

## LOVE LETTER TO SHANGHAI

My husband (Dewayne) and I both had Taiwanese roommates and many friends from China when we were in university in Texas, so when we graduated, we decided to take a year to travel to Asia before we settled down and started “real life.” That was back in 2002 and here we are, still here in 2020! Obviously, we didn’t stick to the one-year plan. Why? Because we fell in love with China and the people of China!

Dewayne and I both love our jobs here and we love the international community and our fellow expat friends, but the one thing that brought us to China continues to be the one thing that keeps us here – our Chinese friends! Here are just a few examples of the many, many Chinese friends who have enriched our lives:

- The COLD Group, a group of friends we formed back in 2009 and with whom we still meet on a weekly basis, more than 10 years later!
- Xiao Wang (our ayi) and her family who have showered us with love and care since 2009. Among other things, they invite our son (who was born here and has never lived anywhere else!) over every Saturday night and prepare an absolute feast for him!
- Our Bao’An who come knock on our door and let me know anytime my child or pets have escaped and who rushed over and put out a fire in our home a few months ago. These guys are our heroes!
- Many, many coworkers, especially my husband’s officemate who left work and went out to buy him slippers when he was hobbling around on crutches.
- My Chinese teachers who start out as teachers, but who quickly become friends and who have taught me far more than just Chinese.
- Medical professionals who go above and beyond and out of their way to help us when we need it and even just to check in on us.
- Shopkeepers who play ball with our son so I can get our grocery shopping done and fruit vendors who have his favorite grapes waiting for him as soon as they see us coming.

The list could go on and on...

Ironically enough, one of the major factors that led us to extend our time in China so long was SARS. We were less than a year into our China experience back in 2003 when SARS hit. The business we were working for ended up closing down for good, so we had to go back to Texas. Having to return before our initial year was up made us realize how much we love China and how we were nowhere ready to end our time here, so we scrambled to find new jobs and were back within a few months. We witnessed how China and her people overcame SARS and we have no doubt it will be just the same with Coronavirus. 加油，中国！我们爱你。

Love,

Carrie, Dewayne, and Laston Jones

