

OCCA Newsletter

橙郡中文學校 25周年紀念 OCCS 25th Anniversary

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但见时光流
似箭，岂知天道曲
如弓。橙郡中文学
校经历了二十五载
春秋风雨，从开始
的十几个人发展到
今天近百人的学
校，这其中交织着

多少人默默耕耘的
汗水和真诚无私的
奉献。正如著名教
育家陶行知先生所
言：“捧着一颗心
来，不带半根草
去”。饮水思源之
余，让我们怀着感

激的心，共同走进
1986年盛夏的某一
天…

会长：鲁平



Orange County Chinese School (OCCS) How We Started the School in 1986

By Audrey Osofsky
(關惠蓮, the first principal of OCCS)

Foreword

Any culture that survives the challenges of time and history carries a depth and merit. The five thousand years of Chinese culture is rich in the teachings of discipline and integrity. Its wisdom serves me well as a moral compass in a world of conflicting values and challenges. I take pride in having grown up in the Chinese culture.

When asked by a young reporter, Shelly Green, of the Times Herald Record in 1991, why I (and other parents) started the Chinese School, I replied, "It is to make them (our children) aware that being Chinese is something to be proud of. We have a very old culture."

Naturally parents want to give their children the best of what they have. For me, teaching my children about our heritage is the best gift I can offer.



Orange County Chinese School (OCCS) How We Started the School in 1986 (Cont'd)

Orange County Chinese School (OCCS), 1986-

Twenty six years ago, in the summer of 1986, a few Chinese-American families got together and decided to create a neighborhood Chinese language school for their children to learn Mandarin and about their heritage. None of us had any training or experience in setting up a school; we therefore invited the late Theresa Hung of the Chinese American Cultural Association of Rockland (County) to give us a crash course on the how-tos. By the fall of that year, the Orange County Chinese School (OCCS) was founded in Monroe.

We rent out the fellowship hall of the St. Paul Lutheran's Church on Still Rd, Monroe. Using portable blackboards, we divided up the space into three mini-classrooms. I served as the school principal, Jeanette Sung the head teacher. About fifteen students enrolled initially (my six year old daughter included). They were then grouped into three levels of learning: introductory, intermediate and advanced. Willing parents took turns teaching the student body, and sometimes students ended up in their mom's class (happily or unhappily).

The (Taiwan) Chinese Cultural Center of NYC sent the School a free supply of text books and school supplies. The tuition of \$25 / student/semester went to pay the rent, utilities and other expenses. Teachers were not paid, nobody got paid. Nobody was concerned about getting paid. The only concern was keeping the school running.

And the school kept running. Every Sunday afternoon the students, ages six through thirteen, recited Mandarin aloud in unfamiliar intonations, and practiced writing the pictographic characters in the small squares of their exercise books. Parents gathered in the adjoining kitchen conversing over tea and snacks (Mr. Frank Lin attentively served everyone tea). As the foliage faded into snow, the initial awkward intonations eased into natural rhythms; it was music to the parents' ears.

Yet like any pioneering project, unforeseeable problems arose as time went by. Sporadic attendance (a perpetual clash between Sunday classes and birthday parties /playtime), dwindling enrollment, snow storms, unexpected dropouts, and frustrated teachers drove the School to face some difficult challenges.

For no other reasons than being young and resilient, our teachers braved on. Their courage reminded me of the little blue engine in the popular children's classic, "The Little Engine that Could" by Watty Piper (1930), in which the little engine repeats to himself when facing the harshest challenge, "I think I can, I think I can." Our teachers were just as determined as the little blue engine.

For we shared one dream - that the seeds we sowed today would grow strong tomorrow.

Then dawn broke after a long night, as the School hosted its very first Chinese New Year celebration in January. The Year was 4687, according to the Lunar calendar, the year of the rabbit-an astrological sign for peace and auspiciousness.



Orange County Chinese School (OCCS) --how we started the School in 1986 (Cont'd)

On that cold sunny afternoon, parents, family members and friends arrived in festive spirits, looking their best. They crowded into the School for the very first new year celebration the School hosted. They self introduced in their native dialect (Cantonese, Mandarin, Taiwanese, English), greeting and well-wishing each other with “Kung hay fat choy”. Mothers streamed in and out of the kitchen with the homemade New Year sweets and delicacies, hollering for help at times. Pastries were brought in fresh from Chinatown and needed to warming up. The air was thick with the aroma of festive food. Everyone was in high spirits.

Parents and staffs decorated the stage in gold and red , paper cutouts of rabbits, plus motifs symbolizing an auspicious start of the new year were home-made. When the curtain was finally drawn, students in beautiful costumes graced the narrow stage, and in elegant moves, danced sprightly to the beat of the festive music. Rounds of applause and encores roared throughout the hall. Cameras flashed non-stop.

Then someone sang Formosa love songs from the sixties, sweeping the old timers among the audience into flashbacks of a politically unsettling era.

A “big head” buddha fanned his way into the hall, followed by a dancing papier-mache lion bowing and shimmying through the excited crowd. Everyone young and old rose from their seats to join in the fun. The extended parade swerved around the fellowship hall to the front door of the Church then back through the narrow hallway to the kitchen and turned back for a second round. People chased and cheered the lionhead dance along, stepping and stumbling on each other. It was just so much fun.

One of the parents, Ma Hung-on, said with delight in an interview, “The School is the center of culture in the community. I hope by this time next year we will have more people for an (Chinese community) association.” (TH-Record, Jan 26, 1987)

Ma’s notion of a Chinese community association struck a chord. The School could use every support provided by the community to alleviate some of its problems- it had been underfunded and understaffed. Once classes resumed I set out to work towards this goal. I called for a general meeting in early March. In late April, 1987, The Orange County Chinese Association was born. The board of seven members promised that the Association would give its full support to the School. Bravo!!

Meanwhile the School decided to add an extra half hour of cultural activities, including paper folding, Chinese calligraphy, and Chinese chess to lighten the intensive language program.

Our first school field trip, in the spring, brought us to Mandarin Soy Sauce factory in Middletown, NY. J.C. Wu, the President then, gave us a history of soy sauce making in ancient China, followed by a tour of the factory. A very warm-welcoming trip. In June, we held our first picnic in the beautiful Orange County Park, thus wrapping up the School’s very busy and challenging first year.



Orange County Chinese School (OCCS) --how we started the School in 1986 (Cont'd)

Afterwords:

I can't possibly thank enough the teachers and parents for all their hard work that first year to make the School a success. Nothing could have stopped us in those days. We were concerned and passionate parents -- we did what we thought we were best at-- teaching our heritage to our children. Whether we succeeded at passing on our legacy to our students, well, the students will be judges of that. But one thing is certain, we did it. We gifted our children a unique path to travel on together, support one other in the learning and understanding of their complex heritage.

Many of our past students are now married with their own families, and have become established in their chosen professions. Students of twenty five years ago are today's financiers, lawyers, doctors, scientists, artists, architects, teachers, published writers...Some of them have also ventured to China to pursue personal growth and/or professional interests. But no matter what they are and where they are, they should remember we are always one big family. Many of these graduates remain close friends today, and many parents enjoy reminiscing about the first Chinese New Year celebration when every family brought in their favorite dishes. We treasure those old folksy days, don't we.

May the Chinese School enjoy more success and a Happy 25th Anniversary.

Upcoming Event



橙郡华人协会2012年度野餐会 - OCCA Picnic 2012

Time: Saturday, June 23, 2012. 11:00 am to 4:00 pm

时间: 星期六, 2012年6月23日。上午十一点至下午四点

地点: Mary H Harriman Memorial Park (Meadow Ave, Harriman, NY 10926)

美東中文學校協會 (ACS) 2012年年會

May 26-27, 2012

美東中文學校協會 (ACS) 2012年年會日前在紐約州薩芬 (Suffern) 舉行, 年會主題是「開啟華入新世紀, 創新教學領潮流」, 共有來自近40餘所中校的約500多名師生及家長參與。

紐約橙郡中文學校負責安排大會才藝演出晚會。中文學校學生王立和曹姐姐作為晚會主持人。橙郡華人團體為晚會獻上了: 《好運來》、《新疆之春》、《旗袍》。

http://ny.worldjournal.com/view/full_story.ny/18834952/article-%E7%BE%8E%E6%9D%B1%E4%B8%AD%E6%A0%A1%E5%8D%94%E6%9C%83%E5%B9%B4%E6%9C%83-500%E4%BA%BA%E5%8F%83%E5%8A%A0?instance=nyevents

美東中文學校協會 (ACS) 2012年年會



舞蹈：好运来



新疆之春



3rd place, Multimedia Competition
James & Christy Shih

主持人：王立、曹妞妞



旗袍



希望大家为华人协会会刊踊跃投稿、多提宝贵意见。

We are open to suggestions. Please email to occa_suggestion@yahoo.com.

OCCA website: <http://www.occanyc.com/>