



幼稚园新闻

kindergarten news

Greetings Everyone!

2008 March
二〇〇八年三月

Spring has sprung in Chengdu; today was a perfect day with blue skies, lots of warm sunshine, and a light breeze. It was a good day – an indicator of what is to come. Now that the thawing process of a long winter is well underway, I feel a growing sense of anticipation.

As I did some walking and riding around my city today I noticed a growing number of building cranes. Construction projects are booming! Parts of the cityscape are being razed, making room for new buildings at an average of five times taller than what was there before. Change is definitely in the air. I believe what is happening in the natural world is a good indicator of what is going on in the invisible one. It's hard to believe how quickly buildings rise and new neighborhoods seem to be populated nearly overnight. I am believing this too is an indicator of what is happening beyond what my eyes can see.

I am now teaching in four schools – so my schedule is a little more demanding, but I still have some free time to rest and wait. I took some cute photos for you this month. “My” kids here get more adorable every day. I’m still active in the party scene – it keeps me busy. Things are going well here even in somewhat troubled times.

As many of you are keeping me in mind, I am keeping you in mind. I have heard about your struggles “at the pump” as gas prices keep rising and I’ve heard how it is impacting just about everything in your daily lives. The less-than-bright economic news has no doubt put a strain on you, forcing you to make difficult decisions about how you spend/save your money. I can identify. In a recent study reported on the BBC it was found that giving away or spending as little as a few dollars in a day on someone else (as opposed to spending it on one’s self) increased a person’s “happy” quotient by a significant margin. If the economic doom and gloom starts to get me down, I think I’ll give buying a friend or stranger a latte (or a Magnum ice cream bar) a try. Join me? And just so you know, on this one, I’ve got your back! Ecc4.12

Here’s a parting story for you. In one of my three-year-old classes this week they were studying how seeds can be planted to grow into something edible. As part of the lesson, students planted several kinds of seeds for their project. After planting the seeds, one of the students asked for water to “give the seeds.” When the teacher replied that she’d give them water in a little while, the student took matters into his own hands. He leaned over the boxes of freshly planted seeds and began spitting on them. It wasn’t long before he was joined by a handful of other spitting students. It’s a really cute story that gave me a good laugh. But it also served as a gentle reminder to me. I know the seed that’s been planted since my arrival, and I see clearly what the potential is. But I must not make the same mistake of that little boy by thinking up ways to speed up the process. I think I’ll wait for the water to come...there’s an internal belief that I won’t have long to wait. Isa55.10-11

With that, I’ll draw this note to a close. Thanks for letting me share what’s me and with me. Thank all of you for your responses last month – you help keep me connected.

Wishing you all the best as the seasons change,

A.

**For those of you who don't know, my grandma passed away this month – on to receive her reward. She will be missed!*

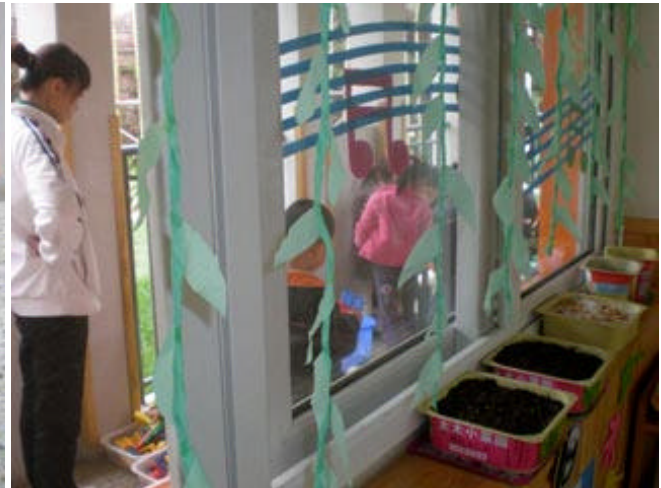




We've moved on to studying face parts as well as general body parts. There's never a dull moment.



Learning to work together is an important part of their early schooling. In a nation with a "one child policy," helping children learn to work with others can be tricky at times.



Yoyo joins the building craze. Seed boxes on the windowsill are like those used in the three-year-old class.



Many of the toys used during creative playtimes are made by the teachers using recycled items like cans, wads of paper, juice and milk boxes, fabric, felt, plastic tubing and all kinds of other interesting things. The coolest ones I've seen so far are coffee cans on the end of a stick that small students can roll around in the grass (like the popping push toys used in the States).



Left: Anna is leaning to jump rope. She's been practicing for weeks – she's up to doing two in a row now. Right: Tom is an artist. Whether drawing, or using his imagination to build something, he does it with flair.



Not only are the kids enjoying a building craze, but the entire city is abuzz with “cranes-cranes-everywhere.”



On the left is one of the newest completed projects near my home...just behind it another large block of high rises is underway. To entice people to purchase an unfinished flat, contractors put a contact number on the side of the building as it is being built. Most buildings are sold out before the fifth floor is completed.



Old sections like this one are slowly being bought out and knocked down, making room for future development. These scenes are familiar to me and make up part of my route to the center of the city. Looking at the picture on the right, notice the street hasn't been swept in a while - we bike riders really appreciate the street sweepers because we “feel” it when they're not around!



Left: It is not uncommon for a building, even one 30 stories, to be painted using a small crew (1-3 men per building) armed with buckets of paint and paint ROLLERS.

Right: A kids group sent this to me to let me know I'm in their thoughts. Thanks guys!

For everything there is a season, a time for every purpose...a time to tear down and a time to build up...we are definitely in that time here in both dimensions. It's exciting to watch the landscape change externally and internally.