



Dear Friends of LearnServe China (LSC) 2008:

June 20 – July 7, 2008, 21 students and 11 teachers from 11 different schools, public, charter and independent, from the Washington DC area, will travel to China on an extraordinary journey of learning, service, and discovery. The trip, sponsored by the Center for International Education at the Washington International School, will allow our travelers to learn and see, first-hand, the efforts, successes and challenges facing China in providing fresh water to its people. Throughout the trip, we will work together with our partner organization, the Jane Goodall Institute's Roots and Shoots (R&S) program in Beijing, and their member students, on service and action plans for educating students and residents about the value of environmental conservation.

Originally, this LearnServe trip was to travel to Sichuan province for several days to work with the affiliate Chengdu Roots and Shoots programs in Sichuan Province. LSC trip leaders, Kate Meenan-Waugh and Pat Kyle, were in Beijing, at the Roots and Shoots office, as part of a pre-June trip planning session on May 12, 2008, when the devastating earthquake hit Sichuan Province. They witnessed, first hand, the speed with which the Roots and Shoots organization in that office mobilized to determine the safety and needs of its staff in Chengdu. The earthquake of May 12, 2008, has shifted the LSC fundraising energy to support Roots and Shoots efforts at recovery and relief in Sichuan Province. We were devastated to learn of the near complete annihilation and loss of life at one of the local schools (Qingchengshan School in Dujiangyan) the Chengdu office has been working with for many months and increasing casualties in areas served by Roots and Shoots programs for several years.

Please see below for a message from Roots and Shoots in China, sent three days after the quake:

Dear friends of R&S in China,

...NGO's based in Sichuan have banded together to informally establish a "Sichuan NGO Disaster Relief Coalition Office," and since our R&S Chengdu Office seems to be in a safe and functioning building, they are operating out of our office. The office has confirmed 5 volunteers who are working on collection and storage of needed items and three vehicle teams who are moving donated items to the locations in need that are accessible by road, namely Pengzhou and Dujiangyan. So far, they have worked with a Guangzhou-based volunteer group to purchase 150,000 RMB worth of needed goods, food and water; and 230,000 RMB worth of medicines was donated by a local pharmaceutical company. The medicines were distributed to disaster areas in cooperation with the Red Cross. They are working through local media contacts and friends at the Red Cross to collect the latest information about disaster areas. That office is now set-up to take donated items that are delivered to our office, and efficiently deliver them to the areas in need.... In the long-term, we will plan to collect donations towards re-building, repairing and re-supplying the damaged schools....and we will begin to gather more detailed information about needs and costs once the urgent medical and physical needs of the people in those areas have been met.

For obvious reasons, our summer trip will now center in and around Beijing, but continue with the original program of education and action on water issues, formulated with Roots and Shoots in China.

The short-, medium-, and long-term needs of the people of Sichuan province will be immense. Monies raised by the LearnServe China 2008 school teams will be used to support the programs of the Jane Goodall Institute Roots and Shoots programs in China in that recovery effort.

Checks may be written to **CIE at WIS** (with a memo for earthquake relief) and sent to **3100 Macomb Street, NW, Washington, DC 20008**. 100% of donated funds will go to R&S.