

Anli Zhang's Summer abroad: Studying overseas in Morocco

By CAROLINE LIU
News Editor

Over this past summer, NCSSM students spent their free time doing a variety of things. Senior Anli Zhang was no different: she took her interest in the world and passion for traveling all the way to Morocco.

Zhang's amazing experience was all thanks to a program called The National Security Language Initiative for Youth (NSLI-Y), which prides itself on "provid[ing] merit-based scholarships for eligible high school students and recent high school graduates to learn less commonly taught languages in summer and academic-year overseas immersion programs".

This is not the first time that a NCSSM student was able to travel the world via this scholarship, grandseñior David Calvert was able to explore India in the summer of 2013.

In Morocco, Zhang was immersed in the world of the Arabic language and culture.

"The Arabs have a rich and beautiful culture. Arabic culture and language is so different compared to my cultural background, but I love it. After I did some research on the history of the Arabic countries, I became obsessed about its language, culture, religion, cuisine, history, philosophy, literature, art,

architecture, music, fashion, etc. I developed a passion to learn and understand its culture in depth through language," she said.

Zhang had the pleasure so staying with a host family as well. "They are my family,



Photo courtesy of Anli Zhang

Anli Zhang (right) makes the Uniflx camelback in the Saharan desert, on a weekend excursion.

not host family anymore. I am so grateful for everything they've done for me. I was a bit scared on the first day, but the awkwardness went away the second day. From day 1, when I didn't speak any Arabic at all, to day 46, when I could tell them I hope to keep in

touch and will miss them, they helped me a lot with learning both Arabic and Moroccan culture," she said.

Her host mom said: "Whenever you are back in Morocco, come back to visit us and live with us if you want to.

Your room will still be your room." One day, Zhang hopes to visit them again.

Staying in Morocco for 6 weeks, Zhang definitely had some trouble adjusting to the culture in the beginning.

"It's very different compare[d] to my own background in terms of culture and religion. We were there for the entire Ramadan ... Rabat is not a night city, but during Ramadan it is. People were outside everywhere and enjoying the time they could eat. During the day in Ramadan, most shops were

closed. Banks, post offices, café, grocery stores, etc were closed very early. However, after Ramadan was over, everything went back to its normal schedule, but it's not safe anymore to walk alone at night, unlike during Ramadan, you could walk home by

yourself at 3 am and still see people on the street," said Zhang.

Of course, a once-in-a-lifetime trip like this comes with a little surprise.

"It turns out - I was living in family with Moroccan celebrities the whole time... My host brother and host sister-in-law are Moroccan actors, film writers and film producers. Because my host sister-in-law was in Agadir and Casablanca for filming during my visit, so I didn't get to see her," Zhang said.

"I remember, one night after f'tour (breaking the fast during Ramadan), the family and I were watching TV, and I saw my host brother on the TV show," said Zhang.

Talking about the overall experience, Anli said "I [had] this awesome opportunity to go Morocco and didn't have to pay a penny; I [couldn't] appreciate my life in America more. In Morocco, I saw people from the richest families to the poorest of the poor, and that just made me appreciate everything I have in my life."

Command Strips: More than meets the eye

By KAYLA BOLLING
Staff Writer

As many people by now know, the only things allowed on the walls here at NCSSM are those things that are manufactured by 3M. Though we refer to pretty much everything as "command strips", there's actually a wide variety of strips, hooks, hangers, clips, and even shower supplies.

Many of the uses of command strips are quite obvious. Use the strips to hang your mirror or whiteboard, use a Command hook to hang your fob and keys. But beyond the conventional uses, what else can command strips do for you?

Ceiling Stylings: You may find that you quickly run out of floor space what with those 20-something textbooks and printer and the fridge and whatever else you brought into your room and immediately threw on the floor.

That pesky tissue box you keep knocking off your desk? Just use velcro hanging strips to attach it to the ceiling. Have a wire box or shelf that won't quite fit between the wardrobe and the door? Just attach it to the ceiling. Want to make sure that you never lose your notebooks again? Attach the velcro strips and just leave them on the wall. When it's time for class, simply grab and go.

Things you might not have thought of hanging: Mugs: Mugs have handles and handles are very easy to

hang on Command hooks. Hanging a mug on an out of the way space on your wall ensures that you never lose it and there's less of a chance of you knocking it over and breaking it. Who knew?

Toothbrushes: Why waste the space with a toothbrush holder or jar? Just turn a small Command hook sideways and rest your toothbrush in it. Easy.

Various headgear: Hang your hat, your headphones, and your glasses. A place for everything and everything in its place.

Your hopes and dreams: Second trimester struggles got you down? Maybe you chose to Chem-Phys at the same time? No worries, Command will help you keep your spirits up. (As long as they don't weigh more than five to ten pounds).

Plus, ceiling style command strips provide a lovely way to hide your things during room inspection. If there's no room for any more miscellaneous items in a wardrobe, then the ceiling is the place to go.

Just remember, there is such a thing as too much. Command strip crazy is defined as more than eight Command strips per square foot of wall space. And please, do stick to the walls and ceiling of your room.

Command strips on your roommates, friends, or the back of the chair in front of you isn't always the best idea. Damage-free hanging does not mean damage-free relationships. So please, use command strips responsibly.

Writing proves important in Science

By BRINDA SARATHY
Staff Writer

NCSSM. The North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics. Nowhere in that acronym does it say "and writing". So, as students of a STEM school, it's safe to say writing isn't all that important. Or is it?

Writing is an essential part of communication. It allows someone to transfer their thoughts to a piece of paper (or onto a computer) that can then be read by the author or another person. Seems simple enough, and not quite that mind-blowing, but in a digital age where mathematical and scientific concepts are so important, why then is it important to know how to write?

The answer lies in one word that's been mentioned: communication.

Engineers need to communicate factors of design to the manufacturers of a product. Researchers need to

communicate their findings to others so that they can benefit the world. Kim Kardashian needs to communicate that her precious baby has made an adorable face. Writing is power, in that one can change another's thoughts simply by writing their own. It's one thing for a person to be a great thinker; it's a great feat for them to be a writer.

A lot of successful people write down their thoughts. Warren Buffett, Bill Gates, the list goes on for celebrities that clear their mind through a simple journal they write in daily.

Writing leads to improved chances of success: A study was done for students taking a test, and many did better after expressing their thoughts about the test on paper beforehand. Simply expressing stressful ideas can make a person more confident and give them the courage to tackle the tasks ahead.

Writing is proven to make people happier as well. It gives people an outlet to express themselves, to get what they cannot speak onto a written piece of paper for another to read. Often, it allows a person to confront their own thoughts, and vocalize what they didn't even know they were feeling.

As the school year begins, it's important to write down our thoughts sometimes, to lower the stress a student will inevitably feel.

Writing goals down also enables a person to have a vision of what they'd like to see in the future. For most students, our goal is college or a career of our choice. To write down that goal makes it feel tangible and more achievable and thus helps motivate us when we don't quite feel like studying for that math exam.

This year, let us all try and write down our feelings a little, get rid of all our stresses before the year begins.