

Cleveland State University Confucius Institute
2008 Teachers' Day Celebration and Professional Development Workshop

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On Friday, Oct. 24, 2008, about 50 teachers from K-12 through higher education, plus community leaders and friends, met to celebrate Cleveland's first Teachers' Day event. The event was hosted by the newly instated Confucius Institute at Cleveland State University (CSU) and held at Epworth-Euclid United Methodist Church in University Circle. The three-hour event opened with greetings and remarks from Dr. James McLoughlin, Dean of the College of Education and Human Services at CSU, and from Mr. Anthony Yen, a respected elder of the Chinese community.

Dr. Lih-Ching Chen Wang, the director of the Confucius Institute, presented background information on how the Institute began and about the life of Confucius, including footage of the opening ceremony of the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Dr. Wang stated that Confucius (551-479 B.C.) was a great Chinese teacher whose philosophy has been influencing education for more than 2,500 years. Even today, educators continue to admire and apply many of his ideas to their teaching practices. In the Chinese tradition, Confucius's birthday is proclaimed as "Teacher Day" in order to honor all teachers. Ancient Chinese character of "He", meaning "HARMONY is one very important idea in the philosophy of Confucius. There is a Chinese saying "Harmony is precious 「和為貴」". The slogan of the Beijing Olympics – One World, One Dream – is an example of Harmony that was derived from this ancient Confucian idea.

Three Chinese language teachers – Ms. Su-Jane Chen (Laurel School for Girls), Ms. Luling Li (Shaker Heights Schools), Ms. Qizhi Zhang (Westlake Chinese School, Cuyahoga Community College and CSU) and three administrators – Deborah Delisle (Cleveland Heights-University Heights Schools Superintendent, State Superintendent-to-be), Mark Freeman (Superintendent, Shaker Heights Schools), and Anthony Yen (Chairman, Chinese Culture Foundation) – were presented awards in recognition of their outstanding work.

The event proceeded with refreshments as well as presentations from teachers and administrators. Ms. Luling Li, a Chinese language teacher at Shaker Heights City Schools, and Ms. Chi-Hwa Yang, a Chinese language teacher at Beachwood City Schools, presented "Meeting the Challenges in Chinese Language Instruction". In terms of "Key Considerations, Strategies and Resources in Offering Chinese Language Programs", Dr. James Paces, Executive Director, Curriculum and Instruction at Shaker Heights City Schools and Dr. Philip Wagner, Assistant Superintendent, Beachwood City School District, describing how their districts recognized and acted upon the rising importance of Chinese as a world language. The group then walked to the Chinese Cultural Gardens to watch the planting of three cherry trees donated by Mr. Yen near the statue of Confucius, a tradition to celebrate the great teacher's birthday. Many participants took turns with the shovels.

Upon returning to the church, teachers had the opportunity to ask questions of administrators and to discuss issues that arise in classrooms, like classroom management, how to integrate teaching

culture and language, and the difficulty of matching the supply of Chinese language teachers to the steadily growing demand. It is concerns and questions such as these that the Confucius Institute seeks to address, through supporting individual teachers and offering future opportunities for teachers to gather, to share classroom experiences, and to network with one another.