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Editor: Chun Xia

## RCEF wins 2007 Echoing Green Fellowship!

RCEF's Sara Lam and Diane Geng have been selected for the prestigious 2007 Echoing Green Fellowship to be full-time social entrepreneurs on RCEF's long-term programs.

The fellowship provides RCEF being a NGO run entirely by \$90,000 in funding for 2007-2009 as well as technical support on staff on the ground, implementing our non-profit management, and backing most ambitious project yet. Sara and Diane will focus their energies on launching the new Teaching Fellows Program and helping RCEF to pursue its mission of sustainable improvements in rural education. RCEF was selected out of over 900 applicants!

Through a two-year fellowship program, Echoing Green helps its network of visionaries develop new solutions to society's most difficult problems. With the help of Echoing Green, RCEF can now move from



## Rural Teachers Network

The Rural Teachers Network is designed for rural teachers who have participated in RCEF projects to remain in contact with each other and with RCEF. We mail regular support packages to the teachers with a newsletter including teachers' own work as well as RCEF updates, and other materials such as books and videos. In October 2007, the first support package was sent to all teachers in the network and has received positive responses.



Dear friends of RCEF,

In the past half year, RCEF has reached several milestones. For the first time, we had full-time, paid staff in China, headed by our Executive Directors Diane Geng and Sara Lam. We were awarded a highly respected grant, the Echoing Green Fellowship. We started new year-round programs to bring sustainable change to the quality of rural education: the Teaching Fellows Program, the Rural Teachers Network, and the Innovation Grants Program. We also had another successful edition of the Summer Volunteer Program, in which international volunteers joined forces with rural teachers to teach. All this has been made possible by your generous support and continuing encouragement. I hope you will enjoy reading this Newsletter and also visit our new blog, which can be found at <http://blog.ruralchina.org>. We wish you a happy Year of the Rat!



Wei Ji Ma (马伟基)

RCEF President and Co-Founder

*The Teaching Fellows Program places workers year-round in rural schools. They experiment with new educational approaches to accumulate experience in how education can empower rural children and their communities to make positive life improvements. There are three pilot schools in the program now: Yinjialin Community School in Shandong Province. Guan Ai Primary School in Shanxi Province. and Fuxin Middle School in Anhui Province*

### Night Classes at Yinjialin Community School

A new year-round "Night School" Tiger Woods Foundation, the class at the Yinjialin Community School is pioneering how to attract out-of-school youth back to education.

Before fully launching in September, a week-long trial camp was held and attended by fifteen local teenagers. They engaged in practical, hands-on experiences that required creativity and teamwork while also practicing computer skills. After setting up brand new computers in the school lab bought with the grant from the

Goals of the classes are made by consensus among students and teachers. The classes rotate between Humanities, Math & Science, English, Computer Skills, and times when students can focus on a topic of their own interest or practice their new knowledge by teaching it to others in the community. The latest lessons have been on how to use FLASH to create animations!

### Rural Education Innovation Grants Program



### Pen pal program between Guan Ai School and Trinity School

Guan Ai School is piloting a pen pal program with Trinity School, an elementary school in California. RCEF's Co-Executive Director Diane Geng visited Guan Ai in late October and gave a presentation about life at Guan Ai to the welcoming and curious pupils, teachers, and parents. She also brought objects from daily life that Guan Ai students wanted to share with the American children (like their paper guns, a treasured book, and paper cuttings) as well as wonderful videos of the Guan Ai students saying and acting out messages in English that they had designed themselves. In

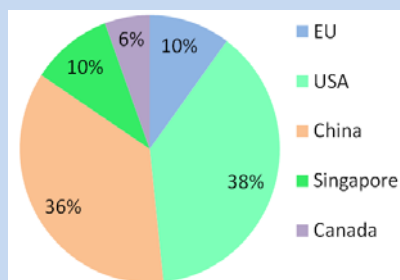
RCEF awards grants of 1000-6000 RMB to selected organizations and individuals in China to aid their work in rural China education or development. Our goal is to achieve positive and sustainable changes in rural China education by engaging the participation and partnership of local educators and grassroots organizations.

The first two grants were given to two volunteer projects over the summer holidays. One was a Jilin University program which sent volunteers to teach in a village that they hope to work in long-term. The other was for "New Hope Society" of Zhejiang University for their year-round volunteer project teaching the children of rural migrant workers. The application for the second round of Innovative Grants closed at the beginning of November with more than 50 applications received through emails and post. Applicants ranged from rural teachers to college students and members of other NGOs that have various programs to improve rural education. Five to eight projects were selected at the end of December through a careful review process by a selection team made up of experienced RCEF leaders.

## RCEF's Volunteer Base

### Our Active Volunteers

Currently, RCEF has 89 active volunteers working for different departments and programs. They come from nine countries and possess a diverse array of backgrounds and expertise.



### Volunteer Profile: Huang Zhenzhong

Originally from Chengdu, Zhengzhong is now a master's student at Tsinghua University's School of Management, studying educational economics and administration. He recalls how he got his start in RCEF:



"I began participating in RCEF in early 2007. I became one of the co-directors of the Summer Volunteer Program (VP) and taught drama and philosophy classes at the summer camp we

## Evaluation of the Summer Volunteer Program 2007

For the last six months, Jikky Lam, through RCEF with their own RCEF intern and a student from

Leiden University in the Netherlands, has been traveling all over China to make evaluation visits to the schools RCEF taught in during the summer. She returned to Guozhuang Primary School in Shandong Province, Dayang Primary School in Henan Province, Dongbaoquan Village in Hebei Province and Runzhen Primary School in Shaanxi Province.

Teachers who participated in RCEF's Summer Camps Program said they were inspired by the energy, enthusiasm and passion of RCEF volunteers. During the training, they watched the volunteers teaching and discussed teaching methods in daily meetings. This inspired new ideas concerning educational goals and strategies. After the summer, some teachers tried out the methods learned

Students say they like the program because they can use the knowledge and skills learnt in their real lives. For example, they have courage to talk to strangers and speak up for themselves after going with RCEF volunteers to interview community members about local issues. Some students feel that they understood teamwork better. "After the summer camp, my relationships with my friends got stronger. Through all the group activities, I became closer with my classmates and started to understand them better. I now know that two are better than one." "We can learn from the volunteers. They come from different countries and have different backgrounds, but they are also able to work together and listen to each other."



put on in Runzhen, Shaanxi province. As a new volunteer, I confronted many challenges, but together with my RCEF friends, we got everything done. Now I'm helping to run preparations for VP

2008. I gained a lot happiness and experience from being a volunteer in RCEF but more importantly, I am doing what I want, that is, to 'make the world better and better.'"

### How You Can Help?

1. Make a donation to improve the quality of education in rural China. Several ways to donate are listed on our website, [www.ruralchina.org](http://www.ruralchina.org).
2. Apply to be a teaching volunteer in 2008. Applications will be available at [www.ruralchina.org](http://www.ruralchina.org).
3. Apply to be a year-round committee volunteer or to join a RCEF regional chapter from wherever you live. Application forms are on our website and are continually accepted.
4. Offer us feedback. Your opinion matters to us! Comments and suggestions are welcome at [info@ruralchina.org](mailto:info@ruralchina.org).