

EDUCATION

Asia is local girl's research hot spot

Banks' Angela Tipton, 10, studies relationships on three-week immersion trip to China

By **NANCY TOWNSLEY**
News-Times

Ten-year-old Angela Tipton of Banks stayed very busy on her three-week sojourn to China in March and April.

She toured eight cities: Beijing, Tianjin, Xian, Nanjing, Shanghai, Nanchang, Guangzhou and Hong Kong. She saw The Great Wall of China, rode a magnetic levitation train and rode in an elevator to the top of an 88-story building in Shanghai in less than a minute.



During her whirlwind tour of China, Angela Tipton managed to walk along China's Great Wall.

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She translated English to Mandarin (and the other way around) for her parents, Regina and Ernest Tipton, and other chaperones.

For a week, she lived with a host family whose 11-year-old daughter was a pen pal of Angela's before the Banks girl made the trip to the far east.

And, the fifth-grader conducted research for an international baccalaureate "capstone" project about cross-cultural relationships she'll turn in to her teachers at The International School in Portland,

where she studies Chinese.

Specifically, Angela's project takes a look at how people and practices are alike in the U.S. and China, and how they're different.

"During school in Tianjin I handed out questionnaires," explained Angela, who is Chinese-American. "One thing I learned is that in the Chinese culture they do a lot of bartering in the stores."

So much so that Angela helped her mom out while buying a suitcase in a Chinese market. "We started at 600 yen, and we bought it for 210 yen," noted Angela. "In American money, that's \$36."

Regina Tipton was grateful for her daughter's business acumen. "We drove a hard bargain," she quipped.

Another observation Angela made is that in Chinese schools, "they have a lot more students, as many as 50 to a classroom," she said. "They have a computer lab, but they also use blackboards."

Please and thank you

Her parents were impressed by Angela's ability to test out her language skills in China. "I can say 'please' and 'thank you,' and 'water,' but Angela



Ten-year-old Angela Tipton of Banks visited China for three weeks in March and April as part of an immersion and research tour. She is a fifth-grader at The International School in Portland.

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was definitely our translator," said Regina.

A student at The International School since age five, Angela's cultural and language immersion experience was important to Ernest, a planner at Portland State University, and Regina, who works for Kaiser Foundation. "We wanted her to have an opportunity to stay in touch with her heritage," her dad said.

Upon returning to Oregon April 1, Angela got ready to administer her survey — which studies how shared values and beliefs influence peoples' daily lives — to her classmates. She'll formally present her findings April 27 during an exhibition fair at The International School, located at 025 S.W.

Sherman St., near the banks of the Willamette River in Portland.

All 450 of the students at the school study math, science, social studies and the arts in either Spanish, Japanese or Chinese.

"Having the experience of using their language in real-time, outside the academic environment, gave Angela a lot of confidence," Regina noted. "She was our leader."

Play every night

While in China, Angela's fa-

vorite experience of all was living with her host family. "At their apartment there were neighbors on different floors who came to our house to play with us every night," she said. "It was really fun."

But now that she's home — where she and her folks live with Nei Nei the cat, Eva the rabbit and Berry and Boysen, two goats — she's happy to be in familiar surroundings.

"I made a lot of friends in China," Angela said. "But I have a lot of friends at home, too."

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