



Edmonton Chinese Bilingual Education Association

愛城中英雙語教育協會



Box 220, #21-10405 Jasper Avenue NW, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, T5J 3S2

www.ecbea.org

“Sichuan Youth Visiting Edmonton 2009” Project Summary

Upon consultation with Dick B. Wong, Director of China Initiatives, for the Mayor's Office of Edmonton, the idea of bringing the Sichuan orphans over to Edmonton started to take shape.

Immediately after a meeting with Dick Wong on May 1, 2009, Peter Wong (President of the ECBEA), Stephen Tsang (ECBEA Director) and John Yee (past ECBEA president), this initiative was brought forth to the rest of the ECBEA Board which unanimously and wholeheartedly agreed to endorse this initiative. This initiative will serve as a reminder to the community and City of Edmonton that the devastating earthquake of May 2008 would not be forgotten.

12 months ago, the ECBEA through the insistence of the students of M.E. LaZerte High School launched a fund raising campaign to seek donations for the Sichuan Earthquake victims. All 12 schools of the Mandarin bilingual program provided support for this fundraiser last May through special fund raising events at each of the schools. Through the support of community groups within the city and the 12 schools, the ECBEA managed to raise \$48,000 which was donated to the Canadian Red Cross. A federal government initiative at that time provided matching donations to the Red Cross which resulted in \$96,000 of aid provided to last year's earthquake victims to help rebuild their lives.

Upon learning that over 650 orphans have been created as a result of the earthquake, with their lives shattered from losing both parents, and for many losing all their relatives, the stark reality is that no amount of aid money will ever return the orphan's family to that child. Many are now alone in the world. The ECBEA jumped into action to start fund raising to bring a number of orphans to Edmonton for *10 days of Hope and Happiness* in an act of compassion.

Announcements to our schools were made at our monthly meetings with the school principals and members at large. Letters were sent via email to all 12 schools notifying them of this worthy cause. The Board of the ECBEA along with several parent members met to discuss strategies and possible opportunities to help with the fund raiser.

The first phase was to initiate an awareness campaign by way of posters, handbills and designing donation boxes. Through the multiple talents of our



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parent members and directors, the posters, handbills and donation boxes were all designed and assembled from within the association. These were sent out to all schools and brought to special events in the community.

In the middle of May, our members were allowed to set up a table with donation boxes and information at many events: the Guofeng Chinese Dance Group Gala, Chinese Music Week – Young Musicians Concert, and the Opening Ceremony of the Photographic Arts Society of Alberta, Annual Exhibition at the Royal Alberta Museum.

During this time our high schools and junior high schools were conducting their grade 9 & 12 farewell celebration banquets at various venues throughout the city which allowed the students from each school to solicit funds at these events. Elementary schools were busy with year-end events and managed to find time to fund raise for this initiative through hot dog sales and other creative fund raising efforts.

To culminate the fund raising events, it was decided by the ECBEA Board and Committee members to conduct a fund raising walk on Saturday June 20, the Father's Day weekend here in Canada. Within two weeks, notices were sent out to the schools to solicit pledges and notify them of the picnic.

The McNally High School site was selected for this event with the City of Edmonton donating the rental of the sports field and the provision of picnic tables and waste facilities. McNally School generously offered the use of their washroom facilities within the school. During the weeks leading up to the walk, news releases were issued to all news outlets in and around the city, both English and Chinese.

The Thursday before the walk, Doreen Poon-Philipps, (ECBEA Vice President) appeared on City TV television station, to talk about the Walkathon and picnic for *10 Days of Hope and Happiness*.

The weather forecast for the day of the picnic was not entirely promising with expected clouds and rain showers all day. Event organizers were prepared for the rain that day with the purchase of 4 brand new canopies to act as event shelters. Fortunately, the weather was sunny with some intermittent clouds with temperatures reaching 24°C.



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Organizers were at the site upon first daylight setting up tents and shelters for use during the day. Event shelter set-up was spearheaded by Mike Lam (Committee member) and John Yee.

Each assigned task by fellow parents and volunteers were carried out without a hitch. The use of the barbecue was donated by Northlands. It was picked up and delivered to the picnic site by parent volunteers led by Doreen Poon-Phillips (ECBEA Vice President). Registration volunteers started arriving on site to receive last minute instructions from Stephen Tsang (ECBEA Director). Food supplies started arriving on site, enough to feed 300 anticipated participants. Angie Loo (ECBEA Secretary) and Sam Ling led the food team and kept everyone well fed for that day.

The Recruiting and Diversity Unit of the Edmonton Police Service provided a presence on site to promote recruitment to the Edmonton Police Service. Shortly after their arrival, Mayor Stephen Mandel arrived on site. The Mayor provided words of thanks and encouragement to the walkers and all the donors for participating at this event. He was pleased that the community had taken on this initiative to bring the orphans to Edmonton.

Walkers assembled on the running track of the sports field, led by the ECBEA Board of Directors. They marched around the field chanting songs written by Cliff Phillips. This encouraged and helped some of the walkers to complete 10 laps around the sports field with each lap signifying each day that the orphans will be in Edmonton.

After the walk, participants were treated to a lunch of barbecued hamburgers, hot dogs and watermelons. Prizes were drawn for students who collected pledges over \$100 and other prizes were awarded to all in attendance. Students and parents alike were also treated to the talents of Valerie Morris, face painting artist, who donated all proceeds to the orphan fund.

As a result of the month-long fund raising and the Father's Day weekend walk, the ECBEA managed to raise \$30,000, enough to bring 18 orphans to visit Edmonton for 9 days.

Planning is currently underway to ensure that the orphans' stay for the 9 days is as enjoyable as we can make it. The orphans will be welcomed at Edmonton City Hall by the Mayor of Edmonton, Stephen Mandel. The ECBEA will be providing parent coordinators and student buddies for the orphans' time in Edmonton. Visits to the Valley Zoo, Royal Alberta Museum, Telus World of Science,



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Fringe Festival, Fort Edmonton Park and West Edmonton Mall are being planned. Hotel accommodations have been generously donated by The Sutton Place Hotels for the duration of their stay. Restaurants and fast food outlets have generously donated dinners and lunches for the time the orphans are here.

We are anticipating the orphans to be here from August 13 to 21, upon issuance of Canadian visas. The City of Edmonton will host the orphans' trip to Canada and the ECBEA is ready to provide support throughout their visit with student and parent volunteers.

Respectfully submitted by,

Peter Wong
ECBEA President

July 20, 2009

The ECBEA continues to explore opportunities to introduce the colorful Chinese history and cultural activities into our schools. Today, the program is offered at 12 Edmonton Public Schools with an active enrollment with nearly 2000 students from kindergarten to grade 12. The ECBEA's goal is to enrich the lifestyle of Canadian families by promoting choice of their children's language acquisition and opportunities to learn Chinese as an international language.

Recipient of City of Edmonton's Salute to Excellence, Award of Distinction 2009

The ECBEA is a charitable organization registered in 1984 - Canada Revenue Agency - Registration Number:
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