



# JUNE 2015 NEWSLETTER



## Spotlight on JiYu Jia, Translator to Shenzhen Social Work Delegation

by Brady Calestro

*Between May 10th - 21st, the Columbus International Program hosted the second annual social work delegation from Shenzhen, China. During their time in Columbus, the delegation visited various social service organizations around Central Ohio. The following is an interview with JiYu Jia — CIP's resident Chinese translator — who did an exceptional job of managing the flow of communication between the delegation and their professional counterparts. The text has been edited for clarity. (BC = Brady Calestro, JJ = JiYu Jia)*

**BC:** How would you describe the state of social services in China?

**JJ:** They are in their infancy -- from education to the social service system. Social work as we know it in the United States is less than 10-years-old in China. That's why upon their return to China, these delegates will become the real trailblazers in the field of social services. Most social organizations are funded by local government, and they hardly survive by themselves. Effective independent fundraising activities are only planned by handful of NGOs each year. The services those agencies provide are all bought by different levels of government and different departments. Moreover, organizations waste more time on evaluations for different places, because there are no uniform standards and experienced third-party providers.

**BC:** After talking with the delegation, what sorts of models which have proven successful in Columbus could be integrated into the Chinese system?

**JJ:** First of all, education! Chinese society needs hundreds of thousands of social workers, but the education system is even more challenged than the social service system. Few if any professors or teachers in universities have a real social work background until recent years. Moreover, a code of ethics and an importance of practice have been ignored. For instance, Doctors with a Sociology, Anthropology or Psychology degrees are the most popular teachers in social work field. They have a limited understanding about social work and few identify themselves as a social worker. That's why I'm not surprised that outside of myself, only one of my undergraduate classmates [in China] works in social work. In that case, I believe that OSU's BSW and MSW could help them a lot. There's a huge opportunity for OSU to provide excellent training for social workers in China. (continued next page)

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Source: Columbus Business First, <http://www.bizjournals.com/columbus/blog/2015/05/census-columbus-among-the-country-s-fastest.html>



Another area the delegation learned about during their visit was hospital social work. Since most members of the delegation were social workers, they understood what social work means. They were amazed by the degree to which social work is essential in places like Ohio Health and Nationwide Children's Hospital. Yes, as social worker, we should be the problem solver, but in many cases we are more like resource-linkers. On job training and cooperation with medical staff allow social workers in hospitals become "middlemen" between patients and doctors. Moreover, they are not only providing clear information and knowledge to allow patients (and patients' family members) to grasp the full picture of their state, but they also allow doctors to save time which could be spent providing service to others. In China, the relationship between patients and doctors is challenging, since they have a hard time communicating with each other effectively, and there is limited help from third-parties. In addition to applying their social work skills, social workers in China must learn to help patients and their relatives link to the resources they need, just like here.

**BC:** What do you think Americans who work in the social services could learn from the social services in Shenzhen?

**JJ:** I don't know how to say it the right way, since I'm still thinking about it. But I prefer to call it "Initiative Service". Actually, it's a little against the social worker's code of ethics in the United States. However, it works well in China. Because of cultural difference and the Chinese personality, social workers in China have to wait for clients come to them. Personally, I *do* think American social services could learn something from this, since many clients here have different cultural backgrounds which need this extra effort to encourage them to ask for help from an outsider in their communities. That doesn't mean social workers don't respect a client's choice or decision, but sometimes they don't know what choices they have or they have no idea what kind of resources are available to them.



**The 2015 Shenzhen Social Work Delegation on their first night in Columbus.**





The delegation at Nationwide Children's Hospital



The delegation at CASA of Franklin County

BELOW: At their farewell dinner at the Sunflower Chinese Restaurant in Dublin, the delegation showed their gratitude by sharing songs and performances. CIP is proud to facilitate cultural exchanges like these which will



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