

EVERGREEN UPDATE

NEWSLETTER OF EVERGREEN FAMILY FRIENDSHIP SERVICE

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WANTED: MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER!

By Edina Elliott

Do you, or does someone you know, want to come to China and teach Evergreen's middle school-aged children? This is a crucial role both to provide quality education to the children and to relieve the concerns of parents who are facing difficult choices for the middle school years.

Shanxi Evergreen International School (SEIS) is in its seventh year of operation under the capable teaching of Edie Eager. One might wonder about the quality of education that can be offered at such a small school in rural Yangqu County. However, those who have graduated from SEIS or attended school in their home country while on home leave have done extremely well academically. They have also been able to make a smooth transition to their home country and into higher education. Davin and Denise Torjesen and Stephen Elliott (former SEIS students) will be graduating from American high schools in May. Davin plans to attend the University of Denver, Denise plans to return to China for a one year internship with Evergreen and then continue her education, and Stephen plans to attend the Naval Academy.

For parents living overseas, choosing how to educate their children is often a difficult decision. Parents must consider what their end goal is in educating their children. Evergreen parents would like for their children to learn Chinese and to be well prepared to enter higher education in their home countries. Currently, there are two options for Evergreen families for the elementary years: put the child in Chinese school for half the day and home school the other half of the day or send them to SEIS. Factors involved in making the decision are the distance of families from SEIS,

how good the local Chinese schools are, and the individual personalities of the children. From the beginning, SEIS has made Chinese a priority in its curriculum and has employed a Chinese teacher to teach Chinese to the children. Other subjects that have been taught by Chinese teachers are math, art, cooking and martial arts.

Decisions about education for middle school and high school are currently the most difficult for Evergreen families. Since the retirement of SEIS middle school teacher Barbara Chapman, there are only three options for students who wish to prepare to enter Western universities: home school, Internet or correspondence courses, or boarding schools. All of the study-at-home options burden already working parents with another heavy responsibility. Boarding schools are countries away and very expensive. To ease this problem, SEIS is currently looking for a qualified middle school teacher to teach junior high school students and also to oversee high school Internet studies for older students. While a long-term teacher who would raise support and learn Chinese is preferable, given the great need, SEIS would be willing to provide

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Edie Eager conducts science class

MY JOURNEY TO A NEW LIFE

By Xin Lihua



Xin Lihua (center) at work in a village

When I graduated from middle school, I didn't continue my education because my family couldn't support me financially. So I went to a village to teach children for a short time. After one year, I found out that one of my classmates had just passed her examination at the technology school. I was really sad because I wanted to finish my education, but I could not find anyone to support me.

didn't agree, but after a while they gave me permission.

I kept in close contact with Evergreen during my schooling, and reported to them about my progress. At the same time I was also a member of their English corner. After three years, I finished my studies in January of 2001. In the same year Evergreen started the Antenatal Project and I was hired to work as a medical assistant for Petra de Ruiter.

We have been teaching health education programs in several villages since last year. At first I didn't expect to teach as part of my work. I started to teach breast-feeding and nutrition. I believe I have done a good job. Petra is the person who guided and supported me in many ways. I am very thankful that the Evergreen doctors have given me many opportunities to grow and practice my skills. I see that they are very serious about our work.

Now I have been working at Evergreen for three years. I have nothing to regret but only wonderful memories. I am very grateful God gave me the opportunity to study and work at Evergreen and even gave me a new life. He did not forsake me. In addition He guided me to serve in a Christian organization. I have gained a great amount of medical knowledge, I have grown a lot spiritually and I have a deeper knowledge of God.

Xin Lihua lives in Yangqu where she works with the Evergreen Medical Team.

After a while, I heard that Evergreen has a village doctors' training program and I thought maybe this was an opportunity to get my education. So I found the director of the Evergreen Medical Team, Mark Strand. He agreed that I could join the training. I learned a lot during the training program and did very well on the final examination. Alice Chen told me that Evergreen would sponsor me if I were willing to study medicine at the public health school. Of course, I was willing but I needed to talk to my parents. At first, when I talked with them they

"As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."
Isaiah 55:9

Peter and Valborg Torjesen (Norwegians with China Inland Mission in Hequ, Shanxi Province) read Isaiah 55:9 on December 14, 1939. That same day, Peter was killed when Japanese bombed their home and church where at times up to 1,000 refugees and wounded were sheltered. In her grief, Valborg heard God say: *"You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."* John 13:7

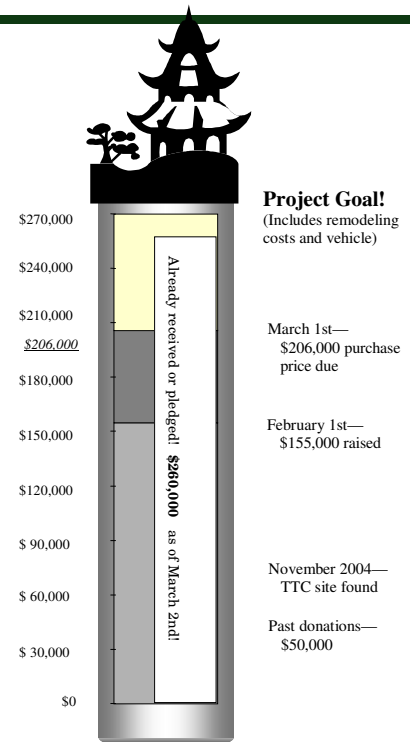
Little did Peter's four children guess that 50 years later in 1990, they would attend the dedication of a monument honoring their beloved Far and be invited by Chinese officials to return to Shanxi to work in the spirit of Peter Torjesen.

PRAISE REPORT

Thanks to the generosity of so many friends of Evergreen, we have been able to purchase the new Taiyuan Training Center!

It was truly the Lord's provision that over \$200,000 was given in such a short amount of time enabling us to purchase the new site without loans or penalties. This is a wonder we plan to tell to all who visit our new facility. The new office and training center is three times the size of our present office and should be ready for us to move into by early summer. Given what He has done already, we are excited to watch God take this empty concrete shell and transform it into an active testimony of His love for Shanxi.

Many thanks to all who have joined with us through your prayers and gifts. Please continue to lift up the Taiyuan region of Evergreen as we seek to develop this new facility wisely and to His glory.



SHAN XI CITY PROFILE—YUCI

City Population: 350,000 (urban center)

Main People Group: Han Chinese. There is a small mosque frequented by Hui and Uighur Moslems.

Primary Language: Mandarin with many local dialectical variations

Religious Following (estimates):

Nonreligious 60%
 Buddhist/Daoist/Confucist Amalgam 27%
 Buddhist 8%
 Protestant/Catholic 4%
 Animist/Shamanist 1%

Geography: Yuci is the main city center for Jinzhong Prefecture in central Shanxi Province. It is located just southwest of Taiyuan. The Han Mountains lie to the north, the Xiao River borders the south, and numerous small villages surround the city. In the 1980s, Yuci was known as "The city with one policeman and one traffic light," a small and peaceful place. But in the last ten years, it has grown remarkably in size and population with two world-class factories and a burgeoning business culture. Being a small city, Yuci has the advantage of space to expand and build housing, roads and shopping centers. There are several lovely city squares that provide evening recreation, as well as a new Culture and Arts Center with a library, movie theaters and first-rate concert hall.

City History: Yuci has a history of 3,000 years. China's merchant culture began in Yuci around 300 years ago, and is now memorialized by the lovely Chang Family Manor and the recently restored Yuci Old City. The Yuci Protestant Church was started by Norwegian missionaries to China. Later, the work in Yuci was run by German missionary Oscar Schroeder and his Norwegian wife Esther who were with the Assemblies of God Church (serving from 1909-34). The original church, built while the Schroeders resided in Yuci, was replaced by the current church on the same location in 1996. The current church can seat 400 people. Believers today enjoy fellowship in Yuci's two Protestant churches on Sunday and in home fellowships throughout the week. The church body is around 70% women and most of the believers are between 40-60 years of age, although the number of younger believers increases each year. The preaching for the Sunday services is rotated among several men and women who are lay leaders. One of the leaders has completed a Bible course by correspondence, making her one of the most educated of the local preachers.

Christian Population in the City: 9,000 (estimate)

Number of Registered Churches: Two Protestant Churches and two Catholic churches

The Evergreen Purpose is:

To assist Shanxi and other Chinese Provinces by:

- *Developing public benefit services for the common people,*
- *Continuing the good works of Ye Yongqing (Leaf Evergreen, i.e. Peter Torjesen),*
- *Acknowledging God's gracious calling in our lives and*
- *Reflecting the credibility of Christ.*

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a housing and living allowance for a short-term teacher (minimum commitment of one school year). If you or someone you know is interested, please contact Edie Eager at edieeager@yahoo.com.

Edina Elliott, editor of the Evergreen Update, lives in Yangqu with husband Curt and five of their six children.

URGENT REQUEST

Edie Eager, our elementary teacher, is requesting a one-year leave of absence to care for her elderly mother. This is only possible if we can locate an experienced elementary teacher to replace her for the 2005-2006 school year. If interested, contact Edie Eager at edieeager@yahoo.com.

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Tax deductible contributions can be made in Australia, Canada and the USA.



Vern & Dorothy Strom

The Evergreen Board held their winter meeting in January in Scottsdale, Arizona. Scottsdale Bible Church graciously hosted. At that time, Chairman **Vern Strom** stepped down as chairman after 12 years of faithful service to Evergreen. Our warmest thanks go out to Vern, and his wife **Dorothy**, for their leadership over the years. Please join us in praying for **Dr. Bill Cairney**, our new chairman, and for new board member **Lyn Hopkins** of Indonesia. Mrs. Hopkins has many years of overseas experience and a heart for our ministry.

Philip Lai, a Canadian medical student, assisted with medical projects in Yangqu for a month this winter. Evergreen welcomed back interns **Joel and Diana Davidse** in January to do several weeks of further agricultural training and to teach cheese making to local women .

Also in January, the North American office bade farewell to assistant **Jan Schmidt**. Other work responsibilities have called Jan away from Evergreen, though she remains a dear friend. We will all miss Jan's cheerful service from the Colorado Springs office and thank her for her hard work.

In December, **Andrew Kaiser** and **Mark Strand** with **Dr. Peng Guanxi** appeared on a local TV talk show, "Tell It Like It Is." Dr. Peng is a longtime partner with Evergreen's Well Baby Program in Yangqu. The half-hour long program featured Evergreen's history and work and the host was especially receptive to hearing about why Evergreen works the way we do.

In December, Evergreen hosted the official opening of the new Yangqu Community Center including a special Christmas performance by the SEIS students.

In January, Chinese staff members **Guo Jinzhi** and **Qiao Huiwen** attended a press briefing in Beijing announcing the release of the book "200 International NGOs in China." Evergreen is one of the few Christian groups featured in this publication.

Finn Torjesen, Executive Director of Evergreen, is initiating a monthly e-mail prayer and praise brief, to keep interested individuals in touch with Evergreen and events in China. If you are interested in receiving this, please request it by sending an e-mail to **Glenda Wilson** in Colorado Springs at gwilson@pcisys.net.

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