

# THE BEE

Serving the Sellwood-  
Westmoreland, Brooklyn,  
Eastmoreland, Reed and  
Woodstock Neighborhoods

CELEBRATING OUR CENTENNIAL 1906-2006 PORTLAND, OREGON • MARCH 2007

## Westmoreland fifth grader aces Chinese Govt. fluency test

BY LINDA BONDER  
SPECIAL TO THE BEE

Katie Stern-Stillinger of Westmoreland was one of only eleven children recently to pass a Chinese government proficiency test normally administered to adults. The test (called "HSK", for its Chinese initials) serves as a requirement to enter university in China as an undergraduate student, and is used by employers in China for positions requiring basic competence in Chinese. The HSK test is likened to the Test of English as a Foreign Language in the United States.

"We are very impressed with these results," said Zhang Jie, Director of the China Language

Office in Beijing. "The kids have done a great job."

"Katie uses the same textbooks as her peers in China," said Yafei Liu, Lead Chinese teacher and 10-year veteran of the program at The International School in Portland, which Katie has been attending. "I am extremely proud of her, though I am not surprised."

Stern-Stillinger and her classmates are 10- and 11-year-old native English speakers who have been enrolled in The International School's Chinese immersion program since preschool, according to Bruce Bayliss, Head of School. "They study an American curriculum with all of their subjects—math,

science, social studies, and so forth—taught in Chinese by native Chinese speakers." As part of their fifth grade curriculum, the children spent two weeks in China last October, attending a Chinese boarding school and visiting important Chinese sites.

The Chinese Language Office has only administered the test twice to such young students, both times at The International School, according to Yang Shen, Chief Education Consul at the Chinese Consulate General in San Francisco. Passing the HSK test exempts students from taking certain language courses in China, as well as in many American universities.



Photo courtesy of Denise Stern

Katie Stern-Stillinger of Westmoreland, photographed on a recent visit to China.