



## Annual Appreciation Dinner

Each year, Renascentia Hall invites host families, partner schools and our international students to a celebration in thanks for participating in our program. The dinner normally coincides with the Chinese New Year, the biggest holiday in China. Similar to Christmas in the United States, it is a special time of celebration. Chinese New Year festivities traditionally run from Chinese New Year's Eve, (the last day of the last month of the Chinese calendar), to the Lantern Festival on the 15th day of the first month. The Chinese calendar is based on the moon phase and the time of the solar year. Thus, the Chinese New Year is often referred to as the "Lunar New Year." This year, 2014, began on January 31 and is the "Year of the Horse" according to the Shēngxiào or Chinese zodiac. Within China, regional customs and traditions involving the celebration of the



Chinese New Year vary widely. Often, the evening preceding New Year's Day is an occasion for Chinese families to gather for an annual reunion dinner. It is also common for families to thoroughly cleanse the house to sweep away any ill-fortune and to make way for good incoming luck. Windows and doors are decorated with red paper-cutouts and couplets with popular themes of "good fortune" or "happiness," "wealth," and "longevity." Other activities include lighting firecrackers and giving money in red paper envelopes.



This year, the Annual Appreciation Dinner was held on Friday, January 24 at the Hibachi Grill & Supreme Sushi Buffet in Wilmington, Delaware. More than 100 guests attended this complimentary event and shared stories of their experiences while enjoying a huge variety of food. Eight winners received a gift certificate to dine again at the restaurant. The highlight of the evening was the announcement of our

Honor Roll students who were invited to a special dinner with our Winter Exchange Students. Honorees were: Chaoyun (Brad) Guo, Shiyao (Jason) Ju, Yifie (Li) Li, Yitao (Terry) Liu, Yiqiao (Aimee) Shao, Feiya (Cassie) Wang, Ruilin Yang, and Bojie (Kevin)

### In This Issue

- ◆ Annual Appreciation Dinner
- ◆ Upcoming Events
- ◆ Happy Birthday
- ◆ Student Spotlight
- ◆ Youth Leadership Conference #1
- ◆ Winter Exchange Program
- ◆ Meet Our New Team Members
- ◆ Important School Dates
- ◆ Host Family Corner
- ◆ Appreciation Dinner Pictures

### Upcoming Events

#### March 1

- ◆ Youth Leadership Conference #2

#### April 12

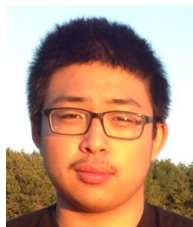
- ◆ Youth Leadership Conference #3

### Happy Birthday



**Jing (Nancy) Bi**  
February 1

**Shiyao (Jason) Ju**  
February 12



### Student Spotlight

Yangning (Nancy) Ning joined Renascentia Hall's family on December 30, 2013 and is completing her 8th grade year at Ursuline Academy. Nancy hails from the Heilongjiang Province located at the farthest Northeast limit of Chinese territory, bordering Russia to its east. The temperature in this climate is generally very cold and provides the perfect environment for the national ice festival. Nancy's favorite activities are swimming and playing badminton. In January, Nancy took part in the 8th grade play "Godspell" with all of her classmates. She resides with her host family Tara & Keith



# Youth Leadership Conference #1

On January 11, 2014, Renascentia Hall students received the benefit of years of training and experience from two exceptional retired military gentlemen at a Youth Leadership Conference. Host father, Carl Witte, LTC and his good friend, Mike Wilgen, LTC, created the program to instruct students on the benefits of teamwork and group dynamics through teaching and hands-on application. The three-part series will focus on the building blocks needed to become a great leader. For the twenty-two students who accepted this generous gift of time and talent, the first session was an overview of future topics: goal setting, planning, organization, and teamwork. At future sessions, students will learn how each skill is necessary to achieve success.

Prior to the conference, the students were asked to complete a self-assessment exercise on perception. The assignments were collected at the beginning of the session and two students' names were drawn from those submitted. Run "Kevin" Zhu and Ruilin Yang both received a \$25 Amazon gift card. To illuminate the concept that our personal biases and experiences influence how we perceive other people, the group viewed a short movie clip, *The Eye of the Beholder*, and then discussed what they observed. The film can be viewed at: <https://archive.org/details/EyeOfTheBeho> (if you would like to view this film, type this URL into your web browser).

Following a lunch featuring Chinese dishes, students took part in interactive activities including Wayward Whispers, a game that displayed how easily and quickly a simple phrase can be misinterpreted. The students discovered the importance of asking questions when they don't understand what they hear. The Simon Says game showed students why listening attentively is key if they want to be successful and achieve success.

The next Youth Leadership Conference is scheduled for March 1 at the Newark Senior Center (200 Whitechapel Drive, Newark, DE) from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. All students are expected to participate and host families are welcome to attend.



# Winter Exchange Program



On Friday, January 25, 2014, a group of six Chinese students and several parents arrived in New York to take part in the first Winter Program sponsored by Renascentia Hall. Lead by new staff member, Maggie Lin, the students were greeted at the airport and brought to a nearby hotel to sleep after their long flight. Saturday morning, they arrived in Newark for orientation and to meet their host families. The Program was designed to coincide with the students' Chinese New Year holiday that typically lasts for three weeks, making it the perfect time for international students to experience American schools in session. This intensive two-week program provides students with opportunities to visit a variety of schools before deciding where they will apply. Hampered by the unusual snow fall that descended on the east coast,

school tours had to be rearranged but thanks to accommodating staff and host families, the students were able to see many of our partner schools.

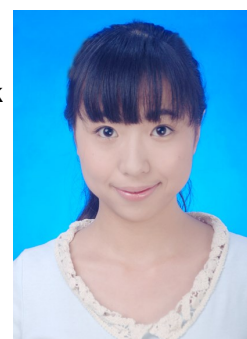
During their stay, students also toured Washington, D.C., Philadelphia and New York City. They also enjoyed a Chinese New Year celebration with full-time students. Living with host families provided an opportunity for the students to experience what life is like in a typical American family. While participating in the program, the students have made new friends and became acquainted with the Renascentia Hall staff.

# Meet Our New Team Members

**Kathleen M. Rutherford** is a recruiting professional with over 20 years of experience in private school education. Kathleen holds a B.A. in Communications from Brockport State University. She began her career as an ESL instructor at the Fay School, a boarding school in Southboro, MA. At Fay, Kathleen also led a summer English immersion program. After the Fay School, Kathleen was hired by Kaplan, Inc., in Philadelphia, PA, as a recruiter for their Higher Education Division. While at Kaplan, Kathleen received various awards for excellence in service and exceeding sales goals. A move to Delaware landed Kathleen a job at Junior Achievement of Delaware as Director of Operations for Kent and Sussex Counties. In this position, Kathleen brought Financial Literacy programming to over 60 schools in Delaware, while maintaining established school contacts and acquiring new contacts. Kathleen was also involved in overseeing several grant-funded projects as well as fundraising events. Most recently, she worked at Saint Thomas More Academy, a private co-ed Catholic high school in Magnolia, DE, where she was the Director of Admissions. While at Saint Thomas, Kathleen established an International Student Program which included students from China, France, Spain, and Nigeria. Kathleen will assume the role as the International Education Director at Renascentia Hall. In her free time, Kathleen enjoys cooking, traveling, and spending time with her daughters,



**Mengqi “Maggie” Lin** joined Renascentia Hall as the Financial Accountant with concentrations both in education and business. With a Bachelor’s Degree in Accounting from Zhongnan University of Economics and Law, Maggie obtained a Master’s Degree in Accounting from Binghamton University. Maggie has work experience both in accounting and education consulting. She worked at Ernst and Young in China and held an accounting position at Sunmaxx Solar, a solar thermal manufacture in Binghamton, NY. As an enthusiastic and skillful professional, Maggie helps to manage the financial matters of Renascentia Hall international programs in both China and USA. In her spare time, she enjoys swimming, dancing, travelling, cooking and photography.



## Important School Dates

### February 6-9

- ◆ “Annie” - Salesianum

### February 8

- ◆ Student Dance - Salesianum
- ◆ ACT Testing - Saint Mark’s & Sanford
- ◆ Scholastic Art Awards Ceremony - Sanford

### February 11-14

- ◆ Encounter Retreat - Salesianum

### February 13

- ◆ Parent/Teacher Conferences - Saint Mark’s

### February 14

- ◆ School Closed - Salesianum & Ursuline

### February 17

- ◆ School Closed - Salesianum, Ursuline, Saint Mark’s, Sanford

### February 27

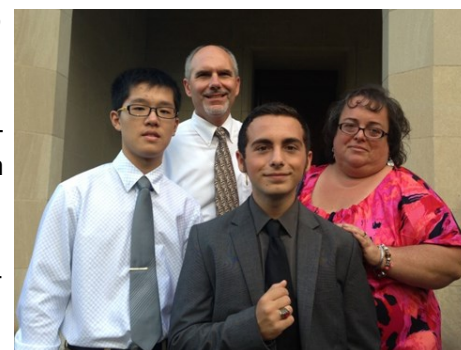
- ◆ Variety Show - Saint Mark’s

### February 28

- ◆ School Closed - Saint Mark’s

## Host Family Corner

“Yifei Li arrived in August 2013 to join our family for his junior year of high school at Salesianum. The experience has been mutually rewarding to our family. Our son Michael has experienced a sense of maturity that comes from being a “big brother” to Li. We have shared life experiences together, laughed, and have fun. Li has adjusted well to our family and the new school environment. He actually advanced to a higher level of difficulty in academic classes to make it more challenging for himself. He has maintained excellent grades, and was honored by Renascentia Hall as the highest ranking student within the program this January. Li celebrated this accomplishment with other top students by enjoying a special Chinese New Year Dinner at the RH’s Director’s home on January 31. We are proud of Li and his mature and dedicated commitment to do his best at school and to get along with others including our family, the daily car pool buddies, and new friends at school.”



# Annual Appreciation Dinner

