

Global Understanding continued

Whether we are talking about the framing of current political debates, or the “view” that we take when discussing environmental issues in a high school classroom, the point Dr. Murray is making is clear. In the 21st century, we no longer have the luxury of neatly segregating our local reality from other global stakeholders and interested parties. We are internationally connected by shared resource concerns, security issues, and economics in ways that we couldn't have imagined a mere decade ago.

To reinforce Dr. Murray's stance, it is helpful to understand that this is from the perspective of someone who has been intimately involved with, in fact, helped to shape, critical U.S. security policies. After graduating with honors from Yale University in 1977, she worked as an analyst on the Strategic Affairs Staff of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ADCA), and at the same time pursued her master's degree and eventually her doctorate from John Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.

From 1985 until 1993, Dr. Murray served as senior legislative assistant on Security Policy for Senator Nancy Kassebaum (R-KS). Dr. Murray also functioned as the ranking Senator's principal advisor for the Foreign Relations Committee.

In April of 1996, Dr. Murray was selected by President Clinton to serve as Special Advisor to the President and the ACDA Director on the Chemical Weapons Convention. This international convention was first negotiated by the Reagan administration and subsequently signed and instituted under the Bush and Clinton administrations. The arms control agreement serves as the basis for international measures to eliminate the manufacture and use of chemical weapons, and to provide the guidelines for the elimination and destruction of these agents.

Dr. Murray has been a prime participant in many critical conversations related to our country's security. As such, she is uniquely positioned to speak on how education plays a vital role in safeguarding our country's security.

UPCOMING EVENTS

May 17- Confucius Classroom Chinese Speech Competition

June 18-29- Free STARTALK Program- Learning Mandarin Chinese through Visual & Performing Arts
www.berksiu.org/asc/startalk

July 27- New Guest Scholars Arrive

August 1- Foreign Affairs Student Essay Contest 2012 submissions due.
www.foreignaffairs.com/classroom/bulletin-board/student-essay-contest-2012

September 12- World Affairs Council's Engage America Series: Understanding Muslim Societies



FROM:

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ASIAN STUDIES COLLABORATIVE

BERKS COUNTY INTERMEDIATE UNIT

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ASC Spring Conference Keynote Speaker To Address Global Understanding

by William Miller

The keynote speaker for the Asian Studies Collaborative's 4th Annual Spring Conference is Dr. Lori Esposito Murray, president and CEO of the World Affairs Council of America (WACA). The Council is an organization that was started in the aftermath of World War I, born by the desire of its founding members to avoid our nation's retreat from participation in international affairs and to counter the isolationist sentiment that dominated U.S. policy and attitudes prior to the war.

Dr. Murray's message, and that of the World Affairs Councils, is both relevant to and aligned with Asian Studies Collaborative imperatives. As a non-partisan, non-profit network of local councils, WACA's mission is to promote education and to engage Americans in international affairs and critical global issues. The Council's 90+ year history of advocacy, with its membership of approximately 500,000 individuals, positions it to serve as a unique partner in the mission of educating students about current relevant issues that will shape the world in which they live.

As an insight into Dr. Murray's perspective on the imperative of educating our students and our citizens about international affairs, I offer this brief excerpt from her November 2011 essay on the topic of the political debates that were staged as part of the Republican primary campaigns:

The campaign debate on "foreign policy" is an antiquated structure and misses the most significant and historic change since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the explosion of the Internet — that the divide between foreign and domestic policy no longer exists. ... Polling trends show that we are down to 33 percent of Americans who believe it is best for the future of our country to be active in world affairs. Americans are believing this at a time when the global changes taking place are tectonic and inseparable from our problems here at home. To continue the debate format and the campaign discussions divided between "domestic" issues and "foreign" issues only reinforces the false notion that we have the luxury of such a division and can ignore the latter if we choose.

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FREE SUMMER CAMP STARTALK

Learning Mandarin
Chinese through Visual and
Performing Arts

June 18-29, 2012
Monday to Friday
8 a.m.-4 p.m.

REQUIREMENTS:
For students entering grades 9-12

BCIU EDUCATION CENTRE
2101 Centre Avenue
Reading PA 19605

The Asian Studies Collaborative at the BCIU is offering an exciting 14-day intensive non-residential program for students entering grades 9-12. This free program provides a wonderful opportunity for students to work with experts in Chinese theatre and music.

Students will have hands-on experience developing skills and working with film and cameras. In addition, this camp offers several field trip experiences. The program will culminate in a performance of student-produced works of Chinese theatre/opera, film, video, and electronic media for parents and the community.

Registration deadline: May 15, 2012





The Three Charms

by Alshimaa Nofal

“What? Why?” How many times in your life have you had this reaction to something? I can easily count a couple of occasions where my response to something incredible was complete denial. Nevertheless, I usually take my time to consider opportunities and I often take chances!

I am Alshimaa Nofal from Alexandria, Egypt, and I am an exchange Arabic teacher at Southern Lehigh School District. I happen to be one of those Egyptians who were chosen from among numerous applicants to be part of the Teachers of Critical Languages Program (TCLP). This program is a multi-layered cross-cultural program funded by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) of the U.S. Department of State and administered by American Councils for International Education. It is designed to increase the number of Americans teaching and studying Arabic and Mandarin. American Councils recruits and

places English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers from China and Egypt within American secondary schools, where they teach their native language and culture. I definitely felt proud and happy about my acceptance to this program, but at the same time I thought, “What? To teach Arabic? There is no way! I am a teacher of English!” Arabic is my native tongue, but English is my major. Now when I look back and reflect upon my initial reaction to the possibility of coming to America to teach Arabic, I simply laugh!

TCLP has brought me closer to my language, culture, and history. I was given a year’s time to remember and appreciate what a great country Egypt is. It did not take me that long. From the very first presentation I volunteered to give about my country, I found that everything was coming back to me.

My students now have a very solid Arabic language foundation. They can give presentations on their own about

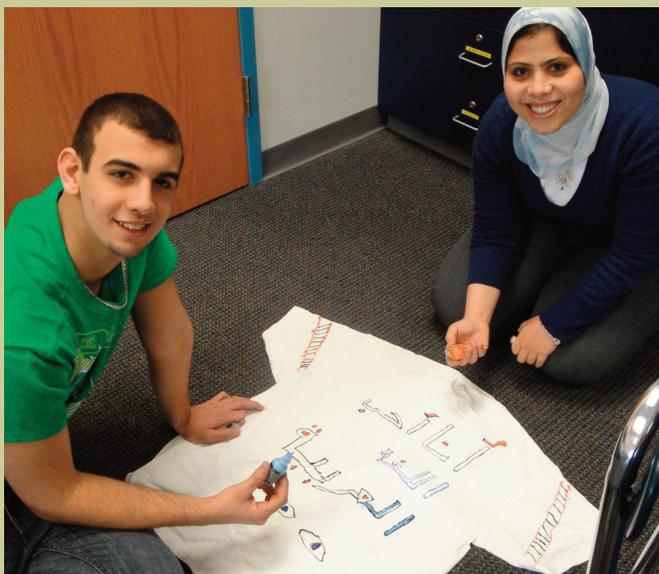
the language, culture, history, tradition, arts, food, and more. They are my sense of pride. Their eagerness to learn is accelerating day after day, and this is my real reward. Their continued progress is my constant goal.



I have made lots of friends in the time I have spent in the United States. One of Merriam Webster’s definitions of “friend” is, “... one that is of the same nation, party, or group.” For once, I disagree with Webster! One friend drove eight hours to come and spend Eid AlAdha (the great feast for Muslims) with me! Another friend invited me to Boston to spend vacation with her. A group of true friends at school consider me one of their group, and we share happy moments together. I used to call the family I live with my “host” family. Now, I do not need to just consider myself one of the family, because I truly feel that I am one and I am treated as one. They are my real family, and their home is my home. I thank God for the opportunity I had to come to America, for it led me to know these wonderful people.

I departed Egypt at a time of national turmoil, a confused political system, and a troubled educational system. Being in the United States made me reflect and see everything from a distance. I saw a fading light at the end of the road—the light that stems from young Egyptian generations who long for the right nourishment. I have a strong belief that change is possible.

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Our Life in the USA

by Ke Qin

It is a fabulous experience to live in a foreign country. In our time here as guest scholars, we have discovered differences in food, transportation, the weather, the language, and so on. We have found it so interesting to feel and see these differences.

Before we arrived here, we thought that there must be a lot of tall buildings in the United States. In fact, we find that there are more hills and trees here than there are tall buildings. When we first moved here, we felt a little lonely because at home in China we live in the city. There are a lot of shops around our living area, and most of those shops are open until 9:00 at night. Also, there are always a lot of people on the street everywhere you look. To sum it up, it is always lively and noisy in China, but it is always quiet and peaceful here. Yet after living here for a

while, we are totally used to the peace and we even enjoy it. We love the little houses and beautiful plants all around, and we love the clean streets and the spacious supermarkets and shopping malls.

Another difference we run into is transportation. In China, we have busses, taxis, trains, and all kinds of public transportation surrounding our homes. We have markets, restaurants, and shops near our living place so we can walk to buy food and clothes most of the time. In the United States, we often find that it is difficult to walk to all the places we want to go, and as none of us even have Chinese driving licenses because we do not drive in China, this could become a problem. Yet, we are lucky because our American and Chinese friends take us to markets and other places very often. With their help, we can go shopping for food, clothes, and even watch movies at the theater. They are so nice that they even bring us to their houses to have dinner with their families during our holidays and festivals. They are very caring to us.

With the help of our friends, we can access all kinds of food to cook familiar Chinese dishes in our apartment. We found that we love American food, but



we still miss food from home. Zhang Yuhong is normally our chef, since she is good at cooking all kinds of Chinese and even some Korean dishes. We usually cook every other day after work. For Chinese dishes, we use many vegetables and we always use some kind of spicy sauce. It is interesting that we find sugar and candy here much sweeter than in China, but spicy sauce and pepper here not spicy enough! Because of this, we buy authentic Chinese or Korean spicy sauce. Because we Chinese people eat rice every day as our main food, we buy large bags of rice at the Chinese market and cook it every day in a rice cooker.

Another difference we notice between cultures is fast food. At Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC), they will serve rice with dishes in China, but we cannot find rice at all on the menu at KFC here. Also, you will be interested to know that we have never seen fortune cookies until we came to the United States! Yet, almost all the Chinese restaurants here give them out at the end of meals as a tradition.

It has been so great to see and feel these differences between life in America and life in China. We love America and the people here, and we will never forget living in Reading, Pennsylvania. You are always welcome in China. We will wait for you at home!





Treading into the Arab World

by Laura Ross

A culture predominately obscure to many Americans is the Arab culture. The turbulent history of the Arab world, coupled with current events both domestic and foreign, often evokes feelings of both intimidated disinterest and encouraged curiosity. This widespread culture is the essence of the land and people who live in The League of Arab States, which encompasses much of North/Northeast Africa and Southwest Asia. Although Arab culture is as different from American culture as baba ghanoush is from apple pie, people around the world are fundamentally similar. On January 24, 2012, students and teachers from Berks County and the surrounding area were determined to experience a piece of the Arab world.

Endeavoring to educate and familiarize local students and teachers on Arabic culture, land, and language, the Berks County

Intermediate Unit's Asian Studies Collaborative, in conjunction with Betty McGinnis and World Artists Experiences, hosted an Arab Cultural Immersion Experience trip to Washington, DC. On a crisp morning in January, 45 tour-goers gathered together as pastel light illuminated the sky. We boarded a tour bus pulsing with rhythmic Arabic music and were welcomed to a breakfast of imported mango juice and Middle Eastern food samplings.

The tour bus rolled along the highway toward Washington, DC, as food, music, language, and videos drew us deeper into Arab culture. We were fortunate enough to have Egyptian guest teacher Alshimaa Nofal traveling with us. This engaging, dynamic, pink-hijab-clad woman graciously shared insights about her land, culture, and language as she coaxed us into Arabic dialogue.

"As-salam alaykum, wa-alaykum e-salam," and, "Kayf Alhaal? Bekhair," floated around the bus as we all tried our tongue at the bond that holds the Arab world together: the Arabic language. We then settled back into exotic music as warm sun blazed through the bus windows and we approached Arabia.



Our day in Washington, DC, began with observing a flair of Middle Eastern and North African countries through a drive-by tour of their respective embassies. The first country on the agenda to visit was Iraq. We were ushered into a circular upper room in the Iraqi Cultural Center of the Embassy of the Republic of Iraq, where curtained doorways and ornately decorated walls beckoned us to enter their country. Via translator, the director welcomed us. "In recent history, the term 'cultural fights' has been used a lot. It was used wrongly, simply because cultures do not conflict each other. They are existing, co-existing, and where they meet forces them to be a continuation of each other, rather than intersecting and conflicting each other." Media icon Ms. Shameem Rassam spoke to the group on various topics regarding Iraq's history, culture, civilization, mentality, sports, and practices. She then delved into the topic of cultural understanding. Pointing

Shameem Rassam and Dr. Abdulhadi Al Khalili, cultural attaché address the room with valuable insights of Iraq culture.





out expatriates in the audience from Egypt, Afghanistan, India, Mexico, and Algeria, she asked them to share something important in each of their cultures. We recognized that everything mentioned was also important to Americans, and she pointed out that, “As we are all here as Americans, at the end of the day, we are all Iraqis.” Dr. Abdulhadi Al Khalili, Cultural Attaché, made a guest appearance and provided valuable insight into topical discussions. Our visit to Iraq ended in a much appreciated, delicious lunch of Middle Eastern food samplings complete with spiced hot tea.

Egypt welcomed us with open doors as we climbed the stairs of the Egyptian Cultural and Educational Bureau of the Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt. Counselor Dr. Mohamed Hemly El Borai and Cultural Attaché Dr. Mohamed Aly Saleh gave profound insight into Egypt’s history, makeup, and culture stemming from the days of the Lighthouse of Alexandria. We learned about their land, their people, and their history rich with the legacy of ancient civilizations and world wonders. Our hosts also unhesitatingly approached discussions and presentations on current events. Students were given the chance to ask questions on everything from Egypt’s recent uprisings to its current political situation. Our hosts commented that, “Egypt is a wonderful country. Every country has its share of problems. So do we.” The resilience and strength of this ancient race of people showed brightly during our visit. After refreshments, we departed Egypt in greater unity with these people across the globe.

The final segment of the Arab Cultural Experience tour was that of being special guests at the Royal Embassy of



Saudi Arabia. Our visit there would prove insightful, interactive, and impressive. As we entered the Kingdom, there was an exotic, rich presence of the land we were now upon. We moved from display cases depicting Mecca, traditional clothing, and artifacts to an opulent conference room where we settled into a presentation and question-and-answer session on everything Saudi Arabian. Our presenter then addressed Saudi Arabian dress. He pointed out that, if he were in Saudi Arabia, he would be clad in an outfit of stark contrast to his current dress suit, business shoes, and uncovered head. He outlined the male attire consisting of a thawb, ghutra, ighal, and sandals, and the woman’s dress of an abaya, hijab, burka, or niqab, and sandals, and how these uniform outfits promote equality. He then proceeded to choose audience participants, clothe them in various ornate, bright dress, and bring them onstage. As he explained the differences in arm lengths, material weight, and fabric colors of the thawbs and abayas, we came to understand how Saudi dress is representative of the person’s surroundings and living conditions.

The main event of the day came with dinner. The embassy opened doors to the Saudi culture by generously offering hungry visitors an authentic

cuisine buffet. Bowls of fresh Middle Eastern salads, pans of slow-roasted meats, and baskets of warm pita bread led to a finale of sweet delicacies. The food transported us to a time and place far away. It was the perfect way to end a day of touring the Arab world.

We boarded the bus for a relaxing ride home, heads full of what we learned, stomachs full of what we ate, and hearts full of growing closer to our brothers and sisters on the other side of the globe.

THE THREE CHARMS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Rubble can be the cornerstone that supports the foundation of my country: Egypt. Egyptians are as old, strong, and vigorous as the pyramids. We have been around for a long time, as my race likes to leave a trace!

I have three charms on my Pandora bracelet. They are a suitcase, a purple glass bead, and a sack of money. Now, I see my true charms as the impact I leave on my students and the smiles we share, the true friends that I have made, and an American family that I will always be a part of.





Becoming a Student Through Being a Teacher

by Ke Qin

It is not easy to teach Chinese. If you are a Chinese teacher in the United States, it means that you know how to speak both English and Chinese. It is even harder if you teach preschool students, elementary students, and high school-aged students at the same time.

What I have learned in my university for several years is the way to teach high school students. These students really have the ability to acquire a second language, espe-

ing questions. Questions that they ask have really helped me find better ways to adjust my teaching plans to fit their needs. I enjoy being with them, and it makes me feel good when I see their progress in reading, speaking, and writing.

When I began trying to teach the tiny, little children at the BCIU Education Centre, I found that it was totally different from teaching older students. At the beginning, I often felt disappointed in myself because

I did not know how to teach them. Little children cannot do homework. They won't take a test or a quiz. I cannot push them to learn because they will cry and ask for their

mommy. Because it was difficult to teach them, I started to look at their regular teachers and how they did things. I have learned a lot from those kind ladies, and they take good care of me and often help me out. They really understand the little students much more than I do. They know the preschool students need a regular schedule every day and that the longest attention span they have is 15 minutes.

cially depending on their experience of learning their mother language and another language before studying Chinese. Usually it is their own choice to sit in class and learn Chinese, which means that they are personally interested in the language or culture. It is easy to make them eager to participate in educational activities, and they will learn on their own outside of class. In my time here in the United States, I have found that American students are good at ask-



I decided to change my way of teaching the tiny ones. I should not teach them in order to just have them learn something; I should make my class like a game. Now I just play with them most of the time, and this is how they learn. When I am doing activities with them, they will often ask me, "What is this in Chinese?" We usually play card games or sing songs together in class. They can sing a lot of Chinese songs now. What they love most is to count in Chinese. Most of them can count from 1 to 10, and some of them even asked me how to say 11. When I told them how to say 11 in Chinese, it was unbelievable that they noticed the regular structure of Chinese numbers and counted to 20 all by themselves. They are so clever!

It is not that easy to be a Chinese language teacher. It means that I am not only a teacher, but a student learning a lot from my work, my students, and my life in America. I really love all of these things.





Chinese New Year Festival

by Li Moyi

On February 3rd, 2012, teachers, parents, and administrators were all invited to share in an authentic Chinese New Year Festival. All students in Moyi Li's Wilson Chinese classes participated. Wilson West's Chinese I students were the hosts, and they introduced the program's festivities and explained what the New Year celebration involved.

Wilson Southern's Chinese I students dressed in authentic clothes and walked the runway for the enthusiastic audience. Visitors were also treated to a student – created animation explaining why dragons are so predominate in the celebration. Cornwall Terrace's Kindergarten class sang “幸福拍手歌” (xìngfú pāi shǒu gē) – *If You're Happy and You Know It* in Chinese! To round out the presentations, Cornwall Terrace's First Grade class performed a beautiful tai chi routine set to music.

After the presentations, students and families were introduced to two games played during the Chinese New Year Festival. The first game was “Egg Tapping” – which is also a popular game to play at Easter in Chinese culture. The rule is very simple: to hold a hard-boiled egg and tap the eggs of other participants to try to break them but keep your own undamaged. The second game was called “Tiger Lantern”—also known as riddle guessing. Because ancient riddles are so difficult and require so much classical knowledge, wisdom, and wit, there is a saying about them: “It's as difficult to kill a tiger as it is to guess a lantern puzzle.” Hence, the name tiger lantern.



Ms. Li's created riddles carried simple messages of good fortune, family reunion, abundant harvest, prosperity, and love. The parents and students took turns pulling a riddle from the many ones hanging around the room, and if they answered it correctly, they were given a small prize!



As the games were being played, Ms. Li provided the audience with a huge array of authentic Chinese foods including dumplings 饺子, sesame rice balls 汤圆, sweet rice pudding 八宝饭, wheat crackers 米果, shrimp flavored chips 虾条, black melon seeds 西瓜子, and all kinds of lucky new year candies! (xīn nián kuài lè) Happy New Year!

