

BRINGING TOGETHER PEOPLE WHO LIVE WORLDS APART (Fall 2006)

Dan and Candy are two teachers who live worlds apart. Dan is American, a seasoned business systems trainer for the Los Alamos National Lab in New Mexico. Candy is Chinese, a young teacher assigned to teach English in a coal-mining community of rural China. They met when our Rural Education Project Team went to Northwest China last fall to train local school teachers of English.

Candy had only been teaching English for two weeks. "Many (young teachers like her) felt overwhelmed," Dan recalled. Candy was frustrated and almost bitter about her assignment because she was originally trained to teach other subjects. Dan worked hard to build confidence in the listening and speaking skills of the class. Their progress in one short week was impressive. When the training was done, Candy presented Dan with a gift and a note that read: "This class was the happiest time of my life."

"When you can see a visible difference and know you've helped people, it is one of the best feelings you can have," Dan said. Teaching has never been just a job for Dan. Helping others learn is his passion. In February this year, his story was featured full-page in the *Los Alamos National Laboratory Newsletter*. Dan's picture with the rural teachers and his heart-warming anecdotes put a face on China and connected people from two remotely different worlds.

