



CHRISTMAS 2017

Dear Friends of Bo Ai,

I am delighted to share this Christmas missive with you. As usual we have had a busy year, and yet we remain mindful of the **many blessings** we have received this year. As we assess where we have been and where we are headed, we are very grateful for the many ways our **visitors, donors and benefactors engage with Bo Ai and contribute** with their talents and donations. We would not be the Bo Ai we are, nor be able to realize the future we envision, without **your generous and continued support** of our students and mission.

We have put up a decorated artificial 7 ft. Christmas tree and strings of sparkling lights meanders the quadrangle pine bushes. Several times each day, Christmas songs blare from the speakers and fill the campus with Christmas cheer. Christmas is in the air. **From Bo Ai we wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year** .

NAMES THAT LIVE

At the Middle School Administration Building Entry Hall, there is a roster of, **NAMES THAT LIVE**, names of individuals or organizations that Bo Ai recognizes for helping us to make progress and transformation possible. In 2017, **138 Chinese nationals** and **118 foreign nationals** came to work together toward the common goal in making a difference for our students and our collective future. Space does not allow us to name everyone of our special friends. They too are **Names That Live in our hearts**. Amongst them are the **National #18 Education Inspection Committee**, Officials from the **QingHai Education Department**, Officials from the **Changzhi Educational Department**, from the **Qinyuan Education Department**, **County Secretaries from Changzhi and Qinyuan**, **School Principals and Teachers** from several



schools, the Director from the **Changzhi Foreign Nationals Department** came to visit me and it was good to get to know him; annually the **Hong**



Kong Bo Ai Foundation Mission Team comes during the Easter Holidays, this year again was led by **Chairman Dr. Eilly Lau, Michael and Janet Tse** and **Dr. Peter Lau**; **Michael** thought up the idea of a **Carnival** at Bo Ai and this was the most fantastic sensation for the young and old, **Dean and Professor Kenneth Leung, Ph. D.** and **Mrs. Andrea Leung** led a 24 member team from the **Shiu-Pong College of Macau University**, besides teaching English they broaden our students knowledge of cities and countries of the world; the 32 Member Contingent from **Houston Fort Bend Community Church** led by **Han Yan, Dr. Kin and Mary Lock, Dr. James Song, Dr. Janet Du**, they performed by far the most funny and yet meaningful skit to our students; the 11 member team from **Hong Kong Island ECC** led by **Lee Wai Duen**, who taught our students crafts, the Phonics Specialist **Ms Louise Ho** who spent many hours each day over a week's time to give our students and teachers a step by step knowledge of English Phonics, the experienced English Language Specialist **Mr. Ivan Tang from Hong Kong** who taught our teachers interesting and engaging ways on how to teach a class; lawyers **Leonard Girard and Pamela Jacklin** who had introduced Pickle Ball to Bo Ai, again each donated a month's time to teach English to our students; We are indebted to all for their selfless time and effort.

TIMES TO REMEMBER



To our students, the highlight of the year has to be the **CARNIVAL**. The **CARNIVAL** was held during the Easter holidays when the Hong Kong Bo Ai Mission Team came. **Michael Tse**, the consummate person and financier with ideas, had for years introduced many kinds of food to our students. This year Michael wanted to do something different and fun. What can be more fun than a **CARNIVAL**! The day came and the campus was bedecked with multicolored pinwheels, tall flags and

flashy balloons. Carnival music punctuated the air! Michael made sure that we had the mandatory **cotton candy machine** and the **popcorn machine**. So we had long lines for the cotton candy and even longer lines for the popcorn! **The face-painting booth** was a requisite and students came out with either a whimsical or a diabolic face. In total we had **16 stalls of games** that were pure fun. Each student received **10 coupons** for games. During the school year, each student **earned points** for outstanding or improvement in behavior, improvement in scholastic results or high test scores. Added together with the



earned game points, each student was awarded a **commensurate prize**. The prize room, which was filled with prizes galore, had a long line. There was so much joy that the students are anticipating another **Carnival in 2018! Kudos to Michael** for paying for **the cost of the Carnival**.



We have seen in June of 2017 Bo Ai graduated the **Thirteen Class of Sixth Grade Students** and the **Third Class of Middle School Students**. There were **forty nine Sixth Grade Graduates** and **thirty two Ninth Grade graduates**. In Qinyuan County, Bo Ai maintained **the number two standing for our Sixth Grade Graduates**. However **our Ninth Graduates did not do as well**. Annually, all teachers are given **year-end additional bonuses** depending solely on their **rated performance of some 20 categories**: the preparation plans of each lesson and the entire semester plans, how each lesson is delivered, the goals that each teacher sets for herself/himself, the determination whether the goals are achieved, any mentorship that some teachers have to accomplish, the inter-teacher relationship, the performance of his/her students. Presently, there are **sound and video monitor cameras in each classroom** which can be accessed in a central location.

During the 2017 summer vacation when the **Elementary School Education Building** is not occupied with teaching, the substandard twelve year old Bo Ai Elementary School Education Building received a **much needed total remodeling**. The cement floors had been peeling off, the toilets needed constant care, the walls had seen its age, the old electrical wires often burned (fortunately the wires in conduits in brick walls did not cause fires), there was no grounding wires in the electrical circuits, the radiators often leaked etc.. During the idle summer months, the Elementary Education Building had the floors tiled, hallways partial height tiled, new toilets and sinks put in, a new coat of paint and the other flaws remedied. **Thanks to all the teachers** who came early to the School to help with the cleanup and to put the classrooms into order.



We are grateful that the Canada **Touching Lives Overseas** held a Fund Raising Dinner in September that partially paid for the remodeling. Bo Ai also is grateful that **Mr. Yao Ke Qiang**, a retired P.E. teacher from Canada, **donated two sets of Basketball Stands** for our 2 basketball courts. The courts had been standing idle for more than a year without basketball stands. We have many blessings to be thankful for and much to reflect on and to look forward to in the days and months ahead.

Mission team members come to teach or to help at our school. Sometimes they help



themselves also. They become helpless when **the cupid arrows strike while they are here**. It has happened at least three times that I know of. **Gary Huang** of Tai Yuan and **Fiona Peng** of Shanghai came as mission members from the University of Toronto in 2014 and **got to know each other**. This summer they had a **marriage ceremony** in Shanghai and then **came with their parents and brother to Bo Ai to thank us** for getting them together. Presently Gary is at the University of

Toronto getting his Master's degree and Fiona is working in Toronto as an accountant.

Xinyuan County Education Department held **its first High School and Primary School Athletic Meet** in October and Bo Ai School has done quite well. We did very well in the short distance races but did not do as well in the long jump, high jump and the long distances races. Bo Ai does not have the long jump, high jump sand pits nor the tract to practice on for the long distances.



Bo Ai has the tradition of **celebrating the teachers' birthdays two times a year**. Those who have the birthdays falling on January to June have their birthday celebrated one time together in the first semester. Those whose birthdays fall on July to December have their birthdays celebrated together in the second semester. This year instead of receiving their Red Packet of Lucky Money, **the July to December group voted to go on a trip** on July 2nd. A rented bus took the 33 teachers and ancillary staff to **Kaifeng for a stay of five days**. Kaifeng was the capital of four dynasties during the Period of Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms (907-960) and of Song Dynasty and was one of eight capitals of ancient China.



GIVING THANKS

Even though our students come from the villages, they too wish to play an active part towards helping the less fortunate. This year the students and staff **held a bazaar** of used but still good clothing, used toys, games, household stuff and collected **3,900 yuan**. With the money, they **bought food and other household necessities** and gave to the destitute or less fortunate. Many of the old villagers have problems squatting down because of arthritis or back problems. Bo Ai was able to buy with the proceeds **16 sit-down commodes**. What a delight to see the smiles and gratitude on their faces! Now when they have to go, they just go! The middle school graders **visit old folk's homes** on the 4th Wednesday of every month. There they put on gloves, cut the nails, trimmed their hair, washed their hair and faces, cleaned the facilities or just talked

and socialized with them. Many of the old folks do not have family and they are delighted when someone comes and cares about them and talk to them..

CONTINUING EDUCATION

On receiving the invitations from our sister schools, the **Holmglad High School** and **Holmglad #2 Primary School of Hong Kong**, five of our directors/teachers flew to Hong Kong for a week in September to become better versed in the kickoff and commencement of **a new school year**. We received much valuable knowledge and information that we can implement at Bo Ai. Thanks to **Simon Lap-Yan Yeung**, the Executive Secretary of Mission Covenant Church and **Principals Philip Lee** and **Connie Siu** for arranging the visit. Our special gratitude to **Dr. Eileen Lau** who again has so kindly let us stay at her apartment during the visit.



Speaking English in better diction is a learned process. For many, the Chinese ping-yin is carried over to the English intonation and therefore the English pronunciation is flawed . Bo Ai is very pleased that the **experienced Phonics specialist Louise Ho** came from Hong Kong to Bo Ai for a week's time to teach an **essential comprehensive course of Phonics** starting from the various basic sounds of a, b, c's to their combined soundings. We have learned much in the phonics classes, have much to practice on and still have a way to go.

Bo Ai is fortunate that so many visitors come to share their talents. Be it the group from **Beijing led by Director Wu Xiao Lic**, groups from **Shanxi Province**, the **Hong Kong Mission Group**, the **University of Macau Shiu-Pong College group**, the **Wau-Duen Lee group** from **Island Evangelical Christian Church**, the **Houston Fort Bend Community Church Group**, English master teacher **Ivan Tang**, lawyers **Leonard Girard** and **Pamela Girard** or graphic designer **Wan, In Kuen** and IT person **Luk, Kwai Fan**, our students and staff benefited from their sharing.



FINALLY.....

Seven of our teachers are **pregnant with babies**, some with the government's sanctioned second child. Too many times we have to **rearrange class schedules** and have teachers **teaching classes outside of their range of expertise**. I have talked to the Education Department that it should have a **cadre of substitute teachers available** at the Education Department who can be called upon to teach at the schools when called upon.

I am happy to have shared with you a snapshot of our present undertakings and where we are heading. The following are some of our needs. The students pay about 1/3 the cost of the board and room. Tuitions are free at our school. Many of our students **remain to be sponsored**. The **soccer field and running tract behind the Middle School need to be done in order to qualify** as a middle school, even in a village setting. Not all students will take the path of a high school and eventual university education. At our backburner dream is to **establish a vocation school** where these students can learn a trade to be used for their livelihood. Bo Ai is still without a principal. It seems to be difficult to have **a dedicated principal** from the outside who is worth the mettle to stay at a village school where there is no recreation, no nearby restaurants or shopping centers. The same can be said about his/her spouse. And yet, we are not ready to engage a local principal who may have too much local relationship. A better scenario is **to train our directors** who have the heart, the qualification and loyalty **to stay** in our locale and our school and **train them for the eventual principal post**. For this, Bo Ai **will send them to Beijing for the training**.

Finally, may the Good Lord bless you and yours with Peace, Joy, Hope and Love. May you have a Wonderful Christmas and a Happy and Fruitful Year of the Dog!

Blessings,

Christine

Bo Ai School, Feng Cun, Shanxi Province, China

FOLLOWING THIS LETTER, PLEASE PERUSE THREE PAGES OF PHOTOS

Overseas Helping Hands

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