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September-October 2021

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September-October 2021

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FOR THE LATEST FAMILY RELATED INFORMATION IN BEIJING



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Telephone/电话：5941 5499

Advertising Hotlines/广告热线：5941 0368

Managing Editor	Mina Yan
Deputy Managing Editor	Vivienne Tseng-Rush
Editor	Julie Wolf
Contributors	AL, XueFei Liu
CEO and Founder	Michael Wester
Owner and Co-Founder	Toni Ma
Marketing Director	Victoria Yang
Marketing Team	Echo Wang, Kris Wei
Art Director	Susu Luo
Production Manager	Joey Guo
Graphic Designer	Michelle Zhang
Photographer	Uni You
Sales Director	Irene Yan
Sales Team	Sharon Shang, Alex Wang, Liu Yue, Dora Wang
Content Marketing	Robynne Tindall
IT Team	Alexandre Froger, Yan Wen
Finance	Judy Zhao, Vicky Cui, Susan Zhou
HR & Admin	Tobal Loyola, Cao Zheng
DM Logistic	Cao Zheng
General Inquiries	5941 5499

Contact:

General Information: info@beijing-kids.com

Magazine: magazine@beijing-kids.com

Sales: sales@truerun.com

Marketing: marketing@truerun.com

Digital & Magazine Marketing: DCmarketing@truerun.com

DM Logistic: distribution@truerun.com

Directories: listings@beijing-kids.com

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Alessandra Azambuja

Alessandra's Beijing adventure began in 2010 when she arrived here with her local Beijinger husband and two children. She is originally from Brazil and has also lived and worked in Argentina and New Zealand. With a passion for working in multicultural environments with international students, Alessandra worked for nearly nine years at The University of Auckland English Language Academy, and is currently at AISB-Hope International in Beijing. You can contact her at azambuja.alessandra@hopeintschool.org

Tim Coghlan

Tim first came to China in 2001 and has made Beijing his home for the last 10 years. He specializes in new market development for the world's most iconic consumer brands, previously helping luxury brands enter and expand in China, and now helps a Chinese technology company build their global business. He enjoys outdoor adventures with his two young children, and time permitting, vlogs in Chinese under the moniker of "Kangaroo Daddy".



Tara Gillan

Tara is from England, UK, and has been in China over 14 years where she is raising third culture, bilingual kids. She has a passion for education in China, and is a lifelong learner still trying to master Mandarin. In between, work, study and being a mum, you will find her looking for her next adventure!



Juliet London

After seven years in Beijing, market researcher, branding consultant and writer, mother to two teenagers, Juliet 'Lady' London continues to be fascinated by this ever changing city. British by birth, she has also lived in Australia and other parts of Asia. Her work primarily focuses on education research, leaving less time than she would like to take exercise, walk her dog, and snap up bargains at local markets.



Caroline Nath

Caroline Nath moved to Beijing as a teenager after growing 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.



Mike Signorelli

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



Grace Sun

Hailing from Sydney, Grace is a true blue Aussie who was always curious about her Chinese heritage. After working in Taipei, Seoul, and Hong Kong for many years, she moved to Beijing in 2016 and hasn't looked back since. In between being a mother of two and working in luxury hotel design and management, she is also founder of the bespoke DCA studio for interior design and art. Contact her at gs@designcollabassociates.com.



A NOTE TO OUR READERS

When scrolling around social media I came across a photo that really spoke to me.

Inspired by this, we wanted to create an issue that not only shares all the fun things Beijing has to offer but also highlights the inclusivity of the city we call home. Gracing this issue's cover is Noa Hottin, a student at Western Academy of Beijing and a US National Braille Champion who's lived in more than 20 countries and speaks four languages.

This is Ollie – a cheeky little boy who has Caudal Regression Syndrome. Ollie is a wheelchair user. He couldn't believe his eyes when he saw a boy like him on the posters in a U.S. [Target] ... wheels and all! Ollie's family say he stopped dead in his tracks to turn back around to get a closer look. His family said that Oliver sees kids every day, but he never gets to see kids like him in magazines or on posters. It made a world of difference to little Ollie, so well done Target for representing people with disabilities.

— Ollie's World



Our student correspondent XueFei Liu interviewed Hottin about his experience living in Beijing (P. 38). In this issue, you'll also find one teenager's firsthand account of living with dyscalculia (P. 70), a neurodivergent condition that's not commonly discussed, and we also learn a bit about two of Beijing's international schools that have created outstanding special needs programs for their students (P. 22).

For many kids, fostering friendships with members of the special needs community can be a unique experience. If they've never met someone with special needs, they're often confused about how to interact and be themselves. We dig into this topic in our Ask the Expert column (P. 28), as educator Julie Wolf shares her experience of explaining special needs to young children and how they can become more inclusive of others.

For my fellow parents with particularly young ones, this issue is also filled with baby-friendly restaurant recommendations (P. 12), baby food recipes (P. 14), and one expat family's tips on their favorite places in the city to go with their new baby girl (P. 48).

Finally, as autumn rolls in, there's nothing quite like a weekend spent exploring one of Beijing's pumpkin patches (yes, they actually exist here). Our editor Vivienne Tseng-Rush takes you on a tour of two of her favorites out in Miyun District (P. 20) and also a few great hot springs where you and the kids can warm up (P. 18).



Mina Yan
Managing Editor

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ON THE COVER

13-year-old Western Academy of Beijing Noa Hottin is a US national braille champion and no stranger to living in different countries.

Photos:
Dave Hanssen of Dave's Studio



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Note that we will only publish
photos of babies born
in the last 12 months



Diana Dmitrievna Filimontseva

Russian

Born Mar 2

to Elena Robertovna Filimontseva and
Dmitrii Vadimovich Filimontsev
at Peking University First Hospital



Chloe Cui

Chinese

Born Sep 15

to Hengyan Tian and Guannan Cui
at Peking Union Medical College Hospital

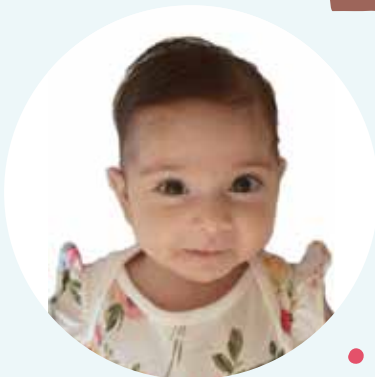


Olav Guo Ek

Norwegian/Chinese

Born Nov 9

to Erlend Ek and Yixue Guo
at Beijing Chaoyang Hospital



Seraphina Pourvali

Iranian

Born Jun 24

to Hosna Omidvarborna and Mohsen Pourvali
at Beijing United Family Hospital



Arjun Devashish Rastogi-Lee

Singaporean

Born Sep 18

to Kaishi Lee and Devashish Bhupendra Rastogi
at Oasis International Hospital

What's New



Universal Beijing Resort Finally Opens

Universal Beijing Resort made headlines on Sep 20 when its theme park, hotels, and City-Walk finally opened to the public! Tens of thousands of guests have flocked to the park every day since, and tickets for the rest of the year are selling fast. Plans for the park had been in motion for nearly two decades so all companies involved in the process must be celebrating after seeing their efforts come to fruition. Of the seven themed lands, it is clear that the Wizarding World of Harry Potter is by far the most popular, with Jurassic World Isla Nublar and Transformers Metrobase coming in close behind. Currently offering more than 30 rides, shows, and attractions, plus 30 dining options and two on-site hotels, the resort is slated for further development in the coming years. We can't wait to see what else is in store!



Burger Fest 2021

Beijing's juiciest festival – the Beijinger's Burger Fest – took place from Sep 19-21 at Langyuan Station. Unlike previous years, this one was held indoors, seeing a crowd of several thousand making the rounds and tasting all the scrumptious goodies vendors had to offer. Side Street, 2020's Burger Cup champion, and Slow Boat, previous Burger Cup champs attracted the longest queues. After rounds of voting, Slow Boat Brewery was crowned the winner of 2021's Beijinger Burger Cup, making it their fifth title! While smoke and ventilation proved to be the downside of an indoor venue for a crowded cooking event such as this one, we are grateful to our faithful supporters and burger lovers for their feedback and ask for your patience as we improve things for the next festival.

PHOTOS: UNSPLASH, UNI YOU, ANNA PELLEGRIN-HARTLEY



Beijing Winter Olympic Park Opens in Shijingshan

On Sep 28, the high-profile Beijing Winter Olympic park in Shijingshan District was officially opened. Its most talked-about feature is the 42km marathon route that links eight parks together and covers an area of more than 2,800 acres. You will see many historic and cultural sites along the way, including Shougang Big Air and New Shougang Bridge. Meanwhile, Olympic-themed sculptures collected from all over the world will also be exhibited in the park, according to officials.

Flu Shots to Combat Flu Season

Beijing has been experiencing a bit of an Indian summer – aka a summer that never ends – even though we’re technically well into autumn by now. The early mornings and evenings have brought some chills and with it the beginning of flu season. Thus, it is timely that hospitals and clinics have started offering the flu vaccine in the capital city. For local citizens over 60, the flu vaccine is free, but we expats will be paying out of pocket or ringing our medical insurance companies for the shot.



Anna PH, *jingkids* Editor, Leaves for Paris

Every Wednesday, when you check out the *jingkids* events listing, you’ll probably have seen Anna Pellegrin-Hartley’s byline. Anna joined True Run Media back in 2018 and served as an editor for *the Beijinger* before joining the *jingkids* team in 2020. She also conducted various journalism workshops, where we got to know about her penchant for puns. We were de-light-ed to hear that she and her husband are expecting their first child, whom they plan to welcome in Paris. September marks Anna’s final month with TRM as she leaves Beijing in October, so we must bid her adieu and bonne chance!



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A NEW LOOK FOR DAD

Father and son bond over a beard design and haircuts!

By Vivienne Tseng-Rush





The idea came from a video we watched in which kids drew beard designs for their fathers and then proceeded to visit a barber who actualized the designs. Sounds like fun, right?

So when I asked my son to draw a beard design for his father, he was game. But then... he drew this.



It's a heart-shaped beard, by the way.

Unfortunately, it wasn't doable. And no matter how much we coaxed my son to draw a different design, he wouldn't budge. So in the end, we got him to simply choose a beard design from a list of possibilities conveniently provided at Truefitt & Hill.

We first encountered Truefitt & Hill in Singapore and fell in love with the centuries-old London brand, known internationally as

a premier gentlemen's barber and perfumer. This would be our first time experiencing the brand in Beijing, and as you might imagine, they had quite a reputation to live up to.

Finding the store was the first challenge, as the English address is listed as Beijing INXX in 01, which does not register on Didi. Luckily, the Chinese address – Yintai Center (No.2 Jianguomenwai) – worked like a charm. The below-ground shopping mall is linked to China World Mall if that helps you navigate a little easier.

The storefront embodies that iconic Truefitt & Hill look, with traditional royal blue and gold decor that just oozes elegance. Likewise, the barbers were decked out in their trademark black vest and pants.

My husband began with his beard shave first, keeping the design my son chose in mind.

Leon, the barber, started trimming and shaping my husband's unruly, thick beard. My son and I gazed in awe as bits of hair drifted to the floor like curly clouds. Haven't you always found cutting hair, regardless of which part of the body it grows from, therapeutic? Out with the old, in with the new.

Part of the essential Truefitt & Hill experience is the traditional hot towel wet shave, which relaxes you unlike anything else. The steam coming off of the towel opens up the pores in your skin and hair follicles, allowing the moisturizing cream and oils to really soak in. Also, it helps reduce the chance of razor burn.

This is how my husband, Jeff Rush, describes it: "The initial contact is exhilarating, albeit shocking! However, as you accept the warm embrace of the towel, a soothing and relaxing sensation envelopes your entire head."

When Leon, in following the design my son picked out, carefully shaved off the little bits of beard to reveal parts of my husband's skin that hadn't seen the light of day for years, my jaw dropped. It was so different seeing the skin around his mouth! I just had to touch it, and boy was it soft.

After the shave, Leon moved on to the haircut. Around this time, my son's barber, Leo (confusing I know) was ready to join us. What I found rather nifty was how each station had its own washbasin so all you have to do is



swivel the barber chairs around and lie back to enjoy the wash, arguably the most serene part of a haircut. Unless you are a 6-year-old with self-diagnosed sensory issues, like my son. He shut his eyes tightly from the moment it began until it was over, and wore a grimace on his face the whole time.

For him, things went downhill from there. He absolutely hated having to wear the protective gown because it really bothered his neck. But once Leo started cutting his hair and the bits fell around – not to mention inside – the protective gown, he got irate, then angry. I tried to hurry the stylist while also being sensitive to the fact that good work takes time. Needless to say, when Leo finally took a step back to admire his handy work, my son was almost yelling. I see now why Truefitt & Hill generally doesn't accept young kids at their stores.

Once he was free of the bonds of the hairdresser, our kid reverted to his carefree, happy self. He didn't much care how his haircut looked, just that it was over. As for my husband, he is definitely going to be a regular at Truefitt & Hill.



Truefitt & Hill

Beijing Yintai Center, Level LG Unit B32B

北京市朝阳区建国门外大街2号北京银泰中心in01A座LG层B32B

185 1404 7364



We've Got a Question For You

"What does being inclusive mean to you and how are you inclusive of others?"

By Mina Yan


Photo by Uni You

Noah (age 13)

I play soccer and playing soccer means teamwork, collaboration, helping each other, and integrating new players into the team no matter which nationality or background.

Michael

In my department, we have a very diverse group of people from many different countries. Here it is absolutely necessary to show respect to different cultures and working styles.



Mom, Vanessa Mackensen, and Dad, Michael Hofmann, have been together for 17 years. The couple met at work and have since lived in Italy and the US, before eventually landing in Beijing. Now, the couple calls China's capital home along with their two children, Noah and Nayla. The Hofmann family loves hiking, skiing, playing tennis, exercising, and movie nights together.

Vanessa

In Germany, I gave private lessons to four kids from a Syrian refugee family and helped them with the paperwork as a voluntary service.

Nayla (age 10)

I am very happy to have the chance to live in China, to meet many people from different countries, and that we had such a warm welcome as foreigners.



Kid-Friendly vs. Baby-Friendly

When kid-friendly restaurants become your worst nightmare

By Mina Yan

Restaurants tend to bundle all kids under one category: If they've got a kids menu they're "family-friendly". But families come in a variety of shapes and sizes, and some of us take kids out to eat beginning at a pretty young age. So the most kid-friendly restaurants in town – those with a play area, crafts, and clowns – are not the same kind of kid-friendly that I'm looking for. In fact, most of the time it's exactly the opposite of what I want.

Let me back up for a second. I have a 1-year-old baby who likes to wobble around. She will sit through a meal if we eat fast, but a two-hour boozy brunch is out of the question. She'll get bored and start banging on her high chair before you know it. Likewise, at restaurants that fit the common definition of kid-friendly, I spend more time worrying about a bigger kid trampling over her than actually eating, and since she's too young to play in any play area unaccompanied, she needs to stay with us at the table.

Then there's the matter of food. Most kids' menus are designed for older kids, meaning if you have a baby you need to either bring your own food or choose a restaurant that'll accommodate your needs with off-menu items. All of which is to say, the perfect kid-friendly restaurants for us right now are those that have high chairs, don't mind the occasional screams, and will prepare us special dishes that are baby-friendly.

So, with all that in mind, here are a few dining recommendations around town for anyone with baby foodies in tow.

Tiago

There are multiple Tiago restaurants all around the city. Tiago Home Kitchen specializes in comfort food, while Tiago Select has all the Italian favorites plus a great list of cocktails. On the other hand, Casa Talia by Tiago is the least baby-friendly of all their restaurants. This one is best suited for date night with just the parents. As for the first two, however, their restaurants have kids' menus, but for babies, they will cook a bit of sauce-free pasta, knowing that your little one will probably do more playing with their food than eating. Add in some perfectly ripe avocados, bread, and pizza crusts, and babies can enjoy a tasty meal along with their parents.



Hot Pot

Contrary to what many believe, hot pot is actually quite baby-friendly – as long as you keep a safe distance between your kid's speedy little hands and the flaming pot of boiling broth. Restaurants that serve up individual hot pots turn into sanitary cooking stations right at your table. I love taking my daughter to hot pot. Cooking some beef and lamb slices, vegetables, and noodles in a mushroom-based broth is fun for both her and for me.



Hulu by TRB

What doesn't the Hulu team prepare? They've got high chairs and also their own bibs! While coloring paper is still a bit too advanced for some babies, the staff at both Hulu locations are great about providing babies with pasta, fruits, and bread to nibble on and play with.

Sanlitun Taikoo Li South
三里屯太古里南区三层
167 1009 0452

Q Mex

Every Q Mex location has high chairs and their newest spot in Solana has an amazing play area for older kids! But, for babies, Q Mex offers something that parents and babies both love – ripe avocados all year round! And for kids who are still too young to know the joys of coloring, they've got tortillas that are great for ripping and munching on.

Solana Mall - 6 Chaoyang Gongyuan Lu
蓝色港湾朝阳公园路6号
8794 5165

Kitty & Daniel Hollywood Grill & Bar

The Kitty & Daniel's Solana location has live performances that start pretty early every Friday - Sunday night so even babies younger than a year old can enjoy them before heading home for bedtime. Wouldn't it be too loud for babies? While the thought of going taking your tiny human to a live music venue for grown-ups, they're actually super entertaining for kids as well, and here's the bonus – because it's so much fun for babies to watch the performances, you get to eat in peace!

Solana Mall - 6 Chaoyang Gongyuan Lu
蓝色港湾朝阳公园路6号
135 5271 3585

Looking for family-friendly dining recommendations? Join the FamFriendlyEats WeChat group.
Add Wilhelmina87 on WeChat to request to join.

LET'S PLAY WITH FOOD

Making a baby-friendly smash cake for their 1st birthday

By Mina Yan

The first year of your baby's life is filled with milestones. The first time they sit up, their first steps, the first time they say mama and baba, first playdates... you get the idea. Needless to say, when that first birthday rolls around, there's a litany of other firsts that come pouring in, all of which you want to capture on camera.

On top of all that, the internet has given us an obsession for gender reveal parties when we're pregnant, and for a baby's first birthday, it's given us "cake smash" obsessions. What's a cake smash you ask? It's exactly what it sounds like – a cake made with baby-friendly ingredients that your little one can smash on their first birthday.

Making a smash cake is relatively easy. After all, no one's actually eating it so you don't really need to worry about the taste. All that matters is that the cake holds up and is baby-friendly. Whether or not your baby actually wants to smash it is up to them.

SUGAR FREE SMASH CAKE

INGREDIENTS

- 1/3 cup or 100 grams applesauce
- 1/3 cup or 75 grams banana (about 1 small banana)
- 1/3 cup or 75 milliliters oat milk
- 3 tsp apple cider vinegar
- 1 1/2 cups or 180 grams all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 tsp or 6 grams baking powder

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit or 175 degrees Celsius.
2. Grease the cake pans or muffin tin with neutral cooking oil then line with parchment cups or paper. Place on a sheet tray.
3. Mix the applesauce and banana. Use a fork to mash the banana then stir to thoroughly combine all the ingredients.
4. Combine the apple cider vinegar and oat milk and let sit for 5 minutes. Stir to thoroughly combined.

5. In a separate mixing bowl, whisk the flour and baking powder.

6. Add the dry ingredients to the bowl with the wet ingredients all at once. Use a spatula to stir until combined and no streaks of flour remain. The batter will be sticky and thick.

7. Evenly distribute the batter in the muffin tins or cake pans, filling about halfway to leave enough room for the cakes to rise without spilling over the edge of the pan. Use the spatula to smooth the tops and push the batter into the edges of the pan.

8. Bake until a toothpick inserted in the center of the cakes comes out clean, about 30 minutes.

9. Remove the cakes from the oven and place on a wire rack. Let the cakes cool in their tins for 5 minutes, then remove the cakes from the tins to finish cooling on the rack.

TO STORE

Once the cake layers are cool to the touch, store the cakes in the refrigerator or freezer if you're not planning to frost them right away. Tightly wrapped in plastic, the cakes will keep for up to one week in the refrigerator or up to one month in the freezer. Let the cakes come to room temperature before serving.

COCONUT FROSTING

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cans coconut cream (not milk)
- 2 tbsp orange juice
- 1/2 to 2 tsp of juice or water

DIRECTIONS

1. Harden your coconut cream by putting it in the coldest part of your fridge for 24 hours.
2. Turn the cans upside down and use a can opener to open the bottom. Pour out any liquid and discard or reserve for another use.
3. Mix coconut cream and juice in a mixing bowl. Whisk until smooth.
4. To color the frosting, add one drop of juice and whisk to combine. Keep adding drops, one at a time, until the desired color is reached. Note that the more liquid that is added to the frosting, the looser it will become. If this is the case, chill the frosting in the fridge for 30 minutes to thicken before frosting your cakes.

NOTE

Coconut frosting will hold its shape at room temperature for about two hours. Keep that in mind when you're transporting your smash cake to the party.





Ten-tacular Surprise!

Making paper plate jellyfish with students at
British School of Beijing, Sanlitun

By Mina Yan

One of the most marvelous things about children is the sheer limitless of their imagination. In this issue, we join Ms. Poppy Thompson from the British School of Beijing, Sanlitun (BSB Sanlitun), and four Reception years students – Neve Davies, Natalia Lopez Andrade, Jonah Lui, and Isaac Liaqat – for a fun paper plate jellyfish craft.



What You'll Need

1. Paper plate
2. Markers
3. Glue
4. Ribbon
5. Scissors
6. Colored paper



1

Step 1:

Cut the paper plate in half. You can either go wiggly or keep it straight.



2

Step 2:

Apply glue across the back of the plate so you can glue your ribbons, aka the tentacles.



3

Step 3:

Cut strips of ribbon and attach them to the back.



4

Step 4:

Once your ribbons are attached you can paint and decorate your jellyfish.



5

Step 5:

On a white piece of paper draw two circles for the eyes and cut them out.



6

Step 6:

Draw in the pupils with a marker and glue them to your jellyfish.

When Beijing Gets Cold. Jump Into a Hot Spring!

Locals swear by the benefits of hot springs,
so should you join the trend?

By Vivienne Tseng-Rush

As a city that experiences a nearly half-year long cold season, Beijing is known for its hotpot offerings, where even an international franchise like Yoshinoya gets in on the fun. But beyond that, there's another way Beijingers like to stay warm in the colder months, and that's by soaking in hot springs!

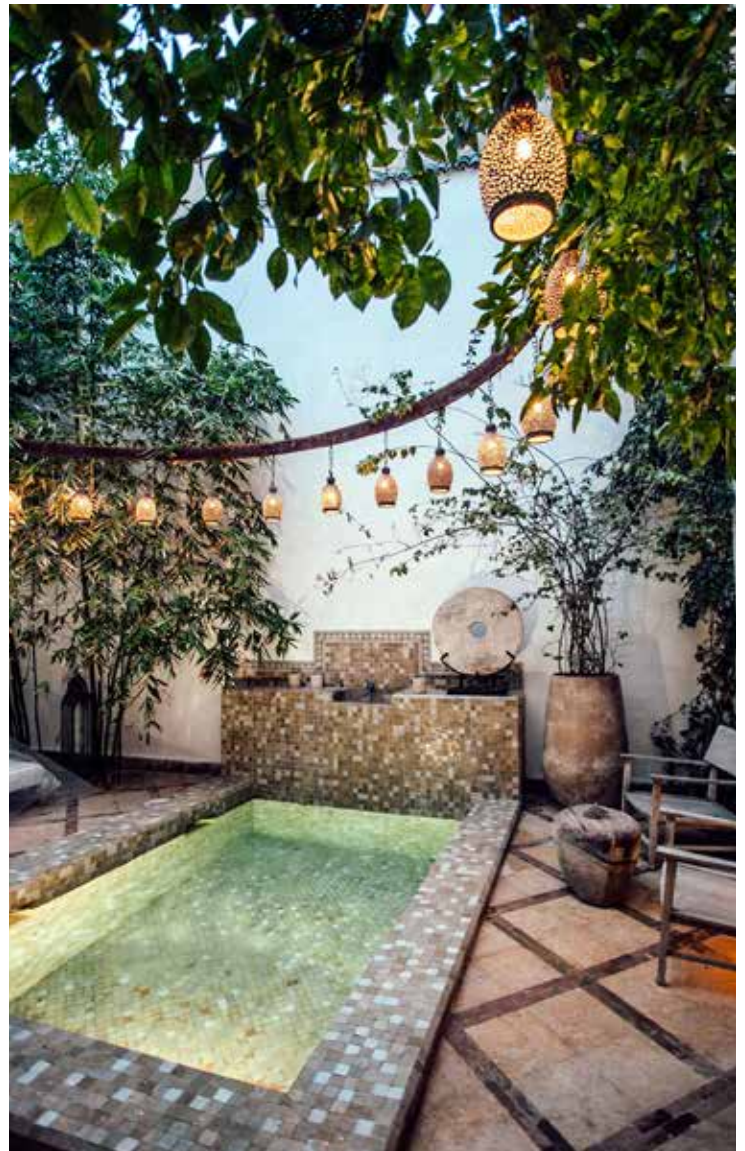
I first stumbled upon a hot spring hotel just down the street from where I live east of downtown Beijing. I saw the words 温泉 (*Wēnquán*), which refers to hot spring, but I was intrigued because it was also a hotel. After asking some of my local friends, I discovered that hot springs hotels and hot springs "lifestyle centers" are rather common here. The lifestyle centers usually include amenities like pools, game centers, and an all-you-can-eat buffet within the price.

But what are the benefits of soaking in hot spring water, or as an uninitiated friend likes to call it, "germ soup"? Well, let's dispel the hearsay and look at the many benefits, some of which are backed by actual scientific research!

First, a little science lesson is in order. Natural hot spring water is geothermal heated groundwater found on the surface of the Earth. Because heated water can hold much more dissolved solids than cool water, hot springs are rich in a myriad of minerals, including sulfate, iron, chloride, silica, and calcium. Because of its rich sulfur content, hot spring water can have a relaxing effect on muscular tissue. The high levels of hydrogen sulfide give hot spring water its reputation for being anti-inflammatory. Meanwhile, the silica gives your skin an anti-aging glow, much like makeup products that incorporate the useful mineral.

Second, a mythology lesson. In ancient times, natural hot springs were believed to heal and treat diseases. This belief is called balneology and was held by the Romans, Egyptians, and Greeks. Today, balneology has evolved into an actual scientific study – sometimes called bal-neotherapy – focusing on the arts, sciences, and cultures of natural mineral waters. Some even drink it!

Now, you need to know that there are naturally occurring hot springs and artificial hot springs. But what's the difference? Well, the end product is the same, but in manmade hot springs, the minerals are added to the water. Fun fact, a patent has been filed for a new technology that allows regular tap water to be transformed into mineral water. This process was done by increasing the carbonic acid content of tap water and filtering it through a proprietary "mineral pack," a special device with rock pillars, which helps convert it to mineral-rich, sub-acidic mineral water.



Likewise, natural hot springs are often channeled into manmade pools or spas, however, spa enterprises are not required to disclose whether their hot springs are natural or manmade. As such, it is hard to know for sure whether your hot spring is natural or otherwise. Though, perhaps it doesn't matter much – unless germs are your concern – for artificial hot springs are more likely to be purified than their natural counterparts.

Right here in Beijing, hot spring hotels and lifestyle centers number in the hundreds. We shortlisted a couple of kid-friendly ones so your whole family can enjoy the benefits of the famed hot spring!

北京乐多港万豪酒店汤乐宫温泉 Beijing Marriott Hotel Changping

Towards the end of last winter, in April, I made a trip to the Beijing Marriott Hotel in Changping, which was introduced to me as the family-friendly hot spring staycation. Their claims to fame?

1. The water that fills your bathtub is hot spring water so you don't even have to leave your room for the experience.
2. The kids' water park uses hot spring water.

About a two-hour drive from the heart of Beijing, the hotel is located behind a big shopping complex and right next to a local amusement park. Both are within walking distance and offer plenty of entertainment options for the kids. There is also a plethora of dining and outlet shops in the area, so definitely set aside some time for that.

The hot spring water park is in the basement of the hotel and costs an additional fee, starting from RMB 98 for kids and RMB 238 for adults for a day ticket. There's also a buffet option if you top up some RMB 200. There is an indoor and outdoor water play area, complete with slides, waterfalls, water jets, and colored pools to add to the fun. Communal huge floats and beach balls are also provided, and kids are allowed to bring their water guns!

尚隐泉都市生活馆 Shang Yin Hot Springs Lifestyle Center

Proudly displaying a "Natural Hot Spring" sign out in the lobby, this hot spring lifestyle center in Feng Tai sports elegant Japanese decor with sliding doors, tatami floors, and wooden gazebos with soaking pools. In the same manner, the restaurant offers a Japanese, as well as Korean, buffet. Kids have both a water playground and a dry one to choose from. This center also has separate sections for men and women if that is your concern. Customers have raved about how the center provides everything they need, from slippers to toiletries and even face wash. Tickets start from a mere RMB 8 for kids to RMB 128 for adults.

Hot springs are aplenty in Beijing, so if you're ready to take a dip, make sure to check that they at least have a good reputation (on Dianping) and clean premises. Happy soaking!



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Tis' the Season of the Pumpkin

We're proud to carry on the autumn tradition of bringing home a pumpkin from Beijing's very own pumpkin patches

By Vivienne Tseng-Rush

October in Beijing means we're knee-deep in autumnal leaves and chillier weather, and a traditional pastime of the season is to seek out pumpkin patches in search of the best orange gourd to bring home. Whether you plan on making pumpkin soup, pumpkin pie, or carving out a scary face for Halloween decorations, there's no doubt that you want to be there in person to touch every ridge and feel its weight in your hands. The question remains though: Where can you find a pumpkin patch in China's capital city?

After scouring Beijing, we found two well-kept farms that invite guests to pick their own pumpkins, among other seasonal fruits like

strawberries and persimmons. We even saw vegetables such as carrots and beetroots. One of the most compelling arguments for getting produce from these farms is that they pride themselves on organic farming and do not spray harmful pesticides on their crops. Prices start from RMB 10 for a pound, but you can't put a price on the joy the kids will get from harvesting their own food!

The first farm is located within Shunyi District, just over an hour's drive from downtown Beijing. 绿谷良田亲子农场 (lǜ gǔ liángtián qīnzǐ nóngchǎng) Lugu Liangtian Parent and Child Farm is much more than just a farm, with a vast expanse of grassy fields where families





LOCATIONS

Lǚgu Liangtian Parent and Child Farm

绿谷良田亲子农场
Guangming Lu, Miyun District
光明大街洛娃农场旁

Golden Sakura Valley Happy Farm

金樱谷开心农场
Xiwengzhuangzhen Jinpoluocun, Miyun District
溪翁庄镇金巨罗村龟山

can rent a tent and stay for a night, or just the day. Aside from the fresh fruit picking, activities include barbecues, fishing, and a cornfield maze! There are also ATVs for the kids to drive, plus a playground with a mini-pool and paddle boats. The best part is that it costs just RMB 30 per adult and RMB 15 per child to rent the tent for the day.

A bit further northeast, beyond Shunyi and nestled in the heart of Miyun District, lies 金樱谷开心农场 (*jīn yīng gǔ kāixīn nóngchǎng*), aka Golden Sakura Valley Happy Farm. This farm is a two-hour drive out and could be parlayed into an overnight stay because there is a full day's worth of nature exploration and farm activities to run

the whole family ragged. Plus, the farm is located close to the Miyun reservoir, which boasts some spectacular natural scenes as well. If you're a nature lover, you'll definitely enjoy a hike out there.

When you first arrive on Happy Farm any time between mid-September and the end of October, you will be greeted by an enormous pile of squash just in front of the white picket fence. They were in all shapes and sizes, with colors varying from deep auburn to modest gold. Our kids happily made their choices from the crop and the staff set those aside for us to pick up later.

What stands out to me about our experience at Happy Farm is the excellent corn

(freshly shucked and roasted) and jianbing they cooked in their little canteen. I also recall the cute playground with two slides built into the hillside that the kids slid down so many times I'm surprised their pants weren't full of holes by the end of the day. For a small fee, kids can hop aboard a rustic train pulled by a tractor and go around the mountainside. There was also a mini hay bale maze with wooden carts that my husband and I used to race the other parents. They won, if you must know.

There are plenty of animal-related activities on Happy Farm too. You can ride miniature horses around the entire premises, which is pretty huge, for an additional fee. There was also a little stream set up in the midst of the field of crops, where the kids could catch small fish using pails and nets. You are allowed to bring home whatever you catch, though we chose to return our fish back to the stream.

It is best to leave before 4pm if you are simply making a day trip out of it, for traffic definitely worsens after that. Just don't forget to pick up your pumpkins before you leave!



INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR ALL

What's special education like in Beijing?

By Mina Yan

Every year when Jingkids publishes our annual School Choice Guide, there's one question that parents invariably ask: Which school is the "best"? We've never been able to answer that, and frankly, we never will be. Because every child is different, and their needs are different, so the "best" school is the school that's able to provide that specific child with everything he or she needs.

Parents should also take into consideration the school's founding philosophy, curriculum, extracurricular activities, location, tuition fees, and tons more. But when you're searching for a school for a child with special needs, you've got far more things to look into.

There are hundreds of international schools in Beijing offering a variety of curriculums, staffed with exceptional teachers, and providing unparalleled extracurricular activities. But when it comes to children with neurodivergent tendencies, the choices for schools suddenly shrinks a little. Not every international school in Beijing is able to accept students with special needs. The ones that do, however, have created programs that go above and beyond what is required, and are able to provide their students with an environment where they can thrive.

For instance, Western Academy of Beijing (WAB) is a fully inclusive school which means

they provide educational opportunities for all students. What's more, WAB doesn't use the term "special education". Instead, they prefer "inclusive education", and define it as "all students, regardless of disability, ethnicity, socio-economic status, nationality, language, gender, sexual orientation or faith, can access and fully participate in learning, alongside their similar-aged peers, supported by reasonable adjustments and teaching strategies."

Over the years WAB has enrolled students with physical challenges such as visual impairment, learning disorders, speech and language impairment, autistic spectrum disorder, and emotional disorders including anxiety and





PHOTOS: WESTERN ACADEMY OF BEIJING, INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF BEIJING, PEXELS

depression. It certainly requires an extra level of attention, resources, and planning, but WAB works closely with families to accommodate each student's learning differences and creates a community where every child can feel safe and supported.

And WAB isn't alone in this. International School of Beijing (ISB) is also renowned for its special needs program, a defining principle of its founding ethos. ISB enrolls students with diverse learning needs (mild, moderate, and intensive). Learning support provides targeted and specific intervention for students who qualify, while evidence-based interventions match student needs and support the learning of, and access to, grade-level content.

"ISB recognizes and respects the unique developmental and cultural diversity of our student body", says ISB's Director of Student Support Services, Danette Sack. "Our partnership with parents and classroom teachers guides students through the developmental learning stages at each grade level, towards

their unique social-emotional, linguistic, academic, and physical potential."

According to Sack, ever since ISB was established some years ago, it's prided itself on being a school for the whole family. Part and parcel of that is emphasizing special needs education because it's something that expat families in Beijing have a genuine need for.

Historically, international schools have been exclusive. If a family with multiple children moved to a school and one of their children had special needs, the school would often accept the children without disabilities and declare their inability to meet the needs of the student with disabilities. ISB developed its inclusive programs in order to meet the needs of all children from their international families. ISB currently has staff certified in all areas of special needs including qualified and experienced learning support teachers, EAL teachers, instructional assistants, a school psychologist, language pathologists, counselors, and a private occupational therapist

who's available to students on campus during the day.

What really makes ISB special, however, is that they've cultivated a student body that embraces difference. The specialized team creates individualized programs for students who require intensive support. For Sack, participation is the most important thing when it comes to special education and it's important that these kids have equal access to everything at school.

WAB and ISB are far from the only two schools in Beijing that go above and beyond to ensure children with special needs receive the best education they can. To find out more about international schools offering special needs programs, scan the QR code to visit the school profile index on our website (www.beijing-kids.com).



Expression Through Art

Students at Dulwich
College Beijing Express
Themselves Through Art

By Mina Yan



Year 13 Henry K

Acrophobia

This piece represents my consciousness of the near-future crisis. In this piece, I portrayed myself falling from the future transportation - "Drone Taxi" that I imagined. Due to the high demand for roads and an increase in the future population, drones will play a bigger role. However, I believe that such a great design can also be detrimental to our society.



Year 11 Agatha Z

Abstract representation of emotion

The watercolour is of the sunset passing through a window and reflected onto the wall. The piece is kept minimalistic and concise. The colours used in the piece emits a long-lost feeling, however indescribable.



Year 11 Cathy M

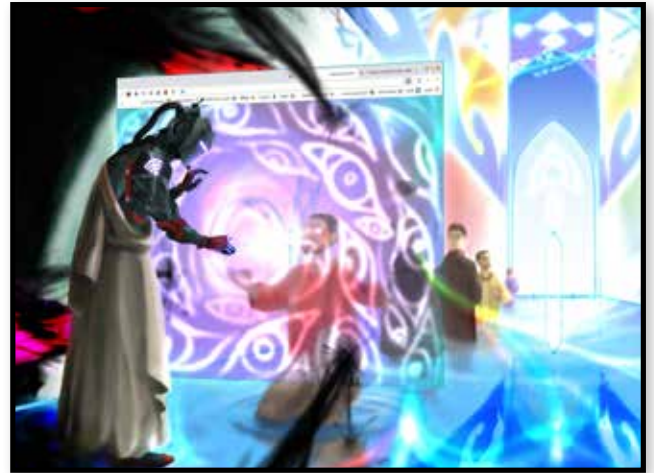
Reminisce

The scene comes from the Beijing opera Peony Pavilion which conveyed the emotions of two lovers when they separated, then found each other again. The tone used on the watercolour is to create and express her emotions.



Year 13 Cher X
An Afternoon

My grandma spends a lot of time on the sofa in our living room. One day during quarantine, the colour of her clothing combined with our sofa created a palette that caught my eye, and I decided to capture the scene. Creating work centering around my grandma prompted me to closely observe her in everyday life.



Year 13 Nathan L
The Healing of the Blind

The creation of the internet has gathered all of human knowledge, and collected many varieties of human opinion, regardless of good or bad. The entity formed from the collective entirety of humanity, has reached an almost god-like existence, possessing knowledge that amounts to that of all the people in the world, for greater than any one person in the world could ever possess. And it answers the prayer of anyone who seeks its wisdom, enlightening them and directing them to whatever knowledge or item they may come to desire that is within its realm.



Year 11 Julia Z
Architecture

The distorted perspective makes the usually firm medieval wooden structures less capable of allowing any household to go inside these buildings. The whole architecture seems absurd, making them incapable of any proper use.



Year 11 Mylene R
Façade

The piece is based on the theme façade, which incorporates both buildings and the deceptive outward appearance of a person. The mirror represents the inner character of a person which is hidden behind the made-up veneer.



TEACHING THE WORLD TO SING, LITERALLY!

This ISB educator, mom, and globe-trotting musician is using the arts to change the world one student at a time

By Julie Wolf

If you looked up international educator in the dictionary, Stephanie Gravelle's photo and résumé would be the definition. This actress-turned-educator has degrees from Carnegie Mellon and Columbia University, not to mention a burning passion for the arts, and deep love for her students. She's taught all over the world and has an authentically global perspective coupled with optimism for the future that is truly inspiring.

Aside from being an educator, however, Gravelle is also a mom and musician who found her way to the classroom through a somewhat unconventional path. During a lull in her acting career, while living in New York, she went back to her hometown in Wisconsin to help out her little sister, whose senior musical needed a director. "I moved home for a few months and tried my hand at directing," explains Gravelle. "I loved it and found I was pretty good at it." When she returned to New York, she took a job at the prestigious New York City Opera working with school-aged kids leading tours and activities.

"Again, I loved it and was pretty good at it," says Gravelle, adding, "As I approached the age of 30... I realized I was happiest and felt most successful in those moments when I was making music with kids." As a result, she applied to Columbia University for an education degree. However, it was towards the end of her program that one of those magical chance meetings happened.

A regular at the restaurant where she was waiting tables happened to bring in a friend who was a career international teacher. "I had no idea international education even existed! I went home that night, looked up International School Services, and applied to a school in Dalian, China. I met my husband in Dalian, and we've been international teachers ever since."

She hasn't looked back. "I love the energy in the (class)room when things are really working. I love being a person in a child's day that

is excited to see them and can help them find their voice – singing or otherwise."

But there has been a lot of debate about how best to prepare students for the "real world" and many schools are cutting funding for the arts. When asked why the arts are important in education, Gravelle mounts a passionate defense.

"Those that focus on test scores and college acceptance letters are thinking small. Test scores measure how well you take a test. They do not measure social skills, problem-solving skills, or anything that is becoming increasingly important. The arts teach collaboration and critical thinking. The arts teach you humility and empathy! Most of the elite US colleges have moved away from looking at test scores."

And she's right. Most schools are putting less emphasis on – or have outright stopped considering – SAT/ACTs as part of undergraduate acceptance, and her own alma mater, Columbia University did not require the GRE.

"I see so many students without a passion because they have been forced into extra classes and test prep...College acceptance is important, but your adult life is so much longer than university."

That's not her only frustration as a teacher. Like so many educators, Gravelle faces the "those that can't do, teach" mentality. "I am highly educated and take a lot of pride in my work...However, there's a lot of side-eye when I try to convince others that this isn't a fallback career or that I don't want to be something more 'successful.'"

But knowing she makes a difference keeps Gravelle motivated. Teachers are often the rock in the proverbial pond. They are the inciting incident but may never understand how far their ripples extend. "At the end of one of the musicals I directed, one of the students stood up and said, 'Ms. G., not only do you teach us to use our singing voice, you give us the confidence to use our voice for good.'"

“WHAT’S WRONG WITH THEM?”

How to help your child be compassionate and inclusive of a differently-abled friend

By Julie Wolf



“Everyone needs something different, and everyone gets what they need.” It was a mantra in our 4’s classroom for a year. We had a student who was biologically 7 years old, but cognitively 4. He had arrived in October after the deadline to enroll in the “special needs” schools and none of the mainstream programs were willing to take on his “challenging circumstances.” Mom was at her wit’s end and came to me asking if she provided a full-time one-to-one specialist for him, would we allow him in our 4’s program until the end of the year. I felt like we couldn’t turn her or her child away. But I was nervous, this would be a big challenge and a strain on our resources. I pulled the teaching team together and we talked.

As educators, we wanted to do the best for a child who clearly needed extra support and attention but we also had to make sure the rest of our students didn’t feel neglected. We worried that we didn’t have the necessary skills to balance everyone’s needs, that parents would complain or that worst of all, we might make a well-intentioned mistake and damage a child’s already delicate development.

But the teachers were dedicated and sought out various training and resources, often at their own expense, and the parents went out of their way to communicate their support and offer help. As a result, the kids

were warm and welcoming to their new classmate. There were some rough moments to be sure but on the whole, they were compassionate. For those of you working towards raising empathetic and inclusive humans, these are a few of my take-aways from that profound year.

“WHAT’S WRONG WITH THEM?”

This is a common question. Children are observant and curious. So the first thing to do when you hear that question – especially if the child in question heard it too – is stay calm and don’t be embarrassed. Then respond with “Nothing is wrong with them. They are just a little different.” If there is an obvious physical issue address it. “Nothing is wrong with them. The muscles in their legs work differently than yours do, but I bet he has really strong arms to be able to roll those big wheels on his chair!”

“WHY DO THEY GET SPECIAL PRIVILEGES?”

This was a big one in our classroom. Most children have an innate sense of fairness and anything that feels unbalanced will generally be challenged. Our new student needed more frequent breaks than the others. About every 30 minutes, he would start to become overwhelmed and a member of staff would remove him from the environment for a quick breather. This led to some indignation and a girl who demanded, “Why does he get extra recess?” We talked about how everyone has

different needs and as a community, we support those needs. We then talked about times they received extra help. This was where we introduced the idea that “everyone needs something different and everyone gets what they need.”

Talk with your kids about a time they got extra help. Like the time they were too tired to walk home from the park and dad carried them, or the day they had to go to the bathroom really badly and all the adults let them cut the line. They don’t need to be dramatic events, just everyday moments when someone else met their needs even though it wasn’t technically “fair.”

“WILL I GET SICK TOO?”

This one threw me for a loop when a child asked it. But it makes sense. Children associate physical issues with the hospital and getting sick. In their minds, walkers, wheelchairs, muscle ticks, and the like are directly linked to illness. Gently tell them this person is not sick, their body just works differently. Remind them there is nothing wrong with their friend and that it is perfectly safe to be around them and play with them.

“WHY WON’T HE LET ME HELP HIM?”

This one was asked tearfully after a blow-up when one little girl very kindly tried to trade our student’s broken crayon for a fresh one.



PHOTOS:

However, it also played out when kids wanted to hug their friend or hold his hand. Make sure you let your child know you love how kind they are being but it is respectful to first ask if someone wants help or physical contact. Despite a child's best empathetic intentions, help or even physical affection may not be what that person needs. The truth is asking permission is a good rule to follow whenever you want to hug or help anyone, regardless of their ability status.

Those were some of the big questions we had to answer but two other things made a world of difference.

ADDRESS IT HEAD-ON:

We had a little time before the new student came to class so, with the mom's permission, we sent a letter home to the parents along with a photo of our new classmate and asked them to talk to their child beforehand. We asked them to convey some of the differences they would see and, at the mom's suggestion, we also listed a few things the child liked. Ice cream, riding bikes, basketball, and Laurie Berkner songs. This was a stroke of genius because it took the focus off of what was different about our friend and drew attention to what we all had in common. We reinforced this idea in class in the days leading up to our new classmate's arrival.



If you know your child will be interacting with a differently-abled person just talk about it ahead of time. Remind them that there is nothing wrong, they are a person just like us but they might need some things that we don't.

MODEL THE BEHAVIOR YOU WANT TO SEE:

Rob Reiner could not have directed a more emotionally beautiful first-day scene. Every parent walked into drop-off, quietly said hello to the new child, and asked for a high five or fist bump. As a group, they then turned to the mom and asked her if she wanted to go get coffee with them after drop-off. They showed

their children that these were now members of our community and that they accepted them.

It was an incredible reminder that compassionate, empathetic kids are the product of compassionate, empathetic adults. They do as we do, not as we say!

I won't lie, it was a challenging year. But it was also rewarding. Towards the end of the school year, we were on the playground and one of the kids started complaining "he always takes the biggest scooter!" Before a teacher could respond the same little girl who was upset about recess privileges at the start of the year responded, "It's cause he's bigger, he needs it! And everybody gets what they need!"

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DON'T TOUCH THAT!

How clean is too clean?

By Julie Wolf



Hand sanitizer, Clorox wipes, anti-bacterial toys...We live in an age of extreme cleanliness. It's somewhat understandable, especially given the current pandemic and all, but there's also something to be said for exposing our kids to everyday, non-threatening germs. In fact, some germs are actually good for us, and by over-sanitizing every surface and stopping kids from rolling around in good clean dirt, we run the risk of setting them up for health issues later in life.

There has been a lot of controversy about a theory known as the "Hygiene Hypothesis". The research is ongoing, but the theory posits that exposure to a wider range of germs and bacteria in early life helps build a stronger immune system, which ultimately leads to lower instances of autoimmune diseases, asthma, and allergies.

So should we be continuing our hyper sanitary vigilance or is it time to start reintroducing everyday germs back into our children's lives? In other words, how clean is too clean? I reached out to Dr. Joy Oreto, a pediatrician at Oasis International Hospital to get a little clarity.

The first thing the good doctor told me was there are three kinds of immunity: Innate immunity is the stuff you are born with like your skin, gastric system, and even your tears and mucus (gross I know, but your boogers serve a purpose!). Meanwhile, passive immunity is the antibodies we don't produce ourselves. Infants get these from their mother's milk and adults get them in the form of vaccines. Then there is adaptive immunity which is the focus of the Hygiene Hypothesis. In laymen's terms, when you are exposed to different viruses and bacteria your body produces antibodies to fight them. Then, the next time your body is exposed, those antibodies can react faster and kill the intruding strain before it makes you sick again. Theoretically, that means exposing kids to milder viruses in places like playgrounds and playgroups before sending them to school could be beneficial in the long run.

For what it's worth, short of sealing them in a hermetically sealed bubble, it's basically impossible to keep children away from all germs. As such, Oreto pointed out that "Our environment has millions of microorganisms. Even if we disinfect our homes, we are unable to remove all of them," adding, "Most of the microorganisms in our environment are usually harmless." At the same time, some bacteria are helpful and exposure could be beneficial. "There are good and bad bacteria," says Oreto. "The good bacteria are often seen in our gut. When we have good bacteria living in our body, it would promote good health."

Plenty of famous mommy bloggers and a lot of local parents endorse the hygiene theory (even if they don't know that's what it's called). A mom friend of mine recently tried to stop a child from putting a rock in his mouth at the park, only to have the child's parent tell her it was okay, and that it was good for him. What's more, I used to know a mom who would drive her kids to a field full of ragweed and wildflowers outside the city because she believed the exposure would help stop them from developing allergies. That's a little extreme for my tastes but I do see the logic in a less aggressive form of allergen exposure. Oreto stressed that this is a controversial theory but when pressed about whether casual exposure could help prevent allergies and autoimmune issues she explains, "In my own opinion, kids who have a mild reaction to a certain allergen, if they are repeatedly exposed, will eventually be desensitized. Our body will already recognize the allergen and will no longer react to that particular substance. Just like when we develop a certain disease, like chickenpox, our body will develop antibodies that would prevent us from having another bout of that illness." Please note she does stress mild reactions. In other words, if your child needs an EpiPen for a peanut allergy then exposure therapy is probably not your best option.

Nevertheless, Oreto does promote moderation, saying "A sterile environment is different from a clean environment. At home, toys and kids' play areas...Frequent sanitation of our home with the use of bleach is unnecessary."

She also underscores the importance of regular hand washing, calling it "the single most important practice in preventing the spread of infection." But even with that, it's possible to go overboard. According to researchers at UC Davis, overuse of hand sanitizer or harsh soaps could damage the skin, thus exposing the body to even more bacteria.

So, what is the barometer? How often should we expect a child to be sick in the first few years? Oreto says it's nothing to be worried about if your child is ill six or seven times a year, it's just their body reacting to a new strain of the disease and developing the antibodies to fight it off.

Bottom line, clean is good but it can go too far. So, teach them to wash their hands with soap and warm water after the bathroom but let them know it's okay to be a little messy in art class. Let them play in the sandbox but don't let them eat the cat poop. Basically, take a page from your parents' book and make the kids go play outside!

PHOTOS: PEXELS

BUSTING BREASTFEEDING MYTHS



北京和睦家医院
Beijing United Family Hospital

Jennifer Leclair

Certified Lactation Consultant, Beijing United Family Hospital (BJU)



As a lactation consultant, I've seen a fair number of new moms who have misconceptions about breastfeeding and its importance; we hope to bust some myths about breastfeeding so that the moms in our community can make informed decisions about early childcare.

Myth #1:

I'm producing a discharge that doesn't look milky. I don't have milk.

After delivery, every woman produces a pre-milk substance called colostrum for about three to five days before milk starts to flow. Colostrum is high in protein and relatively low in carbohydrates and fat. It also contains a lot of antibodies from the mother. It's like a giant vaccine that your baby takes for three days. Colostrum primes the baby's gut, coats it and forms a protective barrier against harmful bacteria while promoting the growth of good bacterial cultures.

Myth #2:

I'm not producing enough milk to keep my baby fed.

The volume of a baby's stomach immediately after birth is 5 ml. That's tiny! Babies that are fed formula routinely get 20 to 30 ml, which artificially stretches the baby's stomach. Also, because the baby's stomach is so small, s/he will want to nurse all the time. This is normal. Your baby wanting to nurse so frequently is not a sign that you are not producing enough milk.

Myth #3:

My baby's crying all the time. S/he's hungry because s/he's not getting enough milk from me.

It is normal for babies to cry; it's how they communicate. Babies could cry for a variety of reasons (poop, wanting to be held, etc.). Once you get to know your baby's cries, you'll know which are caused by hunger and which are caused by other reasons. As mentioned earlier, babies need to nurse frequently anyway, spending more time with your baby will facilitate this.

Myth #4:

Breastfeeding can be unhygienic.

There are actually a lot of good bacteria on the mother's skin that can colonize in the baby and help the baby develop a strong immune system. Unless the mother's breasts are dirty (have blood on them, have been thrown up on), there's no reason to wash the breasts before every feeding.

I recommend that moms spend the first month bonding with their babies, preferably skin-to-skin. If possible, moms would ideally spend 23 hours a day holding their babies. This bonding is wonderful for the

baby's development and actually affects the mother's hormone levels and increases milk production.

Myth #5:

Special massages and soups are required to stimulate milk production.

Breast massages can be good if you have clogged milk ducts, but it is not known to stimulate milk production. Milk production works on a supply-and-demand basis. Your interaction with your baby tells your body to produce adequate amounts of milk.

I often have women asking about special soups that will increase milk production. I don't know of any foods that have been proven to increase milk production.

Myth #6:

I need to raise my babies on breast milk and formula so that they won't react negatively to bottles after I go back to work.

There's no need to mix formula in with breast milk; in fact, we discourage it for the sake of the baby. If you consistently breastfeed in the first six weeks, you'll produce enough milk to pump for your baby after you go back to work.

Myth #7:

I need to take care of myself. The baby's grandparents and aya are on hand to take care of the baby while I'm recovering from delivery.

The first month of a baby's life is crucial for bonding with the mother. This time is also crucial for babies because they start to become exposed to the outside world. Because formula doesn't help babies develop the right antibodies, formula-feeding can actually compromise the baby's gut and result in a baby with more allergies. We recommend that mothers take care of their babies themselves. Everyone else can take care of the mother.

If you have any questions about breastfeeding, please don't hesitate to contact us. Jennifer Leclair works in the Women's Healthcare Medical Center of Beijing United Family Hospital. To make an appointment with Ms. Leclair or for more information, please call our 24-hour Service Center on 4008-919191.

Please scan the QR code to follow **Beijing United Family Hospital** for all matters related to you and your family's health.



For more information about BJU and our services, please visit <http://beijing.ufh.com.cn>

Founded 24 years ago in Beijing, Beijing United Family Hospital is well known for its obstetric services, led by renowned experts and a full-time medical team advocating breastfeeding as always.

Seeking *Mindfulness* and Finding a New Calling

Coaching is the new therapy for anyone and everyone, and you could become a coach too!

By Vivienne Tseng-Rush

Carefully navigating my electric scooter down the narrow hutong streets, I noticed I was already a few minutes late. As my GPS informed me that I was nearing my destination, an older lady leaning against a brick wall gestured towards the door on her left, "It's here," she said to me in Mandarin. I looked at the number on the door, 44, indeed it was the address I was looking for. I parked my scooter to the side of the alleyway, pushed open the wooden doors, and stepped over the threshold.

In characteristic hutong fashion, I walked down a hallway adorned with posters, which opened into a serene courtyard shaded by towering trees. Someone else was there too, a taller lady in a striped dress of autumn colors. Her eyes lit up as she greeted me with a smile, "I think we can go in soon." I noticed she had no shoes on, and followed her example.

A few minutes passed in silence, while I admired the surroundings. Then the lady peered through the transparent door and signaled to me to enter. She led me into the room and we joined the Mindfulness Morning Circle, an event that takes place every Wednesday at 10am. Everyone still had their eyes closed so I did the same. Dalida Turkovic, the founder of Beijing Mindfulness Center (BMC), was leading the session. "Notice how your body feels today, how you feel today, there are no bad feelings, everything will pass..." Those may not have been the exact words she uttered that day, but the sentiment was there. I allowed myself to relax.

We meditated, eyes closed, for a while longer. At Turkovic's instruction, we opened our eyes and went round-robin with self-introductions. Not the typical introduction I have come to expect of expat culture – blandly stating your country of origin and where you just moved from – but an introduction of our present emotional state and our intention for the session. All that the



auburn-haired lady before me said was, "I am here." I waited for more before I realized she was finished and then gave my much longer introduction, stating that I was there to observe and write about the experience.

The rest of the session saw the participants sharing as much as they were willing. One lady, in particular, seemed to be in a rather emotional state. She was a new mom to two young children and had suffered some childhood instability herself, which she believed was preventing her from being the parent she wanted to be. We gave her the space to unload her cares, and she seemed lighter for it.

After the session, armed with my overdeveloped curiosity, I started a conversation with some of the participants who were still lingering in the courtyard and discovered that they were actually all coaches at BMC, trained under Turkovic through the International Coaching Federation (ICF) certification program. "So coaches also attend other coaches' sessions..." I realized. Much like how therapists also see a therapist

themselves. Though the similarity ends there, as Charlene Ong, one of the coaches present that day, explained to me, "therapy mostly deals with the past, and coaching is about the present with an eye on the future."

Technically speaking as well, therapy requires a minimum of a master's degree in psychology or counseling and is a licensed profession, whereas coaching is termed "an unregulated profession" because a coach may or may not have any certification. One reason for this is because coaching is a relatively new industry, exploding since the Covid pandemic put most of the world's population into quarantine and usually high-functioning members of society found themselves staring at the mirror in varying degrees of crises.

So what exactly does a coach do? According to their website, "the ICF defines coaching as partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential." Put another way, coaches are a professional



PHOTOS: BEIJING MINDFULNESS CENTER

friend who's there just for you (within that billed hour of course).

At BMC, the coaches are all ICF-certified, basically the gold standard for the coaching industry nowadays. They are also encouraged to continually renew their certifications and to take on more specialized credentials for specific groups (e.g professional coaching, teen coaching) or practices. This fits in well with Turkovic's belief that a key characteristic of a coach is that they possess a learning spirit. "Otherwise, your clients will outgrow you," quips Julia Feste, who focuses on Non-Violent Communication in her coaching practice.

BMC coaches tell me that they usually meet their clients face-to-face at the center, over the phone, or on video calls. They work in a variety of languages – from English to Mandarin and Cantonese to French – to best suit their clients, a surprising number of whom are Mainland locals.

But do you have what it takes to be a coach? According to Turkovic, "If you have overcome a life challenge and came out of it stronger, if you are curious about people and want to help them be the best version of themselves, if you believe that taking responsibility is much more productive than blaming (self or others), if you are passionate about learning then you already have what it takes to have interest in attending a coach training. Ultimately, all coaching skills can be learned and it is important to know that, like any other profession, in order to be a good coach you need to attend a coach training program that will enable you to coach according to coaching ethics and competencies."

BMC will run a series of coaching introductory workshops throughout November, where you can get all your questions answered. More details are available on their website at www.beijingmindfulness.com.

Beijing Mindfulness Centre / Small Steps Office
Qian YongKang Hutong 44
前永康胡同44号

WEST MEETS EAST

Kids from different cultural backgrounds dish on their extracurricular activities

By Mina Yan



My name is Eliana Brebner-Baig and I'm a Pakistani-Kiwi. I'm 8 years old and a Year 4 student at Yew Chung International School of Beijing (YCIS Beijing).

.....

What is your favorite extracurricular activity and why?

On weekends I like to do horseriding. It is my favorite thing to do because I get to be with animals.

When did you start? What about it in-

terested you?

I started horse-riding in March because I really like horses. I also really like to groom and take care of the horses and get them ready for riding.

Does your family support your extracurriculars?

They drive me there and watch me ride. They let me try lots of activities and they like me to have fun!

Is it difficult to balance your schoolwork and extracurricular activities?

No, because my horse riding is not on the

weekdays. During the weekdays I have school and I go riding on Sundays. I also do gymnastics and art classes. I like to do art and make things.

Do you think your extracurricular activities have helped enrich your life?

Yes, they have. I love horse riding and I have learned a lot about horses.

Will you continue to pursue it for the rest of your life?

Yes, because when I grow up I want to own a horse and live by the forest so I can ride my horse every day.

PHOTOS: ELIANA BREBNER-BAIG

My name is Liu Qian Nan but everyone calls me Anna. I'm 7 years old and a Year 3 student at Yew Chung International School of Beijing (YCIS Beijing).

What is your favorite extracurricular activity, and why?

I really love music. My mom is Cui Jian's and some [other] musicians' manager, so she also really loves music. Since I was little, she introduced me to lots of different musicians and different kinds of music and got me interested in it too.

When did you start it? What was it that interested you?

I started learning piano three years ago when I was 4. I've also studied violin for two years and guitar for one year. I have an app called Guitar Tuna, that helps you tune your guitar and also has fun games! I can play maybe ten or so songs on guitar. I enjoy playing at concerts and stuff, but practicing is a little tiring.

Does your family support your extracurriculars?

My mom really supports my music. She's the one who introduced me to lots of different musicians and bands and takes me to concerts. She pays for different music teachers, like my piano teacher and guitar teacher, and makes me practice (even when I don't want to!).

Is it difficult to balance your school work and your extracurricular activities?

Yeah, kind of. I'm in Year 3 now, so I have more homework to do, like writing Chinese and doing math. I have guitar lessons at home on Friday and piano lessons near Sanlitun on Saturday. I also have other extracurriculars besides music, like tennis, swimming, drawing, ice skating, and ballet (not at the same time).

Do you think your extracurricular activities have helped enrich your life?

I've gotten to do lots of cool stuff because of music. I've met Cui Jian, Tan Weiwei, Liang Bo, and many other musicians. In the US, I got to go to a Billy Joel concert, and I even got to play music together with Stewart Copeland! I also recorded a cover of Michael Jackson's "We Are the World" with 13 other kids from all over the world!

Will you continue to pursue it for the rest of your life?

I'll probably keep playing piano and guitar when I'm older. Maybe when I'm an adult I'll work with musicians like my mom! But no matter what, I'll always love music.



PHOTO: ANNA LIU





"Beijing Has Changed My Life"

Noa Hottin explores the wonders of Beijing

By XueFei Liu

BEIJING! Without a doubt, one of the first impressions we get of this amazing city is all of the wonders tucked between its historic *hutongs* and modern skyscrapers. However, have you ever thought about navigating China's capital without being able to see it? Many might think it's all but impossible. I mean, imagine not being able to see a perfectly roasted Peking Duck, admire all that history packed into the hutongs, or even cross the busy streets without the gift of sight. Wondering about this and much more, I sat down with Noa Hottin, an expat student at Western Academy of Beijing (WAB) who's visually impaired, to find out how he experiences life in the city.

First and foremost, Noa has been impressed by the lengths that WAB's faculty and student body have gone to make him feel at home, adjusting content to make it more accessible and inclusive, with more visual learning. Likewise, unlike in some movies, the students have been super kind not only to him but to each other. "WAB's a

nice place where everyone's super nice to each other," says Noa, adding, "Students, staff, everyone I meet: There's no pressure put on me, and all the questions I get are friendly."

On a more practical level, although he knows the school's layout like the back of his hand, Noa does mention that as the school undergoes continuous renovations, he sometimes walks into unfamiliar territory and bumps into the furniture.

But life in Beijing isn't all about school, and living in this amazing city wouldn't be complete without visiting places like the Great Wall, delicious restaurants, or dazzling supermalls. And Noa is keen to explore every bit of it. When asked about his hobbies, Noa mentions – before anything else – traveling. "I love to travel, within and out of Beijing," he says. And his visual impairment hasn't hindered that love. At just 7-years-old, he was already a seasoned international flyer. One might think that being blind is to live a life of constant fear, but Noa disagrees with the statement. "I obviously feel good in places that are familiar to me. But I don't feel scared in new places. I feel excited to explore, and being blind has never stopped that desire." He's traveled all over Beijing and loves the

city's food and its countryside, believing it to be calming and relaxing, with none of the hustle or bustle of the city. It's his place to relax and unwind.



PHOTOS: LISA HOTTIN

With the help of his trusty cane, life in Beijing has become increasingly easier. But his mother mentioned that over the two years they have traveled in China, they've never seen another person on the street with a cane. Likewise, Beijing is the only place they've been to that provides Yellow ADA Pads to guide him. Unfortunately, due to China's massive population, there are cars, bicycles, and motorbikes everywhere, and many of them park on the ADA pads Noa relies on to navigate the city. As his mother explains, "I have no idea how Noa will walk without me because there are so many obstacles. There are cars everywhere." And yet, Noa doesn't fault the residents of Beijing, pointing out that the city doesn't really have specific bike parking spaces.

"Beijing is really cool," says Noa. "There are the Yellow ADA pads, and it's the first place I've lived in which had these." It's something unique about Beijing that's helped him. What's more, something that makes the city stand out from other countries is Didi, which Noa and his mom consider inexpensive, effective, and good for people who can't drive. However, Noa does believe that the elevators in Beijing's metro system need to be improved, such that they are always made accessible from the ground floor. Touching on his previous point, Noa also points out that Beijing needs more parking for bicycles, and more specifically the shared bikes, which are drastically taking over the population nowadays. That way, the ADA Pads can be accessed, and the bikes do not need to be forcefully moved.

Overall, Noa believes that Beijing is somewhat conducive to visually impaired people, but that there's also room for improvement. Nevertheless, Beijing is truly a special place, going the extra mile to make sure that everyone in the community feels welcome and at ease. Now that's what I call a great city.





Why Are You Bad at Math?

What is it like to live with dyscalculia?

By AL

I've never been very strong at maths. I enjoyed reading and loved writing long stories, meaning I was in my top group in primary for English, but maths would take me much, much longer to understand than my friends. As I got older, it got increasingly harder to keep up, and the problem only seemed to get worse the further I got in school.

At some point, however, I read about dyscalculia, and noticed that many of the symptoms applied to me, some of which include remembering number patterns, difficulty remembering basic facts, being slow to perform equations both mentally and physically, a poor sense of numbers and estimation, and crippling anxiety when it comes to a mathematical subject. Similar to the better-known dyslexia, dyscalculia is a severe difficulty in understanding arithmetic and is even recognized as a developmental disorder. It can be seen across the IQ spectrum and affects between three and six percent of a country's population. Likewise, dyscalculia sometimes accompanies other learning disabilities such as

ADHD, dyslexia, or ADD, and can cause those who live with it severe anxiety.

Although dyscalculia is yet to be fully understood by doctors and psychiatrists, in recent years there have been new tests that can determine if someone is dyscalculic or not. Younger people tend to receive tests with simple addition and subtraction, whereas an older person will be tested on multiplication, division, and fractions – all while being watched and studied by a professional who analyzes the person's abilities – to determine their dyscalculia status. With the support of my school educational psychologist and my parents, I decided to try these tests – and the result was quite clear.

And yet, thanks to those tests my school had a better understanding of what they needed to do in order to support me. With the diagnosis, I was able to have additional time to complete my exams, allowing me to work at my own pace and take the necessary time to understand the questions. My teachers also understood why I found some things difficult, and others – which didn't involve math – much

easier, and could scaffold the lessons to help me with more challenging assignments.

So how does it affect me now? Well, there are no cures for dyscalculia, but people living with it can develop their mathematics skills, albeit with a bit more time and diligence than the average person. There are, however, still some things I find difficult. For example, while it's relatively easy to avoid handing money in China thanks to WeChat and Alipay, the rest of the world – including my home country – still relies on cash. At times, I end up with big bags of change because it's easier to hand over a banknote than count out the coins. Reading bus or train timetables can be a challenge, too. I have developed strategies that help me with this, though. For instance, while managing time is difficult because I can't easily work out how long something might take, if I break it down into manageable chunks then it becomes more straightforward.

Dyscalculia hasn't held me back, though. In the autumn, I will begin studying the course which I want to follow at my chosen university. Unsurprisingly, it's not mathematics!



PHOTOS: DAVE HANSEN

SCHOOL NEWS

Harrow Beijing Opening Day

On Sep 1 Harrow Beijing warmly welcomed its students back to school. With old friends reunited and newcomers joining the community, a lively and celebratory atmosphere permeated the new academic year.



ISB welcomes new Head of School

ISB welcomes Daniel Rubenstein as Head of School. Mr. Rubenstein co-founded Prospect Schools, one of the highest-performing school networks in New York. A winner of the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics Teaching, he holds a mathematics degree from Hamilton College and advanced degrees in Liberal Studies from St. John's College in New Mexico, and Education Leadership from Columbia University Teachers College.



AISB-Hope International welcomes new Head of English Plus Department

AISB-Hope International has appointed Mr. Michael David Sapp as the new head of the English Plus Department. Mr. Sapp holds an Education Specialist degree and two master's degrees in education. He has 18 years of experience teaching at the middle school, high school, and university levels in three countries. AISB-Hope International warmly welcomes Mr. Sapp as a fine addition to their teaching staff this school year.

Congratulations to Dulwich College Beijing 2021 IGCSE and IB students!

Dulwich College Beijing is proud to share the outstanding achievements of their 2021 IGCSE cohort along with the stunning results of the Class of 2021 graduates! As her final advice to the Class of 2021, Head of Senior School Mrs. Rachel Edwards encouraged the now official graduates to "know that you are more than enough and deserving of everything. Work hard, not for a title nor a reward, but to play your part. Be the person who stands up for others, and someone others will turn to. Always strive to do the right thing even though it will always be the most difficult path to take." Those same words indeed apply to the Class of 2023. The future holds even more success for all of these dedicated and hardworking students! And sincere congratulations also go to their teachers and parents for providing them with a supportive learning environment.

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

Chaoyang Kaiwen Academy Welcomes Back Students

In the first week of the new school year, Chaoyang Kaiwen Academy prepared various rich and meaningful activities for the students: new student registration, ignition day, school opening ceremony, society recruitment, home-school communication, parent lectures, etc. For students, this has been a rich and wonderful week.



Dulwich College Beijing: Community of Learners

Head of College Mr Anthony Coles and Heads of School hosted the parent community during the first Head of College Forum of the 2021-2022 academic year.

It was a unique opportunity for parents and school leaders to connect in person after the summer break, catch up on the College's priorities and key initiatives for the new academic year, and collect input from the community.

The community plays a vital role in who DCB is. Combined with other on and off-campus communications channels, these termly Head of College Forums help to reinforce the College-Parent partnership that DCB holds close to their heart, thus supporting their families in understanding their philosophy, student learning and student progress.



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

Beijing City International School Celebrates Mid-Autumn Festival

To celebrate Mid-Autumn Festival, BCIS hosted an event on the field of their main campus. The Moonrise at BCIS celebration was a hit, featuring sustainable lantern making, lovely jazz music, and delicious food. Families came together as one big community for a fun night of dancing, playing, and picnicking! Students also rented picnic supplies and donated the proceeds to charity.



BSB Shunyi Students Inspired by IB ToK Exhibition

The Year 13 IB Diploma Theory of Knowledge Exhibition was successfully held at The British School of Beijing (BSB) Shunyi. Year 12 students got inspired as they listened to their Year 13 peers present their ideas! ToK is a core component of the IB Diploma Programme offered at BSB Shunyi.



WAB Welcomes Students Back to School

With smiles on their faces and pep in their steps, 1,300 students joined their teachers back at school, making new connections in their learning communities and exploring renovated learning spaces. Arriving for their first day of school, students and parents were met at WAB's iconic big red gate by Head of School Dr. Marta Medved Krajnovic and the WAB Tiger mascot.

"Recognizing that there have been lots of changes to procedures leading up to the start of school, I want to thank our parents, students, and staff for the resilience, support, and understanding you have all shown throughout the summer holiday," Marta said. "WAB is ready to offer continuous, personalized learning no matter what health and safety protocols impact our school in the future. We are excited to be starting another amazing year of connecting, inspiring, challenging, and making a difference."



ISB's High School Holds Annual Club Fair

Student choice was on full display at the International School of Beijing's annual Clubs and Services Fair on September 15. The wide range of co-curricular activities allows students the freedom to explore their interests and pursue their passions.





Canadian International School of Beijing Students Attend Peace Festival

CISB was proud to support the 8th Peace Garden Peace Festival on September 20, 2021. Head of school Mr. Prescott and Grade 12 team lead Mrs. Rabord along with ten Grade 12 students attended this event. Held jointly with UNESCO in Beijing, this event recognizes the International Day of Peace. CISB has proudly hosted the event on campus twice, in September 2016 and 2017.



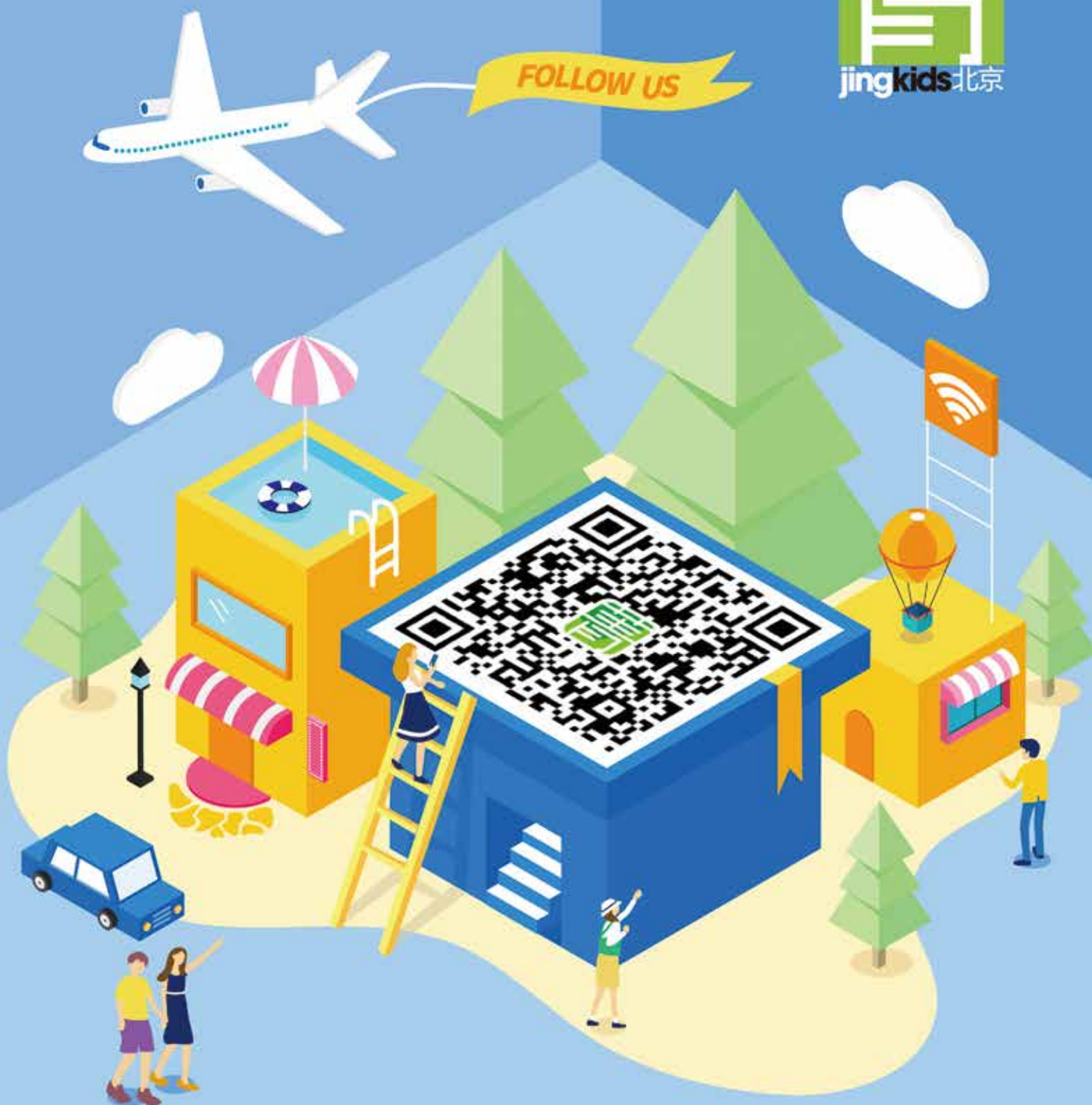
Keystone Celebrates Dunhuang Heritage in Campus Exhibition and Education Salon

In early September, Keystone Academy organized a back-to-back event on the art, history, and culture of Dunhuang, a significant landmark in the Silk Road. The event opened with the Panoramas of Magnificence art exhibition and was followed by the Keystone Education Salon, featuring Mr. Zhao Shengliang, the Secretary of the Party Committee of Dunhuang Academy China.




PHOTOS: COURTESY OF SCHOOLS

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**WANT FAMILY FRIENDLY CONTENT IN CHINESE?
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Evelyn and Oliver's favorite place in Beijing for date night is their living room. It has a precious view of the city's skyline and a playground for Eline.

Their favorite memory of Beijing is the birth of their daughter Eline.

The local food that the Rosenthals were most pleasantly surprised by is the variety of vegetables and mushrooms. One of their favorite restaurants here is the vegetarian fine-dining establishment, King's Joy.

What Evelyn loves most about Oliver is his bravery and that he is ambitious like her. He has a good heart and he's an excellent dad and caring husband. But most of all, she loves that they have been – and still are – accomplices in fun, pain, and constant learning.

Oliver's favorite quality about Evelyn is that she is smart and fun to be around. They never have a boring day together. But besides that, he admires her bravery. For example, when she left her home and family at the end of her pregnancy to start a new life as a family on the other side of the world.

Evelyn and Oliver's favorite place to take their daughter for playdates is Spring in Solana.

Family Favorites!

By: Evelyn Rosenthal and Mina Yan

Photography: Uni You

Location: Spring 思普润一站式早教&游乐中心

We are Evelyn, Oliver, Eline Rosenthal. We are a Mexican-German family. Oliver's work brought us from Mexico to Beijing last year. It's been an amazing adventure, but the best part of all is that our daughter Eline was born here nine months ago.



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