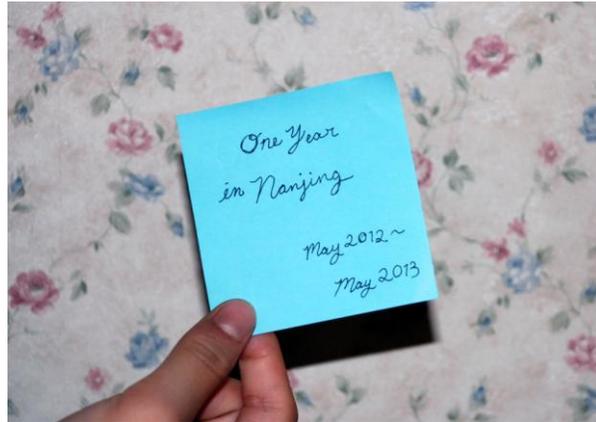


## Blog 27 --- One Year in Nanjing



May 15th marked our one year anniversary in Nanjing. Being in Nanjing for one year, I realize how one year could feel ever so short, yet filled with so many memories worth treasuring. It was like yesterday that our family packed our house in boxes, temporarily stored them in a storage room and boarded the plane with question marks piled up in our mind. As this whole year whizzed by, many things have happened: we visited 7 different cities in China; NIS's number of students officially surpassed 700; my dad's new office has hired over 70 employees; 4 of my friends' families came from Florida to visit me and last but not least, I have gained confidence with my mandarin.

Before I came to China, my mom taught me Mandarin at home. I could communicate with her using simple but broken mandarin. Most of the time, I even took advantage of my mom by replying to her in English. As a requirement of NIS, I have to take mandarin class. Without a formal evaluation, my teacher assumed I was very fluent with my Chinese and placed me in the advanced class! At the beginning of the school year, I struggled with each mandarin class like a new swimmer who could barely keep their head above the water. My Chinese textbooks were all highlighted with new characters and vocabulary. At home, I have to use 100% Chinese to communicate with my grandma as I can not insert any English word into my Chinese sentence. After a year of struggling, I gradually felt comfortable with my mandarin. My teacher said that I have climbed from the bottom of the list to above the class average! At home, I can enjoy a Chinese T.V. show with my grandma and share little giggles with her here and there.

Among the 4 families that came to visit us, one family of my best friends Anna & Willow came to China during spring break in March and specifically stayed with us in Nanjing for 24 hours. We have been friends ever since pre-k. We usually have play-dates and sleepovers during the weekends in Florida. When I heard that they were coming here to stay for one night, I was so glad that I could show them my life in Nanjing. During their visit, I took them to explore some famous tourist sites in Nanjing, cherished a sleepover filled with great fun and also toured our school campus. At school, I led them to my classroom and our teacher generously spent 15 minutes of our class time for Anna and Willow to introduce themselves and their school in Florida. After learning that the kids in our class are from so many different countries, Anna and Willow were pretty

amazed. When the two of them had to leave, it was hard to say good bye, but we knew that in June, we would see each other again.



During summer break, we will be traveling back to Florida for a visit. As June quietly approaches, I become more and more eager to hop onto the plane back home and cover myself with Florida's warm sunshine. I've come up with a long to-do list including visiting my friends, neighbors, parks, grocery stores and the neighborhood I lived in. My mom was surprised that Publix and Walmart ended up being part of the list as well. When I stayed in Florida, I didn't realize how special a visit to Publix could ever be, but when I lost that feeling which seemed like such a regular thing, I realized how much I miss home and how much a visit back there could comfort me so much.

To celebrate our "One year anniversary" in Nanjing, we chose to have dinner at the restaurant that is right next to the very first hotel we stayed at in Nanjing last year. The restaurant has an amazingly wide variety of western food to choose from and even Haagen Dazs ice cream for dessert. As we ate the wonderfully delicious scoops of ice cream, we celebrated and went through the memories made during this sweet year in Nanjing. I've had many adventures and visited many places, but none other adventure had taken me on a roller coaster much like this year in a city halfway around the world.