

## ***AN I-BANKER & HER MA's*** (Winter 2005)

Gloria was a young award-winning I-banker at Merrill Lynch in Canada. What was she doing with MA's in a factory in Shanghai?

Gloria had a one-year position at this company in Shanghai, one of the leading cities in China's economic transformation. MA's are "manufacturing assistants", young women from the countryside far and near, who have come to the big city to seek employment and a brighter future.



Working for long hours and low wages, they are vulnerable to the temptations and vices of the big city. Some prostitute themselves for fast money to buy coveted name brand goods. The company gave Gloria an assignment to create an English program for these young women. She recruited other expatriate colleagues to help. Twice a week, the MA's would gather for fun English classes with Gloria and her team of volunteer teachers.

Now Gloria was more than an English teacher, she became "Big Sister" to the M.A.'s. Proficient in Mandarin and Shanghainese, she was able to share her life with them, teach them survival skills, listen to their stories, and counsel those who sought her out. Ask Gloria and she would tell you that the best part of her China experience was time spent with these young women. They were a blessing to one another.

Gloria left Shanghai two years ago, but the English Program for M.A.'s continues to grow as others at the company are inspired to give their "five loaves and two fish" as well.