait until it starts snowing in Beijing.



Helen, 4, China

I want to put a lot of colors on my tree.



Christopher, 5, China

I can't wait until Santa's reindeer brings me presents for Christmas.

A Taste of Home

Here's to Christmas

by Ember Swift

Since moving to China, there are certain things that I really miss about Christmas. I know I'm not alone. I've tried to recreate them. I've followed recipes, I've attempted to build atmosphere, I've sought out other expats feeling as wistful as I am, in hopes of achieving a collective Christmas energy. But even in their company, I have to admit defeat. It's usually just not the same. It's flat somehow. I can't quite put my finger on it. The Christmas spirit is well hidden in a country that doesn't celebrate it.

That explains the sudden heaviness that comes over me prior to Christmas in the past few years. It's a type of dread brought on by fears of inadequacy. I am the only Westerner in my household. How do I make it feel special for the kids? As a lower than average cook with a crazy work schedule, how do I introduce the tastes of Christmas to them? And as a reluctant event attendee, how can I immerse them in the feeling of Christmas when big (and expensive) expat events aren't usually on our agenda?

Like most people, I watch the calendar edging towards the end of

December and simply scramble. Taobao is my friend. I pre-choose gifts for people knowing that my Chinese relatives will open them uncomfortably, but I don't care. I've stopped expecting anyone to give me a gift; it's just not their way. I put up my little Christmas tree sometime after December 15. I talk to the kids about Santa. I eventually get all the presents wrapped in the final hour on December 24. I stuff stockings. I fall into bed exhausted and lonely.

I really do try.

The problem is that this is the time of year when I'm the most homesick. I want to be surrounded by people who likewise approach the end of December prepping for Christmas, not by a whole culture of people who work or attend classes, business as usual, on December 25. I miss the anticipated visits with long-lost relatives with lots of baked goods on offer. I even miss the clearing of snow off the car's windshield. But flights back to Canada at this time of year are impossibly overpriced. 2015 will be another Beijing Christmas.

I will raise my glass and toast us all on Christmas

So, in an attempt to lighten the dread, I've recalibrate my thinking for Christmas this year. My goal is to accomplish just one thing. Inherent in that goal is the need to accept that I cannot recreate a Canadian Christmas in Beijing. It's impossible. Thus, I have to accept that Christmas in Beijing is its own experience that can be special in different ways. I'll simply have to make it so. And, if I can accept this fully, then my "accomplish one thing" goal becomes reachable.

Eggnog. I am going to learn how to make it. I mean, really make it, from scratch, and make it delicious. Fresh ground nutmeg as a garnish. I will not wait until Christmas morning to attempt my recipe and then find it depressingly lacking. No, I will try in advance. I will experiment. I will pull out my blender and buy real cream. It's going to happen. Then, when success is obtained, I will introduce a single taste of the holidays to my kids who won't know what other tastes they are missing anyway.

So here's to lifting that heavy homesickness. Lightness can be whipped into eggnog, surely. Then I will raise my glass and toast us all on Christmas; we the lonely expats. And when the kids go to bed, I'll add the rum.



About the Writer

Ember Swift is a Canadian musician and writer who has been living in Beijing since late 2008. She and her husband Guo Jian (国团), who is also a musician, have a daughter called Echo (国如一) and a son called Topaz.

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Christmas Crowds

Peace on earth, but maybe not everywhere

by Jennifer Ambrose

Nearly every year since we moved to China, we have gone back to the United States for a few weeks around Christmas. It makes December a bit hectic for us (as I wrote about in the December 2011 *beijingkids*) but we manage.

There was, however, one Christmas when we remained in China. It was in 2008, the year Brigid was born. We weren't ready, either emotionally or even legally, to fly back to America with a six-week-old. My parents were able to visit us from Pennsylvania right after Christmas, so Randy and I decided that year we would stay.

There was one important aspect of Christmas, though, I was a little concerned about: I had read on blogs and news websites that services in China for Christmas often drew a lot of spectators, and that sometimes these could number in the thousands. I was worried about bringing my kids to this kind of spectacle.

We have always attended a local church for our Sunday masses. In Shenzhen we were members of St. Paul in the Nantou section of the city. I was sure that our little parish, tucked into one of the few remaining old alleys in Nantou, and hemmed in on all sides by newer development, would be too out-of-the-way for crowds of onlookers.

That night when we arrived for mass, there was an obvious police presence along the alley leading to our church's front gate: the security bureau had been dispatched for crowd control. The narrow alley that led to our church was teeming with people, many times more than a normal Sunday.

As I felt the chaos
closing in on my kids,
I declared it time to leave

There were hundreds pouring into the courtyard of our tiny church. Everyone I recognized had come early enough to sit in a pew. Since we hadn't believed in the warnings we hadn't planned as well. Our family stayed toward the back, trying to follow along despite the distractions.

As the multitudes grew around us, they turned restless during quieter parts of the unfamiliar ritual. They milled around, stopping to take another picture or answer their phone. Randy said it reminded him more of a rock festival than a religious holiday. Ever since, we referred to the experience as Mass-A-Palooza.

About the Writer

Jennifer Ambrose hails from Western Pennsylvania and misses it terribly. She still maintains an intense devotion to the Pittsburgh Steelers. She has lived in China since 2006 and is currently an at-home mother. With her husband Randy and children Myles and Brigid, she resides outside Sixth Ring Road in Changping. Her blog can be found at jenambrose.blogspot.com.



I was on edge the whole night, the chaos and crowds giving me an unsettled feeling, but the Chinese parishioners took it as a matter of course. Sometime after Communion, I was separated from Randy and the kids. I panicked, fearing Myles might be further pulled away from his father. I eventually found them huddled together, surrounded by a part of the audience who, possibly bored with watching the queues form for Communion, found the little foreign boy and baby so much more interesting. As I felt the chaos closing in on my kids, I declared it time to leave.

I later asked a Chinese friend why so many strangers had shown up. My friend noted that while most Chinese people may not belong to any religion, they know December 24 is the night churches have a party. It had become so common that most churches expected to draw a much larger crowd that night.

Every December I feel a little sad, observing Advent in our current parish and then dashing off for America before Christmas. Then I remember Mass-a-Palooza, and I get over it.

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Kai Parsonage (9 months) takes in his halo

SNOW MUCH LOVE

photo by Dave's Studio

Being with the ones we love and celebrating the Holidays reminds us what, and who, is important in our lives. We know family is everything to our readers, so we encourage you to get out and make memories together on the ice and snow this winter. During the giving season many of us want to do something charitable; we speak to three volunteers giving back to make our community better for those less fortunate. From the simple happiness of playing with your kids, to the pleasure of sharing your blessings with others, we wish you every joy this Holiday season.

the good work

Why these busy Beijing parents
donate their time

by Sijia Chen

"If each of us
made one little
contribution, it
would create a
momentum for
much bigger
change"
Cindy Jensen,
EGRC

Every year, *beijingkids* uses the holiday issue to draw attention to volunteering and charity-related causes. However, charitable work is a year-round endeavor for Cindy Jensen, Nathalie Azzopardi, and Elena Perez, the parents spotlighted in this month's feature. Their reasons for donating their time are varied – supporting a cause close to their hearts, setting an example for their children, exploring different options while on a career break – but they are united by their desire to do meaningful work in a non-profit context. We caught up with each of them to discuss their motivations, challenges, and successes.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF CINDY JENSEN, ELENA PEREZ, AND WAB

cindy jensen

Special advisor to Educating Girls of Rural China (EGRC)

Cindy Jensen is founder and CEO of Boldmoves China, whose services include executive coaching, leadership development, and HR training. She moved here from Vancouver with her family in 2002. Daughter Ingrid (age 17) is a senior at Western Academy of Beijing (WAB). In 2010, Jensen became involved with Educating Girls of Rural China (EGRC), a Canadian organization sponsoring girls and young women from Gansu to pursue high school and university education. Along with Bethel China, EGRC was one of the recipients of this year's Chi Fan for Charity.

EGRC was founded by Beijinger Tien Ching, whose education was disrupted by the Cultural Revolution. Instead of attending university, she worked at a factory in Gansu for eight years. Finally finishing her education in Beijing, she immigrated to Canada in 1983, starting EGRC in 2005.

Take us back to when you first met Tien Ching.

We met in May 2010 at a luncheon the Canadian Ambassador [at the time, David Mulroney] was hosting. He said, "There's a woman I'd like you to meet who's doing great work around education in China."

Tien Ching brought one of the students who had just started her career as an engineer. She got up and shared her story. For a large part of my life, I have volunteered, but I realized then that I'd volunteered for professional organizations, and at the end of the day, [professionals] will be successful on their own.

Tien Ching and I agreed to stay connected, and we started talking about ways I could support the charity.

Tell me about the first project that you did for EGRC.

I was out for dinner with Tien Ching and a number of the students and asked, "If we were to run a program, what would you like to see?" It was a lot of basic skills that many young people ask about: how to be confident, how to present yourself, how to network. A lot of them, having just started university and in many cases moving to a different cities, were facing new and different challenges.

I asked two [Chinese] friends who are also trainers whether they'd be interested in getting involved with EGRC. We developed a program that addressed the girls' needs and requests. It was a very powerful experience for all of us.

This past year, we said "Why don't we develop a program for leaders?" People were so responsive; The Four Seasons sponsored the venue, UNICEF, another company called Teck Resources, and the British Columbia government's International Trade and Investment office sent staff. It's a project I'd like to do again and again.

As a two-time recipient of Chi Fan for Charity, what lessons did EGRC take from the first event, especially with regards to maintaining community interest?

It's a one-time event but it enables an ongoing discussion. Chi Fan enables us to create a broad awareness, tapping into a community that would be impossible to do individually. You have 60 plus restaurants

and on average ten people per table, so that's 600, then you've got all the sponsors and the table hosts. It has this amazing ripple effect. Many times, people individually approach the charity and say "How can I get involved?" If we're able to accomplish that, it's great.

What are some ways charity organizations and companies with CSR goals can ensure a mutually beneficial relationship?

EGRC is a Canadian charity organization run by a Canadian who is also Chinese. One hundred percent of the proceeds go back to young Chinese women and their education. It's immaterial which country funds are being generated from.

It's difficult to create long-term relationships. It takes time for charity organizations to help companies determine the CSR activity to put their efforts behind. Sometimes, it can take a while because we all want to ensure the sustainability of programs. What does the project mean for the long-term? Where does this money go? How does it impact individuals? It's an ongoing task for the charities as they try to find a voice for their cause.

Many readers want to start doing charity work but don't know where to begin. What advice do you have for them?

It comes down to a feeling and a connection point. When it hits, you just know. I love the idea of mentoring and education, so for me it was the perfect match when I listened to Tien Ching talk about her work with EGRC.

I don't speak Chinese well, but I always use this expression: 一步一步 (yībù yībù). A small step creates change. I used to think, I'm just one individual and have a small consultancy, what can I do? But if each of us made one little contribution, it would create a momentum for much bigger change. The key thing is to know where your passion is, then it doesn't even feel like work.

How has your volunteering influenced your own family?

We underestimate the amount our kids watch us. When I was planning this trip to Gansu [two years ago to visit the place where many of the girls are from], Ingrid said to me, "Mom I'd really love to go." She knows about EGRC; she's met many of the girls over the years. It's great when kids can observe that their parents are involved in something like this because [charity work is] in your DNA.

Ingrid is graduating from WAB this year; one of the things she talks about is a keen interest in international development studies. EGRC is something that we're very much committed to. Whether we live in Canada or New York or wherever, it's important for us to always say, "How can we give back to the community, even in a little way?"



Educating Girls of Rural China (EGRC)

To learn more about EGRC, visit www.egrc.ca. To get in touch, email info@egrc.ca or contact Cindy Jensen at 137 0119 5628.

nathalie azzopardi

Chairperson of Parent Link at the Western Academy of Beijing (WAB)

Nathalie Azzopardi is originally from the small island of Malta and has lived in Beijing for 12 years. She has two sons, a 16-year-old in Grade 11 and an 8-year-old in Grade 3 at the Western Academy of Beijing (WAB). Since last year, Azzopardi has been the chairperson of the school's parent-run volunteer association, Parent Link.

How long have you been involved with Parent Link?

I've been involved with Parent Link for a number of years in different roles: room parent for six years, early childhood parent representative for two years, and elementary school parent representative for three years. I've also helped out in the Parent Link shops and different committees such as the Fun Fair, Charity Bazaar, and Career Fair committees.

Do you have a history of volunteering? If not, what made you decide to get involved with Parent Link?

As soon as we moved to Beijing, I started volunteering at the school. I didn't do much volunteering back home, as I used to work and didn't

have as much time. I very much liked the family atmosphere at WAB. My eldest son – who was 5 at the time – was always very happy to see me at school, be it in the shop, during field trips, in the cooking classes, or just helping out in the classroom.

I took a break from volunteering when my second son was born, but returned in a more active role once he started nursery. [At that point] I realized I'd rather enjoy this time to the fullest as our children grow up very fast and before we know it, they are off to college. We are very lucky to be at a school that values parent involvement, and where we can be involved in so many meaningful activities and events.

Name some notable projects that you've helped organize.

One of my favorite events, which I organized consecutively for two years, was the bake sale for our Charity Bazaar. Another one of my favorites was (and still is) the Staff Appreciation Day lunch for all of our wonderful teachers and staff. Both of these events are huge to organize, but both are very special and appreciated.

What do you get out of being part of Parent Link?

It is a very nice feeling to be involved in events that mean so much to our children and to be a part of what they are experiencing.

Is charity a value that you try to instill in your children?

Of course. They have to understand that not everybody is as fortunate as much as they are. Whenever we can, we try to lead by example. We encourage them to help out, but also participate with them in whatever volunteering they choose to do.

What kind of charity projects are your kids involved in?

Both myself and my eldest son help occasionally at Roundabout's store; we also helped at some of their book fairs.

What kind of advice would you give to readers who don't quite know where to start with volunteering?

There is a first time for everything. The feeling that you experience when you're doing something worthwhile is very special and cannot be easily described. As Mahatma Gandhi said, "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."

Parent Link is always looking for volunteers. You can be involved as much as you like; we value everybody's efforts, no matter how big or small. If you're unsure about what you want to do, get in touch with us and we can direct you. As the saying goes, "Volunteers are not paid not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless." Come along and join us in this exciting, meaningful, and enjoyable journey.

WAB Parent Link

Parent Link is open to all parents and guardians of WAB students. Find out more at my.wab.edu/groups/parent-link or contact parentlink@wab.edu for more information.



elena perez

Marketing and CSR consultant at Bethel China

Elena Perez relocated to Beijing from Prague with her family in 2013. Originally from Spain, she is currently on sabbatical from her role as a marketing and communications manager for IBM. Perez's sons Manuel (age 4) and Daniel (6), both attend Yew Chung International School of Beijing (YCIS Beijing).

Currently, Perez is a marketing and corporate social responsibility (CSR) consultant at Bethel China, an organization that fosters, educates, and provides medical care for children who are blind or visually-impaired.

Tell us a bit about what you do at Bethel.

CSR is about working with companies and other institutions to collaborate [with Bethel]. Sometimes it's employee engagement, education, or fundraising activities.

How did you get involved with Bethel?

When I came to Beijing I took a one-year sabbatical to support the family and be closer to my kids. When I was ready to get back into action, I wanted to explore charity work and I found Bethel.

What made you choose Bethel over other organizations?

I really fell in love with their projects. I liked the fact that they were focused on a vulnerable group: orphans who are blind or visually-impaired. I liked their transparency, and that they wanted people with skills.

It's a small organization, so it's possible to make an impact. I like the approach they have. It's not just about being compassionate or feeding or educating them. They think of them as kids who have a right to dream and are equal to anybody else. They're very much loved.

Do you have a history of volunteering or charity work?

I didn't, but it was always something I wanted to do; to do something meaningful. I liked the idea that I could continue to use my skills. I'm also learning, so it's a win-win for everybody.

What have you been learning about?

It's very different to do marketing and communications in a corporate environment than in a NGO space. It's a continuous learning experience. There are a lot of processes in a corporate environment. At Bethel, you do many different things in one day. The objective is different; it's not a profit-based business, it's a love-based business.

What surprised you about working with Bethel?

I didn't know what to expect. When I first visited the foster care home [in Doudian], the moment I got there I realized it was a happy place full of color, love, laughs, and happy kids. Bethel was really home for them. I learned you can teach [these kids] how to be independent, and also how to love themselves and that each of them is beautiful.

What was the most challenging aspect?

The scale. You're changing the lives of some, but you would like to

change the lives of many. Bethel has grown rapidly, going from fostering three kids to 60 and doing a lot of awareness sessions. You see how important it is and how it changes lives. You want to make it bigger, but there is a lack of resources and funding. You have to balance these.

What do you gain from volunteering with Bethel?

I continue to learn professionally and personally. And I have fun. I've met a lot of amazing people and I love spending time with the kids. I've been really lucky to meet the great people who work there.

How do you talk about volunteering with your kids?

I told them that Mommy was starting to work again, but that now she works with kids. It's been very good for them; they've learned there are other kids with a different reality, that love, have dreams, and play like they do. They have visited the Bethel foster care several times.

What was that like?

In the beginning, I think Daniel especially felt a bit overwhelmed; he didn't know how to interact with the kids. After a while, he was less shy and starting to play with some of the kids. He was holding hands with them and helping them. They were on the trampoline and playing football.

For Manuel, it's less obvious; he's only 4 years old. He just thought he was with other kids; he didn't realize that they couldn't see. He was sitting with them, having snacks together and sharing fruit. It was like any other playdate.

For the Bethel kids, it's the same. Sometimes kids see things in a much more natural way than adults do because they have no preconceptions.

What advice do you have for readers interested in volunteering?

Assess what you want to do and the availability that you have. Find an organization whose work you love; there has to be a strong affinity so that your work is meaningful both for you and for them.

I researched on the Internet and asking some friends about organizations. I was lucky because in *beijingkids* there was an interview with a French volunteer at Bethel and I loved the things he said.

Has working with Bethel influenced your future career?

Most likely I will go back to IBM, but [volunteering for Bethel] has changed me. I want to continue to work with charities, whether I'm working full-time for a corporation or not. This is a way of life and something I want my kids to continue having exposure to.

Full disclosure: The author volunteers part-time at Bethel.

Bethel China

To learn more about Bethel, visit www.bethelchina.org. For general information, get in touch at 5869 2169 or info@bethelchina.org. For volunteering enquiries, contact Development Manager Anna Calsina at anna@bethelchina.org.



ICE, ICE, BABY!

Snow and ice activities

text by Sally Wilson

Winter sports are lots of fun - ask any kid who's just scored the winning goal during an ice hockey game or done a figure-eight on a frozen lake. This month, we speak to Beijing international school students about the different winter sports and activities they enjoy.



Brothers Marshall (back) and Roman Wahl (front)

ICE HOCKEY

Canadian brothers Marshall (age 9) and Roman Wahl (10) are students at The International Montessori School of Beijing (MSB). They have both been playing ice hockey for a year now. The boys have lessons up to four times each week at the Hokay rink. "Three times a week is our team practice and then we have a skills practice," explains Roman. They also take part in ice hockey games every Saturday, at various locations around Beijing. Both boys will be attending ice hockey winter camp, held at the Hokay rink.

The coaches at Hokay come from Russia, Finland, Japan, and Canada. Kostya, Marshall's team coach "is very serious about hockey and very nice," Marshall says. "Kostya is all about getting things done right," adds Roman.

The boys enjoy the speed, physical contact, and teamwork ice hockey provides. "And I love it when I score!" laughs Roman. They both agree that ice hockey helps them with their soccer. "It helps me in my position as defender. It gives you a sense of where other players are," says Marshall. "Also my legs have gotten stronger through playing hockey," says Roman. "I do better in the cross-country races at school."

Joose (age 16) and Eerik Harju (14) are Finnish students at Western Academy of Beijing. Both began playing ice hockey at four years of age. The boys first learned to skate in Finland, and kept it up here in Beijing at Le Cool ice rink.

They have formal coaching twice a week at the Hokay rink, play for the youth team, and also go to the rink for skating, scrimmage (pick-up hockey), and free skating. Joose plays in the Beijing International Ice Hockey league (BIIH). Eerik hopes to join the BIIH next season. "The league gives me the opportunity to play with skilled, older guys. The games are more competitive, and cleaner, than in the youth leagues," Joose says.

Their youth team travels a lot, participating in tournaments and friendly matches in Beijing, elsewhere in China, and across Asia. "We have been quite successful, winning great tournaments," says Joose.

"We are coming to the point where there isn't enough competition in Asia. Not only because we have such a good team, but also because the pool of players shrinks as players become older.

It is common in China that players quit in middle and high school because they want to concentrate on studying," explains Eerik.

Both boys agree that ice hockey benefits other sports they play. "Ice hockey builds endurance, develops hand-eye coordination, and strategic game skills. But more than anything, ice hockey is a great team sport. All these skills can be used when we play football and volleyball," says Joose.



PHOTOS: DAVE'S STUDIO AND COURTESY OF NAOMI WAHL, MIKKO HARJU, IMAGINE, Ulf NESTLER, AND PATTY HUNTER



Roman Wahl in action on the ice

ICE SKATING

Tess (age 10) and Maggie Hunter (7) are from the US and have lived in Beijing for four years. Students at Dulwich College Beijing (DCB), Tess began ice skating at age 6 and Maggie at 4. The girls are about to start private lessons with Camilla Ojansivu Underhill, the skating coach for the Dulwich Community Program (DCP). Last year they had group lessons with Underhill, and before the DCB rink opened had private lessons, first at Le Cool ice rink and then at All Star.

Tess and Maggie have lessons once a week during the skating season. They have each competed in Ice Skating Institute Asia's Skate Beijing competition, held at Le Cool. "Ice skating helps us with balance and posture in ballet, because it is just like dancing, but on ice. It also helps us with our football and tennis because it keeps us fit," says Tess.

The girls like to skate at the DCB rink because of its convenience, being located on their school campus.

They won't be attending any skating camps during this winter break, but will be doing free skating with their cousins in the US.



Maggie (left) and big sister Tess (right) at the DCB rink



Maggie shows off her medal and poses for a photo with coach Camilla



SKIING

Chinese-American Dora Xiang (age 9) has been living in Beijing for eight years and attends the Canadian International School of Beijing (CISB). Dora started skiing when she was six years old, and began having lessons when she was eight.

A neighbor's dad recommended multi-activity and sports organization Imagine., for coaching and lessons. "Skiing is fun with Imagine. We do a lot of activities and games, like jumping at the bunny hill. My skiing skills have really progressed," says Dora.

Dora had private lessons with Imagine. coach Kristin and also joined their ski camp last season. She took part in Imagine's ski race weekend, the International Schools Snowsports Championships China (ISSCC) in March 2015. "I didn't win any medals, because all the other skiers were much more experienced. But it was great to experience a real slalom race," says Dora. She plans to keep practicing and wants to join next year's ISSCC with hopes of getting a medal.

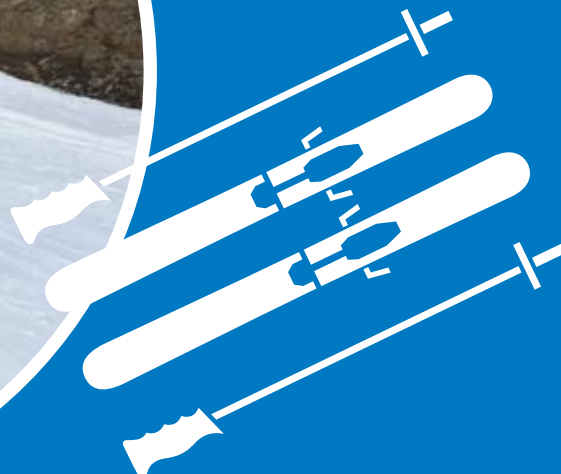
Dora's lessons take place in Huaibei, Huairou and Nanshan Miyun District, with the ski competition held in Wanlong. "I like learning new skills, and it's so much fun to go fast. When I first saw the double black piste in Wanlong, I was scared and thought I wouldn't make it," she says. "Finishing was a great achievement. Skiing gives me confidence." Dora plans to ski with neighbors in Japan this year, her first time skiing outside of China. If she can find a few free days in her busy schedule, she will also join the Imagine. winter ski camp.

German native Jule Nestler is 14-years old and a student at The British School of Beijing Shunyi (BSB). Jule started skiing when she was just two and a half. "My parents put me on skis for the first time in Badhofgastein in Austria, where my family has been skiing for many years," says Jule.

Two years ago Jule had advanced beyond the ski school level, so began private lessons each time the family went on vacation in Austria, at least once every year. "Last year we went skiing for two weeks during the Christmas holiday, and for ten days during Chinese New Year," she says. "Last year on holiday I did the guest race, where I was the fastest female of the day. Even with my young age, I was faster than all the other women," says Jule proudly.

Jule has taken part in the Austrian charity ski race twice in Beijing. "It was a nice experience and I placed third in the mixed division," she says. In the ISSCC competition this year, Jule won gold for the dual slalom and the giant slalom in the girls' 7-13-years age group. She will be racing at the competition again this season, but in the mixed 14-18-years age group. Jule has skied at the Genting Resort Secret Garden in Chongli County.

"It's a good ski resort, with a variety of ways to ski downhill and different types of lifts. I have been there only for races, but it's a nice destination for family trips," she says.



Coach Kristin and Dora get silly during a lesson



Coach Kristin (third from left) and her student Dora Xiang



Skiing and Snowboarding

Nanshan Ski Resort 南山滑雪场

Shengshuitou Village, Hennanzai Town, Miyun (8909 1909, ales@nanshanski.com) <http://www.nanshanski.com/index-en.asp> 北京密云河南寨镇圣水头村

Genting Resort Secret Garden 密苑云顶乐园

Daily 8am-4pm. Chongli County, Zhangjiakou, Hebei Province (400 1681 234, mar.d@secretgardenresorts.com) www.secretgardenresorts.com 河北省张家口市崇礼县四台嘴乡梧桐大道

Wanlong Ski Resort

Daily 8.30am-4.30pm. Honghualiang, Chongli County in Zhangjiakou, Hebei Province (0313 478 5111/8888) 河北省张家口市崇礼县红花梁



Outdoor Ice Skating Dulwich College Beijing

Legend Garden Camus, 89 Capital Airport Road, Shunyi District (8450 7676, information@dulwich-beijing.cn) <http://www.dulwich-beijing.cn> 北京市顺义区首都机场路89号丽京花园7区

Qianhai (Houhai)

Early morning to dusk. Qianhai, north side of Beihai Park, Xihai Beiyuan, Xicheng District. (6612 5717) 前海地区, 西城区西海北沿(北海公园以北)

Zizhuyuan Park

Daily 8am-6pm. 45 Baishiqiao Lu, Haidian District. (8841 2830) 紫竹院公园, 海淀区白石桥路45号

Indoor Ice Skating Center Ice Asia

Daily noon-8pm. Hokay Ice Sports Center, Quanfa Garden North Gate, Chaoyang District (8575 9826 (Chinese), info@centericeasia.com) www.centericeasia.com 浩泰冰上运动中心朝阳区朝阳路兴隆公园内

Le Cool Ice Rink

Mon-Sat 10am-10pm, Sun 10am-7pm. B2/F, China World Shopping Mall, 1 Jianguomenwai Dajie, Chaoyang District (6505 5776, lecool@cwtc.com) www.lecoolicerink.com 朝阳区建国门外大街1号国贸商城B2楼

All Star Ice Rink

Daily 10am-10pm. 1/F, Solana Lifestyle Shopping Park, 6 Chaoyang Gongyuan Lu, Chaoyang District. (5905 6328) 全明星滑冰俱乐部, 朝阳区朝阳公园路6号蓝色港湾国际商务区首层



Julie Nestler shows off her ski skills



The Circuit is a chance to check out what's happening on the Beijing family scene. Want to see your event on these pages?



9th Halloween Costume Party

beijingkids and JingKids co-presented our annual Halloween Costume Party on October 25 and November 1 at the Canadian School of Beijing (CISB) and Keystone Academy, respectively. Both days saw families dressed up in their Halloween costumes and, of course, plenty of sweet treats. Kids had the chance to do some trick-or-treating and test their courage in the haunted house, and families got their Halloween portraits taken to remember the special occasion.



PHOTOS: UNI YOU AND COURTESY OF KEYSTONE

Send an email with the date of your event, a brief description, and high-resolution photos (at least 1MB each) to webeditor@beijing-kids.com by **January 8**.



Keystone's Inaugural Cultural Salon Unmasks the Ancient Art of Kun Qu

It is a rare moment when culture comes to life; it's even rarer when it is steeped in history, embedded in art and literature, and transcends spatial and temporal boundaries. On October 25, over 500 people sat at attention in Keystone Academy's Performing Arts Center to witness Keystone's first "Cultural Salon" on the ancient art of Kun Qu. One of the oldest operatic forms in the world, Kun Qu is a sublime blending of art, poetry, music, singing, dance, martial arts, and more. The salon was led by award-winning Director Li Xiaoping, with acclaimed actors Wei Chunrong and Wen Yuhang.



YCIS Beijing's Kickboxing Club

Every Friday, a group of YCIS Beijing's secondary school students come together to learn the principles of kickboxing and have a great time doing it!





BSB Community Big Draw

On November 7, the British School of Beijing (BSB) Shunyi's foyer was transformed into a giant canvas where students, parents, teachers, and friends took part in creating a collaborative and creative piece of artwork on the theme "Every drawing tells a story".



BWYA Campuses Celebrate Halloween

Beijing World Youth Academy's ghostly celebrations took place Friday, October 30 with lots of freakish fun for all. Over at BWYA's IPC Campus in Laiguangying, students enjoyed a day of dressing up and ghoulish games. For the older students at the Wanjing Campus the student council organized an after-school party featuring scary movies, a haunted house, and plenty of food for hungry trick-or-treaters.



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF BSB AND BWYA



MSB Celebrates International Week

On Saturday October 10, The International Montessori School of Beijing held its International Day Fall Picnic, complete with lion dancing, caber tossing, wheelbarrow racing, and more. The event was the grand finale to the school's annual International Week, which aims to promote cultural and global awareness amongst students.



Sanfine's International Medical and Beauty Fair

On Oct 24, Sanfine International Hospital and Catherine de France teamed up to provide Beijing's first International Medical and Beauty Fair for Breast Cancer Awareness. Guests enjoyed free consultations with women's health and breast cancer specialist Dr. Gemma Gao and general health advice from family physician Dr. Liana Jin. As the event centered on women's strength, health, and beauty, Sanfine treated the ladies with advanced beauty treatments while Catherine de France and Calin Fashion Academy pampered the women with professional hair styling and makeup. To receive news about Sanfine's fun and free events and services, call 6413 6688.





WAB's Global Issues Conference

Western Academy of Beijing hosted its annual Global Issues Conference Friday, November 13. Featuring Australian slam poet champion Luka Lesson, students had the chance to host and attend influential workshops throughout the day about issues facing our local and global communities. This year's theme was "Equality".



Halloween at HoK

On October 30, House of Knowledge International school Quanfa Campus celebrated Halloween with a pumpkin competition, trick-or-treating, lots of fun Halloween-themed games, and a big party.



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF WAB AND HOK



ISB Celebrates Diversity

The International School of Beijing celebrated its annual International Day on October 23. It was a fun-filled day of international cuisine, performances, and a parade with more than 50 nationalities represented in total.



Daystar Hosts Asian Culture Day

Daystar Academy's auditorium was transformed into an Asian haven on Wednesday, November 4 as the school's Toddler and Casa sections hosted their first "Asian Culture Day". The aromas of homemade Thai curry and samosas permeated the room while kids "traveled" to different "countries" to taste the treats, try out an activity, and get their passport stamped! Asian countries represented were India, Japan, Philippines, South Korea, Singapore, Thailand, and, of course, China.



Favorite Family Restaurant

We really like a Greek restaurant north of Sanlitun called **YaDianNa**.

Favorite Dessert

The mango yogurt smoothie at **Jamaica Blue** and vanilla macaroons from **Rolancy Bakery**.

Best Place to Shop

You can find anything you need at **Solana**: clothes, homeware, and tasty ice cream.

Best Place to Shop for Your Kids

We usually find great second hand clothes through Beijing Mamas but we also buy in **H&M**, **Zara**, and **Gap**.

Weekend Activities

Our daughter is starting art lessons at the **Russian Cultural Center** on Saturdays and we like to take walks in either **Chaoyang Park** or **Tuanjiehu Park** afterwards.

Family Rituals

We have a nice Swedish ritual called Saturday sweets: our daughter shops for a reasonable number of treats. We go to **April Gourmet** or **Jenny Lou's** usually but if we want to be really Swedish, we sometimes go to **Ikea**!

New Discoveries

We recently visited **Badaling World Safari Park**. We highly recommend it.

Where Do the Kid Beg You to Go?

Chaoyang Park. Our daughter loves it.

Best Place to Play Indoors

Solana has big variety of kids' activities: skating, drawing, or just jumping and running in the kids' play areas.

Favorite Winter Activity

Joakim is often traveling so when we can, we love to spend time together in the evenings playing Swedish boardgames.

Best Place to Celebrate a Special Occasion

Atmosphere at the top of the **China World Summit Wing**.

Best Spot for a Parents' Date Night

Melody on Chaoyangmenwai Dajie, where we can sing our favorite songs.

The Lindholm Family

Writers of romantic comedies call it a "meet cute," when fate brings a couple together in an unexpected way. On a business trip in 2009, Russian-born Irina Lindholm sat next to Joakim Lindholm on a commuter train in Sweden: he turned out to be her future husband. The couple moved to Moscow where their daughter Ekaterina (now age 3) was born before relocating to the Swedish town of Helsingborg where they had their son Alexander (now 1). The family's life took an exciting turn this past March when Joakim's career brought them to Beijing. Irina is currently on maternity leave from her job as clinical research associate at Pharmaceutical Product Development and stays home with Alexander. Big sister Ekaterina attends Russian Kindergarten, Smeshariki. Irina fills us in on all her family's favorite Beijing discoveries of the last ten months.

photo by Dave's Studio, text by Yvette Ferrari

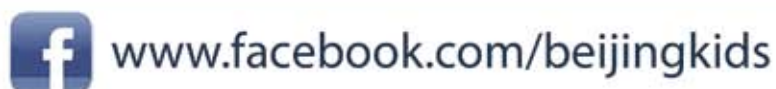
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