



梦想行动

DREAMCORPS

2010 Annual Report

Dream Corps International

让阅读放飞梦想  
*Let Reading Inspire*

[www.dreamcorps.org](http://www.dreamcorps.org)  
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## LETTER

### FROM CHINA PROGRAM DIRECTOR

In 2010, Dream Corps donated 9775 books to nine schools in Henan, Hunan, Sichuan, and Jiangxi provinces. Forty-One volunteers participated in our month-long summer volunteer program. They also helped to train student librarians so that they can independently manage the libraries after volunteers have left. In 2010 we added two new university chapters: Indiana University, U.S.A. and York University, Canada, for a total of nine chapters.

Seven librarians and four school administrators attended a four-day reading workshop in May 2010. One principal wrote a letter to us saying that the workshop improved his understanding of Dream Corps and the importance of reading as well as the key role of librarians in a school system. It is indeed such support from librarians and administrators that underwrites the sustainability of school libraries. All of our current Dream Libraries are open for more than two days a week. Five schools set up book corners in their classrooms, and each student in these five schools reads for at least 20 minutes every day and more than 50 books in the year. This is a noteworthy outcome when compared to the sixth national reading survey statistic showing that on average each child in China reads less than 10 books every year.

Establishing a library is not the main goal of our collaboration with a school. We aim to help children become life-long readers and learners. "Reading to children" is a simple but effective way to get children interested in books. Allowing children the opportunity to express themselves is equally important. Two of our collaborating schools run school magazines and publish student articles; four schools prepare notebooks for students so they can write what they want to say about the books after reading them; and two schools hold story-telling and recitation contests to develop students' confidence to speak in public.

We believe that a love of reading will help every child, and that as long as even one child grows up without the joy of reading, we have work to do. If you share this belief, please continue to help Dream Corps grow and make a difference in the lives of more children.



Yan Liu  
CHINA PROGRAM DIRECTOR

## LETTER

### FROM CHAIR OF BOARD AND PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

In the past seven years, we have built more than 20 Dream Libraries, provided 25,000 books and recruited and trained more than 200 volunteers who contributed more than 36,000 hours of on-site work. In 2010, we restructured the leadership of Dream Corps, adding full-time staff and a group of young professionals to run the organization. Dream Corps is entering a new stage. For all of these achievements, we are grateful for the participation, support, care, and criticism from many people: volunteers, donors, friends, local partners, teachers, and the children of rural China. We are especially proud of our volunteers, who, we believe, will continue to find their experience as a Dream Corps volunteer a meaningful and inspiring part of their life.

China has undergone dramatic changes during these seven years. In particular, economic growth has led to substantial improvement of the material environment of education in rural China. The need for good books, however, remains enormous. The idea of learning through independent, self-guided reading remains largely unrecognized and unaccepted. It is in this area where Dream Corps is looking forward to playing a leadership role. We believe that in our era of "fast-food culture" and endless instant distractions on the Internet, the need for reading a good book with a peaceful mind—a need for children as well as for grown-ups—is more pressing than ever. Much work awaits Dream Corps in the new decade.

The mission of Dream Corps started out as a very broad one of promoting social harmony in general. It later evolved to that of bringing good books to rural areas, opening libraries, and providing educational assistance. Today, we are focused on promoting high-quality reading experience for children. Dream Corps does more than just donating books. We build relationships with schools, with teachers, and with children, and helps them develop relationships with books. Such relationships not only give children company and enjoyment today while their parents work far away, but also nurture in them understanding of the wider world and hope for a better future.

Thank you very much for entrusting you generous gift for children to Dream Corps. Your gift is fostering a love of learning that will be carried along throughout their lives. Please continue to support the cause of Dream Corps: together, we let reading inspire.



Dajun Hou  
CHAIR OF THE BOARD  
OF DIRECTORS



Ruoxia Li  
PRESIDENT

## Overview

2010 is the seventh year that Dream Corps International (“Dream Corps” for short) has worked in rural China. Using experience accumulated in the previous six years, Dream Corps has made significant progress in both programming and organization management this year.

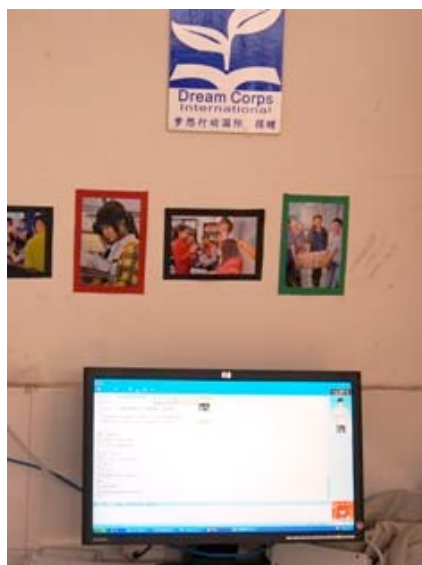
In terms of programming, we have continued and expanded our main programs from the past. These include

- Book donations: a total of 9,775 books, worth 145,696 RMB;
- Project sites: a total of 10 sites, including all 8 old sites and 2 new sites;
- Summer Volunteer Program: 200 applications received, 94 interviews conducted, 41 volunteers selected; and
- Library and reading: at each project site, we continued to provide stipends for librarians, encourage schools to open libraries on a regular basis, and develop reading activities.

In addition to the above fundamental program elements, this year, we have focused on improving communication among Dream Corps organizers, volunteers, school administrators and teachers. A series of new project activities have encouraged many schools to become more involved and active than in the past, and enhanced their own capacity to keep libraries open and run reading activities. Specifically, we

- Invited librarians and administrators from each project site to Beijing for training organized by Dream Corps and for sharing experiences among fellow librarians and administrators,
- Successfully adopted electronic library management systems at 6 project sites,
- Successfully piloted book corners in classrooms,
- Successfully piloted guided extra-curricular reading at home,
- Convinced Huju Elementary School in Hunan, Tenglou Experimental Primary School in Henan, and Nanguang Middle School in Sichuan to incorporate reading classes into school curriculum,
- Extensively encouraged teachers to take initiative in guiding students’ reading, through
  - Improving teachers’ understanding of the function of school libraries and knowledge of books availability at their school’s libraries,
  - Encouraging teachers to organize reading activities based on local school characteristics and to integrate library uses into daily teaching, and
  - Piloting “Reading Workshops” for teachers, and
- Installed a broadcasting system at Laochangying Elementary School in Henan.

In terms of organizational management, Dream Corps has progressed from being run exclusively by volunteers to having two full-time staff members in October 2010.



New computer for the digital library management system, at Nanguang School, Sichuan. Through training and assistance we offered, the school’s librarian Ms. Chaoqiong Lai, who did not know how to use a computer before, has learned to run the library independently.

## Site Visits

To keep close contact with project sites and to fully understand the operation of the libraries and reading projects, Dream Corps enhanced the depth and frequency of site visits, which also evaluated the effect of the librarian training and the summer volunteer program. In total three rounds of site-visits were conducted systematically.

The first round of site visits was conducted in spring 2010. Program officer Ms. Yujia Wang visited four schools in Hunan, and board member Dr. Lili Lai visited Laochangying village in Henan. During the summer volunteer program in June 2010, executive officer Ruoxia Li conducted the second round of site visits and systematically evaluated all nine sites. In November 2010 China Program Director, Dr. Yan Liu, conducted the third round of visits to all project sites.

From those visits, we found the following general encouraging patterns at our project sites:

- Regular opening of library: all libraries are open to students, conforming to our contracts with the schools. Some of them extend beyond the required open hours and some are open for the entire school period.
- Transformation of the role of librarians: quite a few librarians went beyond their traditional role as mere “book keepers” to become active “reading guiders”.
- Setup of book corners in classrooms: due to the students’ busy schedule and librarians’ heavy teaching load, many libraries used to open for less than one hour per day. With book corners in classrooms, students’ reading time is dramatically increased because access to books is no longer limited to the library’s open hours.
- Regular reading time and reading curriculum: Three schools have designated regular classroom reading time, such as 15 minutes during the morning self-study session or during the lunch break. In some schools, reading is incorporated into the curriculum, which engenders at the school the atmosphere of a reading community.
- Teacher-guided classroom reading: in addition to librarians, school teachers also play an important role in developing students’ reading interest and improving their reading skill.



The open school library at Huju Middle School, November 2010



## Book Donation



Students excited about arrival of new books, Huju Elementary School Library, Hunan

This year, ten sites received 9,775 books through Dream Corps (see table to the left). Among these, Xinping Foundation donated 4,191 books to the libraries in Henan, Jiangxi and Sichuan, the Buddhism Study Group at Indiana University donated 63 books to the libraries in Hunan Huju Elementary School and Sichuan Nanguang Middle School, & Zhejiang Children's Publishing House donated 100 books to Beijing New Century Library.

For book sourcing, our major partner is Beijing Brooks Education Center (BBEC). Through their mediation with multiple publishing companies, BBEC helped us acquire high quality books at a reasonable price. From the list of available books from BBEC, we selected and purchased literature, science, and arts books suitable for the age and reading level of students at the schools, according to our experience in reading programs and local schools' specific recommendations. A fair number of the books were picture books selected specifically for beginning readers.

One of the ten sites, New Century Library, was founded in 2005 in a migrant community in Zhufang Village, Beijing. After six years of support from Dream Corps and two years of funding secured by Dream Corps from the Chen Yet-Sen Family Foundation, this library became self-sustaining in 2010.

Library Sites	Donations	
	Books	Value
Zaoshi Elementary School Library, Hunan (800 students)	913	\$1,816
Sicong Elementary School Library, Hunan (661 students)	913	\$1,816
Pingshui Elementary School Library, Hunan (1115 students)	913	\$1,816
Huju Elementary School Library, Hunan (540 students)	945	\$1,877
Huju Middle School Library, Hunan (800 students)	612	\$2,074
Tenglou Experimental Primary School, Henan (229 students)	610	\$1,591
Laochangying Elementary School Library, Henan (160 students)	1401	\$2,960
Nanguang Middle School Library, Sichuan (888 students)	1951	\$5,198
Desheng Elementary School Library, Jiangxi (320 students)	1417	\$2,833
Beijing New Century Library, Zhufang Migrant Community, Beijing	100	\$229
<b>Total:</b>	<b>9775</b>	<b>\$22,210</b>

## Teacher Training

Through our efforts in previous years, we gained a good understanding about the necessary conditions for setting up libraries and developing reading programs in rural schools. Among other factors, support from the leadership of the schools is a crucial precondition and dutiful librarians are the key. Given this, we invited from the schools their principals and librarians to a training program in Beijing in May 2010. Twelve teachers from our sites attended, including Mr. Yi Wang, Director of Beijing New Century Library, Principal Zhen'ai Chang from Tenglou Experimental Primary School, Principal Fuping Li from Huju Elementary School, Vice Principal Junsheng Jiang from Lingfang Elementary School, and Curriculum Director Fengming Chen from Nanguang Middle School as well as librarians from each site.

### Lectures and presentations:

#### *Children's psychology of reading*

Jin Zhu

Center for Reading Research, Beijing Normal University

#### *How to interpret picture books to children*

Xiaoying Wang

Translator and children's book expert

#### *How to read aloud storybooks to children*

Ling Li

The Green Child

#### *How to categorize library books*

Jinghong Yang

Librarian, No.14 Middle School of Beijing

#### *Digital management system for school libraries*

Jingwei Fan

1Kg Book Donation Net

### Visits:

- Library of No.14 Middle School of Beijing
- China National Library
- New Century Library, Zhufang Village, Qinghe, Beijing

### Topics discussed:

- Interaction between reading & teaching
- Relation between operation of libraries & support from school leadership
- Challenges in daily library management & operation
- Role, responsibility, & workload of school librarians

Through training and face-to-face discussions with reading experts and Dream Corps organizers and volunteers, teachers in charge of each site gained insights into libraries and reading and further identified with Dream Corps's mission. Moreover, their connections with Dream Corps and the volunteers were strengthened, and their willingness to cooperate and promote library programs at their school was enhanced. From what we saw during our subsequent visits, our teacher-training program this year turned out to be a great success with outstanding results.

Apart from teacher training in Beijing, Dr. Yan Liu, our China Program Director, also gave lectures on reading methods and skills and led discussions during her site visits to all of the schools, which further deepened mutual understanding between Dream Corps and the schools regarding library and reading.



Ms. Ling Li of The Green Child demonstrates how to read picture books to children.



Ms. Jinghong Yang of Beijing No.14 Middle School gives a tutorial on book cataloguing.



## Star Reading Promoters

The program goal of Dream Corps is to initiate and facilitate open libraries and reading programs that are eventually to be run locally by the schools and communities they serve. The support and passion of the local leaders, teachers and librarians play a crucial role in achieving this goal. In 2010, we received great support from various project sites. We would like to share with you the stories of four “Star Reading Promoters” who have done an outstanding job in promoting reading in their local schools or communities.



**Fengming Chen, Curriculum Director , Nanguang Middle School, Sichuan**

Mr. Chen championed the idea of rural school libraries that are “always open” (常态化开放). He strongly supports the adoption of digital management of the library and is committed to full library access for all students rather than selective groups or grades. He initiated the combination of library use and classroom reading to develop students’ interest in reading. He deeply appreciates the importance of school librarians and was instrumental in making one of the teachers at the school full-time librarian.

**Junli Duan, Part-time Librarian, Huju Elementary School, Hunan**

Ms. Duan designed and created “reading notecards”. After each student finishes reading a book, she asks them to write on a reading notecard the title, the author, and the publisher of the book, their favorite phrases and characters from the book, and one sentence expressing their feelings from reading the book. As students return books, they give their reading notecards to Ms. Duan, who then organizes a discussion to share these reading notecards among students. This “reading notecard” idea is simple, but creative and effective. It does not place a lot of pressure on students but helps them better understand the book.



**Xiaodong Wang, Full-time Librarian, Laochangying Community Library, Henan**

On her own initiative, Ms. Wang went beyond her role as keeper of books to organize reading activities among local students. She herself has read most of the books in the library and is good at recommending books suitable for students. For example, when the village school’s fifth-grade teacher asked students to read “classics”, they turned to Ms. Wang for advice. In response, Ms. Wang not only found appropriate books for them, but also offered brief summaries. And the students were instantly hooked.

**Dong Tang, Part-time Librarian and Curriculum Director, Tenglou Elementary School, Henan**

At his school, Mr. Tang introduced one reading lesson per week for each class, led by the class’s Chinese teacher. He also led weekly discussions of plans for reading lesson with all Chinese teachers at the school. These discussions covered reading methods, guided reading, self-directed reading, reading sharing, English reading, and reading show-and-tell. Mr. Tang also encouraged Chinese teachers to use famous Chinese and foreign sayings about reading to encourage their students to read good books often and to enjoy reading.





## Digital Library Management

In 2010, Dream Corps has computerized library management in 8 schools, using the library loan management system developed by 1Kg Book Donation Net ([www.1kgbook.org](http://www.1kgbook.org)). During our Beijing training, we invited the staff of 1Kg Book donation Net to demonstrate this system. At each site, our volunteers helped librarians set up the system and digitize book catalogues. Our volunteers also prepared a user manual that addresses common problems from actual use of the system. Moreover, They familiarized student librarian assistants from the local schools with this library management system, so that they could help the school librarians with book circulation.

We discovered many advantages of digital library management. First, the 1Kg Book Donation Net system has a simple user interface with a relatively comprehensive set of features, making it easy for teachers and librarians from the rural communities to learn and use it. Second, the system greatly simplified the process of book borrowing and returning, reduced the workload of librarians, and thereby significantly increased the efficiency of library management. Third, librarians can update the library information regularly to the website of 1Kg Book Donation Net through this management system, allowing donors, schools, and Dream Corps staff to track the operation of each library, thereby giving us a tool for making our project management more transparent to the public. Finally, through this system, we can see which books are being frequently borrowed and accordingly make adjustments in our future book sourcing.



The screenshot shows the 1kgbook.org website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links like '首页', '浏览捐书项目', 'DIY自助捐书', '爱心礼物卡', '我的1kgbook', '浏览分享日志', and '浏览公益组织'. Below this is a banner for '1kgbook 祝大家新春快乐!'. The main content area is divided into two sections: '学校图书利用率排行' (School Book Usage Rate Ranking) and '图书借阅排行' (Book Borrowing Ranking).

**学校图书利用率排行**

序号	学校名称	总学生数	借阅次数	利用率
1	河南邓州裴营乡老常营村社区图书室	160	2648	1655%
2	河南邓州裴营乡滕楼村实验小学图书室	229	961	428.38%
3	四川宜宾南广镇中学图书室	888	2632	296.4%
4	晏阳初图书馆	2400	2097	87.38%
5	熊培云图书馆	2400	1975	82.29%
6	甘肃省舟曲县城关第一小学	1400	331	23.64%
7	甘泉图书馆	4800	974	20.29%
8	湖南株洲茶陵县平水镇中心小学图书室	1115	148	13.27%
9	北京市昌平新源打工子弟学校(原单村百年实验学校)	319	40	12.54%
10	湖南株洲茶陵县枣市镇中心小学图书室	800	77	9.63%

**图书借阅排行**

序号	图书名称	出版社	借阅次数
1	暂无图片 精选英汉汉英词典(大字本)	商务印书馆	50
2	书虫入门级-红酋长的赎金	外语教学与研究出版社	24
3	书虫入门级-吸血鬼猎手	外语教学与研究出版社	24
4	我的第一本科学漫画书:原始丛林大冒险(7)	二十一世纪出版社	18
5	儿童彩绘注音版:安徒生童话	云南教育出版社	18
6	我的第一本科学漫画书:亚马逊丛林历险记(40)	二十一世纪出版社	17
7	漫女生	凤凰出版传媒集团	16
8	世界儿童共享的经典丛书:一千零一夜	上海人民美术出版社	16
9	我的第一本科学漫画书:撒哈拉沙漠求生记(3)	二十一世纪出版社	16
10	人类未解之谜	吉林文史出版社	15

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### Sample activity records from 1Kg Book Library Management System

We also encountered various challenges associated with digital library management. First, the system requires a stable Internet connection to operate properly, which proves challenging at some sites. Second, old computers used at some sites (such as Tenglou & Huju Elementary Schools) were inadequate for stably running the system. Third, the amount of training and technical support required at the initial phase of implementation is a serious overhead. To meet these challenges, we need to ensure close three-way collaboration among Dream Corps, the schools, and 1Kg Book Donation Net.

## 2010 Summer Volunteer Program

The annual Summer Volunteer Program (SVP), running from the end of May through the end of June is one of the most significant events of the Dream Corps year. During last year's SVP, more than forty volunteers, hailing from many universities around the world, came united by Dream Corps's mission of promoting education equity for rural China and contributed a month of their precious time towards library building and reading promotion in rural China.

Preparation for the SVP, however, started much earlier. Online Application for the SVP was officially launched near the end of January. Through February and March, our Recruitment Committee worked diligently to ensure that applicants were properly and fairly screened and interviewed. During April and May, Dream Corps hosted four online training sessions for this year's volunteers. Beginning in late May, volunteers joined together with Dream Corps staff for a three-day Training Camp in Beijing. Volunteers then went to nine different project sites to work for three weeks, after which they returned to Beijing for a two-day concluding forum.

Although specific activities of our volunteers varied from site to site, these largely fall into three categories: (1) opening and improving libraries, including decorating libraries and reading rooms, book cataloging, streamlining of library operation, installation of digital library management, and technical assistance to local librarians, (2) designing and organizing reading activities, such as "month of reading" promotion, reading aloud to children, creative handcrafts, English reading, and science and technology popularization, and (3) learning from and understanding the local communities through teacher-volunteer discussion, home visits, and community engagement.

The 2010 SVP combined our traditional work on library resource and infrastructure with an emphasis on reading activity. Not only did our volunteers catalogue large quantities of new books, better the reading environment, and set up digital library management systems and launched "book corners" inside classrooms to facilitate book access, they also spent much of their time promoting reading to students, teachers, schools, and communities. They selected "student librarians" at several sites to improve student participation in library operation. They also organized essay writing, story telling, acting, as well as other forms of reading activities. In all these activities, volunteers cooperated closely with local teachers and schools. At some sites, volunteers also promoted reading in local communities.



Librarian and volunteer training camp, Beijing

### Timeline

4.10—5.01	Online training
5.20—5.22	Librarian Training in Beijing
5.23—5.25	Volunteer Training in Beijing
5.26—6.22	On-site work
6.24—6.25	Concluding Forum



## Volunteers

### Universities of 2010 Volunteers

#### Canada

University of Toronto  
McGill University  
Queen's University  
Marianopolis College  
York University  
University of Western Ontario

#### U.S.A.

Temple University  
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi  
University of Virginia  
University of Chicago  
University of North Carolina  
University of Pennsylvania  
University of Pittsburgh  
University of San Francisco  
Bryant University  
Clark University  
Duke University  
Illinois Institute of Technology  
Indiana University  
University of Tulsa  
College of William and Mary  
Middlebury College  
Wellesley College  
Williams College  
Bard College  
Washington University in St. Louis  
Murray State University

#### Asia

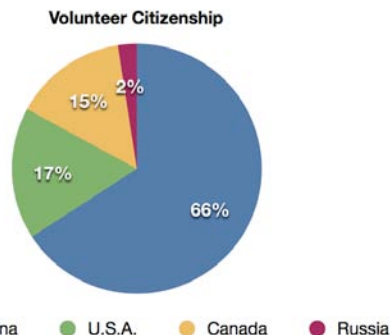
Heilongjiang University  
National University of Singapore

#### Britain

London School of Economics

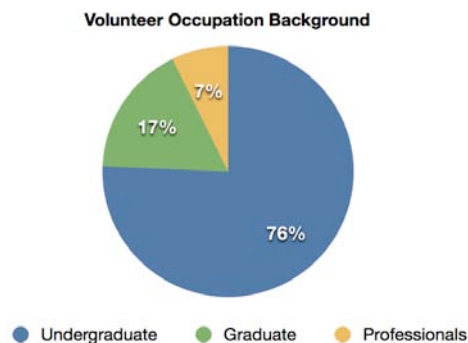
### Composition of 2010 Volunteer Class

Canada	6
U.S.A.	7
Russia	1
China	27
<b>Total:</b>	<b>41</b>



Volunteer Citizenship

Undergraduate	31
Graduate	7
Professionals	3
<b>Total:</b>	<b>41</b>



Volunteer Occupational Background

## Program Highlights

### Furnishing a Dream Library

Much of our work at a new site during the first year involves book cataloguing and library environment improvement. Take Huju Middle School as an example (pictured on the right): our volunteers did a lot of labor-intensive work, such as book sorting, re-labeling and cataloging. The suitable ones among the school's old books were combined with new books donated by Dream Corps. These were then digitally cataloged and physically labeled and shelved, in a way that is easy to retrieve. Our volunteers also decorated the walls, blackboards, desks and chairs of the library with unique designs in order to create a colorful and comfortable reading environment. To help the students feel at home in the library, volunteers encouraged them to use their imagination and creativity to make little colorful books, which were put on the walls of the library for sharing with each other.



"A Colorful World", Huju Middle School Library, Hunan

### Student Librarians



Student librarians at work, Nanguang Middle School, Sichuan

"We put posters up to recruit student librarians. In the first couple of days nobody stepped forward. We started talking to students in person about what they can learn from such a role and encouraged them to apply. After that we got many applications, which we looked through thoroughly and then selected qualified applicants for interviews. Letting students 'organize' other students turned out to be very effective. Those who are 'in charge' perform their duties very well, and those who are not envied the student librarians. Later we discovered many students would like to be in this position, for this was a very dignifying task for them."

— Ai'dong Ji, Sicong Team

At Sicong Elementary, Zaoshi Elementary and Huju Middle Schools in Hunan, and Nanguang Middle School in Sichuan, student librarian program was established to assist school librarian in library operation. Dream Corps volunteers recruited and selected librarian assistants from the students. In the elementary schools, student-librarians are selected from grade 3 or 4 students, because grade 5 or 6 students are close to graduation and grade 1 or 2 students are too young to handle the responsibilities of this position. In the middle schools, student-librarians are selected from grade 7 students. Training was provided to these student librarians, during which their roles and responsibilities are explained, and basics of book cataloguing, books shelving and use of "book proxy" boards were taught to them.

The student librarians are divided into shifts. When on duty, they ensure students are following the rules for library use, remind them of talking quietly, no eating, no fighting, taking good care of books, and keeping the library clean.

The "book proxy" is a board to be inserted at the position of a book that is being taken out. When the book is returned to the library, the borrowed book is put back to the shelf where the book proxy is. This is an efficient way to ensure the book goes back to where it belongs on the bookshelves. It helps students understand library operation and facilitate their self-management. At Zaoshi School, book proxies are made of wood. At Huju Middle School, they were made from recycled cardboard.



## Book Corners

While an always-open school library is crucial for supporting reading, it also has its limitations. First, space in the library and reading room, which is typically converted from a regular classroom, tends to be small, with a maximum of 40 or so seats, not quite enough for running a reading lesson for a typical class of 50 or more students. Second, some school libraries are located far from at least some of the classrooms, making it difficult for students to visit the libraries during breaks between classes. Third, since most librarians are actually full-time teachers, most libraries can stay open only for a short period of time, such as about an hour per day.

To address these issues, our volunteers have set up “book corners” inside classrooms at Nanguang Middle School, Huju Elementary School and Pingshui Elementary School this year. Nanguang piloted book corners in two grade-7 classes. Two student librarians were elected from each class and given training by our volunteers. Around 100 books, plus 25 English-Chinese dictionaries were lent out to each classroom. These book corners are open every day during the lunch break so that students can get books themselves. At Huju Elementary, bookshelves donated by two volunteers of our 2009 SVP were added in the classrooms of grades 3 and 4. The school librarian checks out from the school library a certain number of books at the beginning of each month for each classroom, to be replaced at the end of the month. Student representatives of each class are in charge of keeping track of books borrowed from and returned to the classroom book corner. At Pingshui Elementary, volunteers acquired 10 bookshelves for grades 3, 4, and 5 in collaboration with the school. Each class has two student librarians in charge of managing books on these shelves, which include books owned by the class itself, books borrowed from the school library, as well as books donated by the students themselves. In addition, volunteers at Huju and Pingshui have also set up book corners in offices of the teachers.

Setting up book corners has increased the use of books and made circulation faster and more effective, giving students more time to spend on reading. It also provides learning opportunity for students to practice care of books as well as self-governance.



Teaching students how to use “book proxies” to check out books, Zaoshi Elementary School Library, Hunan

## Communicating with Teachers

Initiative and participation of teachers are crucial conditions for successful promotion of reading in schools. This year, our SVP put special emphasis on volunteers' communication and cooperation with teachers.

### "A Midsummer Night's Dream"

Our volunteers at Pingshui School organized a tea party with teachers of the school. In reference to the fact that Dream Corps runs its SVP in midsummer, the party was nicknamed after the Shakespearean play. At the party, volunteers and teachers met and chatted in the school library's reading room. Volunteers shared about their experiences studying and living abroad. They also talked about the importance of reading and introduced the new books they have brought. Through sharing life experiences and stories, volunteers and teachers came to understand each other better. In particular, the teachers came to know why our volunteers went there in the first place. Moreover, through spending time in the reading room, many teachers became highly interested in the resources and learning opportunities the reading room and library could offer to their students.



"A Midsummer Night's Dream", Pingshui Elementary School, Hunan

### "A meeting a day"

At Nanguang Middle School, the volunteer team leader Ms. Lan Zhang worked closely with the school's Curriculum Director, Mr. Fengming Chen, and met everyday to review progress of work and make adjustments to plans for further action. Volunteers held weekly meetings with English teachers for grade 7 to both understand their needs and co-design English reading activities. Volunteers also met with head teachers of all classes to work out details of book corner implementation. In addition, volunteers engaged Chinese teachers of the school to promote the use of library and book corners and worked on a daily basis with the school librarian to co-design library management scheme and reading classes.



## Reading Activities

### An organic reading program

At the Tenglou Experimental Elementary School in Henan, volunteers formulated a 3-step program that organically integrated reading, writing, and storytelling in a way fully utilized the limited resources of the library and fit with the school's unique situation of having only sixth graders. Each of the three steps combined modeling and activity. The first step was about using the library for reading—for gathering and organizing raw materials. Volunteer Rindy Zhang explained the rules of library use, introduced how to search for information in the library, and arranged training exercises for the students to locate books, find useful material, and organize data by themselves in the library. The second step was a writing exercise. To lead the students to write creatively, volunteer Sijing Liang blended *Journey to the West* and *Cinderella* into a short play, which was in turn performed by the volunteers for the students so as to illustrate active and creative reading and writing. A training exercise was then arranged for the students to read two books of their choice from the library. The students were then encouraged to compose their own story with imagination, by integrating characters or stories from the two books. The third step was a storytelling contest. Volunteers introduced the students to the basics of storytelling through demonstration. The program culminated in a grand finale of the school-wide storytelling contest for students to tell the stories they wrote themselves.

“For the writing exercise, most of the students turned in their stories. We asked them to write at least 500 characters, but many of them wrote around 2000 characters, with some exceeding 3000. Some of them simply combined the story of the two books or copied the basic content of the original stories. But some of them really showed creativity with their well-conceived stories. For the storytelling contest, some of them told their stories as if they were reciting a textbook, but a small number of students came fully prepared and those who were chosen to enter the final contest demonstrated impressive talents. The entire project can be viewed as an interesting pilot. Its effect on students’ creative writing and expression ability is probably questionable. Guidance and modeling are clearly necessary, however, and there is no doubt that the activity part encouraged students’ participation and stimulated their enthusiasm for reading. And that is a most gratifying result of these activities.”

—Haitao Guo, volunteer at Tenglou.



Reading stories wrote by students during the “Month of Reading”, Tenglou Elementary School, Henan

## “Subjects of knowledge”

Books in a library are typically categorized according to subjects such as literature, history, society, and science and technology. Volunteers at Teng Lou Experimental School shared with the local students their knowledge of the subjects they majored in. For example, Yevgeniy Grechka from Russia gave a talk on statistics and game theory and Haitao Guo offered lectures on cinema, travel, and American history and culture. In openly sharing their own interests and learning in simple language and accessible style, volunteers showed the students the beauty of literature, of mathematics, of history, of geography, of science, and of nature, and stimulated their curiosity in these subjects. Such sharing did touch the students, who were very enthusiastic about the lectures. Haitao Guo said, “our main goal is to tell these children that they can find in books so many interesting and exciting things about the world.”

## English reading

Our volunteers at Nanguang Middle School designed an English reading program to increase the use of English reading materials and dictionaries donated to the school library through Dream Corps. They first learned about English teaching goals from teachers at the school. Then, they held discussions with teachers and students on the integration of library materials into English curriculum. Based on their research, they designed and implemented an English reading program that consisted of multiple activities. First, during the morning reading session before classes, volunteers would help students with their English pronunciation. Second, volunteers hosted an hour-long “English Corner” every day in the school library to provide opportunities for students to practice expression in English. Third, they taught grade 7 students how to use English-Chinese and Chinese-English dictionary. Fourth, volunteers guided students page-by-page through their reading of an abridged version of “King Arthur”, wherein every two students shared a copy of the book as well as an English-Chinese dictionary, with volunteers readily available for help. One of the volunteers, Clint Liddick from the USA, said that, “our hope is that this activity could instigate an interest in the students in reading English books, while helping them get used to using a dictionary.”



English reading class, Nanguang Middle School, Sichuan



### Promoting reading in rural homes

During the school hiatus around the Dragon Boat Festival and the local wheat harvest, our volunteers at Laochangying Community Library in Henan visited about 700 homes in 13 villages. They distributed flyers about library and reading and brought new books with them for story telling to children. They worked closely with the directors of women affairs in the villages to encourage young parents to read stories to their children. Grandparents were also invited to join in and listen to stories. Every evening after dinner, our volunteers would show up at children's homes to read to them and read with them. One of our volunteers, Geng Cheng, told the saga of the "Yang Warriors" as a series to a little boy.

At Laochangying School, our volunteers installed a brand-new public broadcasting system, with a veteran volunteer at the site, James Liao, contributing half of the funds. Using this system, the school and the community library co-organized a successful story-telling competition for children of the village. James, who has volunteered at Laochangying 5 years in a row, reflected: "It is no easy task to get a community library to truly function. It is only into this fifth year of our work here that we have probably learned enough to pull together the children, the village school, and the rural community to take advantage of the resources at our library."



Reading a story at a village home, Laochangying Community Library, Henan

## Financial Figures

November 2009 through December 2010

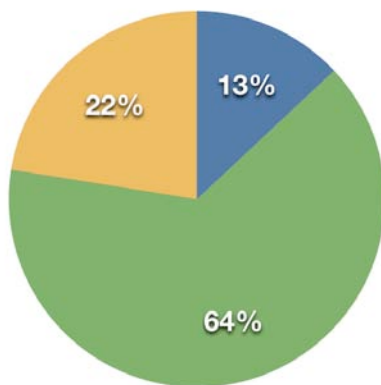
### Revenue

Corporate contributions	\$5,500
Foundation and charity contributions	\$27,247
Individual contributions	\$9,497
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$42,244</b>

### Expense

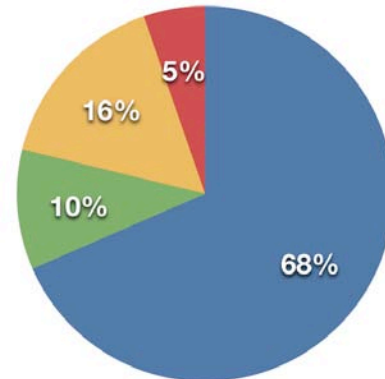
Books and program development	\$24,372
Librarian training and teacher development	\$3,686
Staff salary	\$5,664
Annual retreat and administration	\$1,880
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$35,602</b>

Revenue



- Corporate contributions
- Foundation and charity contributions
- Individual contributions

Expense



- Books and program development
- Librarian training and teacher development
- Staff salary
- Annual retreat and administration



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