

Blog 38 --- The Holiday Weekend

On the last day of November, NIC (Nanjing International Club) hosted a Christmas Concert/ Party at our school as a Charity event supporting the Hopeful Hearts organization. On the following day, the first day of December, we had a late Thanksgiving party with three other families that all came from the US. Over the weekend, I stuffed myself with cookies, cupcakes, apple pies, mashed potatoes and turkey legs, and I'm quite thankful I didn't burst!



During the Christmas party at school, many people donated home made pastries to raise money for the Hopeful Hearts. Many students set up booths to help and sell them, and I was one of those students. My friend Emily and I were in charge of a table full of Christmas tree shaped cookies, peanut butter and chocolate chip cookies, chocolate covered strawberries and mini pies all for 5 RMB. We were placed in the corner of the room near the door. In the beginning, there weren't a lot of people buying our cookies, so we started thinking of ways for more people to buy them. At first, we each pretended to be customers. We bought (with our own money) a couple of cookies, ate them up when people walked by and said, "Mmmmm, this is good!" It served as a sort of advertisement for our booth! :) Afterwards, we figured the advertisements didn't work so well, so we decided to do a discount on our treats: Buy 1 Get 1 Free! All of a sudden, many people started coming to our booth. In a blink of an eye, the plate of chocolate covered strawberries disappeared and many other cookie plates were nearly half empty! After that, it was time for the concert. When the concert ended, everyone came back and began trying to sell the rest of their treats, so every booth had a Buy 1 Get 1 Free discount. But my friend and I decided to go even nicer on the customers and gave a Buy 1 Get 5 Free discount on all of our cookies! When it was close to the end of the party, we had more than a dozen cookies left and we decided to just give them for... free. :) We did raise a lot of money that night and I was glad I could help for the event!

For the Christmas Concert, we saw many wonderful choir and music performances by the Nanjing Singers Club and some NIS students. During the concert, there were also many sing-alongs, including one very famous song: The Twelve Days of Christmas. To sing this song, the audience was split into 12 groups with one member of the Nanjing Singers club as their leader. Each group was responsible for one day. I was sitting in the back, and I was put in group 5 who were singing (More like shouting) "5 golden rings" when the song came to that part. The song was supposed to be just a sing-along but it ended up as a competition to see which group was the loudest. Some groups had less people or had more little kids and they weren't as loud as the others. In the beginning, I didn't quite get it, but as we got farther into the song, I gradually became more confident and ended up screaming at the top of my lungs along with the many other middle and high school students in my group. At the end of the song, we definitely didn't lose the "competition" but everyone nearly lost their voices. During the concert, the songs brought back many memories of Christmas in the U.S. It got me thinking of what I would be doing at around the beginning of December if I were still in Florida. I guessed I would probably be taking out the decorations from the attic, picking out a tree to put in the living room and maybe even shopping in Wal-Mart or Target for a sparkling star to put on top.



The next day, we went to a Thanksgiving party held by one of our neighbors who just moved to Nanjing in August. Since all the families at the party were from the US, turkey had got to be a part of it. In the US, my mom would normally buy a pre-cooked family Thanksgiving meal from Boston Market. She would happily heat up the whole turkey and pretend that she made it! We don't have Boston Market in Nanjing, so DIY is a must. It took the party host eight hours to cook that big bird! When we entered the house, we all closed our eyes, stuck up our noses and just enjoyed the moment with the smell of the turkey wafting out from the oven. When that golden bird came out of the oven, I noticed that the bird's stomach was full of sticky rice mixed with raisins, hazelnuts, walnuts, black rice and pine nuts. It's nice to see a turkey with a Chinese style add-on. For the dessert, each family brought a pie to the party without discussion. Surprisingly, they were all different! We had apple pie, blueberry pie, pecan pie and pumpkin pie! After dinner, everyone was draped onto the couch, unable to move.



As I'm writing this blog, I could still see all those cookies and that turkey floating out in front of me when I close my eyes, and I could smell them too