A Trip to China

Boyd-Buchanan School

2008-2009 School Year

Melanie Schonhoff – Second Grade Teacher

Boyd-Buchanan is a private, religious school in Chattanooga, Tennessee. It was founded in 1952 on Vine Street and it moved to its present location on Bonnieway Drive in 1961. This school year, approximately 1000 students will attend Boyd-Buchanan in grades Pre K through 12. There are three classes in each elementary grade level with 15 to 20 students per classroom. Each second grade teacher plans to develop a unit focused on an Asian country. At the conclusion of the units, the teachers plan to host an event where the students can share their Asian experiences and knowledge with their fellow students.

The unit, *A Trip to China*, will last two weeks. Each day one to two hours will be devoted to learning new information and activities about this country. On Monday, the children will prepare for their trip. They will begin by making a passport. After observing a United States passport, they will fill in information on their passport including drawing a picture of themselves. Each day that they successfully complete a Chinese experience their passport will be "stamped," indicating acceptable work. After completing their passport, the children will locate the country of China on globes, on a pull-down classroom flat map, and on individual notebook size flat maps. The teacher will lead a discussion concerning the continent where China is found, and countries and oceans surrounding China. Using the map legend and rulers, the students will estimate the number of miles from Tennessee to China. Following the discussion, the students will cut the country of China out of white paper and glue it on blue construction paper. They will label adjacent oceans, countries and islands. The teacher will also list on the board significant rivers and mountains which the students will also label on their map.

On Tuesday, the students will watch a video about home life in China entitled, Children of Hangzhou, produced by the Boston's Children's Museum. Following the video, the teacher will attach the classroom Venn diagram to the whiteboard. Students will take turns writing facts about home life on cards and reading them to the class as they put them in the Venn

diagram. They may choose a fact about Chinese home life, American home life, or something that is the same in both countries. The students will be given a question sheet with five questions and they will be asked to choose an answer. The following questions will be included: What does "have you had rice today" mean? Is it better to wear a green hat or a blue hat in China? Should you leave your chopsticks outside or inside the bowl? Would a man prefer a gift that is wrapped in pink or white paper? Should you leave a little food on your plate or eat all of it? When the students have finished, the teacher will lead a discussion of these questions and other Chinese customs. The students will also have an opportunity to practice with each other customs they have learned. Some of these customs will include: greeting the oldest person first, looking at the ground when you greet someone, presenting gifts with two hands, not opening a gift when it is received, removing your shoes before entering a house, waiting to be told where to sit, and holding your rice bowl close to your mouth as you eat.

On Wednesday, the students will view pictures of Chinese palaces including the Forbidden City. The teacher will lead a discussion of the dynasties that have ruled China through the years and the communist type of government in place today. The teacher will discuss the role of emperors and contrast them with presidents and kings. The students will observe the Chinese flag and discuss the significance of the symbols on the flag. They will then make a Chinese flag for their portfolio. The students will observe Chinese paper money and coins. Using magnifying glasses, they will list objects which appear on the money. After examining the pieces of money, the students will make a piece of paper money and draw a coin for their portfolio.

On Thursday, the students will observe slides of Chinese pottery, painting and porcelain. Students will also observe slides of Chinese gardens. The teacher will ask them to reflect on the rocks, plants, and water and the way each one is placed. The teacher will show the students a bonsai tree and describe the careful and delicate way the tree must be taken care of year after year and reflect on the same care and attention that must be used with a garden. After students are shown the minimal color and the bold, dark lines of Chinese painting, the students will be given an opportunity to create their own Chinese Brush Painting. From the website, "Chinese Tools," students will be able to chose one of 19 animals and follow the instructions

using Chinese techniques to create their own animal. These will be matted and displayed in the hall. On the final day of celebration, the artists will be able to stand by their painting and talk about it with fellow students and parents. At the end of the day, the teacher will assign an animal report, which will be due on Tuesday.

On Friday, the students will work in pairs using the internet and other resource books in the classroom to locate facts about the Great Wall of China. As students bring facts to the teacher, she will examine them for accuracy and spelling and give the students colored index cards for their facts. When each group has found at least five facts, the class will construct the Great Wall outside their classroom using construction paper, butcher paper and paint. Each group will be assigned a portion to construct including areas that are crumbling in desert areas, towers, and areas with wide passageways and steps. The finished wall be will approximately 20 feet long and 9 feet tall. Index cards will be attached to the wall for others to read and enjoy.

On Monday, the teacher will read the book, "Everybody Cooks Rice," by Norah Dooley and Peter J. Thornton. The students will discuss the importance of rice in the world and especially in the country of China. The teacher will describe for the students the special features of growing rice in a rice paddy as compared to growing cotton and corn in Tennessee. The class will travel by bus to Brainerd Road and eat lunch at the "China Moon Restaurant. Parents are invited to meet at the restaurant and eat with their child. "China Moon Restaurant" features a buffet where the students will chose traditional entrees, soups, salads, and desserts. After returning to the school, the students will write about their experience. They will include foods they enjoyed, foods they tried that they had never tried before, and how the rice they ate at the restaurant compares with the rice they eat in their home.

On Tuesday, the students will bring in a report they researched at home about a Chinese animal. Animals researched include: giant panda, south Chinese tiger, Chinese alligator, takin, golden lion tamarin, brown-eared pheasant, red-crowned crane, red ibis, white-flag dolphin, Tibetan antelope, white swan and yak. Each student will relate the diet, habitat, size and predators of their animal. The culminating report will be about the panda. Following the reports, the students will take turns listening to the tape "Bamboo Valley," by Ann W. Nagda,

produced by The Nature Conservancy. While some students are listening to the tape, other students will create a panda for their portfolio including their bamboo forest habitat and diet.

On Wednesday, students will observe a Chinese newspaper, wrappers and toys from McDonald's in China and a second grade book, "Chrysanthemum" in Chinese. After noting the characters and direction of writing, the teacher will read the book, "Ruby's Wish" by Shirin Yim Bridges, describing a young girls desire for an education and the importance of calligraphy in her life and the lives of the Chinese. The students will then practice calligraphy writing with black paint and brushes. After practicing, the students will produce "Happy New Year" signs in Chinese to decorate the room.

On Thursday, the teacher will read the book, "Kites, Magic Wishes That Fly Up to the Sky" by Demi. It discusses the Chinese invention of the kite, and the uniqueness of Chinese kite designs, using figures such as dragons, animals and plants. The students will use their imagination to create a kite that they think the Chinese people would enjoy. They will be reminded about the animals, plants, colors, and designs we have studied. When the kites are finished, half of the children will attach a short string to their kite and go to the football field with a mother to run and "fly" their kite. The other half of the children will enjoy a simple tea ceremony using a traditional teapot of unglazed clay. Students will be taught to not touch the tea leaves, let the tea brew for 30 seconds, hold the cup with both hands and only take 2 or 3 sips. Later, the two groups will trade places to allow each group to perform both activities.

Friday will be the final day of our *A Trip to China* unit. Students will be allowed to dress in traditional Chinese outfits, if they desire. Students who do not chose to dress in traditional outfits are encouraged to wear the color red for "good luck." The teacher will read the book, "Lion Dancer," by Kate Waters, which describes a Chinese New Year in New York City's Chinatown for a family with elementary age children. Students will then visit three craft centers. In the first center they will make a Chinese lantern from four paper plates. The sides will be decorated with a panda, a ying yang, Chinese characters, and a dragon. Red yarn will be attached to the top and a red tassel to the bottom. At the second center, students will make a dragon from a paper bag and a prepared face. At the third center, students will prepare a "Happy New Year" card for a friend or family member using Chinese characters and the figure

of an ox, which is the Chinese character for the year 2009. As students finish their craft centers they will begin cleaning the room to rid it of bad spirits and decorating it with red crepe paper streamers to prepare for the New Year. They will also practice saying the words “Gung Hay Fat Choy” which means “Happy New Year” in Chinese. The principal of the school will come to the room and greet the students and wish them a “Happy New Year.” The students will respond with the words, “Gung Hay Fat Choy.” As each student approaches the principal he or she will bow and the principal will present the student with a red envelope containing a shiny penny, a Chinese custom. All of the elementary students will gather in the halls as the second graders form a parade and wish the students “Happy New Year” in Chinese. They will carry either a dragon, a lantern, or a New Year’s card. Other second grade classes will represent the countries of Korea and Japan. In the afternoon, all of the second graders will gather together to share their experiences of the two weeks and their new knowledge and appreciation of the countries of China, Japan, and Korea.