

THE PANDA

BEARER

友愛中華

China Outreach
MINISTRIES

Giving Christ to China's Future Leaders

October 2015

Coming to America | Forever Changed

The Thankfulness Issue:

*Giving thanks for God's grace
and love in 2015*





Giving thanks

November is the month of Thanksgiving, so we want to focus on giving thanks in this issue. I want to say thank you to all who read the Panda Bearer and pray for the ministry. I want to say thank you to all who support this outreach to Chinese students and scholars and make it possible for the staff of China Outreach Ministries to do what God has called them to do. I also want to say thank you to the COM staff for their dedicated service to the Lord Jesus and to Chinese students and scholars. God uses people to accomplish His plans — He works in us and through us. It is because of each person involved that this ministry is having an impact for the Kingdom of God.

In the pages and the stories to follow, you will learn more about the staff and the ministry of COM. If there is a common theme here, it is their thankfulness and gratitude for what the Lord is doing in the lives of Chinese students and scholars.

I recently received an email written by a Chinese scholar who had studied in America and is now back in China in a top position at a university. He and his wife had been touched by the love of Christ in His people while they were here. They wrote to share their thanks and love. The scholar said: “Many good things have happened to our family and we both believe these things have not happened by coincidence; we thank God every time; we pray every day. And we found we are growing much in our spirit and coming closer to God. Thanks to God for making dreams come true, and bringing a holy new life for us! We are so happy to share this good news with you all, and hope we all can get more joyful in our God! We miss everyone so much, and wish you all the best!”

And so I share thanks with you. Your prayers, support and involvement make it all possible. And we thank God most of all! As Paul wrote to the Philippians (1:3-6):

“I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”

Glen Osborn, COM President

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The Panda Bearer is published quarterly by China Outreach Ministries.

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*a higher standard
a higher purpose*

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Snapshots from our workers


From John and Karen Zondlo, Colorado State University-Pueblo

Greetings from Colorado! We were very excited when “W,” a scholar that Karen had been helping and studying with, decided to make Jesus the “boss” of her life! She was baptized at our church at the end of August, just before she returned to China. This was a team effort; a friend from church and another Chinese partner also met with “W” to help her understand who Jesus is and what “saved by grace” really means. She started attending church regularly with us last fall and was deeply moved by the love people shared with her and the consistent peace she experienced with the Christians she met.

From Danny and Susan Forte, SUNY, Albany

We had a wonderful, safe trip to Amish Country! Eighteen internationals, including two children and six volunteer leaders made up our party. Despite a malfunctioning brake caliper, we arrived on time at the Sight and Sound Theater for their production of Joseph. The acting, scenery, live animals, singing and story brought glory to God and an understanding of the gospel to all of us. The next day was devoted to discovering the Amish way of life — a guided tour of an Amish home, farm and school. We also took buggy and train rides, explored covered bridges and enjoyed some very good food. On Sunday, we all attended a local church before heading home. Many seeds were planted for the Kingdom of God. Please pray these seeds will find good soil and produce relationships with Jesus. Thanks again to all of you for your prayers and support!





From JingJing (Rachel) Lin, Pennsylvania State University

“K” shared with me that her mother’s background was Buddhism, and she really wanted her mom to believe in God. “K” had tried to witness to her mother, but she also wanted to be patient, not pushing her. On our bus ride back to State College, I was reading the Gospel of John from my phone as my devotional, and I got the idea to share with “K’s” mother. Knowing she did not have good eyes, I asked her if she would like to listen to the Bible. She said, “Yes!” I started to pray silently in my heart. After we listened to the first chapter of John, I wasn’t sure if she would like to continue, so I asked. Without hesitation, she said, “Yes” again! She kept squeezing her earphone closer to her ear, listening on and on. When we probably had listened to chapter six or seven, I felt sleepy and started to lean back. I looked and she was still awake, sitting straight and continuing to listen. Later, she asked me to summarize what we had listened to, so I shared the gospel with her. When I asked her if she wanted to accept Jesus as her personal Savior, she nodded her head! She said that she would give up Buddhism, and we prayed together. I was amazed by the Holy Spirit’s work in her heart. Praise the Lord!

From Heidi Ifland, University of Washington, Seattle

It’s been a joy to serve the visiting Chinese scholars at the University of Washington this past spring. Some highlights: We saw our volunteers and hosts grow in confidence and step up their service to meet new needs. We saw new dimensions of friendship develop due to Amelia (my baby) and all the wonderful conversations surrounding parenting and future dreams (especially from grad students). We saw deepening relationships with Chinese women here in Seattle. Lastly, we heard the scholars talk about “love languages” and their families more this year. As one guest at our marriage retreat said, “Thanks for your arrangement last weekend, it is a fantastic experience. My host is so hospitable, the activity of church is really lovely and lively.”

A woman with short black hair and glasses, wearing a red long-sleeved shirt, is sitting at a wooden table. She is smiling and has her hand near her chin. Behind her is a wooden chair and a wall with a mural of a woman in a hat and a red shawl. To the right is a window with a view of a building. The text "Meet Sunny" is overlaid on the bottom right of the image.

Meet Sunny

From Washington, D.C. to Beijing to Philadelphia, Yaofang (Sunny) Zhang has gotten to know many of the faces of China Outreach Ministries in her journey to faith. “Since the beginning of my Christian walk,” Sunny says, “I’ve always had COM staff around as good teachers and friends.”

Before she came to Christ, Sunny’s typical day was consumed with academic work. She explains, “When I had energy, I worked. When I was tired, I rested so that I could work later.”

Sunny first became acquainted with COM while a student at the University of Maryland, College Park. She met “H” and was grateful for the practical help that he offered her as she acclimated to life in the United States. The Lord was at work, and Sunny came to Christ through a local campus ministry. As a new Christian, Sunny returned to Beijing where she met another COM staffer. “I got to know ‘N,’” Sunny says. “We became really good friends and she introduced me to a house church.”

“Once a student visiting the United States, Sunny is now sharing Christ’s love with Chinese academics on American campuses.”

After two years in Beijing, Sunny returned to the U.S. to attend seminary in Philadelphia. It was there that Sunny met “F,” a COM staffer at Westminster Seminary. Sunny and “F” became good friends — a “dear sister,” Sunny likes to say.

“I came to know that COM staff supported and cared for each other just like family.” Sunny also says that the “heart-warming service towards Chinese students and scholars” impressed her. While studying at Westminster, “F” recommended that Sunny join COM herself.

Sunny joined China Outreach Ministries and graduated from Westminster. Today, she works in the Philadelphia region to serve students and scholars at St. Joseph’s University and Bryn Mawr College. Knowing the challenges that students and scholars face, she works to reach out, build relationships, help with studies and help adjust to life in the United States. Ultimately, she desires to lead students and scholars to see Jesus and understand the gospel. As she trains new Christians to live as followers of Christ, she will also help them find a healthy and loving church when it comes time to return to China. Sunny sums it up best: “Because of my own experience studying alone in America as a visiting scholar and coming to Christ by our Father’s amazing grace, I always have Chinese students and scholars on my heart.” ■

Leaky Roofs, Growing Babies

Looking back at the end of last semester, Nick and Lydia Romanin (Purdue University) said goodbye, for the first time, to their new Chinese Christian brothers and sisters. These men and women returned to China. They went to other schools. They joined the workforce.

“It was bittersweet,” Nick says, “but at the same time, August arrived with hundreds of new students setting foot in the United States for the first time.” This their first year welcoming students to Indiana’s Purdue University, Nick and Lydia are learning that the greatest needs of visiting students may seem mundane to most readers — setting up a bank account, activating a cell phone. What is the number one thing Chinese students want at Wal-Mart? “Time,” Nick says. “This is their first chance to see an American supermarket. They want to take it all in.” Students also want advice on everything from table etiquette to local laws, even tips on how to clean a dorm room or apartment.

Not fazed by the everydayness of ministry, Nick tells this story of one student he met through a simple day of errands: “One student that I have become good friends with, ‘Z,’ came to Purdue for the first time in January. I met him by taking him to Walmart. I was driving a friend of his, and he was invited to tag along.

After having a meal together at my home and meeting one or two other times, he began to attend a seeker study that I was leading.



Through our friendship we've talked about many things, including who he is and where he is from. He told me that the reason he continued to come to the seeker Bible studies was that he didn't feel pressured. He didn't feel that I was pushing him to attend and to believe, but just offering."

Nick volunteers for the International Students and Scholars Department as a courtesy driver. "This means that I wait at the Union with a Purdue van, and whenever students arrive from the airport shuttles, I offer free rides to their residence halls." Nick says, "I had a lot of great conversations with these new students, and for many of them, I was the first person from Purdue that they



had ever met. I've been a foreign exchange student before, and I understand the nervousness and what it's like to be in a strange country."

Nick says that he is thankful that the International Students and Scholars Department at Purdue is so willing to allow on-campus ministries to participate in welcoming students. "I talked to one student who hadn't slept in over 30 hours." Nick says, "They are all adults and can read instructions on a piece of paper, but there is something about a welcoming face that is just a little more comforting."

"The reason he continued to come to the seeker Bible studies was that he didn't feel pressured."

On the home front, Nick and Lydia find their three children are growing up right before their very eyes. Nick also believes he has found a way to fix the leaky roof. This dichotomy that we all face in life is perhaps a sound analogy of the Christian walk. The mundane and the miracles going together, often hand-in-hand. What begins as a trip to Wal-Mart or a ride from the airport, can lead to a life forever changed. ■

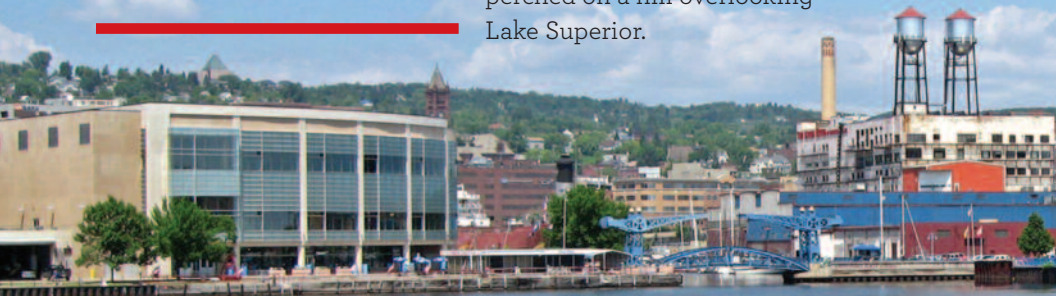


City on a Hill

In the early 1870s, a United States congressman by the name of J. Proctor Knott delivered a speech to the House of Representatives, titled The Untold Delights of Duluth. Though his intent was a satirical jab at a railroad bill, the Kentucky congressman may have been onto something—something to which David Zhang, Tom Lindstrom and the COM staff from the University of Minnesota can readily attest.

*“Nearly half the day
is spent driving,
so why is it such a
popular trip?”*

The COM staff at the University of Minnesota have led a road trip of students and scholars to Duluth every year for 16 years. Families, singles, grandfathers and babies pile into cars and caravan 150 miles from the Twin Cities to Minnesota’s seaport, famously perched on a hill overlooking Lake Superior.





Once they reach their final destination (the nearby city of Proctor is named after the facetious congressman), Tom Lindstrom chuckles that the greatest challenge of the day is negotiating Duluth. “The city is on a steep hill, and everywhere you go there is street construction. You cannot supply adequate driving directions. It’s a wonder we don’t still have people there from previous years who never found their way home.”

Tom recalls a memorable year when a Chinese student invited an Iranian student who in turn invited his Iranian friend. Several weeks after the trip — which was so cloudy and rainy that it was impossible to see a thing from the five-story Enger Tower — both Iranian students announced on Facebook their

faith in Christ. Several months later, after Tom broke his back, he was visited by one of the Iranian students who came to pray with him in the hospital.

The next year, David loaded up for his very first Duluth trip. David joined China Outreach Ministries in February 2015 after being involved with COM for a year and half. In his work with the campus ministry, David says that he is thankful for coworkers who love him, care for him and teach him.

“It has become a favorite trip for students,” David says. “Nearly half the day is spent driving, so why is it such a popular trip? Perhaps the time spent talking in the cars is as important to the students as the sites and attractions to be seen.” David says that his favorite part of the trip is the conversations with people: “Caring conversation is key.” ■



Second Daughters

Duane and Jodi Decker (Portland State University) were on a recent trip to Beijing alongside 15 other China Outreach Ministries staff members when their tour guide gave them a shock. Their tour guide, “R,” said that, to the Chinese, if a man wears a green hat, it means his wife has been unfaithful. To Jodi’s chagrin, Duane had chosen to wear his Green Bay Packers ball cap that day all along the Great Wall of China!

In addition to being a wealth of Chinese culture and customs, “R” was bright and funny as well. A self-described tough girl, “R” received her own surprise during the course of the three-day tour. While leading Duane, Jodi and the COM group, she was met by a group of people from a past tour. Jodi noted that “R” was visibly choked up to see this family once again.

The next day (the day that Duane was turning heads along the Great Wall), “R” explained why this family made her so emotional and shared her experience as a second daughter.

Jodi explains: “In China, farmers are allowed two children, but they really want at least one son to carry on the farm and family name. First daughters are loved. Second daughters are often sent to an orphanage so that the parents may try again for a boy. ‘R’ said that 92% of children in Chinese orphanages are farmers’ second daughters.”





***“First daughters
are loved.
Second daughters
are often sent to
an orphanage.”***

Thankful for her parents, thankful to them for having her and not sending her to an orphanage, “R” has known all her life that her birth lowered her father’s status. To this day, “R” and her sister admittedly work hard to prove that a daughter is just as good as a son. As for the family of tourists that had made “R” nearly cry the day before? They were on vacation with their daughters—their adopted Chinese daughters.

With no religion of her own, “R” told Jodi and Duane that meeting the group from COM made her want to investigate this overlooked area of her life. Together, the COM staff talked and prayed with “R” and helped connect her with a local believer.

Please pray for “R’s” search. Pray that she will embrace the Father who runs to meet each of His children. ■

Great News for Those 65+

Did you know that if you're 65 years of age or older, you can receive a fixed income stream for life? Simply make a gift of \$10,000 or more in exchange for a Charitable Gift Annuity. The older you are, the higher the rate you'll receive. It's a great way to generate steady income for your retirement as well as help China Outreach Ministries continue to share the gospel with China's future leaders.

If you'd like to learn more, we're hosting a 30-minute webinar **Tuesday, November 17 at 1:00 p.m.** (EST). Our webinar presenter, **Guy Burgo**, will walk you through all of the benefits of Charitable Gift Annuities and answer any questions you may have. So please join us, and other COM friends, for this exciting and informative webinar. All you need is a computer connected to the Internet. To register or ask questions about the webinar, contact Jeff Krimmel in the COM Development Office at jkrimmel@chinaoutreach.org or 717-591-3500.



Guy Burgo

Once registered, you will receive instructions on how to join the webinar on November 17. Space is limited. **Register today!**



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March 14, 2016
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Erie-Area Celebration

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Harrisburg-Area Celebration

March 17, 2016
Sheraton Harrisburg Hershey Hotel
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To help our staff continue to share the gospel with Chinese students and scholars, please consider joining our support team with a one-time or a monthly donation. To learn more, visit chinaoutreach.org/donate.

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