

THE BRIGHT SIDE: NEW VISION, NEW HOPE (Spring 2007)

In 2002, PESI began sponsoring the Siyuan Leadership Program at China's top-ranking Tsinghua University. "Siyuan" means "appreciation for the source of all good gifts in life." We hope to help nurture compassionate and inter-culturally competent leaders who are committed to connecting people for social impact. In three summers, Siyuan students go through cultural exchange with American students, community service in rural China, and a study tour of Hong Kong to learn about the education, business, government and non-profit sectors of an international city.



Lanjie was in the first Siyuan cohort. After a 3-week cultural exchange program with American students in the summer of 2002, he reflected: "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.' ... I've been inspired to love my country, my people, my family and everything around me more boldly... I believe love can dispel the darkness around us."

Summer 2003, the Siyuan students had plans for a community service project at Gulang, one of China's poorest counties in the Northwest. But SARS hit, and the project was deferred. That year, Lanjie went to an international student conference in New York as the China delegate. There he met Josh from Stanford. The two started a student volunteer organization to mobilize their peers on both sides of the Pacific for social ventures. In the last three summers, over 150 Chinese and American students served in Gulang and other poor areas of China, working with rural school teachers and students.

Young people like Lanjie and Josh, who have a vision for responsible leadership, social concern and the bridging of peoples and cultures, give hope to the future and the world that China and the U.S. share.