



Natomas International
By Karen Wilson

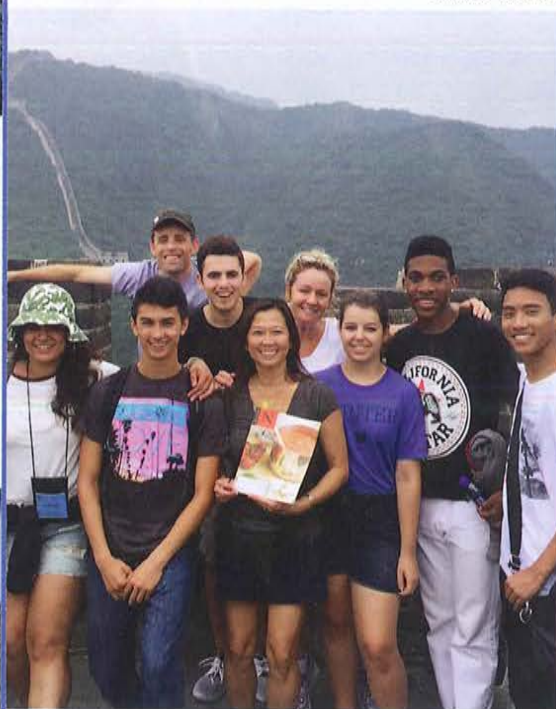
The One Voice – China Project is far from over. Natomas Charter, a Confucius Institute School offers a Mandarin language program and a Chinese cultures class.



Natomas Students Speak One Voice in China

(below)
Ting Sun (holding N magazine)
with Natomas students on The
Great Wall of China.

Connecting cultures through the arts is a time-honored diplomatic strategy. A group of Natomas Charter School students has just reached out in a big way to make those connections personal.



The school's One Voice – China project took five seniors and two juniors to Jinan, Beijing, Shanghai and Qufu, China for two weeks in September. The students submitted written applications and went through an interview and audition process to be part of the trip, promoting peace and goodwill through performance.

In addition to scheduled performances in locations including the Forbidden City, the students gathered flash mobs on street corners, drawing hundreds of people at a

time with a program of original songs, including “Be the Change,” made up of lyrics from Chinese philosopher Confucius, encouraging individuals to take action to make the world a better place.

“We’d put on the music and once we got our crowd, we’d hand out postcards hand made by students,” says Natomas Charter School Executive Director Ting Sun. “The songs were done with complex harmonies and choreography, and our students have a star quality, so even if they didn’t understand the English words, the audience was drawn in, and the post cards from American students were a big hit.”

The trip coincided with, and became part of, the Jinan-Sacramento Sister City Corporation’s 30th Anniversary celebration. Delegations from Jinan’s sister cities all over the world joined the

City and County of Sacramento’s delegation, led by County Supervisor Phil Serna. “My official capacity was leading the delegation of 16 countries, places like the Republic of Korea, Russia,

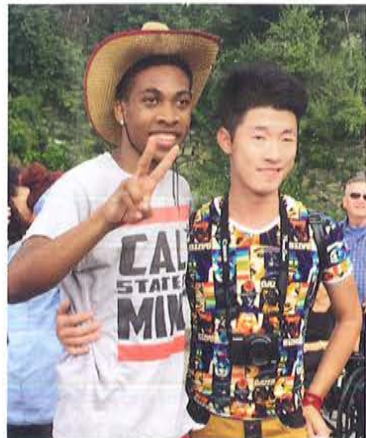


Charter School Director, Ting Sun
and County Supervisor, Phil Serna

Sweden, Finland, Namibia, Australia, East Java, Indonesia among others,” Serna says. “Although it is a city organization, I was invited in recognition of my father’s (former Sacramento Mayor Joe Serna) leadership of a delegation in 1994. We were the U.S., as well as the Sacramento, delegation.”

Serna led a dialogue with Chinese officials on issues ranging from economic development to climate change. “Discussions were

with the mayor of Jinan and his staff but also one of the party secretaries for all of China," he says. "That's something I was not expecting, to have our discussion elevated. It was a once in a lifetime opportunity. I was not shy. I also serve on the California Air Resources Board, so I have a special interest in greenhouse gas reduction and climate



Charter School student, Willie Huggins, made new friends from China on their One Voice journey to the Far East.

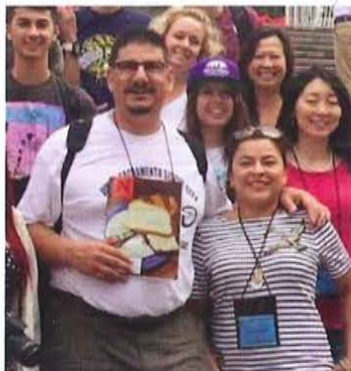
change. I talked about efforts to expand renewable energy portfolios and California's cap and trade system. It was welcomed by the Chinese, a very interesting intersection of local governance and international diplomacy."

The kids were the centerpiece of the trip for me," Serna says. "The people were extremely warm, and curious about us, as we were about them. It was a delight to see these students engage with wide eyes and openly discuss with their peer group in China issues of interest to young people -- things that transcend political borders."

The One Voice - China Project is far from over. Natomas Charter, a Confucius Institute School (Qufu is the birthplace of Confucius and was a stop on the trip), offers a Mandarin language program and a Chinese cultures class. Sun says the student ambassadors will be creating a performance in the Benvenuti Perform-

ing Arts Center in spring based on their experience. "We're working on a proposal for a 10-day visit here by the Jinan students, so that they can see and take part in our performance. Next year, we hope to take a version of our performance to China." Serna has already invited the students to a meeting of the Board of Supervisors to receive Resolutions for their unique brand of ambassadorship, and says he's looking forward to another performance.

Students on the trip included five seniors: Sabrina Calderon; Jocelyn Kilpatrick; Aidan Leo; Willie Huggins; and Klaude Matias, as well as juniors Alexander Green and Maggie Alvarez. In addition to Ting Sung, adults on the trip included Karen Pollard,



Supervisor Phil Serna with wife, Roxanna accompanied the Charter School students to China.

drama teacher and Artistic Director for One Voice Project; Jeff Pollard, History Department Chair and Humanities Director for One Voice Project; Josh Landry, digital arts teacher and technical Advisor for One Voice Project. Also included was former Sacramento Mayor, Heather Fargo.

LearnMore

Natomas Charter School
natomascharter.org

Performing & Fine Arts Academy
pfaa.natomascharter.org

State Department: China Travel
travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country/china.html

Family & Cosmetic Dentistry

We support a healthy Natomas community.

Glenn M. Misono, DDS



Dr. Arad, DDS



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Dr. Arad, a DDS graduate from Stanford, has experience with the National Health Service. He's a great listener and is excited to work with Dr. Misono and his team.

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Corina

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