

# The Green Exchange



*The Newsletter of Green Across the Pacific, Inc., November 2010*

- Green Across the Pacific seeks to improve cultural and environmental awareness and cooperation around the world
- To this end, Green Across the Pacific conducts exchange programs that function to establish an international community of learners

## **The Student Experience Perspectives from Abroad**

**Nie Yiyao**



Before I arrived in Vermont. I was afraid of going there, afraid of discrimination, although I don't know why there are the amount of unfair and unequal things existing in the world. But when I arrived there, all of my concern was eliminated. All of the experts and teachers treated us equally, no academic parochialism. Any questions and confusion

could be put forward, and they would explain to you. I thought, in their mind, every child was their student, wherever they came from. Perhaps that was one of the American spirits that attracted me deeply and continually. You can really get the truth there.

The time in Vermont made me understand the American life and values that I had read in books before.

During our exploration, I knew and studied the local environment, politics, science, culture, economy, history, and society. I was astonished by the high conscience of the local people to protect the environment, and they almost devoted all their life to protect it.

I think Green Across the Pacific just opened a window for us to explore the world. It let us know there're still a lot of things you need to learn.

Recalling the life in Vermont, it's like a dream but it's more than a dream. It seems that the country music in Mark's van is still echoing on the way to our destination. Peter's smile is still inspiring me, every communication and debate is the upgrading of thinking, my host

family and I are still walking down to downtown Burlington. In this capricious world, the memory and experience in Vermont are eternal.

I'm still on the way to my dream, stars in the sky blink to me.

Yiyao is a student at Hua Shi Fu Zhong, Guangzhou, China. She participated in the Guangdong-Vermont Exchange in July 2010.

### Shieri Okawabata



At first, I was very confused. Why? Because I knew people have their own style and preferences. However I have no style. For example, in chemistry class, every [American] student did their own thing, like experimentation, studying for exam, and so on. Every person did what they wanted. Owing to my lack of style, I couldn't do anything; and this is not only in a class, but any time. American free style made me feel not free.

But as days passed in Vermont, I could find what I wanted, and try it. That set me free, and I felt more and more comfortable. From this, I learned that people have different styles. But people still have feelings of respect and consideration to others, and this is all I need. If I have these, difference is great thing!

In Japan, there are many houses or apartments. Each building is very close, but it is said that people don't even know their next door neighbor. In Vermont, there is much space, but people had stronger relationships with each other than Japan. I think we should try to copy this community spirit incredible.

It will have been half of year since I visited Vermont. But even now I can remember it clearly. This program gave me many things, friends, feelings, special experiences and so on. I deeply appreciated the people taking part in this program, Emily, and the Wood family.

And never have I forgotten the views of Vermont. One is of town, like Church Street. And the other is nature. Vermont has many people, but town lines have the same taste. I know that it's hard to protect nature. So, I respect the people who help preserve it. When I saw the wetlands for the first time! "Wonderful, wonderful, wonderful!!!" I thought.



I'll visit Vermont once again!!

Shieri is a student at Yonago Higashi High School, Tottori, Japan. She participated in the Tottori-Vermont Exchange in March 2010.



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## Sun Yan



During 21 significant days in Vermont, I've seen all kinds of amazing things which I never dreamed I could see by my own eyes. I've experienced a lot of happy moments with students from America and from my own school. I've made friends with people from all over the country: Rachel and Holly, who both took part in Green Across the Pacific (GATP) this summer; Noah Armstrong, a tall and humorous boy that I met in the final exhibit; Sally, my dearest host mother; Sophie, my cute host sister who [is] now a typical American teenager; Katie, a lovely dog who constantly thirsted for my food; Meimei and Ben, two black cats who enjoyed lying on my bed and leaving cluster of cat fur on my books.

When the van took all Chinese students away on the last day of GATP, I stared at the clear blue sky of Burlington, Vermont, convincing myself that one day, I will be in the program again, either as a student or a special participant. GATP is not only a program about nature or science, but also a platform which gives chances for people from China and America to communicate. Culture exchange is the biggest attraction in this program, in my opinion. Here, you will hear a different voice from a different corner in this world, but you'll also notice the same voice calling for healthy environment and unbothered nature. The most important thing you'll find out in GATP, is the harmony presented in two widely different

cultures, which will eventually influence you in every aspect of your life.

GATP is, and will be, one of the greatest chances for teenagers to know about this world and to know about themselves. Hope all of you can enjoy yourselves in this great program just as I did.

Sun Yan is a student at Hua Shi Fu Zhong, Guangzhou, China. She participated in the Guangdong-Vermont Exchange in July 2010.

## 2010 Year in Review

After several years of planning, it was wonderful to welcome our first group of students from Tottori, Japan, to Vermont last March. During an all too short ten days, students visited classes at Mt. Abraham and Harwood Union High Schools, toured the Vermont State House, met with business owners, and explored woods and wetlands with Susan Morse at Keeping Track. All the while, American and Japanese students raced to create conceptual designs for affordable, green housing.

In this era of accountability and testing in education GATP is now assessing our programs through the "tears test" at the airport at the close of each program. By this measure, our students from Vermont and Tottori did exceptionally well in March. These students will stay in touch for many years to come.



This year, there were several developments in our three-week Environmental Leadership Exchange program for Chinese and American students in July. Most notably, we shifted our base of operations to the University of Vermont (UVM) in Burlington. After two

weeks with wonderful host families in the Burlington area, students spent the last week together in a UVM dormitory preparing final projects for display at Shelburne Farms. The Rubenstein School of Environment & Natural Resources at UVM arranged for a day of visiting at the University, including meetings with Admissions and a tour of the Rubenstein Laboratories by the waterfront where students were fascinated by Prof. Ellen Marsden's studies of Sea Lamprey in Lake Champlain.



Addition work to develop relations with Tottori, Japan, and Guangdong, China, took place this year. Educators from Mt. Abraham and Harwood Union High Schools traveled with GATP, the Japan-America Society of Vermont (JASV), and Burlington Representative Rachel Weston to Tottori, Japan, in August. We were treated to a tour of the beautiful, small, and relatively rural Prefecture in Western Japan punctuated by business and planning meetings for future exchanges. A small delegation of Japanese officials traveled to Vermont at the end of October for additional planning meetings.

Following our work in Tottori, Japan, in August, GATP's Executive Director, Peter Lynch, traveled on to Guangdong, China, where he met with Principal Wu Yingmin and Xia Tao of the Affiliated High School of South China Normal University (Hua Shi Fu Zhong-HSFZ) to consider the future of our summer exchanges and reaffirm our commitment to this flagship program. Lynch also met with Prof. Liu Wenhua at the University of Shantao where there is interest in collaborating with an American university such as UVM.

It has been a full year with much promise for an expansive future. The real

promise, however, is in the hearts, minds and voices of the young people represented on the first three pages of this Newsletter.

### **Looking Forward to 2011**

GATP, Harwood and Mt. Abraham Union High Schools are looking forward to hosting Japanese visitors from Tottori in March. Students from Vermont and Tottori will have an extended opportunity to work together as we will also visit Tottori in April this year. Students will design museum exhibits representing the dynamics of an environmental topic in Tottori and Vermont. Topics will be selected by students, but may range from business development to natural history or policy and culture. Scaled down models of exhibits will be prepared for display.

In July, we will send a group of American students to South China for an exchange program designed by educators at HSFZ. It's hard to believe that it has been 15 years since we first met with Principal Wu Yingmin in Guangzhou to discuss starting an exchange. We are looking forward to another exciting program exploring Guangzhou and surroundings with Chinese students. American students will visit businesses, research facilities and natural areas, and experience family life with their Chinese hosts. We will also spend several days exploring Hong Kong.



Application for the South China program is open to students throughout the United States and Canada. Chinese students will be selected by HSFZ.

## Recognitions

The following businesses, agencies, institutions and individuals gave of their time, wisdom or through in kind contributions during 2009:

Vermont State Government  
Governor Douglas  
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Senator Peg Flory  
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Dave Sausville  
Dale Witlock

Tottori Prefectural Government, Japan  
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Vermont Youth Conservation Corps  
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Magnolia Bistro  
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The Nature Conservancy

Also **Mark Lembke** for years of outstanding service to GATP students! Thank you Mark!

## Donors

We are grateful to the following corporations, foundations, and individuals who contributed to Green Across the Pacific during the past twelve months:

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