

Submitted photo

Coventry High English teacher Julie Lima-Boyle and a pair of Chinese students take their picture together during her trip in September.

# Top teacher tells tales of trip to China

## Julie Lima-Boyle one of a handful of educators to travel as teaching ambassador

KENDRA LEIGH MILLER  
kimiller@ricentral.com

COVENTRY — A Coventry high school teacher recently had a rare opportunity to represent the United States as an ambassador on a nine-day trip to China in an effort to share and compare methods of teaching between the two countries.

English Curriculum Coordinator Julie Lima-Boyle took her trip at the end of September and was chosen to go, having been a Rhode Island Teacher of the Year in 2012, through Shanghai Education Magazine, which scouted both state and national Teachers of the Year this summer at a conference in Philadelphia.

“They sought to represent the U.S. geographically as well as various grade levels and said they appreciated my dedication to staying in the classroom and doing the hardest work of teaching students. Many state teachers of the year leave the classroom to work in administration after the award,” Boyle said. I traveled with the National Teacher of the Year for from California as well as state teachers of the year from Kansas and Arkansas.”

Boyle explained that being chosen to participate meant a pretty aggressive schedule with two formal keynote speeches to audiences in the thousands, along with Q&A sessions, two less formal speeches to beginning teachers and principals and another to top/elite trained teachers, five school visits, one official state visit in Shenzhen, China and six banquet/luncheons with educational dignitaries.

“Essentially, both in formal and informal settings, I heard stories of our success in instruction and assessment and focused my speeches on importance of formative assessment and the need for personalization/differentiation to increase student achievement

# China trip has Boyle humbled by all the fanfare

Continued from Page A-1

levels," she said. "I knew this was an 'edgy' message for the audience of teachers who still tend to operate as lecturers versus facilitators of learning."

Some of the aspects she took away from her nine-day trip were that kids are kids and teachers are teachers, regardless of the culture. They thrive with quality feedback and support whether American or Chinese and great educators are always looking for ways to im-

prove their craft.

"Shanghai has one of the most celebrated education systems, yet their teachers were hungry for new ways to improve their craft and better instruct students," Boyle said. "There is much we do in Coventry and our state of which we should be proud."

Since her return, she has been thinking about a few things that vary between the two countries.

"The extent to which U.S. students often overestimate

skill sets and readiness for life after graduation and Chinese students underestimate the same, the ways to cultivate grit, healthy competition, and 'stick-with-it-ness' in our students — as well as ingenuity, creativity, and wholesome self-concepts — and how can we learn from global best practices in increasingly collaborative ways and how can technology help this."

A few aspects of the trip that really resonated with Boyle were the scope and scale of her experience.

There was extensive media coverage and public relations," she said. "We were followed by cameras and journalists practically everywhere we went and professionally produced billboards, staging, video introductions were all extremely professional and we were treated like rock stars."

Boyle said the scale of venues and the large crowds were bigger than she anticipated and the autograph and picture requests were humbling.

"Notes and cards pressed into my hand by Chinese teachers thanking me for inspiring them made me well up more than once!" she said. "I really enjoyed seeing the sights of China too. Shanghai is an amazing city. The num-

ber of skyscrapers especially at night illuminated with lights was really impressive. One night we took a boat ride down the HuangPu River and it was otherworldly — it looked straight out of a James Bond movie."

Boyle said another new adventure was the food, with exotic dishes such as bullfrog, jellyfish, fish gill soup, and black skin chicken on the menu.

"Definitely not like Americanized Chinese food," she said. "Our hosts were very attentive to our safety, enjoyment, and communications and translators showed patience, skill, and interest in correctly conveying our comments and questions."

The trip, which had never been organized before, was organized by AA Eagle Group, who coordinated the travel arrangements via Los Angeles.

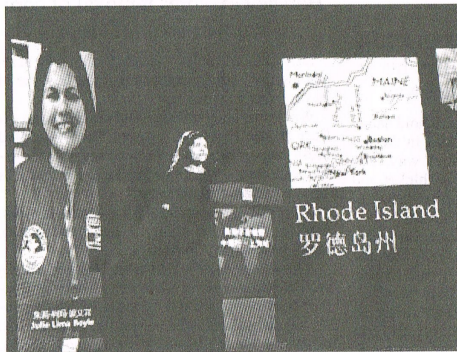
"Another group who heard me speak in Shanghai offered to pay for me to return to Beijing to deliver a similar lecture series," she said. "I would love to do so in the future, but right now my biggest concerns are teaching my grade 12 English students at Coventry High and the work I am doing as part of the leadership team of curriculum coordinators to make



Submitted photo

According to Boyle, she was treated like a rock star in China, with plenty of opportunities for photo and autograph seekers.

learning experiences authentic school — but I hope the program continues in the future." preparing for life after high



Submitted photo

Julie Lima-Boyle, who was Rhode Island's Teacher of the Year in 2012, was led through China on a whirlwind tour that saw her seek to large crowds.

**STORM TEAM 10 HD**

WED      THU      FRI