

Local principal teaches English and heritage in China

by Donna Danielli

It took some rescheduling in the wake of the September 11 tragedy, but Campbellville's Barb Singleton was finally able to take her children to China late in September.

Barb and her husband Paul made a commitment when they adopted their daughters, Emma and Samiee out of China, to raise the girls with an awareness of their own culture. Samiee, who is nine years old, was adopted in 1994 and Emma, who is eight years old was adopted in 1993, and this trip will take both girls back to the orphanage they were adopted from in Yangzhuo City in the Jiangsu Province of China.

Mrs. Singleton, both girls and their older brother Jamie will spend until mid-December in a town 400 kilometres west of Shanghai on the Yangzhe River, where Mrs. Singleton, who has taken a leave of absence from her position as principal of Milton District High School, will work as a teacher.

Study of the English language is compulsory in China for students in grade three and over and the government of China has vowed that all citizens of Beijing City will know at least 200 English phrases by the time of the 2008 Olympics. Amongst the teaching materials Mrs. Singleton took to China with her are videos of "Mr. Bean" and "Joseph and the Technicolor Dreamcoat".

"If I do things that are unusual and funny, it'll prompt them to try some new oral procedures," explains Mrs. Singleton. "Most of their learning of the English lan-

guage has been from books, and they'll need the conversational practice."

An elementary school is attached to the high school where Barb is teaching and it is here that Emma, Samiee and Jamie will take classes in Mandarin. "They can experience China with their hearts as well as their heads," says Mrs. Singleton. "We'll also spend a week at the orphanage, where we can read to the children and hug a baby."

China has a one child policy and boys are often preferred by Chinese families because it is felt that daughters will grow up and leave the family home to live with her husband's family, leaving her parents with no one to care for them in their old age. Orphanages are filled primarily with female children and all the girls in the orphanage that Emma and Samiee were adopted from have the last name of Yang.

"That makes them sole sisters," explains Mrs. Singleton. "I can't change the world, let alone China, but I can change the world for these two girls."

Mrs. Singleton encourages anyone interested in adopting children from China to phone her or her husband Paul at 905-854-0261.

Jamie, Emma and Samiee are all students at Brookville Public School, which opened its doors to TV Ontario just before the Singletons left for China. TV Ontario is filming a documentary called "The Pledge" which will look at how families in North America bring children adopted from China

up according to their own heritage. "The Pledge" will air in February and Barb, Emma, Samiee and Jamie will fly back to Canada to

join Paul and sons Zach, Matthew and Glen just before Christmas. The North Halton Compass wishes the Singleton family well in China

and looks forward to bringing you the reader an interview with them after they return to Canada.

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School welcomes public to share technology

by Donna Danielli

Technology and its advances will play a large role in the lives of students. State of the art computers and printers, as well as Internet access, are almost becoming a staple on the school supply list, but for many families, that simply isn't possible.

Whether it's difficulty in attaining Internet access in a rural environment, the high costs of computers, or simply preferring not to own a computer, many families have reason to look for alternative ways to utilize the technology available.

Brookville School received funding through Industry Canada and purchased four new Compaq computers and a laser printer. While these units are available for

Brookville student use throughout the day, in the evenings they offer an open access to the community.

Principal Rick Nodwell's goal is to have these units available for public use weekly, from Monday to Thursday, 5 to 8 p.m.

Volunteers with a working knowledge of word processing and simple tasks such as how to access e-mail and the Internet, will be on hand to help out. Volunteers are needed for this program, either adults or high school students who are looking to fulfill their required number of volunteer hours.

Anyone interested in volunteering for or finding out more about the Computer Access Program at Brookville School, is urged to call Rick Nodwell at 905-854-2205.

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