

SCIS moms join hands to aid children in need

Folke Markestein

LEAVING your home country behind as a working mom and being far away from family and your well-known social environment can also be seen as a great opportunity for your personal and professional development. At least it has been for me.

Shanghai, a city with as many inhabitants as our home country, The Netherlands, has a large expat community and there is always something suitable to do. Our school environment is a great opportunity to be involved in and develop your network. I have a 7-year-old daughter and a 5-year-old son who attend the Shanghai Community International School in Pudong. We moved to Shanghai three years ago.

How can you fulfill your personal needs such as being there for your family but also contribute to society in other ways?

Over the past few years, other moms and I have helped SCIS-Pudong develop

a close relationship with the non-governmental charity MaiTian. It helps children from impoverished rural mountain areas around the country receive an education. MaiTian works toward building schools and libraries, providing educational material and financial support to enable children to go to school.

The program SCIS-Pudong enforces is called "Kids for Kids." All SCIS teachers and a small, dedicated group of moms make sure SCIS students make an effort to participate in projects that raise money for the MaiTian students in need. My role as a MaiTian mom is to make sure these projects take place in school and that money raised reaches its destination. One big project I would like to highlight is an initiation of book corners in 31 classrooms in Jiangxi Province. SCIS students raised money to buy 50 books for each book corner.

My family has learned to respect and acknowledge what we have and to be happy and grateful.



The Markestein family (Folke, Deen, Lene, Lennard) in this photoshopped photo. Folke is very active with the MaiTian charity at SCIS Pudong.