



## 認助中國鄉村教育項目系列

### SUPPORT EDUCATION IN RURAL CHINA PROGRAM SERIES

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#### **On Producing the ESS DVD**

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To share with you my ESS experience, let me start with my story. I was born in a small fishing village by the Yellow Sea in the northern Jiangsu Province. For generations, not one single person in my family ever attended school. I am one of the very few in my hometown to have received higher education. Consequently, we, the lucky ones, have been considered as respectable citizens with high I. Q. by the town folks. In fact, deep in our hearts, we know very well that it is only because we were fortunate to be given the opportunity. Our fates were altered and our horizons were broadened by being educated.

The importance of education was thus ingrained in me. I felt an unprecedented sense of pride and achievement when I sent my son to the best pre-school while working in the provincial capital. However, at that point, it did not occur to me that in every city in China, thousands of children of the rural migrant workers had no access to school there. In every village of the rural, and mountainous areas, countless children could not afford schooling. I did not give too much thought as to how my “successful life” would relate to these children, until I came to the United States years later. I became deeply touched by what is taking place here. Children of immigrants like us are entitled to a decent education by attending public schools. Furthermore, when the state legislature of California attempted to withhold from the children of illegal immigrants the right to attend public schools in order to conserve diminishing resources, the Federal High Court unequivocally ruled in favor of these children.

The policy of extending equal educational opportunity to all inspires me. As an independent film producer, I feel it is my duty to pay attention to the status quo of the education in China. In the past, whenever I returned to China for a visit, I had always acted like a lone investigator, amassing information on certain schools, staying on the trail of a few rural migrant workers’ families. I had then set my mind on producing a film on the education of children of the rural migrant workers. Just at this juncture, a friend who worked in Maryland invited me to attend an ESS meeting. I found that their goal of helping to improve the education in China is the same as mine.

In fact, an opportunity was waiting for me. ESS had been planning on producing a DVD introducing their programs and profiling their sponsors and volunteers. Gladly I volunteered for this assignment. I must have been one of the happiest producers in the world, doing what I do best, for a cause that I love.

After I studied the information in detail provided by ESS, my students at the Department of Communication and I interviewed and filmed the ESS sponsors and volunteers when our university was not in session. My students were immensely impressed by the way that ESS volunteers carried out their programs. When I attended the ESS Professional Development Training for principals and teachers in Anhui Province, China, the temperature was at the highest in summer. Yet members of ESS maintained a low budget policy and endured a minimum room and board standard. People at the hotel said they had never seen any organization as frugal as ESS. When I went to Gansu Province to interview the graduates of ESS financial assistance program, I learned that they are aspiring to do their best to improve the education of their hometowns. I can see that the seeds sowed by ESS have taken root to bloom and bear fruit. Successors are on the way.

I would like to love my people in plain and simple ways, just as my ESS fellow volunteers do. I will continue to volunteer for ESS, and I will find ways to complete the DVD on the education of children of the rural migrant workers in China.

(Translated by volunteer Bella Li)