

Sister Partnership Between West Park Academy and Xinjin Experimental Primary School

A field trip to Chinatown

1. Project Description

In order to address the need of students to experience Chinese culture, architecture, food and arts in a setting outside of school, promote the sister partnership between the host school and the home school, let all the pen pals students from 2 different schools between China and America to know more about each other's country and culture, we designed this project. To be specific, the objectives are to allow the students to experience hands on culture and break down cultural barriers, boost their interest in language learning and also support the STEAM goals and Chinese language project of the host school. The results of the project turned out to be great. All the students and their families enjoyed the experience, they learnt a lot about the Chinese traditional food and showed great interest in Mandarin and culture.

The project included three parts and was implemented at school and in Chinatown. First, at school, The students have been pen pals between the host school in Chicago, Illinois and the home school in Chengdu, China since November 2021. They sent videos to each other to introduce themselves. Second, on April 26, the 4th grade students who are taking mandarin classes and participating in the pen pal activity in America went to Chinatown in downtown Chicago as a field trip. They went to a Chinese park called Ping Tom Memorial Park in Chinatown and watched Chinese architecture and murals with Chinese characteristics in it. They performed a popular Chinese song Listen to Me Saying Thank You to express their gratitude to their parents and teachers there. They found their Chinese Zodiac sculpture and practiced asking and answering the sentence pattern we've learned at school each other at the zodiac square. At lunch time, the students tasted Chinese food in a Chinese restaurant, and they applied their ability to use chopsticks happily. After lunch, they walk around the streets and visited the stores. After the field trip, the participants filled in a survey for feedback.

Third, the students who participated in pen pal activity in China did hand tie-dry with some fabrics, dyestuff and showed it to their pen pals by pictures and videos at their school, it's one of the traditional Chinese cultures and it helped American

pen pals to know more about China and Chinese culture. All these activities promoted better cultural understanding between the students and enhanced the host school's critical language program greatly as well as expanded the community's knowledge of Chinese culture.

2. Results and accomplishments

Overall, the project was very successful. All the participants enjoyed all the activities and sent back their positive feedback. It was the first time for the host school to take students to Chinatown to explore Chinese culture. And it was also the first time for many families and students to eat Chinese food over there and visit the traditional Chinese park. They ranked out of 5 stars for their experience and they looked forward to exploring more about Chinese culture. Some parents told us they would take their kids to Chinatown in the future. When we went back to school, the students were so excited to write about their experience to their pen pal friends in China after this trip.

The project helped the students to be global citizens. It inspired cross-cultural friendships and gave students a great chance to experience hands-on culture and break down cultural barriers, and also boost their interest in language learning. Students got the opportunity to know something out of their own community and broaden their horizons. Through this field trip they got to know more about Chinese culture and some Chinese murals, they viewed and knew the meaning of the Chinese famous saying "The best kind is like water". They were fascinated by the delicious Chinese food. They obtained more information to communicate with their pen pals in China. It will help the students to break down cultural barriers and boost students' willingness to practice reading, writing, listening and speaking in Chinese. It greatly helped the students' parents know more about Chinese culture and support the host school's Chinese language project too.







 These pictures are from the home school in China:



