

A Life in Bloom

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Dedicated to serving the needs of the international community in Shanghai



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2021 Shanghai 123 is a **FREE** immersive half-day orientation catering towards the "New Normal" in Shanghai. Shanghai 123 will provide supportive information and resources that you need to help navigate Shanghai. We will discuss common issues, answer questions, and share tips to help support you in the "New Normal" in Shanghai. Leave with an essential foundation to continue to live in this dynamic city.

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- Work/Family Balance
- Managing Stress, Anxiety, & Transition
- ...and much more

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 To Connect, Support, and Enable Internationals to Adapt and Thrive in Shanghai

Bloom into your Fullest and Most Vibrant Colors!

If you are anything like me then you will have spent quite a bit of time trying to understand how best to navigate the daily challenges that life brings you – especially the challenges we still face as we navigate life in a pandemic. It's been over a year since it all started, and I assure you that I have looked to a LOT of places for inspiration.

- I have googled enough combinations of “how to balance work and online schooling,” “how to quieten the anxiety of the unknown,” “keto diet and the corona weight gain”... it is quite the list.
- I have tried to find inspiration in books that show the courageous spirit of people who have navigated huge challenges in their lives (I highly recommend Edith Eger’s *The Gift* if you need a bit of a jolt from the “woe is me” that sneaks into our lives).
- I have made a commitment to invest in my tribe to show up, be present in the process, and live as courageously as I can, and to do this with the fellowship of the women in my life. I thank Brené Brown and her ability to speak to me directly and authentically.

As I reflected on the theme of this issue, a huge part of my inspiration came from the recognition that for the first time in a long time I have been forced to stop and smell the roses – literally and figuratively. I had to stop and deal with the absence of things that I had taken for granted and learn to adjust my prism in life. I realized that life lessons can be found in the simplest of places such as the nature around me. What two things did I learn from observing the flowers?

I. Embrace the Sun (focus on the good)

Flowers grow towards the sun – they depend on it for life. As human beings, we too must focus on the light – the light that comes with virtues of goodness, generosity, happiness, moral integrity, and good will. Life is difficult and certainly, at many times and in many instances, dark and depressing. But without the darkness there could never be

light. Without this focus on all that is good and positive in life, our own happiness fades and we cannot be a source of light for others; for those who suffer in darkness and long to grow toward the sun.

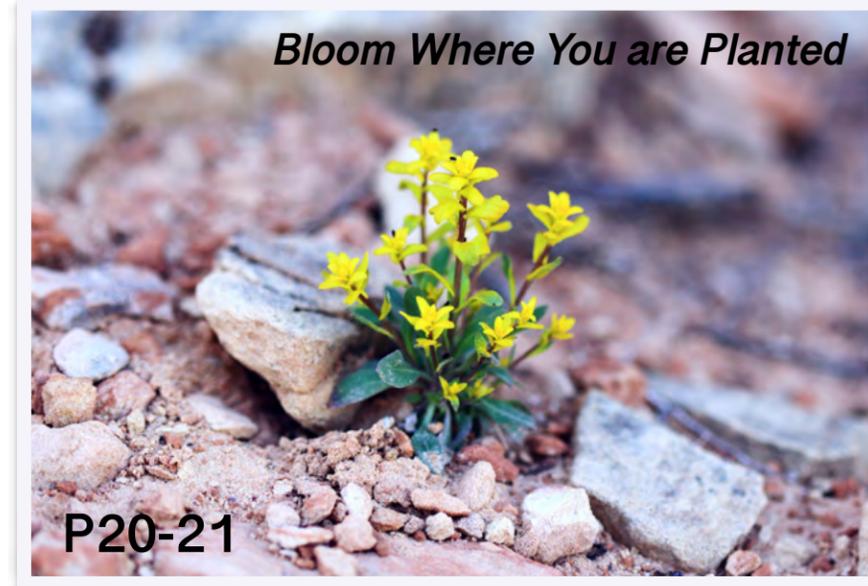
II. Open Up (no matter what is inside)

Flowers bloom regardless of what they look like, no matter their true colors. We owe it to ourselves to open up and fully embrace our uniqueness – to accept, appreciate, and maximize who we are on the inside. We owe it to ourselves to fully explore who we are: our interests, our passions, our fears, our strengths, and our weaknesses.

As you read through this issue “A Life in Bloom” I hope you will be inspired by the stories shared by our community members. Read Nicki Leaper’s article on harnessing the potential of spring and how she chooses to live actively within her values (page 15). Tanja Smit’s article highlights that growing into the best versions of ourselves requires us to fearlessly look inward (page 14). Corinne Hua reminds us that, despite the restrictions we live in, there is an opportunity to explore and grow (page 11). As a budding self-taught restorer, Louise Roy shares with us a lighthearted article on the process of learning new skills and the joy of restoring furniture to unveil its hidden treasure (page 13). In her wit-laden article Heather Kaye reminds us that grass is greener where you water it (page 12). Lidel Freeman reminds us to enjoy the moment and not lose hope of great things to come (page 10). Arie and Milena Schreier’s article shares an amazing testament of how a family can create something beautiful out of a traumatic experience (page 16).

We hope these stories inspire you to embrace life and bloom into your fullest and most vibrant selves!

Senait Petros Tekeste
Executive Director, CCS



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Planner: Senait Petros Tekeste, Sammi Zhou

Editor: Lisa Stewart

Designer: Sarah Wu

Cover Photo: Johan Prozesky

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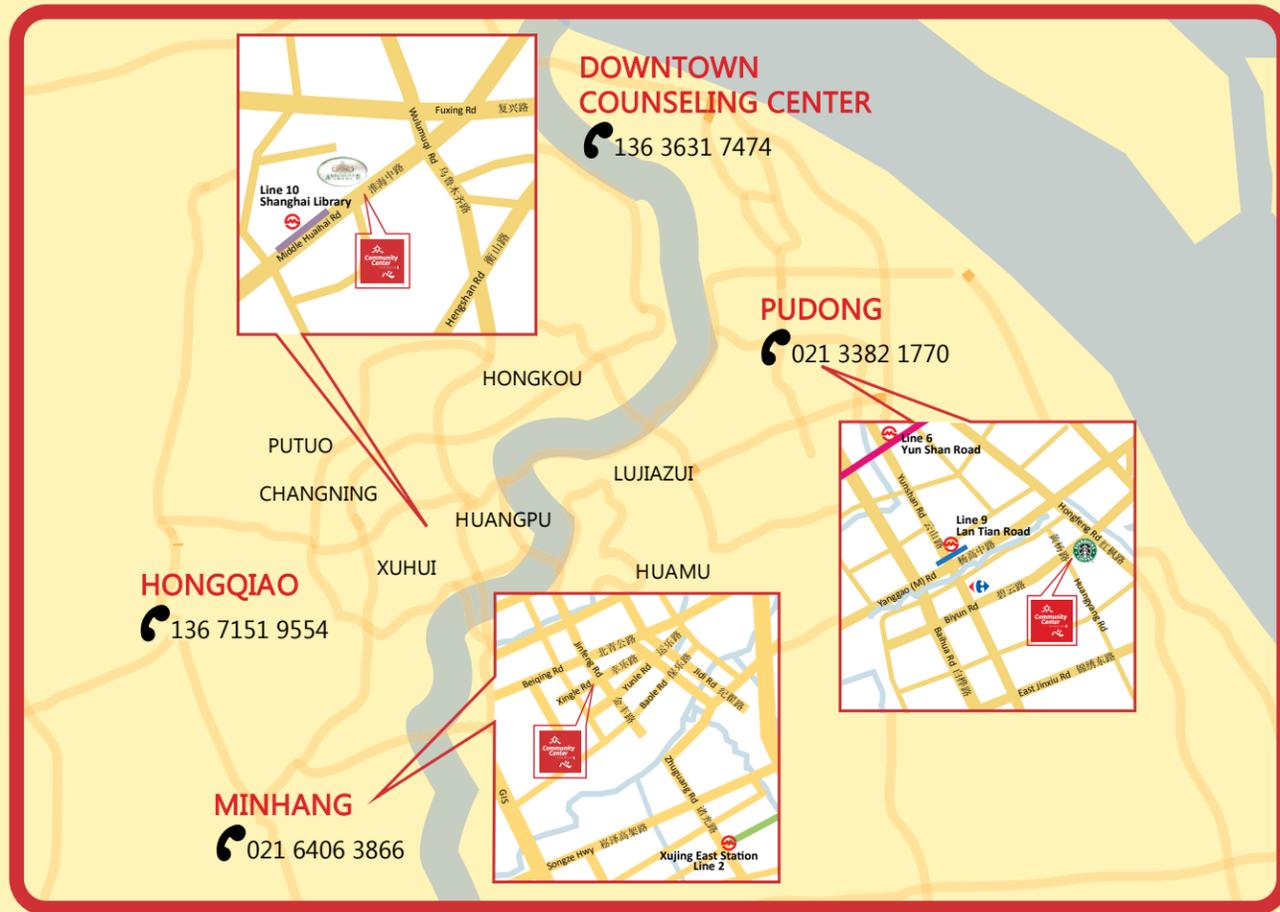
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Pudong Center

3F, Building 3, No. 1146
Biyun Road, Jinqiao,
Pudong
Shanghai 201206
CCSSH2016

浦东新区金桥
碧云路1146号3号楼3层
靠近黄杨路

Minhang Center

2F, No. 360 Xingle Road,
Huacao, Minhang
Shanghai 201900
CCS-Minhang

闵行区华漕镇
幸乐路360号2楼

Downtown Counseling Center

Ambassy Club Puxi,
No. 1500 Middle Huaihai
Road
Shanghai 200031
ccs-counseling

淮海中路1500号
近乌鲁木齐中路

Hongqiao Satellite Center

136 7151 9554
CCSHQCenter

Corporate Office

Executive Director: Senait Petros Tekeste
senait@communitycenter.cn

Community Building Director:

Anissa Majer
anissa@communitycenter.cn
HR: hr@communitycenter.cn

Marketing:

marketing@communitycenter.cn

Community Relations:

communityrelations@communitycenter.cn

Advertising and Sponsorship:

promotions@communitycenter.cn

Counseling:

counseling@communitycenter.cn

Charity:

charity@communitycenter.cn

Events:

events@communitycenter.cn

Workshops, Talks, Tours, & Room Rental

Pudong:
pudongclass@communitycenter.cn

Minhang:
minhang@communitycenter.cn

Hongqiao:
hq@communitycenter.cn

Our Name: 众心

Many people sharing one heart



Our Vision

Community Center Shanghai (CCS or 众心) connects, supports, and enables internationals from the moment they arrive in Shanghai, through relevant community-building activities.

CCS is a not-for-profit organization, strategically located in Shanghai's international communities in Pudong, Hongqiao, and Minhang. CCS responds to the ever-changing needs of the community by providing relevant programming that equips individuals and families so that they can maximize their potential while in China.

Our Services



Community Building

Community building is at the core of everything Community Center Shanghai offers. CCS does this by providing a platform for the community to connect through interesting tours and explore interesting topics through talks and workshops. Improve a language or skill. Dabble in a new hobby or interest. Take a tour and explore the city.



Counseling

Community Center Shanghai has a counseling department with more than 20 professional counselors that speak 10 different languages. The counselors offer professional, compassionate support to individuals, children, couples, and families.



Charity

Community Center Shanghai provides the opportunity to give and serve in the community through its well-known and established charity, Giving Tree. CCS's CharityLINK provides a platform for collaboration, referrals, and an opportunity for volunteer matching.

Promotions

- Community Center Shanghai – The channel to reach internationals, serving their needs and connecting them to companies that provide relevant products
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New Board Member Announcement

Community Center Shanghai (CCS) is fortunate to have a continually active and committed board of governors that tirelessly provides stewardship and support. We would like to introduce two new members of the CCS board: **Mark Fischer** and **Doug Grove**.

Meet Mark Fischer

Originally from Boston, I first came to Asia to visit a friend in Taiwan 35 years ago. I became captivated by both cultural and professional opportunities and, one thing having led to another, I'm still here! My career has mostly been in sports marketing and management, including 12 years in a series of leadership roles at NBA Asia (including as the first MD of NBA China), four years establishing UFC's business in Asia, and several agency businesses.

My family (wife Chantiel and two kids) and I happily moved to Shanghai from Singapore nearly five years ago and I currently run Eastbridge Sports Management and serve as chair on the AmCham sports and entertainment committee.

One of the things I've loved about my life in Asia has been the international community. The pleasure and stimulation of meeting and getting to know people of all ages, walks of life, and origins coming together into one international community is a unique feature of expat life. I have also noticed that when people move to a new place, in particular a foreign country,

they have not only the opportunity but also the need to learn and grow in ways that "staying at home" does not quite provide.

This is especially true in such a dynamic and culturally hospitable place as China. That said, there are also challenges to overcome when one is far from familiar surroundings, hometown, and family members.

For these reasons it is invaluable to have an organization like Community Center Shanghai that provides wonderful opportunities for members of the international community to interact with one other and with the local community, and also for personal development by offering a variety of courses as well as key support services such as professional counseling.



Meet Doug Grove

Professionally, I am Interim-Head of School at Concordia International School Shanghai. I originally came to Shanghai in 2018 as the Senior Director of Business Development for Concordia International School Shanghai. My career experience has placed me in leadership roles in both K-12 public and private school settings, as well as in higher education. My career began as a teacher and has evolved over the years into many different leadership roles in areas such as curriculum and instruction, assessment, marketing, enrollment, online course development, and business development.

Personally, I have been married to Tami for 27 years and we have two children, Blake (25) and Logan (23). Tami has been a teacher and college volleyball coach, and has worked in the food and beverage industry for much of her career. Blake is currently working on his MBA in Finance at Durham University in the UK and Logan is the Regional Sales Representative for Santa Monica Seafood Company in Southern California, USA. When not working, Tami and I really love to travel and we most enjoy warm locations with beaches, hiking, and surfing.

I am passionate about education and find great joy in seeing students, teachers, and families engage in the learning process together. When I look back on my most meaningful relationships and at my long-term friendships, I think about how they were all cultivated in authentic communities. Whether those communities were built around places like schools, churches, sports, or other things, what they had in common was people working, learning, or playing together in a way that developed deep relationships. At Concordia Shanghai we talk often about "learning wrapped in relationships" and that statement epitomizes one of the ways in which we as a school seek to build community between our students, parents, and teachers. Community is where I get connected and where I have opportunities to cultivate relationships.



CCS:
The Most Beautiful Family in Pudong!

On Friday, March 5 2021, **Community Center Shanghai (CCS)** was honored to be declared "The Most Beautiful Family" through its Executive Director, Senait Petros. This was awarded by the Pudong government at a ceremony to recognize families that have contributed to Pudong.

The award was presented to us because of the **Love Letter** project that we initiated at the beginning of 2020 to provide a platform for community members to share their messages of love, hope, and encouragement to Shanghai – a city that we all love and deeply care for and that is our "Home Away from Home."

We want to thank each and every person who wrote and sent in their love letters and the many more that love and care so deeply for this beautiful city.

THANK YOU!

We continue to provide the community with a platform for adapting, transitioning, and thriving in their journey here in Shanghai.

To read the letters sent to us please scan the QR code:





Seasons in the Sun

By Lidel Freeman

Lidel Freeman is a busy mom of three. This is her family's second time in Shanghai, for a combined 9+ years. CCS has been an integral part of their lives since the beginning. When Lidel isn't volunteering for school or Heart 2 Heart, she's having fun with family and friends.

What do spring and summer mean to you? For me this question invokes feelings, senses, memories, and so much more. I posed this question to friends and family living in different countries. I found the different perspectives interesting: people living in very cold climates at the moment had much more to say than my family living in Arizona. For those of us in Shanghai, this time always follows Chinese New Year and NEW seems to be how everyone feels.

SPRING! A fresh start. The sun is starting to shine more and the weather is warmer. We all feel like we are waking up from the cold. Like we are coming alive! Flowers are starting to bloom and trees are full of foliage. It even smells sweeter outside. The birds are singing and the city comes back to life with more and more people everywhere. No more heavy coats and gloves. Kids are playing outside



and the noise of their laughter can be heard throughout the neighborhood. Long walks exploring the city are again part of our plans; Sunday brunch sitting on the terrace of our favorite restaurant; having friends over and sipping drinks on the back patio. Beauty is all around us.

Then comes SUMMER! Kids are out of school and our schedules are relaxed. Vacations home to see family and friends. Trips to new places in the world. Many of us take this time to visit people we know who moved away from our expat countries. The days are longer. Shorts, tee shirts, and open-toed shoes are the norm. When I asked, most people described summer as going swimming at the pool, heading to the beach, seeing

blockbuster movies, riding bikes in the compound, and barbecues at friends' houses. Nothing beats feeling the sun on your skin!

Of course, things have changed this past year and most of us are using the word HOPE! Hope that we will stay safe and healthy. Hope that the world will heal and we can travel again to see the friends and family we love and have missed for so long. Hope that our children graduating school will be able to move on to their next destination. Hope to go on adventures to foreign lands to explore, try new foods, and spend time with loved ones. Hope of great things to come.

Let's enjoy this time no matter where we are. Get out of the house and feel the sun. Go to the park, walk, play, and dance. Start a new exercise plan. Walk along the Bund or Nanjing Road. Take pictures of things as if you are a tourist. Have friends over for yummy food and great conversation. Go to the zoo and watch the animals. Play outside with the kids. Buy flowers at the market and transform your yard or balcony. Form new friendships or create stronger bonds with the friends you have. Don't waste a minute of these few months we are given!

Living Life to the Fullest

By Corinne Hua

Corinne is the founder and director of a Shanghai volunteering organization. She came to live in Shanghai with her husband in 1993 and they raised two children here, who are now grown up and living in London.

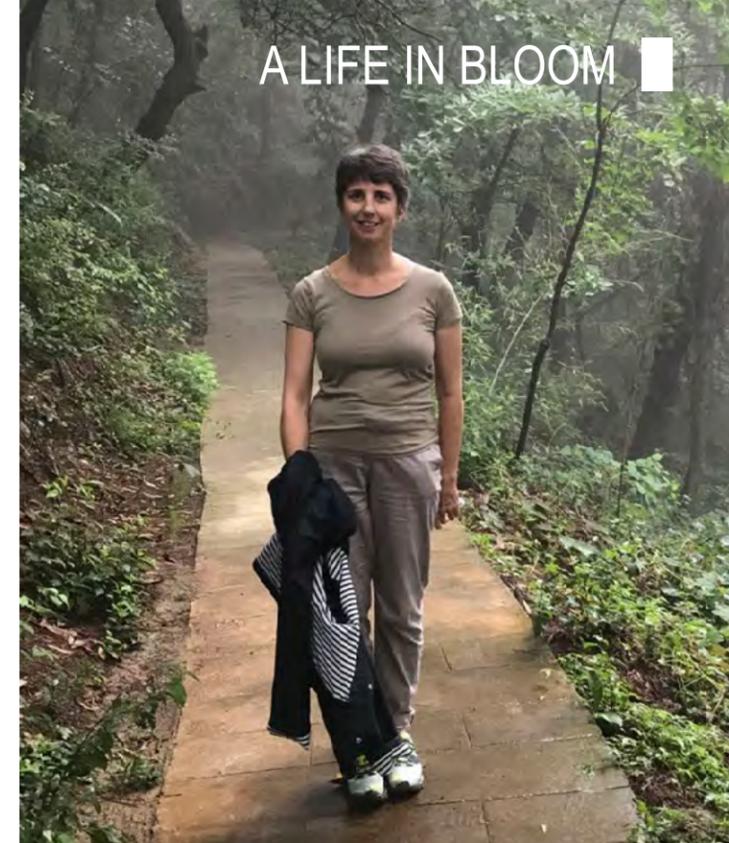
This was my 26th Spring Festival in China. That's exactly half of all the Chinese New Years during my lifetime, though I confess to not really noticing the passing of the lunar new year until I was studying Chinese at university in the late 1980s.

All but two of my Chinese New Year holidays have been spent at my in-laws' home in Beijing, where the word spring is usually a complete misnomer. Even in Shanghai, spring can still feel a very long way off at Chinese New Year – the weather doesn't usually turn consistently warm until April.

This year seemed a bit different. Even in Beijing, there were only a couple of days during the holiday when the temperature went below zero. In Shanghai, the temperature has already been above 20 degrees many times, and in both cities, we have had more clear, sunny days than usual and the pollution levels seem to be decreasing, thank goodness.

Spring is a time for making plans. Normally, we would be planning some overseas trips and looking forward to seeing our children and other family members. For now at least, we are restricted to domestic travel this year. Like many people the world over, we have spent more time exploring the cities and countries that we live in and have been pleased to discover new and interesting travel destinations as well as previously unexplored parks and museums in Shanghai. We are looking forward to more trips and new discoveries in 2021.

Covid-19 has restricted our lives in many unwelcome ways but has also pushed us to explore new hobbies and interests. I started playing badminton once a week with friends and took up Chinese lessons again to stave off the decline in my language ability. My husband started learning the flute, French, and boxing. Having avoided KTV for the past 20 years, we recently started to go with



friends and now are hooked! I continue to sing in a choir, attend a book club, and do Pilates, as well as watching films.

With most of our partner schools still closed to volunteers, work is not as busy as it was pre-epidemic, so my work-life balance is better than before and I find it easier to stick to healthy routines. Our local circle of friends is smaller than it was, with many friends still stuck overseas, so we spend more time with the friends who are here. Overall, as our fields of activity have become smaller, our lives seem in some ways to have become richer, more concentrated somehow.

Of course, I still very much hope to be able to return to England and France soon to visit my children and my father. I also look forward to our children being able to come home to Shanghai. But for the moment, I will continue to live life to the full right here in Shanghai.



Spring – It’s Time to Branch Out

By Heather Kaye

Heather Kaye is the co-founder of Loop Swim, founder of the Shanghai Eco Warriors Summit, and co-creator of the “Plastics are Forever” impact project with Green Initiatives. She is a frequent speaker, panelist, contributing writer, and educator on sustainable fashion and plastic pollution.

A horoscope somewhat unfairly summed up my Libra personality as “Wants things now and now only.” In defense of my fellow Librans, I’d say it’s all in the expectations. My husband recently gifted me a hand-crank coffee bean grinder in an attempt to stem the tide of funds flowing to Baker & Spice – only 20 minutes and acute tendonitis later, I could have myself a DIY latte! Caffeine, folks, is a category with high – and immediate – expectations.

The promise of spring is similarly laden with high expectations. When I asked my 10 year old what she’s most looking forward to, she replied, “Biking – and my birthday.” For me, spring expectations have historically meant observing the plane tree buds unfurling day by day, Taobao-sourcing up my picnic game, and reaching for hot pink after putting away the five black outfits I wore all winter.



But that’s just the tip of the iced-tea-berg. All of that energy we put into keeping ourselves warm and on top of Sherpa’s coupons during the winter can now flow into activities that help us thrive and unfurl some new leaves of our own. Aside from work and other commitments, I have three new spring goals: first, I am committed to learning one song on the cello without hurting anyone. Born with a tin ear and avoidant of large instruments as a child, I’ve settled on the cello because it speaks to my current frequency: mature. What instrument is calling you? Shanghai has them all, for a song!

Second, I’m locating my spiritual side. I’ve ignored this for a while now, figuring my business partner, who moon-bathes crystals and practices reiki in her spare time, has us covered. When a friend recently announced she was organizing a mother–child “gong bath” and confirmed that everyone remains clothed, I signed us up. On the morning of the gong bath, Anne Fong Brillard welcomed our sweatpant gang to her lovely home and led us downstairs to her gong lair. Soft futon mats lay on the heated floor surrounding a vertical pair of gleaming gongs, fuzzy-headed mallets of various sizes tucked underneath. Warm buckwheat tea signaled to our bodies that a new sheriff was in town; soon we were lulled into deep relaxation by Anne’s otherworldly music. “Just watch the movie your mind puts on, and let it go without judgment,” she advised. I was so content reliving childhood road-trips and random other subconscious flotsam that I did not register one daughter escaping upstairs to play with Anne’s Toto toilet.

Nevertheless, I left reminded that carving time out to sit with ourselves, with no plan or agenda attached, is valuable. Relaxation is valuable. And being open to an energy we can’t see or rationalize feels like a gift.

And third, contrary to my Libra nature, I’m going to grow something. Slowly. It might be a balcony tomato plant, or tween mahjong champions – I haven’t decided. If the Covid-19 era has taught me anything, it’s that slowing down, growing, and connecting with this extraordinary city and our even more extraordinary community surpasses all expectations in time. Life teaches us that the grass isn’t greener on the other side – it’s greener where you water it. Happy spring and summer, fellow Shanghaiers!

Unveiling the Hidden Treasure

By Louise Roy

Louise is a long-term Shanghai expat, birth doula, and lactation consultant, and is the director of patient support at a women’s health clinic in Shanghai. She’s a mum to two active kids; aside from being passionate about all things bellies, boobies, and babies, she also enjoys furniture restoration and hydroponic gardening.

During the past 18 months I have taken up an unexpected hobby. It’s not a “normal” hobby according to my kids, who I assume would prefer me to do something different. You see, I’ve taken to rummaging through garbage.

More specifically, I’m rummaging through garbage to rescue old furniture. I’ve been dragging home trunks, cabinets, boxes, stools, old water buckets ... all wood, all old, and all in a miserable and decrepit state of disrepair.



The Merriam-Webster dictionary lists several definitions of “bloom,” among which are:
To become more apparent or fully expressed
To appear or occur unexpectedly

Beneath the dust, paint layers, and cobwebs I see a potential for my rescue items to bloom. It’s as though they are calling me to pick them up and dust off the decades of crud to reveal a new potential.

To the utter bemusement of my neighbors, I stack the broken and neglected junk onto my scooter and ride it home. I have even bargained for a trunk from a recycling cart, and several garbage pickers have my WeChat to let me know if they come across some grade A junk. I love the thrill of the hunt as much as the renovating itself. One person’s trash is quite literally another’s treasure: the worse state it is in, the more it calls me.

Yes, I have fast become the eccentric laowai of my lane.

My friends have been joking that these pieces find me the same way kittens find some people. It’s nowhere near as noble a cause as animal rescue is, but I do love that what was destined for destruction can come back to a new life, a new home, a new purpose.

As I sand back years of neglect, my family have noticed that a funny thing happens: I stop referring to the item as “it” and start referring to it as “she.” (With the exception of one bucket, they have all been “she”.) I don’t know why, it just happens.

As I start to oil, wax, and polish, they literally bloom under my hands. Colors begin to emerge from the grain of the wood, and eventually a name pops into my head. During this anthropomorphizing there have been stools called Isobel and Stella, a pair of sweet water buckets called Hilda and Hildy (sisters, no doubt), and a trunk called Gertrude. Not to mention Mr. Wang, the lone male water bucket among the ladies.

As someone who works in maternity care, it is not lost on me that my hobby involves a process of rebirth.

With my home bursting at the seams, I have started selling the pieces on, finding them a new home far from the trash piles of old Shanghai. Although I miss them once they’re gone, ultimately I take the most joy in the challenge of helping these items bloom. During the process I am learning my own potential and developing new skills and techniques. As a self-taught restorer, it is also a process of learning and exploration of my own capabilities and what I am able to achieve.

Another kind of blooming, if you will.



It's Spring! Grow Flowers in the Garden of your Head

By Tanja Smits

As an integrative nutrition health coach, Tanja Smits helps people navigate their food and lifestyle habits to support and improve their health and make lifelong changes. She makes the process easy by breaking it down into smaller steps and supporting her clients along the way as a coach and an expert in this field

As an integrative nutrition health coach, Tanja Smits helps people navigate their food and lifestyle habits to support and improve their health and make lifelong changes. She makes the process easy by breaking it down into smaller steps and supporting her clients along the way as a coach and an expert in this field.

Growing into a better version of ourself requires awareness of who we are and fearlessness, to look inward and accept what is without judging.

If there's one thing we have learned in the past year, it's that our mental health is important and that navigating challenging moments is a skill we might not have learned in school.

Here are four of my most important self-care tips to help you build a fulfilling life.

1 A meditation/ breathing practice

Allow feelings to enter your body, locate where you feel good and where you feel tight or uncomfortable. Focus on your breath, take deep breaths in and out, and let any thoughts that enter your mind subside.

Don't expect miracles or answers from the meditation practice itself, but look for them in your life outside your meditation practice. Meditation and breathing help you to relax and get to know yourself better, reduce anxiety, improve self-confidence, and so much more.

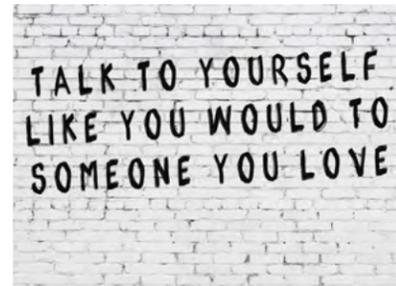
2 Positive self-talk

Start by noticing your self-talk and be aware of the tone of voice you use to yourself. Then compare it with how you talk to your best friend: is it the same?

Consider your inner thoughts as a garden. If you take good care of your inner thoughts, you will grow flowers; otherwise you will grow weeds. Try to be gentler and more loving with yourself.

3 Journaling

Journaling is a good way of organizing your thoughts to make sense of what you really think. As soon as thoughts are put on paper, you have connected the dots, self-reflected, and made your thoughts more comprehensible.



4 Connect with nature

It makes us feel vulnerable in this big world, knowing that nature happens and we are part of it. It has been proven that connecting with nature relieves stress, reduces anxiety, and makes us feel more relaxed.

Some ideas to get started:

- Go on a friend date to watch the sunrise at the Bund. Check your weather app and see what time the sun sets – meet 1 hour earlier to not miss that special moment.
- Buy a journal, put it beside your bed and start writing as soon as you wake up. This is a special moment where you have access to your subconscious mind. Start by noting any recollection of your dreams, then move on to journal any other thoughts, then finish by writing down a couple of things you are grateful for that happened the day before. You will notice it starts your day differently.
- Select a set time each day, find a quiet place to sit, set your phone on silent and a timer for 5 minutes, put relaxing music on, and focus on your breath. Repeat daily for a month to enjoy the benefits.



Harnessing the Potential of Spring

By Nicki Leaper

Nicki Leaper is a women's leadership coach based in Jinqiao, Pudong.

We arrived back in Shanghai at the end of March 2020. Two weeks of home quarantine left me feeling like I was watching spring happen without me. From our dining room table (aka "the classroom") I watched as our apple tree turned confetti white. Strangers stopped to take photos of its beauty. The kids watched a "snowstorm" of petals on a windy day and then it was gone before we knew it, making way for bright green leaves and dappled shade on our lawn.

When we stepped out of our un-tagged front door, I felt like I was walking straight into the start of summer. My favorite Shanghai season had been missed in a haze of temperature taking and Zoom lessons.

And so now, as I sit writing this, I'm excited by the signs of spring and how I might make the most of it this year. How can I harness the potential that lies within the very notion of spring as a time of rebirth and new beginnings?

I choose to actively live my values, reminding myself that the choices I make daily create my reality; that the small routines matter as much as the grand gestures.

Gratitude and joy

At the end of each day, I note three small things that I am grateful for and that have brought me joy. Watching an old woman doing tai chi in the park on my early morning walk, getting a really good cup of coffee and enjoying it with a book, being made to laugh by one of my kids. For me, there is a direct link between noting my gratitude and feeling a growing sense of joy.



Curiosity and growth

My children are taught about the need for a growth mindset and I've embraced the idea as well. I might be in my mid-forties, but my curiosity has not waned. I am always keen to learn and grow. So, I have committed to taking on a further coaching qualification, for my professional development, and I'm continuing with my reformer Pilates lessons. I may not be very good at a lot of the exercises (yet), but I see small improvements with each session, which keeps me motivated.

Courage and adventure

"Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away." (Maya Angelou)

It's all too easy to stick with the same, the known, and the comfortable, particularly when daily life is busy. And yet routine blurs not only the passing of time but also emotions.

What can I do that is new and that will challenge me? Make me feel a little (or a lot) uncomfortable? Because it is in these moments that I feel truly alive and excited for all that is to come.

Whether that's a new neighborhood to explore on foot or a new restaurant to try with the family, Shanghai in springtime offers us all the perfect opportunity to choose our own adventure.



Journey of Hope

By Arie and Milena Schreier



Arie and Milena settled 15 years ago in Shanghai, where all four of their sons were born. Arie is the general manager of a business support organization in Shanghai. Milena is a dedicated teacher with a passion for art and charity work.

Our story, being one of the first of such cases, spread quickly. We received enormous amounts of support and assistance from the Shanghai community: individuals as well as organizations, the Israeli consulate, the Jewish community, and Shanghai Community Center. Kind people sent food, games, and books to make it easier for us in the hotel and for the boys in the hospital.

We cannot forget Rebecca, a Dutch lady who didn't even know us and was stuck back in the Netherlands— who asked her ayi and driver to bring the most amazing lasagnas to both the hotel and the hospital every few days.

In our time of need we were surrounded by wonderful people from the entire Shanghai community, both expats and locals.

Some doctors on WeChat followed our case and were in constant communication with the doctors looking after our boys. The doctors in the hospital were also immensely helpful. They understood how stressful the whole situation was for us and stayed in daily contact.

Luckily, our boys didn't develop any symptoms, but it was an entire month before they were released from the hospital. They were tested for Covid-19 almost daily, which was very unpleasant for them. After the boys were released from the hospital, we self-quarantined at home for another month.

After this, our 10-year-old son, Shalevi, started attending a local art class. Soon after, one of his paintings was selected to be exhibited at the Shanghai Art Collection Museum in the fifth International Children's Creative Art Exhibition, which was called "Fight against the Epidemic with Children's Art." This encouraged Shalevi to create more paintings, thinking about other children who were not as lucky as him to be free to go back to their normal lives.

Shalevi and Milena, who is also an amateur artist, have put together a large collection of paintings that they have created in the months since quarantine. Their exhibition "Journey of Hope" was held in February and it was a huge success, raising awareness and funds for two charities – A21 (www.a21.org) and Eden (www.thisiseden.org).

When we left for the Chinese New Year holiday last year, we didn't know that our 10 day vacation in the USA would turn into a two-month road trip.

China went into lockdown due to Covid-19 as we arrived in the USA, so after 10 days we decided to postpone our flight back. After few weeks of uncertainty on the road, we started looking into schools for the kids and Arie explored the option of opening a US branch for his company. It seemed that we might actually start a new chapter in our lives, but then Covid-19 hit the USA...

Schools, theme parks, and entertainment centers closed and it was even hard to find food in the supermarket (not to mention toilet paper!). When we heard that China was closing its borders, we quickly made the decision to return. After a long and exhausting trip, we landed on the night the regulations changed so quarantine was to be in a hotel instead of at home. We were given nucleic acid tests and waited for the results.

At midnight, the medical team knocked on our door to say that two of our four children had tested positive and would need to be taken to the hospital immediately.

We were shocked and it was extremely hard to let the boys be taken without either of us accompanying them. However, we understood that we couldn't do anything to change this regulation.



The exhibition "Journey of Hope" will be presented also at the China Israel Innovation Hub in Putou (May 15-May 29).

From June 1- June 14, the exhibition be hosted by the Shanghai Refugees Museum in Hongkou.



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Life and Blooms

Text and Images by Johan Prozesky

Every year we wait eagerly for the cherry blossoms in Shanghai. When they finally burst out in all their pink and white splendor, announcing brightly that spring has arrived, they are a source of great happiness. We see children running amongst the trees, playing with the fallen petals, while families and older people take leisurely walks, enjoying the awe-inspiring view. Two weeks later, the blossoms are all gone.

If they were around all year, we would hardly notice them. Their transience is the reason that they give us so much pleasure.

Rarity and briefness add value, also to moments and time. The sun shines all day, but it is the brief sunrises and sunsets that make us pause to take in their beauty. We wonder at a pretty rainbow. We enjoy our annual vacation. All because they are momentary – all too soon, they are gone. These moments of joy are highly rewarding because they are fleeting.

What we often realize too late is that so many other parts of our lives are also fleeting – we only recognize that when they are over, or almost over. We have a poor grasp of passing time. It feels like yesterday that we changed our kids' nappies, when it felt they would be in our lives forever, and now they are in high school. Before too long, they will be independent, carving their own way through life. When we see our parents only now and then, we notice how they have aged and we become aware that, before too long, our kids will look at us and think the same.

The more frequent our experiences, the less we appreciate them. Until we realize, often too late: they may have been routine, but they were of immense value.

Do you know that the moon landing took place 52 years ago? Or something much fresher in our memories, 9/11, occurred 20 years ago? The fact is: life is fleeting.

It has become a cliché that we should live in the present, meaning that we should stop worrying about the past and fearing the future and enjoy what is happening now. It comes down to really appreciating the value of passing time. It is not easy, and probably not fully possible, with all the “noise” around us – demands on our time and mental resources, and bombardments with manmade sources of sensory overload. Cliché or not, focusing on the present is a practice that can reward us hugely by helping us realize the value of time, and its impermanence. And that makes time, and our lives, more treasured.

Cherishing the small joys of fleeting moments can add up to happiness. Sometimes we should just put our phones down and absorb the moment through our eyes and minds. The trick is to really pay attention and discover the magic in everyday life and living – it is there to be found.

And if we understand that life itself is fleeting, and worth truly paying attention to, we can find the beauty in that.

The cherry blossoms are a reminder of the value and beauty of passing time. All too soon it will be over, and that is why it is beautiful – something to cherish and be grateful for.

Johan and his wife have been in Shanghai for 5 years. Hailing from South Africa, he has dabbled both semi-professionally and professionally in photography for the past 30 years. Johan has been a photographer and photography instructor in South Africa, Korea, and Ecuador and now teaches English and photography at Community Center Shanghai. johanprozesky@gmail.com



Get a Head Start on Your Future with IBCP at WISS

The Western International School of Shanghai (WISS) is the only full continuum IB World School in mainland China offering all four programmes of the International Baccalaureate. Through their innovative IB Career-related Programme (IBCP), WISS offers you the opportunity to study in an educational program that combines the IB Diploma Program's academic rigor with focused, career-related studies in a chosen field, providing a highly personalized, challenging, and well-rounded education for students.

This innovative, flexible, and individualized program gives students real-world, career-focused learning. In IBCP, students develop personal qualities and professional skills, as well as intellectual habits required for lifelong learning and success in their chosen career. WISS is renowned for their strong commitment to providing students with a variety of opportunities to develop their interests and talents as part of WISS's flexible and balanced curriculum. Through the IBCP, WISS empowers students who have already identified their future career aspirations to begin focused study in their chosen field.

Four IBCP Pathways to Prepare you for your Future

The IBCP is done both on campus and through online learning. Working with prominent universities through the IBCP Programme allows students to get a real feel for their future university studies. WISS partners with top ranked universities around the world such as Savannah College of Art & Design (SCAD), the Sustainability Management School (SUMAS), and Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (ERAU). These partnerships give students the opportunity to earn college credit while still in high school, along with gaining impressive experience for their college applications.

WISS is currently offering the IB Career-related Programme (IBCP) in four different and specialized pathways that open doors to our students' many careers of interest:

The IBCP Sports pathway follows the BTEC International Level 3 Subsidiary Diploma in Sport. It aims to provide a broad educational base for further training, further education, and employment within the sports sector. This pathway is suitable for students interested in Sports and Exercise Science, Physiotherapy, Sports Coaching, Personal Training, Teaching (Physical Education), Sports Business, Sports Management, and Sports Marketing.

The IBCP Art & Design pathway is a partnership with SCAD University, and the courses are completed through eLearning and are taught and assessed by SCAD Faculty. As an IB-approved collaboration, SCAD offers a plethora of university-level courses based around foundation-level Art and Design. This pathway is designed for students interested in Game Design, Technical Drawing, Animation, Graphic Design, Architecture, Painting, Interior Design, Fashion, Advertising, and Marketing.

The IBCP Management & Sustainability pathway is relevant for all students interested in responsible management applicable in different fields. The SUMAS "Business & Sustainability" pathway aims to provide students with the foundational knowledge of managing sustainability and developing their competencies in becoming responsible leaders. The courses are offered through eLearning by Sumas University. This pathway develops responsible young leaders with the appropriate skills and qualities needed for a successful business career.

The IBCP Aeronautics pathway is WISS's new, high-level educational program in collaboration with the Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (ERAU). The courses are completed through eLearning and taught by ERAU Faculty. This pathway for students interested in Aviation, Aviation Safety, Air Traffic Control, Engineering, Physics, Math, and all the aviation industry fields.

The IB Career-related Programme (IBCP) prepares students for the 22nd century and a changing world of work that demands professionals who are highly skilled and confident solution finders, collaborative communicators, and resilient.

If you are looking for a program that tailored for your interests and will help you stand out from the crowd, join the IB Career-related Programme at WISS. For more information, visit WISS website or contact the IBCP Coordinator at WISS, Stewart Paterson, at spaterson@wiss.cn.



Bloom Where You Are Planted

By Carrie Jones, Director of Counseling, Community Center Shanghai

I have always considered “Bloom where you are planted” to be a trite cliché, but when I learned that Life in Bloom would be the theme of this issue of the CCS Guide, the saying immediately popped into my mind. The more I thought about it, the more I realized there is wisdom in it that is very relevant to us as expats during these strange times we are living in. When we uprooted ourselves from our previous homes and replanted ourselves here in Shanghai – whether relatively recently or years ago – we had to make a conscious decision to “bloom where we were planted.”

For some, the move to Shanghai meant changing job positions or even careers; for some it meant the change from being a working individual to a stay-at-home partner or parent; for some it meant embarking on a new course of study. We all had varying circumstances but established or were in the process of establishing ourselves and our lives here.

Then 2020 hit. Many of us were uprooted once again but this time unexpectedly and perhaps unwillingly. Our situations, circumstances, and experiences have been as varied and diverse as we expats are. Some were locked out of China briefly, others not so briefly, and some have yet to return. Even those of us who stayed here throughout the entire course of events have found ourselves in very different job, school, and personal circumstances than prior to the pandemic.

Now that the dust is starting to settle, at least to some extent, it is time to once again find ways to “bloom where we are (re) planted.” It is probably fairly safe to say that none of us are in quite the same place we were pre-Covid, whether that means physically, emotionally, or spiritually. We all need to find ways to adapt to our new environment and conditions so that we can once again bloom and thrive.

What is nourishment?

How do we do this in practical terms? Just as plants need nourishment, so do we. Nourishment comes in many different forms. Friendships, relationships, connections, and community are nourishment. Feeling a sense of purpose and some degree of control over our lives – meaningful work, study, volunteering, pursuit of hobbies and interests – is nourishment. Physical care – exercise/activity, eating healthily, prioritizing adequate sleep, rest, and time to recharge – is nourishment. These various forms of nourishment generally do not just happen or magically appear; we have to be intentional about seeking them out and cultivating the kind of lifestyle and habits we want in our new circumstances.

What is not nourishment?

As we look for ways to bloom in our new circumstances, there are also some common pitfalls it can be helpful to avoid. To draw on another old adage, we often feel that “the grass is greener on the other side of the fence.” Whether referring to our neighbor’s fence or the fence that separates us from our former way of living or where we think we want to be in the future, it is easy for us to fall into the trap of missing the beauty in our own selves and our current lives by comparing ourselves with others and their circumstances and/or wishing for a return to the past or for the future to hurry up.

It is hard to bloom and flourish when comparing ourselves with those around us and assuming that because they appear to “have it all together” on the surface they are coping with everything the world has thrown our way better than we are. Again, none of us have made it through the last year and a half or so or completely untouched; we all have struggles, whether visible or not. That individual you are negatively comparing yourself with likely has challenges and issues you never imagined. Rather than beat yourself up for “not measuring up,” recognize that we all have certain things going for us and certain things we’re struggling with. That’s life; that’s humanity. It is also important to be realistic about the fact that, just as life is not perfect now, it was not perfect before and will not be perfect in the future. Accept the imperfections of the moment and find the beauty in them. It is impossible to recreate or return to the past and the future will come soon enough on its own. This is not to say not to have goals or think ahead but to warn against being so consumed with them that you are not able to fully embrace the good in the moment – and there really is good in the moment even in the midst of the challenges!

Invite and allow others to help nourish you when you need it depending on what your 2020 experience was and what your current circumstances are, it may feel overwhelming to think about even surviving, much less blooming. You may feel exhausted, depleted, drained of all energy, or even traumatized depending on what you have endured. If so, do not be afraid to say so and to reach out for extra help and support. Allow and invite others to help nourish you. It is a sign of strength, not weakness, to ask for help when you need it – and we all need it at some point. Furthermore, when we are honest and transparent about our struggles, we open the door for others to be open and honest about theirs as well. Shared experiences, even painful ones, bring us together.

May 2021 truly be a year of nourishment, growth, and life in bloom for you!



About the Author

Carrie is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker from Texas (USA). She has a master’s degree in Social Work from Baylor University. In Texas, she worked in a number of settings including a family counseling center, a substance abuse center, and several schools. Since 2010, she has served as the Director of Counseling at Community Center Shanghai.

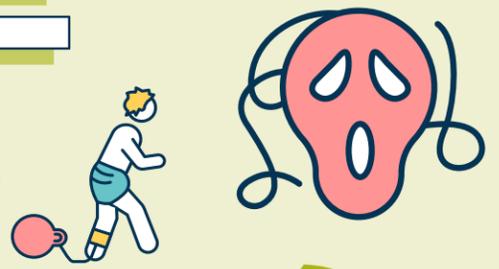
Carrie specializes in working with children and adolescents, but also works with adults on a broad range of issues including cultural adjustment and transition, self-esteem and identity, grief and loss, substance abuse, self-injury, anxiety, stress, depression, and mental illness. Carrie has a firm background in working with clients, both adolescents and adults, with eating disorders and is a strong believer in family-based therapy for this issue. Carrie also has training and experience in marriage counseling and is committed to helping couples and families improve their relationships.



MIDLIFE CRISIS

By Cecilia Ding, CCS Intern Counselor

or growth spurt?



About the Author

Cecilia Ding has had a passion for empowering others since high school. After graduating from Harvard, she worked on venture capital and IPO projects; after achieving success with her own investment firm in the United States, Cecilia decided to return to her roots and help others as a life coach. She has coached for many years and is now pursuing a master's degree in Counseling Psychology (LMFT track) from Palo Alto University and receiving training in individual, family, and couples counseling, and specialties such as play therapy and tele therapy.

While Cecilia comes from a coaching background, she believes that clients ultimately have all the answers within themselves. She helps them uncover the power already within. She guides her clients to answers rather than giving them the solution (授之以鱼不如授之以渔).

Most of us know that children's bodies do not grow at a constant speed. Their bodies can go through exceptionally rapid periods of growth, otherwise known as growth spurts. Children often have temper tantrums, squirmy bodies, and highly fluctuant moods during these periods. They are reacting to the discomfort of rapid changes within themselves. Because they do not understand or know how to express what they are experiencing, they react by acting out their confusion. What many of us forget, including those who have children, is that we continue to have such growth spurts throughout our lives.

While our bodies reach maturity by our mid or late 20s, our brains continue to evolve as we accumulate life experiences. In recent decades, science has proven the brain's ability to change through neuroplasticity late into life. It is not hard to imagine then that we also go through difficult developmental periods as adults. Midlife is one of those periods. Common wisdom knows it is difficult time for many of us. We have all heard about existential crises, career transitions, and breakups. Many call it the midlife crisis, but I prefer the Chinese term 中年危机 (zhōng nián wēi jī). The word 危机 (crisis) highlights the coexistence of danger and opportunity. I view this oft-dreaded period as a growth spurt, a special opportunity for personal growth.

Midlife is undeniably rocky. Physically, we experience indisputable signs of aging. Some question the meaning of a career long pursued. Stresses from long-term relationships with children and partners surface even though we love them deeply. Finally, the death of somebody close to us makes us

think about our own mortality. While all of these signal "trouble," they also are chances for us to reshape the meaning of our relationships with our family, career, and internal world.

The multiple challenges that we face force us to accept new ideas, approaches, and help. The 危 (danger) here is that the "new" approach could be simply finding the easiest way out of this difficult period. For example, common responses include plastic surgery to disguise sagging skin, staying in a job for the stable pay, or finding a new lover to feel we are still desirable. These are like the temper tantrums of midlife when we do not know how to handle the growth pain of this period.

Fortunately, opportunities for true growth are abundant if we rise to the challenge. The discomfort we experience creates the opportunity for our courage to manifest, which will fuel emotional growth. Physically, our biological rhythms are ready to counterbalance some of our youthful anxieties. We can retain the majority of our energy with better control of how to spend it. Careerwise, we have accumulated enough self-knowledge and financial resources to take some risks. Emotionally, our maturity can guide us to look beneath misleading myths about romance to recognize the true love around us. In finding new ways to define life for ourselves, we gain the reward of having what feels natural to our mind, body, and spirit. We are no longer slaves to external demands.



Naturally, taking advantage of the 机 (opportunity) for renewed energy, passion, and direction requires effort. In order to realize the potential of this midlife growth spurt, I have identified eight key points.



1 Accept the past

Recognize that regrets are necessary lessons; they are okay as long as we learn from them. We are biologically programmed to pay more attention to the negative, as a survival mechanism. As a result, we underestimate what true assets we have. Accepting and appreciating what we have can be very healing.

2 A growth mindset



Once we have accepted the past, we must focus on the growth potential of the present. We deserve to invest in ourselves and not be consumed by the lives of those around us. If our basic survival is not threatened, we can afford to try new things and take risks. In the end, we have nothing important to lose and everything important to gain.

3 Children are blissful and optional

Whether you have them or not is not the key to happiness. As soon as we stop wondering what people who chose differently have, we can find the joy in the choices we made for ourselves. We might feel we made the wrong decision when we are lonely or, conversely, feel exhausted from childcare. In reality, we will build other relationships or have all the time we need again. Live the way you feel true to yourself in this moment, with or without children.



4 Relationships are not everything

Cherish them, but don't expect them to provide everything you need.

We value different things depending on how we are genetically and socially engineered. Some might need more from relationships than others. We can only give each other our best. Ultimately, we – not our friends, lovers, spouses, or children – are accountable for our happiness.



5 Balanced pursuit of ambition

Wealth and power are convenient until they become destructive. Like many human ambitions, they are neither bad nor good until the price we are willing to pay for them does harm to others or to ourselves. We do not have to deny them. We just no longer need, or have the luxury, to pursue them by ignoring everything else.

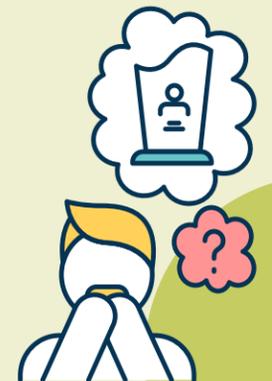
6 Find the beauty in our aging bodies

Beauty and age do coexist.

Our consumer world has unrealistic definitions we cannot change. However, we always have and always will have control over personal definition of beauty. Aging can be very beautiful when we look in the mirror and no longer wonder who that person is, physically and emotionally.

7 Play again

Whether you have a child or not, play is a crucial but often neglected part of the midlife transition. The inner child in us, the one that can genuinely find ourselves and those around us beautiful, is still there. This is our chance to rediscover it. Give yourself permission to be silly and spontaneous at times.



8 Slowdown in order to speed up

Although we strove to do everything fast as younger selves, we often went nowhere quickly because we had no inner direction. Armed with our emotional maturity and a clearer direction, we will find that going slower is our new goal. Reacting more slowly to situations that don't matter helps store up energy to react faster to those that do.

This will not be an easy process. It is not meant to be. It can take many years. There will be ups and downs, gains and losses. Keep courage; you will find a renewed and happier self at the end of the process. Do it well, so you can do it again in future growth periods.



Counseling Service at Community Center Shanghai

If you find yourself in need of guidance or support, do not hesitate to reach out to Community Center Shanghai (CCS). CCS's team of compassionate counselors have solid experience in supporting individuals, children, couples, and families. Our highly trained counselors fully understand the unique challenges expats and internationals face. Whether you just moved here or have been in Shanghai for some time, you have probably experienced the exciting and enriching aspects that come with living and working in this amazing city. We know that people can also sometimes feel overwhelmed living here. Many times a combination of several issues seem to surface simultaneously and create temporary, intense stresses and/or crises.

WE ARE HERE TO HELP YOU!

If you find yourself or someone you care for in a position of need, please contact us:
 Business hours: Monday – Friday, 9 am – 5 pm
 Phone: 136 3631 7474
 Email: counseling@communitycenter.cn

Scan the QR code to connect with CCS Counseling



OUR COUNSELORS



Carrie Jones, LCSW
 Director of Counseling at CCS
 Licensed Clinical Social Worker
 Master's Degree in Social Work
 Language: English
 Location: Pudong



Dominique Lavin W., MA
 Psychologist
 Master's Degree in Clinical Psychology
 Certificate in Positive Psychology
 Languages: English, Spanish
 Locations: Pudong, Downtown



Azin Nasser, PhD
 Psychologist
 Doctoral Research – Clinical Psychology
 Master's Degree in Psychology
 Language: English
 Location: Downtown



Eunice Adriana Lazar, MA
 Psychologist
 Licensed in Family Therapy and Systemic Practice
 Master's Degree in Clinical Psychology and Counseling
 Languages: Romanian, English
 Location: Online



Hifumi Ohnishi, PhD
 Licensed Psychologist
 PhD in Counseling Psychology
 Languages: English, Japanese
 Locations: Downtown, Pudong



Javiera Rébora, MA
 Psychologist
 Master's Degree in Clinical Psychology
 Language: Spanish
 Location: Online



Leo Lazo, MA
 Professional Counselor
 Master's Degree in Counseling
 Languages: Spanish, English
 Locations: Downtown, Online



Linda Confalonieri, PhD
 Psychologist
 Doctorate Degree in General Psychology
 Languages: Italian, English
 Location: Online



Qi Cheng, MA
 Licensed Psychologist, Child Life Specialist
 Master's Degree in Psychology
 Languages: Mandarin, English
 Locations: Downtown, Pudong, Online



Scott Shen, MSW, LSW
 Licensed Social Worker
 Master of Social Work Degree
 Languages: Mandarin, English, Shanghaiese
 Locations: Pudong, Minhang, Downtown



Jing Chen, MA
 Palo Alto University Student Intern
 Master's Degree in Mental Health Counseling
 Languages: Mandarin, English
 Locations: Downtown, Pudong, Minhang



Sharon Lui, MA
 Master's Degree in Marriage and Family Therapy
 Languages: Mandarin, Cantonese, English
 Locations: Downtown, Minhang



Theresa Decker, MA
 Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist
 Master of Arts Degree in Family Counseling
 Language: English
 Locations: Downtown, Online



Vilia Lyell, DLitt et Phil
 Psychologist, Clinical Social Worker, Life & Executive Coach
 Doctorate Degree in Psychology
 Languages: English, Afrikaans
 Location: Downtown



Melonie Grannell, PsyD
 Clinical Psychologist
 Doctoral Degree in Clinical Psychology
 Language: English
 Locations: Minhang, Downtown



Thamar Álava, MA
 Licensed Clinical Psychologist
 Master's Degree in Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy
 Languages: Spanish, English, French
 Locations: Pudong, Online



Lucia Hu, LMFT
 Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist
 Master's Degree in Counseling Psychology
 Languages: English, Mandarin
 Location: Pudong

INTERNS



Jonathan Sedarati, MSc
 Sino-American Family Therapy Institute Intern
 Master of Science Degree in Psychology
 Language: English
 Locations: Downtown, Pudong



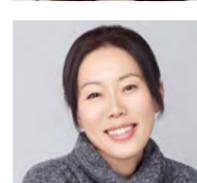
Karlene Rowland, MSc
 Clinical Intern
 Master's Degree in Mental Health Psychology
 Language: English
 Locations: Downtown, Pudong, Minhang, Online



Marina Kalashnikova, M.A.
 Clinical Intern
 Master's Degree in Psychology
 Languages: Russian, English, Spanish
 Locations: Downtown, Pudong



Linlin Mai, MA
 Clinical Intern
 Master's Degree in Person-Centered Counseling and Psychotherapy Practice
 Languages: Chinese, English
 Location: Downtown



Cecilia Ding
 Palo Alto University Student Intern
 Pursing a Master's Degree in Counseling Psychology
 Languages: English, Mandarin
 Location: Online

Counseling Corner

As exciting as it is to live in a city like Shanghai, it can also feel overwhelming sometimes. At Community Center Shanghai (CCS) we would like to provide you with an additional platform where you can reach out to our counselors when coping with a challenging period in your life or time of transition.

CCS would like to extend a “counseling corner” platform, where you can send in a question to our Counseling Department and a response will be provided in the next issue of this magazine.

Do you have a question you would like to pose to our counselors? This could be on topics such as depression, anxiety, or relationship issues. Submit your questions to counseling@communitycenter.cn.

CCS will then select questions and our counselors will provide a response to these questions. We will then print these answers in this magazine. We publish three magazines a year. The column is not intended to replace in-person counseling and should not be used in place of severe or threatening concerns and diagnosis. All questions and personal information we receive are confidential and Guide Magazine will not publish identifying information.

Remember to keep your question concise and to the point to enable us to better understand your question and provide appropriate feedback/advice.

Dear Counselor,

I have a friend I'm really worried about. He is really struggling lately and often talks about wanting to just end it all. I'm terrified he is going to kill himself. I really want to help him but have no idea what to do. .

Scared and Feeling Helpless

Dear Scared and Feeling Helpless,

Your friend is fortunate to have someone as caring, concerned, and willing and ready to help him as you in his life. Unfortunately, there is not a very established system available to expats here in times of crisis or emergency like you would find in many of our home countries, but there still are several things you can do to help your friend.

Do you know if he sees a therapist? If he does, you can encourage him to schedule an appointment as soon as possible and to be completely open and honest about how he is feeling and the thoughts he is having. If he doesn't already see a therapist, you can encourage him to find one and can even help him find options, schedule his first appointment, and accompany him to it if that makes it a bit easier for him. Sometimes when people are struggling, even the act of reaching out for help can feel overwhelming, so anything you can do to make it a bit simpler would be a solid start.

If you ever feel your friend is in immediate danger of hurting himself, do everything possible to get him to an emergency room at a medical facility such as Shanghai United Family Hospital as soon as possible. At present, the international medical facilities are not able to admit individuals for psychiatric care, but they can have your friend see a psychiatrist or other mental health professional. If your friend needs to be admitted to a hospital here in order to be kept safe, the Shanghai Mental Health Center (www.smhc.org.cn, 64387250) may be an option.

If your friend is not able to be admitted to a medical facility and you are worried about his safety, it can be helpful to arrange a rotation of friends to stay with him until he is stabilized and/or arrangements can be made for him to fly home or to a place where he can be admitted to a hospital or residential treatment program. Make sure this is done with the support and guidance of a mental health professional though.

You also can let your friend know about Lifeline China (400 821 1215, WeChat ID: LifelineConnect). While Lifeline cannot actively intervene (i.e., cannot send someone to help him), they do provide free, confidential, anonymous listening support 365 days a year, 10 am–10 pm. Lifeline is not a substitute for a mental health professional but can be a tremendously valuable resource to help individuals feel less alone and more supported in rough moments.

Be sure to take good care of yourself too. It feels very heavy and distressing when someone expresses thoughts of suicide.

Do not try to manage the situation entirely on your own. Make sure you reach out to others for help and make sure you have the chance to talk through the feelings you experience. If you and/or your friend are minors, reach out to a trusted adult (parent, school counselor, etc.) immediately.

Thanks again for being such a committed and caring friend. I hope your friend gets whatever help he needs and starts to feel hope again.

Sincerely,

Carrie Jones, LCSW
Director of Counseling
Community Center Shanghai



For more information on CCS support groups, email counseling@communitycenter.cn.

CCS Support Groups

We all know that life can be rough sometimes. However, we don't have to tough it out on our own. Throughout this year, Community Center Shanghai (CCS) Counseling will be offering support groups focused on specific issues such as eating disorders and grief and loss as well as groups for specific populations such as teens, men, and parents.

Through the connection and shared understanding provided by a support group, those who are experiencing similar circumstances, issues, and situations can encourage one other, reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation, and share healthy coping strategies and tips. As group members share their individual experiences and listen to those of others, they will experience new insights and opportunity for growth and healing.

CCS Counseling Workshops

Mental health awareness and working towards reducing the stigma surrounding seeking counseling support is a top priority for Community Center Shanghai (CCS). In support of this, CCS is launching monthly counseling workshops designed to demystify counseling in general as well as to share knowledge and information on specific topics related to mental health issues relevant to the community.

These monthly counseling workshops will encompass a broad range of topics including stress management, social support, self-care, and healthy coping skills critical for mental health and emotional well-being.

CCS recognizes that stress is inevitable and a natural part of life, but when the intensity and frequency of the pressure we experience at work, school, and in the home begins to overwhelm us, our mental health may suffer. CCS aims to empower the community by creating awareness of different mental health issues, of when to seek out support, and of how and where to get support. Additionally, CCS encourages individuals to identify and reach



out to their support network when facing difficult times. This is a critical factor in reducing feelings of loneliness and isolation and encouraging emotional well-being and mental health. Meaningful relationships increase our resilience and strengthen our community as a whole.

To find out more, follow our official WeChat account. For further information on upcoming workshops or to request a specific workshop for your organization, email counseling@communitycenter.cn.



CCS University Students Social Mixer Recap



Community Center Shanghai (CCS) continues to provide university students in Shanghai who are studying online with an opportunity to step away from their computer screens and connect with others in a similar situation. CCS has been hosting these extremely popular monthly mixers since fall 2020: the evenings provide a casual, relaxed environment of games, movies, and lots of wonderful laughs and connection.

This initiative was started by CCS's Director of Counseling, Carrie Jones, and the mixers are organized and supported by our volunteer Dewayne Jones. His brilliant humor and cooking skills have enabled us to entertain these young adults and, more significantly, have provided a loving and nurturing atmosphere where they can relax, develop friendships, and release some of the stress and pressure of academic life.

CCS recognizes that social connection and feeling supported is critical for young adults. This plays a great part in their mental health wellness, especially with the transition from high school to university – a period of increased vulnerability in their lives.

Through what may have been a tough time of increased social isolation, the monthly university mixer has provided the young adults with a community where they can connect, share, and grow.

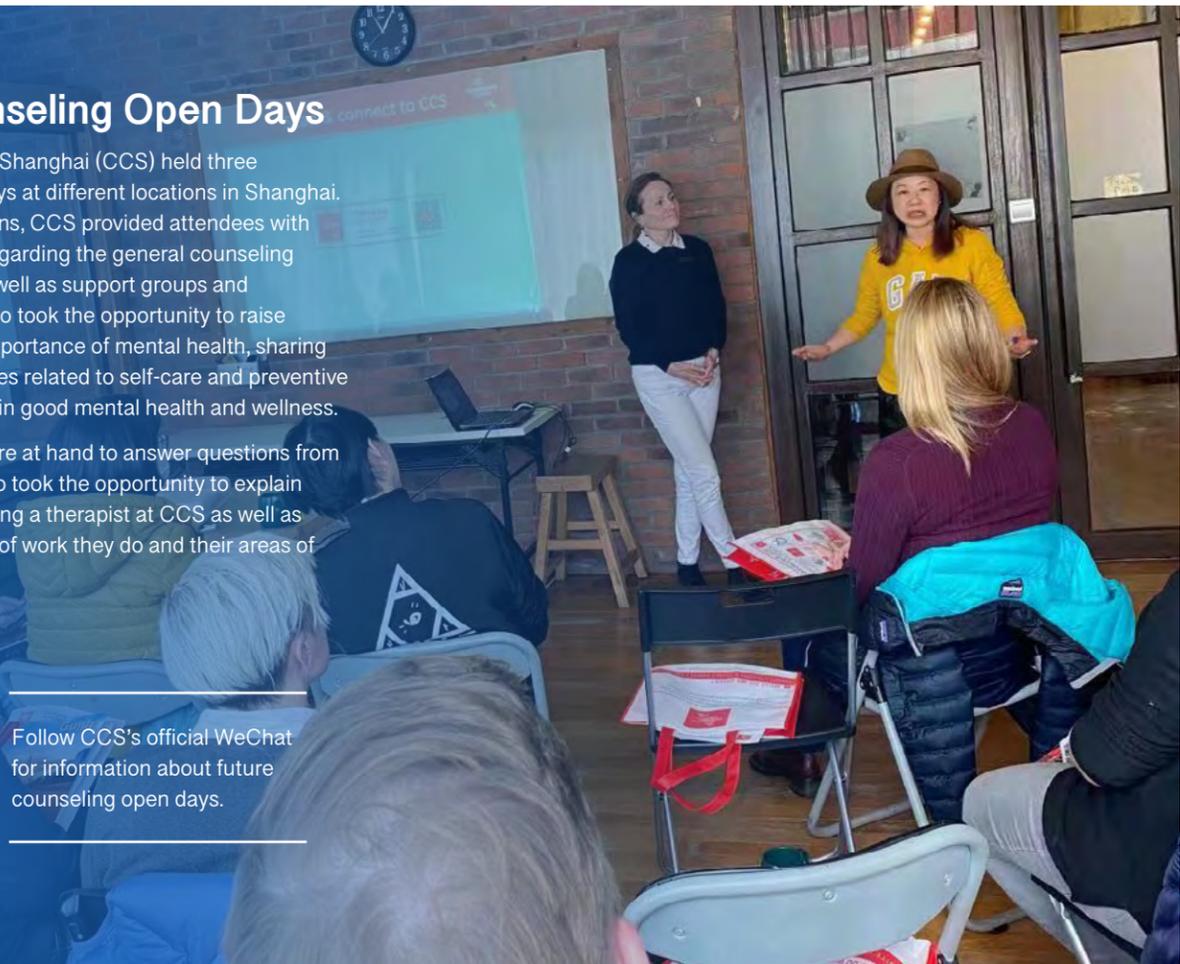
If you are interested, or know of anyone who might be interested in joining the university mixers, follow CCS's official WeChat account for information on the next university mixer event.

CCS Counseling Open Days

Community Center Shanghai (CCS) held three counseling open days at different locations in Shanghai. During these sessions, CCS provided attendees with basic information regarding the general counseling services offered as well as support groups and workshops. CCS also took the opportunity to raise awareness of the importance of mental health, sharing ideas and approaches related to self-care and preventive measures to maintain good mental health and wellness.

CCS counselors were at hand to answer questions from attendees. They also took the opportunity to explain the process of seeking a therapist at CCS as well as discussing the type of work they do and their areas of specialization.

Follow CCS's official WeChat for information about future counseling open days.



GIVING TREE

Since 2003, the Giving Tree Program has helped over 134,000 children in need. Donors fill personalized gift bags with essential items, which are then hand-delivered to underprivileged children across China.



2021 GOALS OF GIVING TREE

- Help children in need across China
- Inspire them to learn and give back
- Build a socially responsible community in Shanghai



2020 was another successful and fruitful year for Giving Tree! Community Center Shanghai (CCS), with the support of donors, distributed more than 4,500 gift bags filled with essential items to four migrant schools in Shanghai and nine village schools in Wenshan, Yunnan.

We are thankful to everyone who helped support the 2020 Giving Tree Program. The work of Giving Tree is far-reaching and would not be possible without the combined efforts of our donor organizations, supporters, volunteers, and staff. The lives of these children have been made warmer and brighter, not only through this winter, but also through their lives.

In 2021, we will work to maximize our impact and continue to help those who need it most. This year, Giving Tree aims to go "beyond the bag," and to be brave, purposeful, and engaging. To accomplish this, Giving Tree needs your support – we hope you'll join us.

If you are interest in giving back and getting involved with Giving Tree in 2021, please email us at givingtree@communitycenter.cn.

“Without community service, we would not have a strong quality of life. It's important to the person who serves as well as the recipient. It's the way in which we ourselves grow and develop.”

–Dr. Dorothy Height

Scan the QR code to watch a brief video recap of the 2020 Giving Tree Program.



Giving in a Way That Nurtures More Giving!



Dou Ju Primary School-Yunnan



Jie Pai Primary School-Yunnan



Po Tou Primary School-Yunnan



Yucai Primary School-Shanghai



Lagoon Primary School-Shanghai



Yu Hong Primary School-Shanghai



Qi Lu Gu Primary School-Yunnan



Lao Wu Ji Primary School-Yunnan



Wu Se Chong Primary School-Yunnan



Liu Jing Center Primary School-Yunnan



Le Shi Chong Center Primary School-Yunnan



Jia Ma Shi Primary School-Yunnan

Scan the QR code to watch a brief video recap of the 2020 Giving Tree Program.

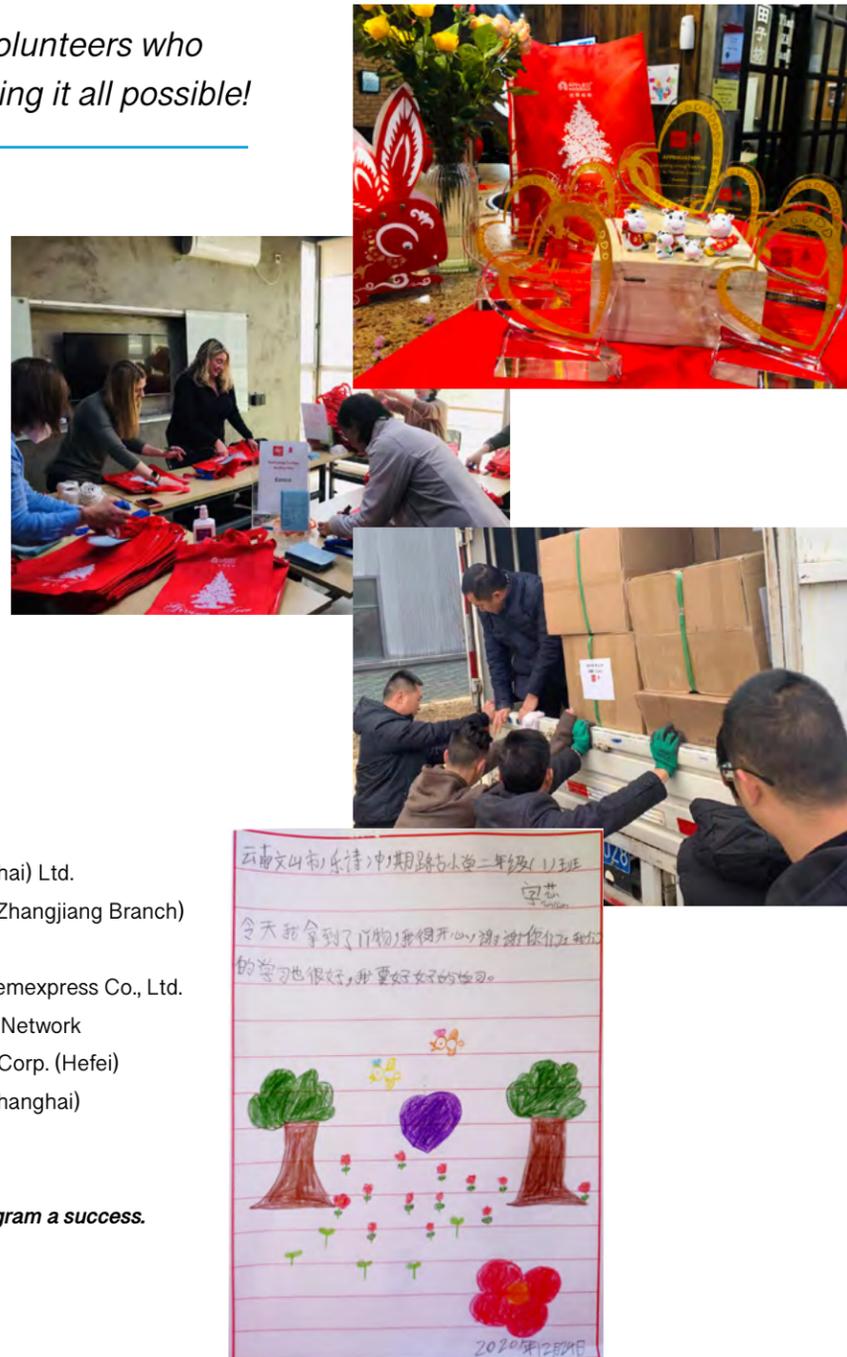




Thank you to all our donors and volunteers who have put in time and effort to making it all possible!

- Abundant Grace International Fellowship
 - Applied Materials, Inc.
 - AVIAGE SYSTEMS
 - British International School Shanghai Puxi
 - Blum Furniture Hardware (Shanghai) Co., Ltd.
 - Brantingham Manufacturing
 - Concordia International School Shanghai
 - Costco Wholesale
 - eBay
 - German School Shanghai Hongqiao
 - HQIS Interact Club
 - Infosys Technologies China Co., Ltd.
 - JunHe Law Firm
 - Secret Heart of Jesus Catholic Church
 - Team Education Consulting
 - Wall Street English
 - Western International School of Shanghai
 - 博雅酒店 Parkyard Hotel
 - 东电电子（上海）有限公司 Tokyo Electron (Shanghai) Ltd.
 - 南京银行上海张江支行 Bank of Nanjing (Shanghai Zhangjiang Branch)
 - 瑞石生物医药有限公司 Reistone Biopharma
 - 上海皓元医药股份有限公司 Shanghai Haoyuan Chemexpress Co., Ltd.
 - 上海序言网络科技有限公司 Shanghai Xu Yan Ze Network
 - 蔚思博检测技术(合肥)有限公司 VESP Technology Corp. (Hefei)
 - 中芯国际集成电路制造（上海）有限公司 SMIC (Shanghai)
- (Listed In alphabetical order.)

and many many more individuals and volunteers who made the 2020 Giving Tree program a success.



CHARITYLINK

CharityLINK is a Community Center Shanghai (CCS) platform that facilitates collaboration, referrals, and growth for charities through workshops, networking, opportunities, and connections to resources. In addition, CharityLINK provides assistance for English-speaking volunteers looking to give back to the community.



2021 GOALS OF CHARITYLINK

- Match** prospective volunteers to a charity in need
- Help** charitable organizations promote their cause
- Inspire** the community to give back



Want to be a charity volunteer?

Are you looking for a way to make a meaningful impact in Shanghai? Ready to start volunteering? Or just wanting to explore community service opportunities?

This is your chance to meet with different charitable organizations and learn how you can make a difference. CCS CharityLINK events take place 2–3 times each year.

Can't wait for the next CharityLINK event?

Scan the QR code below to complete the prospective volunteer survey and we will help match you to the perfect community cause for your time and talent.



Interested in becoming a CharityLINK Member Organization?

This is your opportunity to network with other organizations, educate the community, and recruit volunteers! Join a vibrant network that engages mission-driven organizations. We attract more than 40 non-profit professionals across China in an ongoing exchange of knowledge, networks, and support enriched by workshops and events.

Open to sharing your skills and expertise?

If you have experience in the charity industry, we welcome you to be a guest speaker at the next CharityLINK event.

At CCS we are passionate about charity and providing a platform for the community to give back and serve. We know that volunteering your time to support a worthy cause is something you will never regret. Getting involved in your community and supporting those in need enriches your life, broadens your perception of the world, builds a deeper sense of community, and helps you grow as an individual.



Scan or Call
to Signup

SUMMER CAMP!

Empowered by Community Center Shanghai

i Pudong Center: 3382 1770
Minhang Center: 6406 3866



2021 CCS-Greenwoods Boarding Camp Age: 7-15 years

This boarding camp will provide a setting for children to develop a sense of independence, gain self-confidence, and learn new life skills. We help them build character, resilience, and grit in a safe and controlled environment by play and task-based learning.

Your child will explore and interact with others in a face-to-face setting while experiencing independence with others in similar circumstances. There are endless possibilities for fun through English drama, wood carving, kayaking, swimming, zip-lining, climbing, shooting arrows, or simply sitting around the campfire with their new friends and counselors.

Children will have plenty of opportunities for summer school, sports training, and strictly academic programs. Let your child have a week or two weeks to unwind and become mentally and physically ready to thrive in the new academic school year. Give your child the opportunity to be the best that they can be!

Location: Sun Island, Qingpu
Date: From mid-June to August
Price: RMB 8,000 – 20,800
for different packages
Contact us for early bird price!



Count Me In! -A CCS Community Service Camp Age: 7-12 years

Price: 3,000 RMB
Location: CCS Pudong or Minhang
Center & field trip locations
Time: 9 am to 3:30 pm
Date: TBC

- ▶ We all want our kids to succeed and to give them the skills to do so, but are you putting volunteer service on your child's list of crucial extracurricular activities this summer?
- ▶ When kids discover early on that they have the power to make a difference it sets a foundation for a lifetime of giving back
- ▶ CCS Community Service Camp will not only teach participants about the importance of giving back but also aims to build emotional intelligence and empathy through service to others
- ▶ Participants will visit local charities and participate in hands-on activities revolving around building empathy and giving back
- ▶ Transportation and lunch are included
- ▶ Proceeds help support the Giving Tree Charity in Shanghai



Community Service

SUMMER EXPERIENCE

SUMMER EXPERIENCE AT THE LINDEN CENTRE

The Linden Centre was developed to serve as an experiment, an attempt by Brian and Jeanee Linden to contribute to China's rural development by preserving existing heritage architecture and employing and training local villagers. Their goal is to preserve the tangible and cultivate the intangible via close interaction and cooperation with the local people.

The Linden Centre now has seven heritage sites around China. The two most recent are The Spring Garden in Suzhou and Linden Centre ShaXi in Yunnan. Community Center Shanghai is excited to continue collaboration with the Linden Centre and is currently working on travel packages to these new heritage sites. Follow our official WeChat channel for further information.



Linden Centre: The Spring Garden, Suzhou

Linden Centre: The Spring Garden, Suzhou

The newly opened Linden Centre, The Spring Garden (Rongchuntang 容春堂), is situated in Wengxiang Ancient Village of Dongshan, Suzhou. It was originally built by Liu Gongbao, a local wealthy merchant, during the Qing Dynasty. It is representative of Dongshan late Qing architecture and is the largest ancient residence remaining in the area. The site covers an area of over 3,000 m². Owing to its massive size, people in Dongshan call Rongchuntang "the house with 108 rooms."

In 1948, the film *Springtime in a Small Town*, directed by Fei Mu and named as the best film of the Chinese 100-year film history by Hong Kong Film Awards Academy, was shot in Rongchuntang.

The Xiangsha Craftsman Group (UNESCO intangible cultural heritage) spent two years at Rongchuntang for restoration. Relying on the concept of "activating cultural relics," the Linden Centre has imbued this historical courtyard with new charm and vitality through space design, exhibition planning, and practical activities. This gives the opportunity to visitors from all over the world to truly immerse themselves in traditional Suzhou culture.

Outdoor Activities

- ▶ Biking, boating
- ▶ Hiking
- ▶ Picking fruit

Indoor Activities

- ▶ Tea-tasting
- ▶ Cooking experience
- ▶ Handicraft workshop

Linden Centre: ShaXi Yunnan

The Linden Centre, ShaXi, is situated in Shilong village, Shaxi Town, Dali, Yunnan Province, which is a good distance from any big city, being located about two hours' drive from Lijiang Sanyi International Airport or Dali airport or railway station, but only 30 minutes' drive from Shaxi ancient town. Designed by Xishi architecture studio, it took four years to build and complete. From "restoring" to "creating" regional architecture, the Linden Centre explores the possibility of innovation in rural construction, culture, and tourism. The architectural design won the American Architecture Award in 2018. It was started with local resources and strove to establish a connection between local and non-local communities.

Outdoor Activities

- ▶ Walking in Shilongcun, a Bai ethnic group village
- ▶ Guided tour of Shizhongshan Grottoes, primarily created in the late Tang Dynasty
- ▶ Hiking along the ancient path; this is the only surviving historical market town on the Ancient Tea Horse Road



Linden Centre: ShaXi Yunnan



Please follow our official WeChat to see special travel packages to these two wonderful places.

Regular Policies at Community Center Shanghai

Registration Policy

Registration is required for all activities. Attendees will receive confirmation via email or EventBank. Please note that bookings are reserved for registrants on a paid-first basis, not by date of registration.

Payment Policy

To guarantee a place on Community Center Shanghai (CCS) community-building workshops, events, and tours, CCS encourages registrants to make payment by visiting a CCS center, by official CCS payment QR code, or through EventBank. Registration policies can also be found online.

The early bird fee is usually applicable to payments made at least 2 weeks before a workshop, otherwise the regular fee is applied. Prices are subject to change. For the most current information, please visit www.communitycentershanghai.com.

Cancellation Policy

CCS reserves the right to cancel workshops, tours, or events that do not have sufficient enrollment or in the event of an emergency. CCS makes every effort to notify registrants promptly. Therefore, CCS encourages registrants to provide their phone number and email address at the time of registration.

Refund and Credit Policy

- ◆ Full credit or refund: client cancellation minimum 3 working days before first workshop, tour, or event unless stated differently at time of the registration
- ◆ 20% cancellation fee: client cancellation within 2 working days of the first workshop/tour day
- ◆ 50% refund: withdrawal from series workshop after first session
- ◆ No refund: withdrawal from series workshop after second session
- ◆ Refunds will be processed the same way payment was received
- ◆ Cancellation by CCS: client receives full refund, workshop credit, or gift voucher
- ◆ Workshop credits expire after 6 months
- ◆ Withdrawal from series workshop or tour due to medical emergencies: assessed on a case-by-case basis

Contact CCS for questions. CCS is a not-for-profit organization; workshops and tours are conducted based upon the minimum number of paid registrations. Participants are encouraged to check personal schedules carefully before committing to a tour, event, or workshop. Withdrawals at a late date can cause inconvenience to CCS and other participants.



Art of Mosaic Workshop



Cooking Workshop



Wellness Wednesday



Celebrating International Women's Day



Chinese HSK1 Learning



Mini-market

INTERDISCIPLINARY LEARNING AT SAS' INNOVATION INSTITUTE

Contributed by Shanghai American School

“What do aluminum, coral reefs, and palm oil have in common?”

They're all commodities a group of Shanghai American School students recently explored as part of their quest to answer the question: **To what extent does scarcity influence our actions?**

In groups, students presented their findings via stop-animation films, deep-diving into topics like how the production of palm oil results in the scarcity of biodiversity around the palm oil plantations, and if the harms of coral mining outweigh its benefits. Each presentation wrapped up with a Q&A session from the audience.

“I love this unit, because it forced our students to tell a story as a response. It meant that they had to find a narrative that revealed the impact of commodity scarcity, which we often view through a macro lens,” says Jay Goodman, Puxi campus Innovation Institute and high school English teacher. “We had a guest animation expert dialed in on Zoom as well, to give the students personal feedback and problem-solve with them.”

SAS' Innovation Institute—What is it?

The project is the perfect example of what SAS' Innovation Institute is about. This two-year Signature Program features a transformational approach to education, and includes teachers from four different disciplines coming together to fuel learning that challenges and empowers high school students to think critically, and apply their learning to open-ended, complex questions that address contemporary, real-world issues.

“It's different from traditional high school programs in that it offers students the opportunity to study as a cohort, using long-term projects as the driver for their learning,” explains Dr. Emmanuel Bonin, Deputy Head of School and Chief Academic Officer at SAS. Every other day, students gather in a large, collaborative, purpose-built space to carry out project-based learning; the rest of the week, they rejoin regular classrooms in areas like math, languages, and P.E.

“Innovation Institute is unique as it is only offered in its form at SAS. While other interdisciplinary program exists in schools, rarely do we see one that commits students over two years for much of their learning time. The program pushes them to collaborate on everything they learn, has them produce results that reflect real life, while still retaining the rigor and quality of traditional subject-area classes,” continues Dr. Bonin. “Many international schools in Asia have visited us to find inspiration in our program, as they try to develop their own.”

What else do students gain from the program?

“It really taught me new forms of creativity, new ways of synthesizing information,” says SAS alum Ken Jie '19. “I'm always looking for connections between different subjects now. It makes learning a bit more exciting for me.” He also stresses teamwork as one of the most important lesson he and his course mates reaped from their time at Innovation Institute. “We did

so much work as a team, and had to manage all the important dynamics and personalities. It influenced the way I communicate with my teachers, and even the way I communicate in other areas like sports.”

“The program targets and meets the same standards as traditional classrooms, but approaches learning in ways that allow for a stronger focus in soft skills,” explains Dr. Bonin. “These include critical thinking, effective collaboration, skillful communication, creativity, and ethical citizenship, all important qualities that will help better prepare students for the challenges and opportunities of college and life.”

Students leave the Innovation Institute program confident in their ability to:

- Identify and respond to complex problems and issues
- Effectively communicate their ideas about the world in many ways
- Be comfortable with uncertainty
- Be vulnerable to share ideas and accept criticism
- Take risks
- Effectively collaborate
- Make connections between classes and the real world

Innovation Institute is coming to SAS' Pudong campus

Originally only available on SAS' Puxi campus, the SAS Signature Program will make its debut at their Pudong campus in September of 2021.

“It will provide a great opportunity for (our Pudong) students to (further) develop critical-thinking, problem-solving, and teamwork skills, all necessary for success as they move forward in high school and beyond SAS, and that they otherwise wouldn't be able to develop in a more systematic way,” says Michael Crachiolo, Pudong campus high school English and social studies teacher (and future Pudong Innovation Institute teacher). “Students will see the way content and skills across multiple subjects complement each other and do not exist in isolation. There is no one answer to questions, much like in the real world, and that is the beauty of the program!”

He adds, “I wish I had the opportunity as a student to participate in a program like this. That being said, I feel lucky and excited to be able to take part as a teacher! This is the future of education, for sure.”

ABOUT SAS

Founded in 1912, Shanghai American School (SAS) is the largest and most established international school in China. In short, it's the kind of school you wish you would've attended when you were a kid.

Find out more about SAS' Innovation Institute via their website at www.saschina.org, or reach out to their Admissions Team at admissions@saschina.org.

SAS

INNOVATION INSTITUTE

PD



DRIVING QUESTION:

HOW DO WE ADAPT TO SCARCITY IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD?

ANSWER:

COMING SOON

Innovation Institute at Shanghai American School is a transformational approach to education in which learning is interdisciplinary and structured around complex and open-ended driving questions. The Institute is a two-year program (grades 9 and 10) that places learners at the center of the educational experience. Students are required to stretch themselves beyond the traditional learning framework by engaging across subjects in project-based learning that requires the use of 21st century skills.

“

When I came to Inno I didn't think it would be as good as everyone said it was. Honestly, it's been even better. I'll be really sad to leave.

”

– Martha '24

Tämä on **hundrED** koulu.

Recognized as one of the top 100 innovative education programs in the world by global education nonprofit HundrED.

Join Innovation Institute at SAS Pudong.

Scan the QR code to learn more.





Life Success Starts
with Concordia



Concordia
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL SHANGHAI

上海协和国际外籍人员子女学校