

Florida Chinese School Conference

■ By Conchita Hsu

highlights growth in two day conference attended by over twenty Florida schools



The Association of Chinese Schools in Florida (ACSFL) held its annual convention from August 10 to August 11, 2007. The two-day conference was attended by over 20 Chinese schools from across Florida, represented by over 60 principals, teachers, and educators. Hosted by the Chinese School of the CAACF-Chinese American Association of Central Florida, an Orlando Chinese school, the conference was held in a convention facility located in Kissimmee, about 10 minutes proximity to the amusement parks.

At the conference, guest speakers spoke about the increasing importance of the Chinese language in America today. One speaker, Dr. Li-Na Fang, a professor representing the Overseas Compatriot Affairs Commission from Taiwan, highlighted the different methods of teaching Chinese overseas, discussing Mandarin phonics and the differences between traditional and simplified Chinese. Another speaker, Ms. Henny Chen, a Chinese language teacher from California, talked about the new Advanced Placement Chinese program offered by the College Board, which debuted last year and had the first AP test administered in May. Chen also talked about the

standards set by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), as well as the role of technology in learning Chinese. Topics covered included using digital lessons and web logs, commonly known as blogs, to supplement more traditional Chinese language lessons. Many sessions were also held on teaching

the linguistic/cultural aspects of China. Schools from Tallahassee, Gainesville, Tampa/Clearwater, Sarasota, Boca Raton, Jacksonville, Miami, Orlando, and multiple other cities across Florida were represented. Besides holding elections for the next president of the Association of Chinese Schools in Florida, the conference also included a taste of Chinese culture: traditional Chinese songs, acrobat dances and Beijing operas were performed as dinner entertainment at the commencement ceremony attended by many local dignitaries and supporters. The event was definitely a great success. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the chance to learn and to meet other Chinese educators and sharing each other experiences.

The conference had a great turnout despite being exclusive to educators. In the past, children of educators also joined together at the same site in a separate session as the Youth Summer Camp to learn Chinese cultural and craft. All these conferences were organized by the Association of Chinese Schools in Florida. The Association was founded in 2002 and serves to connect Florida's growing number of Chinese

language and cultural schools, as well as help the growing number of Chinese classes in public and private schools statewide. The Orlando host, Chinese School of CAACF was founded in 1980 and has been serving the Central Florida region ever since, dedicated to promoting the Chinese language and culture. It meets every Saturday afternoon at the Winter Park High School Ninth Grade Center.

For more information please contact Dr. David Muh, acting president of the Association of Chinese Schools in Florida, at (321) 795-9292 or dmuh@cfl.rr.com, or Conchita Hsu, principal of the Chinese School of CAACF, at (407) 977-1125 or orlandochinese@yahoo.com. The above photo is credited to Mrs. Michi Liu and was taken during the event.

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Conchita Hsu, principal of the Chinese School of CAACF (www.orlandochineseschool.org), has had great success in bringing the premier Chinese school in Orlando to new heights. She continues serving another term, the first to carry on the principal position in nearly 30 years of the school. Her broad vision

and warm approach has been well received, confirmed by the rapid growth of the school in becoming one of the largest and most reputable in Florida. Born and raised in the Philippines, Conchita is multilingual and fluent in Chinese.