

Spring 2012

VISIONS Service Adventures: China; A Comprehensive Program Design

Whitney Morgan
SIT Graduate Institute

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/capstones>



Part of the [International and Comparative Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Morgan, Whitney, "VISIONS Service Adventures: China; A Comprehensive Program Design" (2012). *Capstone Collection*. 2535.
<https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/capstones/2535>

This Thesis (Open Access) is brought to you for free and open access by the SIT Graduate Institute at SIT Digital Collections. It has been accepted for inclusion in Capstone Collection by an authorized administrator of SIT Digital Collections. For more information, please contact digitalcollections@sit.edu.

VISIONS Service Adventures: China
A Comprehensive Program Design

Whitney W. Morgan
PIM 69

A Capstone Paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Masters of Arts in International Education at the SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont, USA.

Capstone Seminar Start Date: May 25, 2012

Advisor: Rich Rodman

Copyright Notice

The student/author holds copyright to this material. SIT maintains a secure archival copy of the work. An online digital repository is also supported by SIT, and it contains the abstracts of all students' final degree works. With permission, other researchers and colleagues may consult this work.

Student Name: Whitney W. Morgan

The author hereby grants SIT Graduate Institute permission to reproduce and transmit this material to the public in print or electronic format. WWM (initials)

Student Signature: Whitney W. Morgan Date: 05/17/2012

© Whitney W. Morgan, 2012. All rights reserved.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| ABSTRACT | 5 |
| INTRODUCTION | 6 |
| COMPANY BACKGROUND | 9 |
| LITERATURE REVIEW | 12 |
| NEEDS ASSESSMENT | 17 |
| THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS | 18 |
| RATIONALE FOR HOMESTAY ADDITION | 19 |
| THEORY-TO-PRACTICE | 20 |
| CHINA AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY | 22 |
| VISIONS: CHINA (WANSHAN COUNTY, GUIZHOU PROVINCE) | 24 |
| RATIONALE | 25 |
| GOALS AND OBJECTIVES | 26 |
| PROGRAM GOAL AND OBJECTIVES | 27 |
| <i>Participant Goals and Objectives</i> | 27 |
| HOST FAMILY SELECTION | 28 |
| SITE DESCRIPTION | 28 |
| PROGRAM DESCRIPTION | 30 |
| TIMELINE | 31 |
| POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS | 32 |
| STAFFING PLAN | 32 |
| PARTICIPANT ADMISSIONS | 33 |
| FINANCIAL AID | 34 |
| CURRICULUM | 35 |
| OVERVIEW | 35 |
| LOGISTICS | 37 |
| CHINA TOURIST VISA (L VISA) | 37 |
| <i>Travel to and from China</i> | 37 |
| <i>General Housing (for program leaders and participants)</i> | 39 |
| <i>Meals</i> | 39 |
| <i>Communication</i> | 40 |
| <i>Banking</i> | 40 |
| HEALTH AND SAFETY PLAN | 41 |
| RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN | 44 |
| EVALUATION | 46 |
| BUDGET FOR PROGRAM | 49 |
| BUDGET NOTES | 50 |
| GROUP EXPENSES | 50 |
| FACILITIES | 50 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| ADVENTURE TRIP | 51 |
| SALARIES | 51 |
| OTHER | 51 |
| CONCLUSION | 51 |
| REFERENCES | 52 |
| APPENDIX 1: GRAHAM GIBBS REFLECTIVE CYCLE..... | 56 |
| APPENDIX 2: VISIONS PARTICIPANT APPLICATION FORM | 57 |
| APPENDIX 3: HOMESTAY QUESTIONNAIRE | 59 |
| APPENDIX 4: VISIONS AGREEMENT FORM..... | 60 |
| APPENDIX 5: HOST-FAMILY APPLICATION FORM..... | 63 |
| APPENDIX 6: STAFFING PLAN | 65 |
| VISIONS EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION | 65 |
| APPENDIX 7: CHINESE TOURIST VISA (L VISA) INFORMATION..... | 72 |
| APPENDIX 8: END OF PROGRAM ASSESSMENT SURVEY..... | 73 |
| APPENDIX 9: RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN..... | 74 |

Abstract

The proposed international education program design offers an innovative way for American high school students to participate in a community life and community service in the Chinese province of Guizhou. The proposed design entitled, *Visions Service Adventures: China* will not only provide a new location and expansion for this third party provider company, but will also give participants the experience of staying with a local family for a portion of the program. The homestay experience will allow *Visions* participants the chance to interact and experience Chinese culture and language. Susan M. Knight (2008) found in her study the effects a homestay have on students abroad positively enhanced the overall participant experience.

This comprehensive program design will contain a number of essential components needed to provide a well-rounded experience for the *Visions* participants. Arrival preparation in country (including the screening of potential homestay families) and in-program orientation (health and safety, Chinese language and culture, community service project) will be a continuous effort of the hired guides and program director. Homestay orientation (student/family homestay preparation), as well as post-program assessment and closing activities will be a continued process through out the duration of the program. Many studies of successes of abroad programs directly relate to the ability of a student integrating into local culture. The homestay is a foundational distinction that will give *Visions* participants a unique advantage, not only for their age, but also as Americans living and learning in China. This homestay design will provide a new platform for short-term experiential education programs to use towards transforming and improving the already existing designs present in the field.

Introduction

The proposed *Visions Service Adventures* comprehensive program design is intended for American high school students to travel to the province of Guizhou, China and immerse themselves not only in the community service project, but also within the local culture. The design emphasis is the “homestay” – a new component that is currently not apart of *Visions Service Adventures* programs. Intercultural interaction as well as community service allows for the *Visions* participants to become acquainted with both the Chinese culture and the realm of experiential education, which will promote interest in future study abroad experiences. A survey conducted by Jian Guan and Richard A. Dodder about “*The impact of cross-cultural contact on value and identity: A comparative study of Chinese students in China and the U.S.A (2000)*” concluded that “cross-cultural contact can result in changes - some values decrease their significance among [Chinese] students for cultural adjustment while others increase their importance for cultural identity” (pp. 271-288). Intercultural contact allows individuals the opportunity to not only explore different cultures, but also discover new boundaries and personality traits within themselves.

Legitimate, reputable organizations are essential in providing such an experience. *Visions Service Adventures* was established in 1989 to cater such experiences for American high school students. Promoting the organization as a “Peace Corps” like experience, *Visions* designed their programs to resemble a true volunteer experience with integration as the main element to their programs. On the “welcome” page of the *Visions* website, it states “Days of close camaraderie within a cross-cultural context have a rhythm and substance that push you to tap into your potential as you, the community, and

other students work toward common goals” (“Home Page”, 2011). *Visions* has been commended by several magazines and newspapers since 1991 on the work they have done towards creating a meaningful as well as educational experience for their participants. In 1997, Alan Hass of *USA Today* wrote

“Large price tags on some programs reflect supervisory and organizational costs, and sometimes travel. If a participant is inexperienced in navigating in unfamiliar territory, it’s important to have a solid infrastructure in place to provide emotional and logistical support. Visions International Inc. [is] a respected program that provides a high degree of care” (“Education” section).

Since 1997, *Visions* has consistently been able to maintain this reputation as they’ve both progressed in site location as well as structurally as an organization. As a past participant of *Visions Service Adventures* myself, I am a witness to such stability and safety *USA Today* describes within the programs offered.

I first began learning of such organizations and educational programs when I was 14 years old. I believe my participation on the *Visions: Montana* program laid the foundation for what I have done with my life thus far. *Visions* programming in Montana provided the interest as well as courage for me to travel to over 10 countries and study abroad in high school, college, as well as in graduate school. At this time, it seems only appropriate with this interest and training to return the favor to this special organization with the envisioned experiential education program design in western China.

My service in the Peace Corps became a next stage in seeing the need and conceptualizing the ideas for this design. The Peace Corps training program provides each volunteer a homestay family to live with during the first two months of training. This was the most valuable experience I, as well as my peers, were able to have during

our training. Seeing a culture from the outside (on the streets, at a restaurant, in a park)

only scratches the surface of the daily life in [China](#). Peace Corps clearly states

“Families do not need air conditioning, gas heating, television, indoor plumbing, or the Internet to host a Volunteer. What they need is a desire and willingness to welcome a Volunteer as a family member: to share their homes, teach their Volunteer about life, and learn about the United States from their Volunteer...The greatest value of the program, though, is in the sharing and learning that takes place during the homestay period, and the lifelong relations that develop as a result of this time spent together” (“Peace Corps Volunteer Homestay Program”, n.p, 2012).

Living with a family gave us the opportunity to see how family dynamics work (the role each individual carries), the standard norms of living in the house (what is cleanly behavior, what is not), as well as general emotions. A common misconception is that the Chinese people are very cold and quiet individuals. Living in a homestay will allow

Visions participants to see that the lack of emotion on the streets is certainly not present within the home. Participants will come to find that within the home, people are free to be themselves, and much of the raw emotion that a participant might expect to see in public is very much present within the home.

As I began to take on my responsibilities as a volunteer teacher with the Peace Corps in Guiyang, I started to wonder how a short-term community service/adventure program could answer all the questions I had during my time spent in China. I also began to wonder 1-whether community service was a logical and 2-reasonable approach to becoming not only involved in the community. Lastly I questioned whether this would provide the motivation to learn and understand more of China and other cultures once the program ended. Alan Tugend of the New York Times asked similar questions in 2010. In the article titled “The Benefits of Volunteerism, if the Service is Real”, Tugend

interviewed Joseph E. Kahne, a professor of education at Mills College about the connectivity of future volunteerism after completing a service-learning program.

Kahne and

“His colleagues [just] completed a survey of more than 500 teenagers in the 11th and 12th grades from a diverse set of 19 high schools in California. The researchers followed the students for up to three years after graduation. The students who were engaged in some sort of community service in high school — whether mandatory or voluntary — were more likely to volunteer or be involved in some civic activity. Most, but not all, of the volunteer work had classroom learning attached to it” (Tugend, p. 1, 2010).

Kahne continued to discuss that not only was the actual work of the community service important, but incorporating a “forum to talk about and question the larger issues involved” allowed for complete understanding of not just the surface level problem, but of the grander problems involved.

The culmination of education abroad experiences, training and acquaintance of literature and best practices led to fresh thinking about introducing a new model for *Visions Service Adventures*. The end result was to find the need for as well as opportunity within China for experiential learning, particularly providing community service and homestays within the new program. For such a program to take place, conversations with Chinese and Americans, as well as officials at *Visions* headquarters permitted the ground work for a complete needs assessment as well as provide tangible evidence for the new program design.

Company Background

Since 1989, VISIONS Service Adventures has worked towards being one of the best third party providers for outbound community service programs offered in the United States. Using an experiential education model, programs provided by *Visions*

programs provide middle and high school students ages 14-18 years from the United States the opportunity to grow as individuals through a one-month community service experience at one of the 14 site locations in Alaska, Montana, Mississippi, Ghana, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Cambodia, Guadeloupe, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Ecuador and Galapagos, and Peru.

Potential participants complete an application indicating their program location preference. Accepted participants then engage in community development programs through construction projects, language learning, adventure trips, as well as cultural immersion activities provided by local citizens from the community. Each projects is considered to be a sustainable, long-lasting facility, which the chosen site will use for the improvement of their environment. Since 1989, *Visions* “has completed 995 structures, including 22 schools, 61 houses, 121 new additions to buildings (rooms, roofs, decks/porches, stairs, ramps, as well as community centers, playgrounds, bridges, septic tanks, and school furniture” (“Ground-up Construction” Section, n.p., 2012).

Construction projects are not the only kind of activities that participants are involved in during their stay onsite:

“Every Visions summer program includes non-construction service work, too, such as internships with micro-businesses, farmers, artisans, health workers, and others. We create and paint murals for community buildings. VISIONS teens volunteer with children in day camps and tutoring activities, and assist with the elderly, orphaned or disabled” (VISIONS, p.1, 2011).

Every year, VISIONS reassesses the location of each program to ensure it is located in an environment in need of assistance; VISIONS generally re-develops each program in a different location within the state or country to provide opportunity for a sustainable

working program. This kind of attention to program location is necessary so that communities do not become dependent upon the help of the company and its participants.

Visions strive to include both community service and adventure components into their programs. This program design challenges participants not only with regard to cross-cultural immersion, but also through physical as well as in intellectual capacities.

As *Visions* states on its website, designed programs resemble a Peace Corps service opportunity for teens. *Visions* believe their experience is comparable to that of Peace Corps because

“Everything in *Visions*, the degree of [our] success, depends on teamwork. We are interdependent, alternately supporting and leaning on each other. We live together simply, work together, explore and play together, and enjoy our shared experience” (*Visions*, 2011, p.1).

In order to provide the ultimate experience, *Visions* has cultivated strong relations with grassroots organizations, local and national governments, schools, nonprofit organizations, community outreach and charitable organizations as well as individuals who embody the spirit with which *Visions* was founded. Such ties with the local community have provided opportunities for *Visions* as well as its participants in sustaining a reliable and constructive environment at the site location. As *Visions* states “Of equal if not greater value is the authentic cross-cultural experience: the close relationships with individuals in the communities in which we live and work” (*Visions*, 2011, p.1). *Visions* has successfully maintained an effective and positive presence within the communities they provide programs in because of this perspective; the incredible testimonies of the individuals who participate in the *Visions* experience then support and prove these positive relationships.

Visions looks for not only a community which finds itself in economic despair, but also a community that is open to and excited for the opportunity to educate others on their culture and community. Standard logistics such as having a point of contact in the community, a construction project needing to be done, a place to live during the program are necessary, yet not the basis of why *Visions* goes to these communities. Inter-cultural exchange as well as education is the primary forces behind the *Visions* experience.

Visions only go to these sites if the potential site is willing to be a part of this mission.

| Literature Review

Colin N. Power discussed the trends of globalization and education in the 21st century by first defining what globalization means. Power states globalization as

“A set of multi-faceted processes which include not only the changes which have flowed from the new information technologies and opening up of markets, but also new concepts which mean that ‘shrinking space, shrinking time, and disappearing borders are linking people’s lives more deeply, more intensely, and more immediately than ever before (UNDP, 1999, p.1)” (“Global Trends and Education”, 2000, p.152).

Power believes these shifts in our world will not only force our societies to become multicultural, but will also force shifts in “our educational and development priorities as we assume multiple cultural identities” (p.152). Therefore the reshaping of education and curriculum to incorporate the growing international trends and cultures within the United States and abroad has allowed for an increase in demand of such organizations like *Visions*.

High school service-learning programs need to provide proper experiences that challenge the individuals to not only observe their surroundings, but to also become more fully immersed within [them](#). Burbules and Torres (2000) state “Fitting into a community, whether a local or national culture and way of life, can be seen as an educational

imperative” (p. 3). In China, it is not only the personal perception individuals may have of foreigners that prevent [cultural integration](#), but it is the language as well [that impedes efforts](#) to integrate. [T](#)wo Chinese words within the language describe a foreigner – *laowai* or *waiguoren*. *Waiguoren* directly translates as “outside-of-the-country-person” whereas *laowai* “may reflect the true opinion Chinese have of foreigners. *Lao*, a common word meaning old, can also be used to express “old friends,” [in other words](#), friends for a long time, or always. The second half of the word means outside. [Therefore](#), [a direct translation would read](#): “Always outside” (Knapp, 2010). Without conscious [awareness](#), individuals place a person outside of their community [through everyday language](#), not realizing that if the opportunity presented itself, they may in fact make a friend rather than assuming them to be a part of the greater “laowai” group. [Therefore](#), [while it is imperative for foreigners living within China to try and become apart of society, it is perhaps one of the most difficult tasks to accomplish.](#)

Burbules and Torres (2000) continue to explore the question of what impact globalization has [and](#) could have on the realm of education, both within the United States as well as abroad. They state that

“Educational aims that have more to do with flexibility and adaptability, with learning to coexist with others in diverse public spaces, and with helping to form and support a sense of identity that can remain viable within multiple contexts of affiliation, all emerge as new imperatives” (p.22).

Providing a homestay experience for high school students within China would provide an environment that not only encourages the individual to expand their degree of comfort, but also allows them to reinforce their own sense of self – who they are, what they like/dislike, what boundaries they can push and [what](#) ones must remain. The shock that comes from living in Chinese culture can be immense, therefore it is [vital to give](#) *Visions*

participants many opportunities to experience, question, and learn from people with whom they live. R. Michael Paige suggest that an understanding of “intensity factors” can allow education abroad facilitators the ability to properly prepare participants for the arrival as well as in-country journey participants will experience. Paige’s “Ten Intensity Factors” (Cultural Differences, Ethnocentrism, Cultural Immersion, Cultural Isolation, Language, Prior Intercultural Experience, Expectations, Visibility and Invisibility, Status, and Power and Control) all work towards the successful design of “intercultural programs, in guiding and advising persons involved in intercultural transitions, and in facilitating the intercultural development of the sojourners” (“The Theory”, n.p., n.d). Paige’s take on the experience of program abroad participants allow for organizations such as *Visions* to fully assess the probable issues and solutions attached to implementing a homestay component. While stress factors may be associated with participating in the homestay, the growth and education *Visions* participants experience will benefit all parties.

Anastasia Kitsantas (2004) explains, “cross-cultural interactions bring awareness of culture and cultural differences, factual knowledge necessary for adjustment, challenges [to] people's emotional balance that intercultural experiences unavoidably bring, and opportunities to practice skills and behaviors that can assist people's adjustment” (p.2). While is it not expected that each participant and family end up developing a deep relationship, some change or gain in perspective is expected.

Visions: China program and homestay component will introduce a new educational trend to the community in which it will be located. Eastern China has increasingly found an influx in the number of students studying abroad, whereas Western

China has seen a very slow interest in the international community. For the past 20 to 30 years, China has been hosting travelers and tour groups, profiting from the tourism industry. Companies such as *Visions* is trying to offer a new kind of tourism, one where the level of both host nationals and tourists appears equal, knowledge is shared, and friendships are made:

“As *Transitions Abroad* contributing editor Deborah McLaren points out in her recent book, Rethinking Tourism and Ecotravel: The Paving of Paradise and What You Can Do to Stop It (Kumarian Press, 1998), the unequal power relations between tourists and locals emerge in both economic exchanges and the exchange of knowledge. Because tourists are paying customers, they have “rights” in the host community. One result of this unequal power dynamic is that the tourists never get to know the locals in any meaningful manner; likewise, the locals’ view of the tourists is a very superficial one. One problem that stems from this lack of “real” contact between hosts and guests is the stereotyping and idealizing of cultures” (Sumka, n.d., p.1).

Educational tourism not only brings economic aid through increased revenue within the tourism industry in general, but it also gives the opportunity for cross-cultural exchange that can often be overlooked in general tourism. *Visions* programs are not only considered educational tourism, but also service-learning programs, which allow space for the development and implementation of experiences such as the homestay.

The homestay experience especially provides the opportunity for not only cultural learning, but also language learning for both the families as well as the participants. Two undergraduate students who participated on an SIT Study abroad program affirm this advantage:

“There is no better way to immerse yourself in a new culture than to live among locals. As your host family forces you into familiarity with their language and culture, you will come to understand your host country and find a place to belong. In the midst of an exhilarating and bewildering journey, they offer us one thing we can recognize—a home” (Gupta and Fasig, 2011, p. 1).

Experiential education programs are intended to provide space for improvement within an individual – community service projects, language classes, and now homestays are the ingredients which help inspire and motivate for the change one seeks [within themselves](#). Ellen Honnet and Susan Poulsen of the Johnson Foundation consulted with over 70 different organizations [from](#) the National Society of Experiential Education (NSEE) to develop the most common principles of developing programs centered around service and learning. [Honnet and Poulsen](#) (2010) [developed](#) ten principles to reflect the premise of experiential program design; the first and last are perhaps the most important principles to maintain in any experiential program design [as well as aid in the argument of promoting and providing a homestay experience](#). The first states that

“An effective program engages people in responsible and challenging actions for the common good. Participants in programs combining service and learning should engage in tasks that they and society recognize as important. These actions should require reaching beyond one’s range of previous knowledge and experience. Active participation – not merely being a spectator or visitor – requires accountability for one’s actions, involves the right to take risks, and gives participants the opportunity to experience the consequences of those actions for others and for themselves” (Honnet & Poulsen, p. 3).

The last principle discusses the need to encourage and include all interested [applicants](#) in becoming a part of the program. By providing such a program,

“those responsible for participation in [the] program should make every effort to include and welcome persons from differing ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds, as well as those varied ages, genders, economic levels, and those with disabilities. Less obvious, but very important, is the need for sensitivity to other barriers, such as lack of transportation, family, work, and school responsibilities, concern for personal safety, or uncertainty about one’s ability to make a contribution” (p. 4).

VISIONS participants as well as the host nationals who choose to participate as a hosting family will engage in a program design which encourages [open](#) dialogue, [observation](#), [and questions during their time together](#). The homestay component for the VISIONS:

China program provides a place for those opportunities to occur, but within a secure environment, not only for the VISIONS students, but for the families as well.

Needs Assessment

When I traveled to China as a dedicated Peace Corps volunteer, I spent much of my spare time envisioning an experiential education program for *Visions Service Adventures*. Prior to departing for my service, I had a conversation with the current director of the company about my intentions for designing a program. When we started to talk about the hopes for a program in China, there were certain criteria that a *Visions* program should meet – housing, sustainable community service, contact information, and transport. With the very basic skeleton of a program, I saw the opportunity to contribute something new and different for the China program. It is commonly believe that the Chinese culture and language (both Mandarin and Cantonese) are incredibly difficult for foreigners to learn. I became determined to create an experience for the *Visions* participant that would both introduce the culture and language, as well as inspire the participant to continue their education of the people and culture they had encountered.

With the increase in competitors providing opportunities similar to *Visions*, the program design must introduce unique elements. Not only does the program need to feel accessible for potential participants, but it also needs to give the participants as well as their parents a compelling reason for applying. Community service can be done just about anywhere in the world; *Visions: China* provides not only the community service, but also a chance for integration into the community during the service. *Visions* programs provide participants with a guided introduction to their host communities. The existing *Visions* program design are built upon the following design:

- A coed summer service experience for teen's ages 14-18 blending ambitious service, cross-cultural living and learning, adventurous exploration.
- Group is gender-balanced. Maximum group size is 24-25 with 5-6 leaders including the program director. Staff / student ratio is 1 to 4 or 5.
- Service comprises 55% - 60% of the experience. Intercultural activities and exploration integrated throughout every week.
- Each program has a central construction project and other service such as sustainable development, environmental or agricultural work, volunteering with young children or the elderly, internships with local artisans, farmers, fishermen, vendors and more.
- French- or Spanish-language immersion in some programs. Participants must have minimum 2 years high school foreign language or equivalent fluency.
- Participants learn building skills from carpenters on staff and/or local masons and maestros.
- Home base residence is a community building, e.g., a school, community center, church hall or large hostel. We work alongside and socialize with community residents and long-time friends on site.
- Emphasis on community living and teamwork. Regular weekly gatherings encourage open communication. Participants and staff share insights and reflect on events in an informal setting through voluntary disclosure.
- All programs include sight seeing, visits to cities, markets and places of cultural, historic, geographic interest.
- All programs incorporate exploration recreation and recreational trips weekly ("About Us", Visions, 2011).

While the mission of *Visions* clearly states, "Participants are challenged to grow thoughtfully and intentionally within a community of peers and adult leaders," the dramatic differences between American [and Chinese culture](#) presents an opportunity to alter the current design of the *Visions* program and include a component that will give participants the opportunity to be directly included in the community through the implementation of the homestay experience (["About Us", Visions, 2011, para. 1](#)).

Community living and teamwork can be considered the essence of the *Visions* programs. With these qualities being shown through the example of *Visions* participants, it is hoped the local community will see and learn from the *Visions* example of service, which will then become incorporated into their daily interactions as well as cultural norms.

Theoretical Foundations

Rationale for Homestay Addition

Milton J. Bennet discusses the importance of including the homestay experience in not only study abroad programs, but short-term programs as well. In his article, *Defining, Measuring, and Facilitating Intercultural Learning*, Bennet explains

“Most international exchange programs have structures such as homestays or host-culture school attendance that tend to equalize power, and so they can legitimately claim that mere participation in their programs is likely to increase tolerance for other cultures (Paige et al, 2009 this volume)” (Bennet, n.d., p. 9).

It is with this perception of the importance in the homestay in *Visions: China* will provide the platform for participants to learn and grow as an individual as well as student.

Since 1989, *Visions* has provided all encompassing, culturally sensitive programs for their participants. *Visions* has created environments in which participants are encouraged to explore their identity, envision what they can become, and develop interests around language, culture, and service. While *Visions* does provide cultural orientations for their programs located overseas, China is perhaps a unique environment that takes foreigners years to come to understand, if they come to understand it at all.

Incorporating a homestay experience within the *Visions: China* program allows students to witness what is perhaps one of the most important aspects of Chinese culture and tradition: family. The experiential method *Visions* already used within their program design will now be further advanced toward true cultural integration. Host nationals that choose to participate as a host family will bring a unique experience to the home – allowing, at some times, three generations of Chinese people to become acquainted with a teenager from the United States – introducing food, music, and typical daily habits that come with living within their home. *Visions* participants from the United States will bring

with them their own flavor of life from the United States, providing insight in to what it means to be a teenager in USA. With all that is difficult to understand about the Chinese culture, the family unit is perhaps one of the most intriguing. [With all that is difficult to comprehend about the Chinese culture, the homestay is given as an advantage to our students – an opportunity that gives them a place within the society they may have a hard time finding otherwise.](#)

Theory-to-Practice

[Lutterman-Augilar & Gingerich](#) explain that Dewey's belief that: "Activity that is not checked by observation of what follows from it may be temporarily enjoyed. But intellectually it leads nowhere. It does not provide knowledge about the situations in which action occurs nor does it lead to clarification and expansion of ideas" (Lutterman-Augilar, & Gingerich, [1997, p. 25, p. 87](#)). Dewey explicitly states the fear of all experiential based programs and their founders – will this experience be sustained when the participant returns to their home [and](#) society and provide guidance for the actions they choose to take in the future? Host families and homestays act as a glue to allow for two ideas, experiences and reasons for those experiences, to stick together and become one. This experience incorporated into the *Visions* program will give a richer meaning for those who come to explore Guizhou province for [an extended](#) period.

The program [design must embrace a](#) participant-centered program approach in that the facilitators or group leaders that work for *Visions* merely act as a guide throughout the program's duration. What the participants experience and who they have experiences with will [primarily](#) drive [their willingness](#) to become a part of the community. [A participant-centered experience](#) "...means that the teacher's role is to

develop methods for engaging the students in experiences that provide them with access to knowledge and practice in particular skills and dispositions” (“Experiential Education”, 2011, n.p.). Host family experiences would [challenge](#) the participants to be involved and [surrender to](#) what they see, what they feel, and how they conceptualize what they experience. Cultural facilitators, and/or guides that work with the program act as references and provide insight into the experiences participants do not understand. This way of program design enables the [result of their experience](#) to be within the hands of the participants, which will dictate the kind of experience they have. The tools are simply given to ensure a steady start to the experience.

Bough, Keogh, and Walker (1989) [believe](#) reflection is perhaps one of the most difficult tasks to assess throughout and at the end of a program. Boud et al. (1985) [suggests](#) that structured reflection is the key to learning from experience, and that reflection can be very difficult for the learner (“Educating citizens: annotated,” 2011). Therefore it is imperative that the approach for reflection be thought of as a circle – all experiences end up connecting to the experience before and after, in the end coming together, to show that everything is interconnected.

Graham Gibbs (1988) a professor of higher education at Oxford University designed a reflective cycle for educators and their students to use during a time of assessment in a given circumstance. The six-step process is one of the few models that take emotions into account (“Gibbs reflective cycle, 2011”) ([See Appendix 1](#)):

Description: Here students are asked to describe the experience they had without enforcing any critical thought or emotion. Their main goal is to simply state the facts that occurred during the event.

Feelings: During the given event, what was the participant feeling/what emotions did the event evoke within the participant.

Evaluation: This time, when retelling the event, participants describe the positives and negatives that were experienced.

Analysis: What does the experience mean now that the participant is reflecting?

Conclusion: What could the participant have done or not done during the event to have changed the outcome.

Action Plan: If the event were to take place again, what can the participant do differently now that they have reflected on the previous experience?

Using this method of evaluation and reflection will give participants the opportunity to truly examine the events that take place during their time with the host families.

Implementing the host family experience while giving participants the opportunity to have “group time” will allow students to realize the connectivity of what all are being introduced to within their perspective families. The Gibbs reflective cycle provides a space to dissect the events that occur within a homestay, and allows participants to not only analyze, but assess with emotions, which are perhaps the two most difficult tasks to separate if necessary – with this model however, emotion plays a major role in the effort to understand surroundings and opinions when immersing in a new culture and family.

China and the International Community

When the borders of China opened in the 1980s, Chinese citizens as well as businesses found themselves at the helm of international business and commerce. For the

past thirty years, China has worked to increase their international relations and ties with countries in Africa, Southeast Asia, Europe and the United States of America. Tourism influx within China has given outsiders a firsthand look into the complex and rich history of China, as well as the unbelievable growth of their population (1.3 billion people). The economic and social advancement of China has generated increased interest for individuals to study and work within the country. According to Studyabroad.com, over 171 study abroad programs exist in China today – an incredible number considering study abroad providers did not have access to the country until 1980s. According to Open Doors “Highlights of 2010”, China is ranked as the fifth as the most popular country for study abroad, with 13,674 people choosing to travel there – a four percent increase from the previous census taken (International Institute of Education, 2010). China is one of the few countries to show an increase in the number of study abroad students from 2008-2009 to the 2009-2010 academic year. This is a clear indication that the country as a whole appeals strongly to the American student population.

Universities located in China and countries around the world are developing study abroad/exchange programs for both Chinese students as well as the international community. Most of these study abroad and exchange programs are offered through universities or third party providers predominantly in Beijing, Shanghai, Macau, and Hong Kong. These cities without a doubt represent the centers of international commerce for China as well as Asia. What China now faces as a country is how to promote itself as a whole, rather than just the coastal regions, which have significantly profited from foreign investment. Western China has begun to see a growth in development, thus becoming an enticing region for developers to relocate their companies and factories.

Guizhou province was one of three provinces to see an increase in production during 2011 by 15% (Fan, 2011). Due to the increase in production, Guizhou Province can now anticipate an expansion within the educational realm.

Companies and programs such as *Visions* would have the unique opportunity to not only promote something not fully a part of Chinese culture today, volunteerism, but to also become a fixture in Western China as well, an area which finds itself with less foreign visitors than Eastern China, but holds the highest population of Chinese minority groups, natural resources, as well as scenic sites.

Visions: China (Wanshan County, Guizhou Province)

Today, *Visions* is located in approximately fourteen locations around the world, excluding China. Each location offers a distinct community service project, specific to the region in which it is located. For example, Montana programs invite potential participants to live on an Indian reservation, thus providing an opportunity to engage in a community service project but also learn of the local tribe. The newest *Visions* program is located in Vietnam – their first program to enter into the Southeast Asian community. With the success of the Vietnam program, *Visions* hopes to extend programming to other countries nearby. Each program location is chosen based on a thorough program proposal. The proposals may be submitted by anyone working for *Visions*, however it must meet certain criteria that are expected of all *Visions* programs.

Visions recognize the importance of China in the international community, and accordingly, *Visions* in China has become a necessity. Constructing a relationship with a local non-profit and/or government agency within Guizhou province, located in Western China, would stand as an incredible milestone, not only for *Visions* but for Guizhou

province as well. Today, Guizhou is ranked as the poorest province in China. It also happens to be one of the most beautiful and culturally rich provinces in all of China.

Foreigners hold a limited presence in Guizhou, but their numbers have grown over the past decade. Contract teachers as well as the United States Peace Corps represent a consistent presence in Guiyang, the capital city of Guizhou province since they entered the region almost a decade ago. For the citizens of Guizhou located in the rural cities, their introductions to the foreign community have been limited to non-existent. While the coming of foreigners has been welcomed with hesitancy, every day Guizhou citizens find themselves hosting more foreigners. While it is taking time, the province is becoming accustomed to and interested in hosting foreigners as the years go on. *Visions: China* would provide an exciting opportunity for participants as well as host nationals, who may never have had experience interacting with a foreigner before. For the participants, this will be their first experience coming to a country that is greatly dissimilar to what they have ever known back at home. *Visions: China* will also introduce the effects of both volunteering and cross-cultural interactions can make on an individual as well as an entire community through the unique opportunity of a homestay experience.

Rationale

In 2010, the United States government and China made an agreement in which to promote the cultural and educational exchange between the two countries.

“On May 25, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Chinese State Councilor Liu Yandong hailed the importance of people-to-people engagement in a signing ceremony at the National Center for the Performing Arts in Beijing. The signing ceremony highlighted the start of the U.S.-China Consultation on People-to-People Exchange and the launch of the “100,000 Strong” Initiative” (U.S Department of State, p.1, 2010).

It has become a priority for the United States and China to formulate a cohesive and stable relationship to ensure a working economic world. Due to this necessity, the United States and China have realized the importance of cross-cultural understanding, and through this have promoted an education initiative to increase the exchange of American and Chinese students both within the United States and China. Unfortunately, the efforts primarily lay within the United States to increase the interest in learning the language and studying within China. The number of American students choosing to study in China, for any period of time, is far lower than Chinese students traveling to English speaking countries, including the United States.

Visions find itself in a unique position; it has the opportunity to design a program within China that not only increases the interest of China to young American students, but also introduces the idea of volunteerism and cross-cultural relations to Chinese citizens. As a past United States Peace Corps volunteer in Western China, I witnessed the impact interactions with a foreigner have on the local community – it truly becomes a moment where one can see the light bulb turning on overhead. The shock that comes with seeing a foreigner in Western China will begin to diminish as more foreigners start to see the importance of traveling, working, and studying within Western China. *Visions* can become the stepping-stone needed for American students to become interested in learning the Chinese culture.

Goals and Objectives

Differences in culture and contact between the United States and China hinder Americans in study abroad or experiential based programs from learning about the details

of the other culture. The proposed program design for *Visions Service Adventures* in China incorporates intentional homestays as the primary focus of the program. With proper care and attention the homestay should enhance cultural understanding, promote the use of the Chinese language, as well as develop and expand new and existing personality traits within the participants. While other organizations such as Cultural Homestay International and AYUSA offer the homestay as the program itself, few organizations offer the experience *Visions* provides for their participants – a group oriented community service program that incorporates the homestay as apart of the program.

Program Goal and Objectives

The goal of the design through *Visions Service Adventures* is to contribute to greater understanding of the world as well as the value of service and the homestay through student participation in communities across cultures. *Visions: China* [aspires to the following objectives](#) for the summer of 2012:

- Increase the quality of cultural orientation and reflective sessions throughout the duration of the program for both participants as well as host nationals involved in the homestay experience
- Increase program capacity to develop participants abilities to become competent cross-cultural communicators
- Increase program capacity to global critical thinkers who can identify the connection between issues within the local community and greater society, both nationally and internationally
- Increase community service opportunities that will challenge not only their physical but mental strength as well as educate participants about what is attainable through such work

Participant Goals and Objectives

The goal of the proposed program design for participants is to expand their thoughts and views of the global world. Participants will critically analyze and evaluate

the environment from which they came before to develop not as individuals or as Americans, but as global citizens. During the program, students will be able to:

- Increase knowledge and appreciation of social and economic norms in host families and families in the United States
- Increase intercultural communication skills with fellow peers as well as host nationals
- Increase knowledge of the Chinese language, customs and, traditions which will be measured through the homestay
- Increase self-confidence through a community service project and a homestay experience
- Create and increase group connectivity through mutual understanding and appreciation for the events they experience as individuals and as a group

Site Description

Guizhou Zhongshui Hope School is located in Aozhai Town, in Wanshan County of Guizhou province. The Hope School educates over three hundred students who live in the area, ages five to 18 years. Here, students receive their primary and secondary education to prepare them for the entrance exam to attend either university and/or pursue vocational training.

Aozhia Town, located in Wanshan [County](#), is perhaps one of the poorest areas of Guizhou. The county has been titled as an experimental zone due to the interest the government has taken in its natural resources, which have proven to be of considerable profit for the country. Due to this development, international mining companies have been contracted to extract the minerals, thus taking land from the local farmers, as well as removing homes and families. The companies provide meager readjustment stipends as well as insufficient stipends for moving costs. As a result of these [local](#) struggles, economic stability within the community has fallen, providing little sight of hope and progressive mobilization.

The placement of the program in Aozhai Town will be an inventive and unique experience, not only for the participants, but also for a community who has had little contact with the rest of China, let alone the outside world. While *Visions* participants will not be able to interact with the community during their service work, the homestay as well as community activities with students from The Hope School and their families will provide ample opportunity to learn from one another.

Host Family Selection

Visions staff from the United States as well as liaison within the community will choose interested host families within the school community. At the end of the semester, the Hope School officials will make an announcement to the community that any interested families should attend an informational seminar and fill out the required informational sheet for consideration (See Appendix 4). Approximately one month prior to the beginning of the program, *Visions* will estimate the number of participants for the program, and then 1) how many families will be needed and 2) begin the selection process for the chosen families.

The program director as well as group leaders will arrive approximately 10 days before the program begins. During the preparation period before the program begins, the program director and/or program leaders will do a housing check of all chosen host families to ensure their homes meet the standards required such as electricity, a working plumbing system, cleanly kitchen environment (all standards are set within the parameters of what is standard and expected in the local environment). This will also give the *Visions* staff an opportunity to become acquainted with the families and begin to

form a relationship with the participating families, as well as their children who attend the Hope School.

Program Description

Visions: China will be a one-month program beginning the end of June to the middle of July during the summer of 2012. Not only will this group of students serve as the first *Visions* group to travel to China, but they will also serve as the first informal ambassadors from the United States to this region. Students will travel to the city of Guiyang, Guizhou province for their transfer to site in Aozhai Town, located in Wanshan District. The program components will be divided by:

- Week One: Introduction (Aozhai)

Participants will become acquainted with their *Visions* guides and local community while participating in a cultural orientation. Guides will introduce the construction project and participants will begin working. During this time, icebreaker games, tours of the town and school facilities, as well as a proper introduction into the history of and culture within Aozhai will commence. Students will also be separated into the classrooms in which they will be sleeping during the time the group spends together. Girls will be in one room and boys in another. Staff will sleep in a separate room, near the participants, alternating with one sleeping with students each night.

- Weeks Two and Three: Homestay/Construction project

Participants will continue with the construction project and cultural interactions by joining a family for a total of six days during the middle of the program. All participants will work in all aspects of the construction project, with proper supervision provided by the *Visions* staff as well as hired (and paid) masons from the local community. Masons

will receive a formal training from the *Visions* in-country liaison to discuss how to interact with the *Visions* participate through out the project. During this time, the students will be commuting from their homestays to the construction site, eating lunch with the group. The host families will give both breakfast and dinner during the program homestay.

- Week Four: Reflection/Wrap-up of construction project

Students will come back together as a group to complete the project as well as living together once again at the school. At the conclusion of the program lasting impressions will be discussed and evaluated before the participants depart for the United States. A host family appreciation dinner will be held for participants to say their goodbyes one last time. Host families will also be evaluated on their experience hosting a *Visions* participant, as well as commenting on the interest in future homestays with *Visions*.

Timeline

Once leaders have chosen participants through the *Visions* application and acceptance process (see Appendix 2), departure to site will begin in the United States and end in Guizhou province, People's Republic of China.

- Wednesday, June 6th 2012: Departure from United States (program director (PD) and leaders)
- Saturday, June 16th 2012: Departure from the United States (participants)
- Monday, June 18th 2012: Arrival in People's Republic of China
- June 18th 2012: One night stay in provincial capital, Guiyang, Guizhou
- Tuesday, June 19th, 2012: Transfer to site, site tour, program orientation:
- Wednesday, June 20th, 2012: Begin construction project

- Thursday, June 21st - June 29th 2012: Homestay/construction project
- July 3rd – July 6th 2012: Return to group housing/construction project
- July 7th – July 8th 2012: Conclusion of program
- : July 9th 2012: Departure for United States

Potential Participants

Participants who wish to join *Visions* come from all over the United States. Each potential participant comes to participate in a culturally enriching, community service program – thus his or her application must demonstrate an interest of such cultural participation. The age range for participants is between 14 and 18 years old. Scholarship opportunities are available to those demonstrating financial assistance. *Visions* works to incorporate a diverse community within the accepted pool of participants, therefore they do not discriminate against race and/or sex. Participants must be physically able to participate in the program; consequently teenagers with limited physical abilities may not be appropriate candidates for a *Visions* programs.

Staffing Plan

Every *Visions* program “maintain(s) a staff-to-student ratio of 1 to 4, and never lower than 1 staffer for every 5 participants” (“Visions Service Adventures,” 2011, n.d.). Staff directors and group leaders coordinate every program. Each program has one staff director who completes a training program during the orientation and training phase before programs begin. Each person hired to become a program leader will then participate in a three-day orientation before program directors and leaders depart for site. After this necessary preparation, “Everyone then travels to the program site for eight to 10 more days of orientation and preparation before participants arrive. This investment

pays off in a well-grounded staff team when participants arrive, and in a staff return rate each season averaging from 44% to 55%” (“Visions Service Adventures”, 2011) (See Appendix 5).

Although *Visions* does not require program directors and leaders be fluent in the host country language, for *Visions: China*, competencies in the language as well as culture are vital instruments in the success of the program. This will enable a smooth transition for the participants when they come to site, as well as for the other leaders who may never have been to China. Also, due to the lack of foreign influence within western China, program directors and leaders will be acting as a representative, not only for *Visions* the company, but for the United States as well. Program staff is generally from the United States, with the average age being 23 years old – however, most program directors are, on the average, 28 years old or older (“Visions: Staff”, 2011).

The program director and the United States based office, located in Bozeman, Montana will handle logistics. Flight coordination, program budgeting, as well as crisis management will all be arranged by the Montana office, prior to the program beginning – coordination and follow-up of arranged policies will be verified when the program director and program leaders arrive at site, approximately eight to ten days before the program begins. Any alterations to the logistics, as well as budgeting of the program must be discussed and cleared by the Montana office before major changes take place.

Participant Admissions

Participants who wish to join a *Visions* program must complete the required application form prior to the start date of the program (See Appendix 2). *Visions* will encourage potential participants, as well as their parents, to contact the *Visions* office in

Montana with any inquiries, as well as read about the company, their programs, and expectations of volunteers and the program in its entirety.

Currently the *Visions* application process does not require any information from participants other than their contact information, current school they attend, as well as the current contact information for their parents or guardians. Each participant must sign an agreement form from *Visions*, along with payment of tuition for the program.

Due to the incorporation of a homestay experience for the *Visions: China* program, an agreement form, issued by *Visions* after the application form as been completed and signed by the parent or guardian, as well as homestay questionnaire (filled out by the participant) will accompany the basic application – 1) so that *Visions* knows the students are willing to participate in a homestay experience, and 2) that *Visions* staff know their specific interests, concerns, and preferences in a host family environment (See Appendix 3). Participants will then be asked to write a letter to their homestay family. Participants may use this an opportunity to state their excitements, anxieties, as well as information about themselves. The family will receive this letter (translated by the in-country *Visions* liaison) prior to the program beginning, so they may become introduced to their new family member.

Financial Aid

A portion of the tuition costs will be covered through financial aid if the prospective participant applies for such assistance:

“Visions offers financial aid to approximately 10% of our participants. Visions provide some spaces as well to promising teens from the international and domestic communities in which we work. We also partner with select non-profits that identify bright, motivated students who lack the funds to participate otherwise. Our most enduring partner in this regard is Summer Search, an exceptional organization which works with economically disadvantaged young

people who have unlimited potential. Summer Search not only helps make summers possible but also mentors students throughout their high school years and often into college” (“Visions Financial Aid”, 2011).

The financial aide *Visions* gives not only allows participants to become acquainted with cultures outside of their own, but also become aware of the differences within their own culture – both socially and economically.

Curriculum

Overview

Visions: China will begin with a cultural orientation and simple language instruction during the first week of the program. Prior to the program beginning, the program director as well as program leaders will participate in a similar training at the site to acquaint themselves with the local community, culture, and language. The program will then progress towards the homestay experience – including extensive discussion about expectations and the environment within a traditional Chinese home during the first week of the program. During the homestay and program duration, participants will take part in activities that include outdoor exploration and other cultural, interactive experiences with community members.

June 20th – June 22nd: Participants will have guided group discussions with the program leaders as well as the program director about experiences with culture shock, the program environment, and the upcoming construction project. Participants will be introduced to the local community – i.e. the school headmaster, local students, teachers, as well as the local masons hired to help with the construction of the project. The construction projected will be determined prior to the arrival of the program director and leaders, after a needs assessment has been made.

June 21st: Participants will enter their homestays after completing a day of work on the construction site. During lunch break, the group will discuss any last minute concerns, questions, or inquiries about the next nine days of their homestay experience. Proper etiquette, as well as what is considered “normal” Chinese customs will all be thoroughly discussed before any student departs for their first night with the family.

June 22nd – June 29th: During the next ten days of the program, students will commute back and forth between their host families and the construction site. One hour of basic Mandarin language class will take place prior to the start of the construction project. The group will eat lunch at the construction site however, breakfast and dinner will be provided by the families. Time will be taken to discuss any concerns that may arise during the homestay experience, and participants are encouraged to voice any worries and/or anxieties they may have. This will take place as a whole group as well as having an individual one-on-one session with *Visions* staff to discuss specific personal concerns through out the duration of the homestays experience.

June 30th - July 1st: Group 1 (half of the group) will be taken to climb Fujingshan Mountain, while the other half continues to work on the construction project – located about 1 hour and 30 minutes from site location. Here the group will hike the mountain as well as camp for one night during their time there. The other half of the group will stay on site and continue to work on the construction project as well as participate in cultural activities planned by the local community.

July 2nd – July 8th: The Program director and program leaders will begin to conclude the program through discussions as well as activities to discuss the successes of the program, and examine the growth each participant believes they have made.

July 4th – July 5th: Group 2 will depart for Fujingshan Mountain to hike and camp. The other half will continue working on the construction project.

Evening of July 8th: A host-family appreciation dinner will commence, as well as an unveiling of the construction project that took place for the community to come and visit. Host families as well as participants will be able to say their proper goodbyes before the program ends.

*From July 2nd – July 8th, end of program discussions, topics of re-entry back into the United States, as well as program activities will be covered to prepare the students for the end of the program.

Logistics

Logistical considerations include: Chinese tourist visa, travel to and from the United States, in-country transportation, homestay arrangements, site housing arrangements (for both program leaders as well as participants), meals, in-country communication as well as access to the Montana office, and in-country banking.

China Tourist Visa (L Visa)

Program directors and guides, as well as the participants must have a valid passport for up to 6 months in order to leave and join the program. Prior to departure, participants and staff must apply for the tourist visa by following the specific directions given by the Chinese government. (See Appendix 6).

Travel to and from China

Visions organizes group flights from New York airports, either JFK or LaGuardia, however participants are not required to travel on the group flight. *Visions* staff will be

present at the airport to help with the check in process as well as any other problems that may arise prior to departure for the program.

Visions also offers chaperones for participants that have to arrive a day early before departure as well as when they return. For those families that wish to plan their own travel arrangements for their children, *Visions* travel agent provides options to mix and match the flights with or without the group flights, as well as changes of cities of departure. Since the *Visions: China* staff will have been in China for at least eight days prior to student arrivals, “Staff leaders meet all flights upon arrival at the program airport, and on the last day remain at the airport until everyone's departure is confirmed. *Visions* representatives *do not* fly with participants to the program destination” (“Visions Service Adventures”, 2011).

Homestay

Each student (or pair of students) will live within a homestay for nine days of the program. The liaison from China hired prior to the program starting will do a preliminary orientation and scanning of families interested in participating in the homestay experience. All families will have children that attend Guizhou Zhongshui Boai Hope School; the liaison will prefer families with students close in age to the participants of the program. The host families must be within walking distance (up to 20 minutes away) to the construction site and/or school for easy transportation to the site if necessary. *Visions* staff will direct multiple orientation sessions for the host families and will specifically meet the program director and program leaders prior to the arrival of the participants. Each family must submit to a “home check” before participants leave for the ten-day homestay experience.

Before the participants leave for their first evening with their host families, as proposed by the *Guide for Successful Short Term Programs Abroad*, "...each student should have an individual meeting with whoever has organized their housing for them. At the individual meeting details about the family can be discussed" ("Chapter 15: Orientation and Reentry", 2007, p.189). Each participant will receive an overview of the family orientation, contact information, as well as hobbies, occupations, and the grade level of the students who attend The Hope School.

General Housing (for program leaders and participants)

The Hope School has a number of classrooms and a large gymnasium on the school grounds to provide comfortable housing arrangements. Leaders will designate a "boys room" and "girls room" for sleeping. General bathrooms with squat toilets are available, as well as a shower facility. Limited hot water and cold water are both provided. This will be provided for *Visions* participants prior to and after the homestay takes place (approximately 15 days of the program). In case of an emergency or unforeseen circumstance, this will also be an option if a student is unable to complete the homestay experience during the program. Participants and staff will be sleeping on sleeping pads and sleeping bags – required items to bring for the program by *Visions*.

Meals

During the time period in which participants are staying with their host families, the family will provide breakfast and dinner. *Visions* will hire someone locally as a chef to provide lunch. During the time of the homestay, the program director and program leaders stay at the school in assigned rooms, eating breakfast, lunch, and dinner provided by the hired chef. An option can be provided for staff to stay with families as well if the number of interested families exceeds the amount of students on the program. When the

participants return from their homestay, the hired chef will provide all meals to them. Meals will mostly be derived from Chinese dishes, however, for those with food allergies, special meals will be prepared. *Visions* also understands the importance of “comfort food;” therefore, dishes evoking Western influence will be provided to the participants on occasion.

Communication

The school will provide Internet service for the *Visions* program director as well as program leaders for contact with the Montana office. Program leaders will share three cell phones for ease in communication; the program director will have his or her own cell phone on at all times to be in constant contact with the office in Montana. During the camping and hiking trips, there will be no Internet availability, however, cell phone reception is still available on the mountain. A satellite phone will also be provided for the program to use in case of emergency. Host families will be provided with emergency contact cards during the time participants are living within their home. Participants will have this card as well (one side with English, the other side in Mandarin) to carry at all times during the program. Cell phones are not permitted to *Visions* participants during the program, however families in the United States may contact headquarters in case of an emergency.

Banking

The Bank of China is one of the most commonly used banks in China. ATM machines are available across the country; therefore, a checking account will be opened

through the Bank of China for *Visions* funding throughout the program. All that is required of an individual to open a checking account is a valid passport. From the United States, any bank will be able to transfer money into the account with the correct checking account number, as well as address of the bank where the account was opened.

Health and Safety Plan

The application form participants must submit to *Visions* includes a section for any health concerns or notices the staff should be aware of during the program. *Visions* clearly addressed their health and safety plan for all programs as follows:

“Safety is our premier consideration, and [we] are proud of our exceptional safety record. There are risks inherent to programs of this nature, both foreseeable and unforeseeable. Participants and their families must understand the nature of our programs and accept the risks involved. These risks include but are not limited to: the risks of air, foot and motor travel; unfamiliar diet and diarrhea; civil unrest, war, terrorist activity. It is imperative that students follow the rules, policies and protocols established by *Visions* and any adventure services contracted by *Visions*. Any disability arising during the program must and will be examined and verified by a physician of *Visions* choosing. Certain adventure activities require additional liability releases signed by parent/guardian and will be included in the spring mailing. All participants must have health insurance coverage, valid passports, and, in some locations, emergency evacuation insurance. Participants will receive health insurance and medical forms to be completed and signed by a physician and parent/guardian” (“*Visions* Enrollment Agreement”, 2011, pp. 2-3).

Visions provides a comprehensive packing list for all programs prior to their departure which includes but is not limited to such items as: SPF clothing, appropriate length shorts, skirts, and dresses; comfortable closed-toe shoes for the construction site, hiking, as well as long-distance walking.

Visions guarantees that all staff will be at least 1st Aid/CPR certified, but preferably WFR certified (Wilderness First Responder). During the hiking/camping adventure components, the program staff will carry proper health and safety materials,

i.e. a first aid kit to ensure the safety of all participants. All program staff members are

trained on how to deal with such situations and will carry out the emergency crisis management plan designed and agreed upon by all *Visions* staff in the event of an emergency during the adventure part of the program.

All participants will fill out a 'hot sheet' before the program commences the following day. Their name, address, and parent/guardian contact information will be recorded a final time, as well as any major allergies to food, medication, or insects. Each day, the program staff will carry with them at all times the 'hot sheets' for their assigned participants in case of an emergency. As well as filling out the 'hot sheet' information, a safety and security talk will take place before participants settle for the day.

Strict policy exists on all *Visions* programs concerning drugs and/or alcohol – any consumption of drugs or alcohol will determine immediate expulsion from the program and the participant will be sent home at their own expense. Safety precautions such as fire extinguishers will be introduced; participants and leaders will know the extinguishers' locations throughout the duration of the program. In case of any emergency, participants will be informed of the emergency number within China – 210 or 110. Leaders will encourage the importance of staying hydrated and well rested throughout the program as well as monitor student hydration and energy by checking in with students daily.

Before traveling to China, according to the CDC Traveler's Health Guide, all participants must be "sure [their] routine vaccinations are up-to-date... Routine vaccines, as they are often called, such as for influenza, chickenpox (or varicella), polio, measles/mumps/rubella (MMR), and diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) are given at all stages of life" must be up-to-date and all participants should carry with them a

vaccination yellow card (WHO Card) if they have any other vaccinations as well ([“Health information for,” 2011](#)).

If participants travel with any medications, [program leaders will ask them to](#) carry their prescriptions on their person, as well as within the provided medicine bottle, with the prescription attached to the bottle. Any participants who wear contact lenses should have with them a supply to last the duration of the program, as well as bringing an extra pair of glasses. Generic Ibuprofen as well as cough medicine, anti-acid, [and](#) anti-diarrheal will be included in the health and safety medical kit, however, [pre-program literature will encourage participants to bring](#) any [extra](#) medications [they feel they will need](#).

Host families will be briefed on what to do in case of a medical emergency and will be given strict instructions to not treat participants with “traditional” Chinese medicines. They will have, for the comfort of the participants, a mosquito net available if they desire. Host families will also be given the contact information for the doctor as well as hospital in Tongren (approximately one hour from Aozhai) in case of an emergency. Protocol follows they must contact the program director, if not reachable then program leader if a student becomes ill during their time at the home.

According to *Visions* policy for insurance: “All participants must have health insurance coverage, valid passports, and, in some locations, emergency evacuation insurance. Participants will receive health insurance and medical forms to be completed and signed by a physician and parent/guardian” (“*Visions Agreement*,” 2011, p.3). Health insurance policies are not provided by *Visions*, but [the program](#) expects participants to come covered on their own or their parents’ policy.

For minor health issues, students will be taken to the Tongren Hospital located in Tongren, Guizhou. Tongren Hospital is affiliated with the United States Peace Corps and is familiar treating such volunteers. If the Tongren Hospital cannot accommodate the needs of our participants, transport to the Guiyang Hospital, located in the provincial capital, will be arranged. The program director or program leader present with the participant will act as guardian to the participant during their visit to either Tongren or Guiyang Hospital.

Risk Management Plan

The Montana office, in-country staff (program director and program leaders) as well as the in-country Chinese liaison hired by *Visions* will all be responsible for the well-being and safety of the participants as well as the entire staff in case of an emergency. The program director will orient the hired staff with the risk management plan and will act accordingly in case of such an event.

Staff Certifications

Each staff member must be certified in either 1st Aid/CPR. It is preferred staff members are certified in Wilderness Medicine Association or SOLO in Wilderness First Responder (WFR). Ensuring that each staff member comes to the host country prepared to handle whatever medical emergency takes place is the best and most important step in risk management.

Preparation

In case of an emergency, the program director as well as program staff will have all 'hot sheets' collected within a single file in case of unexpected travel from site. Original forms will be kept in a secure lockbox, with copies available at all times to the

staff. The program director, program staff, host families, and in country Chinese liaison are briefed about the standard protocol as well as orienting the participants to what will occur in such circumstances.

Protocol for emergency prevention and action is as follows:

- 1) Staff will provide an emergency orientation for the participants of the program – what to do in case of an earthquake, unexpected fires, as well as unexpected removal from the construction site as well as the district of Wanshan. These are all natural and possible situations that can occur within China.
- 2) Any logistical changes made by either the program director and/or program leaders will be communicated to the rest of the staff so that necessary alterations may be made for the duration of the program.
- 3) Leaders will brief participants on where to go in case of natural disaster/emergency scenarios, as well as be given the information for the United States Consulate, located in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, People's Republic of China. The American services telephone number is (86-28) 8558 3992 – The emergency contact number for the U.S. Embassy is (86) 137 0080 142 (United States Embassy, 2011).
- 4) As the United States embassy suggests to all Americans who travel outside of the United States, Visions Headquarters will register all participants with the Department of State of their whereabouts in China.
- 5) All vehicles used throughout the program must be equipped with a standard, fully stocked medical supply kit, as well as a neck brace and stretcher. Those

supplies as well as a satellite phone must be brought on all adventure outings/trips in case of emergency.

- 6) In case of an emergency, and an evacuation of the patient is necessary, they will be taken to Tongren Hospital, located at Jie2 Fang3 Lu4 87, Tongren County, Guizhou Province – contact number 0856 522 9154. Minor injury evacuation as well as major injury evacuation will be by car. In the case of extreme major injury, air ambulance medical evacuation may be provided by AirMed Asia (205-443-4880) or MetroJet, located in Hong Kong (852-2525-4747) unless the patient has [his or her](#) own medical evacuation coverage. Parents and/or Guardians will be billed the expense of the medical air evacuation, unless they have purchased such insurance themselves.

Each staff member of the *Visions: China* program must complete and send a Risk Management Plan to the Headquarters prior to departure for an adventure trip, pick up and drop off of students, as well as prior to construction beginning for the community service projects [\(See Appendix 9\)](#).

Chain of Command in case of emergency:

The program director is in charge of all facets of the *Visions: China* program. Any health complaints, group dynamic issues, etc. told to group leaders by students must be relayed to the program director. Major medical emergencies, natural disasters, personal issues with participants must be told to the program director, which will then contact Montana headquarters immediately.

Evaluation

The Educators Guide to Service-Learning Program Evaluations states that

“the way you ensure that service-learning programs are effective in achieving their promise long term, is by evaluating the programs. With the results of these evaluations, you will know which programs to continue, how to strengthen them, and which ones to end.” (RMC Research, 2001, p. 2)

The guide continues with a very important question of: “If the program’s resources and student consequences are contingent upon the success of the program, or if this is a trial run of the program, then a formal evaluation should take place” (RMC Research, 2001, p.3). Since both can be equated with the nature of the *Visions: China* program, then a well-assessed, thorough evaluation must take place to help with providing a sustainable program.

Although this community service/adventure program does not count toward academic credit, the amount of information gained allows the program to act as a tool towards cultural understanding, personal growth, and language learning, which can enhance a student’s ability and understanding within the classroom.

In order to ensure the success of the program, stakeholders (participants, host families, and the Hope School) will need to complete an end of program survey to assess the general perception of the program (See Appendix 8). The participants will be asked to write a letter home before their experiences and what they want themselves to remember as they continue with their studies in high school. One year after their participation in the program, a second survey and the letter written by the participant will be sent to the participants’ homes for reflection and thoughts since their return home to the United States. The second follow-up survey (see appendix 10), will allow *Visions* headquarters to interpret the long lasting effects the *Visions: China* program had on its participants. The survey answers will give insight into what elements were missing for the specific group as well as what elements could have been discarded towards the

achievement of a successful program. The letter sent to the participant will hopefully act as the final reminder of what they felt during their time in China and hopefully reinstate the motivation they gained to learn, question, and most importantly, travel more in their future endeavors.

Budget for Program

| Budget for Trip | Fixed Costs | Variable Costs | | | | Currency | Local Curr. (RMB) | USD Total | Total Cost to Part. | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|----------------|--------------|----------|-------|----------|-------------------|-----------|---------------------|--------------|-----|
| | | Costs | Units | Quantity | Total | | | | | | |
| Salaries | | | | | | | | | | Days | 30 |
| Hiring/Training | 1,000 | | | | | USD | | 1,000 | | | |
| Program Director | 2,800 | | | | | USD | | 2,800 | | Nights | 29 |
| Program Leaders | 1,000 | | per PL | 5 | 5,000 | USD | | 5,000 | | Staff | 6 |
| Chinese Teacher | | 300 | staff member | 1 | 300 | USD | 1,959 | 300 | | | |
| Benefits | | | | | | | | | | Participants | 15 |
| | | | | | | | | | | Yuan (RMB\$) | USD |
| Adventure Weekend | | | | | | | | | | 7 | 1 |
| Trip #1 | | 500 | participant | 1 | 7,500 | USD | 48,975 | 7,500 | | | |
| Trip #2 | | 500 | participant | 1 | 7,500 | USD | 48,975 | 7,500 | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Group Expenses | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Supplies | 300 | | | | | USD | | | | | |
| Group Meals | | 10 | part/day | 30 | 4,500 | USD | 29,385 | 4,500 | | | |
| Transportation | 1,500 | | | | | USD | | 1,500 | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Other | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Indirect Costs | 1,500 | | | | | USD | | 1,500 | | | |
| Direct Costs (Pre-arrival for staff) | 600 | | | | | USD | 3,918 | | | | |
| Total Expenses | | | | | | | | 31,600 | | | |
| Revenues | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Participant Fees | 5,000 | | | | | | USD | 75,000 | 5,000 | | |
| Profit/Loss | | | | | | | | | 43,400 | | |

Budget Notes

Group expenses

The **supplies** for the group living/hostel accommodation will be purchased for the duration of the program in country. All necessary equipment for the construction projects as well as food/drink/medical supplies can be purchased either in Wanshan County, Tongren Country, or Guiyang (the provincial capital). **Group Meals** occur once participants arrive in country and follow every day thereafter, including their time spent during the host-family experience. **Transportation** for participants includes pick up and drop off from the airport to site as well as transfers to the point of location for the adventure trip weekend. A van may be rented in case of long distance walking during the homestay period or used as an emergency vehicle through out the duration of the program.

| Facilities

Homestays will occur during a six-day period of the program. Participants will be given two meals a day from the host family. The stipend given to the families will include the cost of the meals as well as any other expenditure they may encounter with an extra person in their home (these costs generally include increased costs of water, electricity, as well as cleaning of the home). **Group housing/hostel** costs will pay for the housing of the program staff as well as participants during the program. The housing arrangements may either be within a hostel/guest house located in the Wanshan County or Tongren or on site at the school if the facilities are accommodating.

Adventure Trip

Trips #1 and #2 costs will cover the rental and/or purchase of equipment, meals, as well as park fees for all participants, *Visions* staff, and local guides. This will also include the cost of transportation to and from the site and the park.

Salaries

Hiring and Training costs will cover the travel of the program director as well as program leaders to the three-day staff orientation within the United States. This includes meal and transportation in the United States as well as their outbound flights to China. The **program director** as well as **program leaders'** salaries will be paid in United States dollars according to the standard rate for the titled position. The **Chinese teacher's** salary includes the costs of a ten-day period of instruction during the program and will be commensurate with the standard compensation fee for a teacher's salary in China.

Other

Indirect costs will cover the marketing, office expenses within the United States, recruitment expenses within the United States, human resources, and legal counsel. Indirect costs will reflect 20% of total expenses throughout the duration of the program. **Direct costs** will provide financial support to the team in country prior to, during, and after the program ends. *Visions Service Adventures* is an organization generating income. The **profit** made from the *Visions: China* program will go directly to headquarters located in Bozeman, Montana to pay for all other expenses the company acquires.

Conclusion

The homestay component has the probability of greatly affecting the make up of a human being. Individuals come to a new country with the hope of understanding a new culture, people, language, as well as customs. Few leave the country with the

understanding they desired to gain during their travels. Bennett (n.d.) quotes George Kelly (1963) in his article *Defining, Measuring and Facilitating Intercultural Learning* that

“Experience is not a function of being in the vicinity of events when they occur, but rather it is how one construes those events that makes a person more or less experienced.” Study abroad students in the vicinity of homestays do not necessarily have a “homestay experience.” It is their interpreting that experience, typically through relating and communicating with the family, that generates the experience” (p. 10).

Visions: China is a program that will provide such an experience for its participants.

Focused preparation in discussions of relevant topics arms participants with the confidence to fully embrace the homestay and all that it encompasses. Most importantly,

Visions: China will provide an experience for not only American teens, but for a population of people in China that have limited access to such opportunities. The homestay, as well as the *Visions: China* program in its entirety will provide ample time for intercultural/cross-cultural learning to take place between people of all ages and backgrounds.

References

- About Us*. 2011. Visions Service Adventures. Retrieved April 9, 2011 from <http://visionserviceadventures.com>
- Bennett, M. (n.d.). Defining, Measuring, and Facilitating Intercultural Learning: A Conceptual Introduction to the IJCE Special Issue.
- Bennett, M. (1993). Towards ethnorelativism: A development model for intercultural sensitivity. (Paige, M. Ed.) *Education for the intercultural experience*. Yarmouth, ME:
- Boud, D., R. Keogh and D. Walker (Eds.) (1985). *Reflection: Turning Experience into Learning*. London: Kogan Page.
- Eaton, S. (n.d.). Literacy, language, and leadership: sample host family application. Retrieved from http://www.eatonintl.com/www.eatonintl.com/Resources_files/Sample%20Form%20for%20Prospective%20Host%20Families.pdf
- Educating citizens: annotated bibliography. (2011). Retrieved from <http://www.compact.org/disciplines/reflection/bibliography/>
- Experiential Education - Brief History of the Role of Experience in Education, Roles for the Teacher and the Student Read more: Experiential Education - Brief History of the Role of Experience in Education, Roles for the Teacher and the Student. (2011). Education encyclopedia: education reform. Retrieved March 29, 2011, from <http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/1963/Experiential-Education.html>
- Fan, W. (2011). *Gdp growth in western china outpaces east*. Retrieved from <http://www.ecns.cn/in-depth/2011/08-10/1529.shtml>
- Gibbs reflective cycle. (2011). Retrieved from http://distributedresearch.net/wiki/index.php/Gibbs_reflective_Cycle
- Guan, Jian & Richard A. Dodder. (2000). The impact of cross-cultural contact on value and identity. *Mankind Quarterly* 43(3) pp.271-288.
- Gupta, A., & Fasig, N. (2011). Abroad view's section on homestay. Retrieved from <http://www.abroadview.org/topics/homestays/index.htm>
- Health information for traveler's to china*. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved April 10, 2011, from <http://www.nc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/china>.

- Honnet, E., & Poulsen, S. (n.d.). Principles of good practice for combining service and learning. Informally published manuscript, Philosophy, University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point, Wisconsin. Retrieved from <http://www4.uwsp.edu/philosophy/jsage/SLSC/resources/Good Practice HonnetPoulsen1998.pdf>
- Kitsantas, Anastasia. (2004). Studying abroad: the role of college students' goals on the development of cross-cultural skills and global development. *College Student Journals*, 38(3).
- Knapp, M. (2010). Foreigners still kept at arms length by chinese culture [Web log message]. Retrieved from http://www.china.org.cn/opinion/2010-07/01/content_20396651.htm
- Knight, S., & Schmidt-Reinhart, B. (2002). Enhancing the homestay: study abroad from the host family's perspective. *Foreign Language Annuals*, 35(2), 190-201.
- Lange, Dale L. & R. Michael Paige. (2003). *Culture as the core: perspectives on culture in second language learning*.
- Lutterman-Aguilar, A, & Gingerich, O. (n.d.). Experiential pedagogy for study abroad: educating for global citizenship. *Frontier Journals*, 8(7), Retrieved from http://www.frontiersjournal.com/issues/vol8/vol8-07_luttermanaguilargingerich.htm
- Paige, R. Michael (n.d.). Theory Reflections: Intensity Factors in Intercultural Experiences. *Nafsa*. Retrieved from http://www.nafsa.org/_File/_theory_connections_intensity.pdf
- Peace Corps Volunteer Homestay Program (2012). *Peace Corps in Moldova*. Retrieved February 19, 2012. <http://moldova.peacecorps.gov/homestay.php>
- Power, Colin N. (2000). Global Trends in Education. *International Education Journal*, 1(3), 152-163. Retrieved from <http://ehlt.flinders.edu.au/education/iej/articles/v1n3/power/power.pdf>
- Schmidt, Barbara C. & Susan M. Knight. (2008). The Homestay Component of Study Abroad.
- Sunderman, G., & Kroll, J. (2009). When study abroad experience fails to deliver: the internal resources threshold. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 30(1), Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2731967/pdf/nihms126911.pdf>
- Sumka, S. (2011). The impact of study abroad: education travel as a mode for responsible tourism. Retrieved from <http://www.transitionsabroad.com>

Study abroad by u.s. students slowed in 2008/09 with more students going to less traditional destinations. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.iie.org/en/Who-We-Are/News-and-Events/Press-Center/Press-Releases/2010/2010-11-15-Open-Doors-US-Study-Abroad>

Tugend, Alina. (2010). The Benefits of Volunteerism, if the Service is Real. *The New York Times*. Retrieved February 19, 2012.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/31/yourmoney/31shortcuts.html?pagewanted=all>

United States Embassy, Consulate General - Chengdu China. (2011). Contact us Washington, DC: Government Printing Office. Retrieved from <http://chengdu.usembassy-china.org.cn/contact.html>

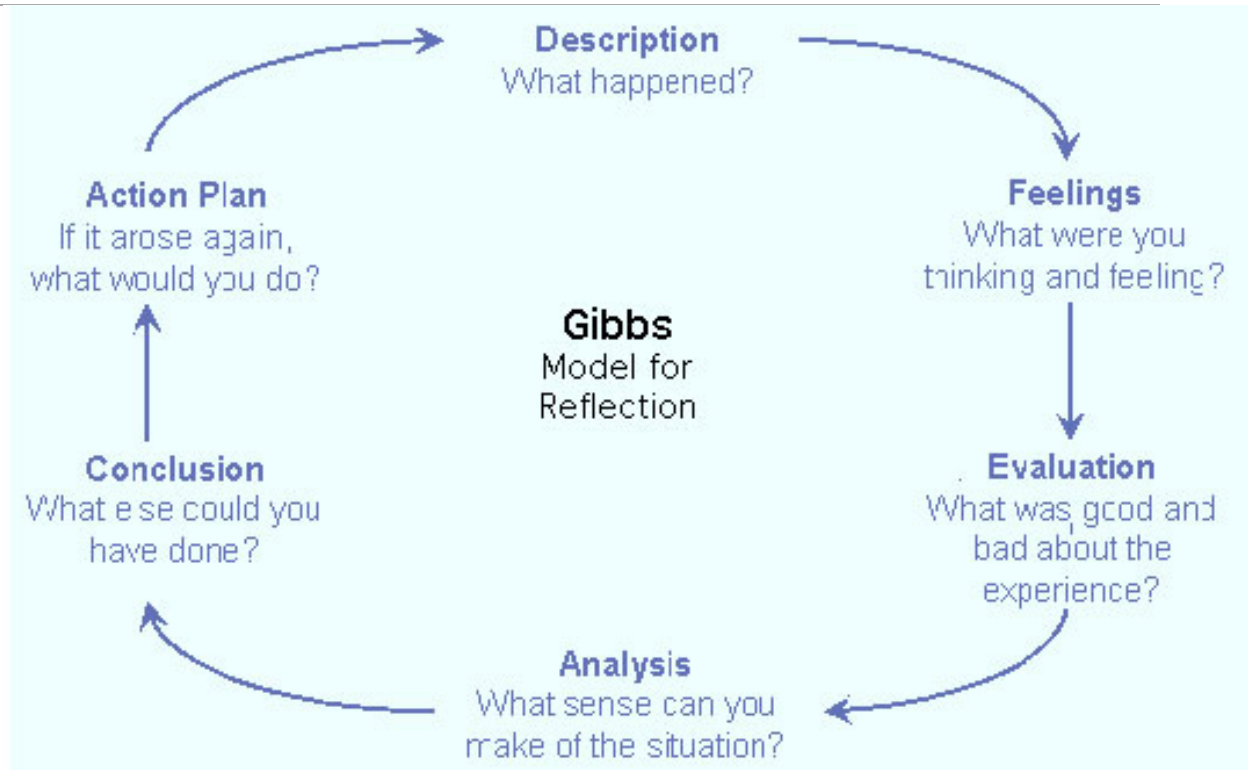
U.S. Department of State. (2010). *Options During a Pandemic*. Retrieved April 29, 2010.
http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/tips/health/health_3096.html

U.S. Department of State. (2010). *What is Travel Registration?* Retrieved April 29, 2010 from <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>

Visions service Adventures. (2011). Retrieved April 10, 2011, from <http://www.visionserviceadventures.com/>

Appendix 1: Graham Gibbs Reflective Cycle

The Reflective Cycle



Six stages of GIBBS Reflective Cycle Template

1) Description

Describe as a matter of fact just what happened during your critical incident or chosen episode for reflection.

2) Feelings

What were you thinking and feeling at the time?

3) Evaluation

List points or tell the story about what was GOOD and what was BAD about the experience.

4) Analysis

What sense can you make out of the situation. What does it mean?

5) Conclusion

What else could you have done. What should you perhaps not have done?

6) Action Plan

If it arose again, what would you do differently? How will you adapt your practice in the light of this new understanding?

Appendix 2: VISIONS Participant Application Form

Summer 2011 VISIONS Application Form

To register for a VISIONS program, please complete the application below. You then will be directed to download our enrollment agreement, which you will mail to the VISIONS office along with a check for full tuition. Space on a program will be secured once payment is received, and submission of this application will place you on our "promised" list for five days until payment and enrollment agreement are received. After five days, the held promised space may be released.

Program: *

Participant Information

Enter this information exactly as it appears on your passport or travel ID.

First Name: * Middle Name: Last Name: *

Preferred Name: Citizenship: *

Passport #: [passport needed?](#) Passport Issued: Passport
Expires:

Email Address: * Cell Phone: ()

Birth date: * Gender *

Male
Female

School

Please enter information about your school.

School Name:

School Location:

city, state or province, and country

Guidance Counselor: Current Grade: *
guidance counselor
or community service contact

Parent 1

Name

Email address:

Phone Numbers

Cell phone

Work

Parent 2

Name

Email address:

Phone numbers

Cell phone

Work

Occupation

Occupation

Family Information

Home Address

Address:*

Address 2:

State/Province:

Country:*

City:

Zip/Postal Code:*

Home Phone Number:*

Billing Contact:

With whom does the participant live?

Other relevant family information or living arrangements:

Who should we call first in case of an emergency?

Additional Emergency Contact:

Enter the names and phone numbers of additional emergency contacts, besides parents or legal guardian.

Brothers and Sisters

Enter information about your brothers and sisters.

Name:

Date of Birth:

Name:

Date of Birth:

Name:

Date of Birth:

Health Information

Please tell us here about any important issues in case we need to discuss them with you before the program begins.

Do you have any disabilities, severe allergies, or other health issues of which we should be aware?

No

Yes

Do you have any mental or emotional issues of which we should be aware?

No

Yes

Are you being treated or receiving medication for any condition: physical, mental, or emotional?

No

Yes

How did you learn about VISIONS?

How did you hear about us? *

Friend

School counselor or teacher

Internet search

Online guide

Advisor

Family

Other

Choose all that apply.

Do you have friends who may be interested in VISIONS?

Do you know someone at your school or among your friends who may like to receive our brochure?

Name:

Street:

City, State, Zip or Postal Code:

Mentor/Other Family

***Property of VISIONS Service Adventures**

Appendix 3: Homestay Questionnaire

Homestay Questionnaire

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Name: | Program: VISIONS Service Adventures: China |
| Current Mailing Address | Name of Emergency Contact: |
| Street or PO Box Number: | Address: |
| City: | City: |
| State: | State: |
| Zip Code: | Zip Code: |
| Gender (Please mark an "X") | Age of Participant |
| Male | |
| Female | |

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Do you mind if there is a smoker in the family home?</p> <p>YES or NO (please circle one)</p> | <p>Do you mind if there are any family pets within the home?</p> <p>YES or NO (please circle one)</p> |
| <p>Do you have any dietary restrictions? YES or NO (please circle one)</p> <p>If yes... please describe below</p> | <p>Please list any hobbies and/or interests you may have:</p> |

Appendix 4: VISIONS Agreement Form

VISIONS Agreement Form

Enrollment Agreement 2011 Participant Contract

I have read the Parent/Guardian Agreement, Noteworthy Information and Terms of Participation therein, and I understand and agree to abide by these. I understand VISIONS mission and that I will be asked to put the group's needs ahead of my own during the program. I understand that by participating in the program, I am an ambassador for VISIONS and will seek to build friendships, uphold an ethic of service, generosity and goodwill in myself and others throughout the program. I assume responsibility to contribute positively to my peer group and my program community and will take active interest in getting to know all group members and our local hosts. I understand that VISIONS is first and foremost a commitment to service work. I willingly agree to assume responsibility for my conduct, to participate with a positive attitude and to do my part to create / make a productive experience.

Participant Signature (legal name as on birth certificate) Date

Parent/Guardian Agreement

Permission is granted to the staff of VISIONS to act as kind and judicious parents for the period of the program. My child may participate in any trips and activities organized by the VISIONS staff; may travel via public carrier or in vehicles operated by VISIONS.

Permission is granted to VISIONS/ assigns to hospitalize/treat/order injections/anesthesia/surgery for my child. I authorize the staff to use non-prescription medicine in the event of minor injuries and/or ailments. I agree that any medical charges incurred by VISIONS will be charged to and paid for by parent/guardian.

I understand that VISIONS has an excellent safety record. I also understand and accept the fact that service work, travel, and living in remote locations in the U.S. and overseas involve risks. These risks include but are not limited to: strikes, civil unrest, war, terrorist activity, weather, or other possibly dangerous conditions beyond the control of VISIONS; diarrhea and bacteria associated with an unfamiliar diet; the risks of air, foot and motor travel; personal property loss by petty theft or damage. Furthermore, there are recreation/adventure and other physical activities in VISIONS that involve risk of personal injury. I understand the nature of this program and its activities and voluntarily accept these risks, and waive claims I may now and in the future have against VISIONS from all liability and covenant.

Students may not use, pursue use of or possess tobacco products, alcohol, illegal drugs/substances. Exclusivity, sexual activity, and intimate involvement with other participants is not allowed. Abusive, violent, unsafe behavior, theft, vandalism, chronic defiance of program policies and established rules or ongoing profanity or other pervasive negativity will not be tolerated. Violation of these guidelines for participation will result in dismissal at the sole discretion of VISIONS without rebate and with additional travel expenses charged to and paid for by parent/guardian. In the event of such dismissal, the parent/guardian is responsible for making the timely / immediate changes in airline reservations. Students who are dismissed from the program for any of the aforementioned reasons will not receive community service credits. Directions and policies set forth by staff for the safety, health and well being of all participants, and of our host community, will be followed at all times.

I give permission to VISIONS to use my child's picture and images derived from his/her activities during the program, and I agree that any photographs/videotapes taken by VISIONS that include the participant / statements by the participant may be used in promoting VISIONS.

I have read and agree with the Noteworthy Information and Terms of Participation contained therein. I agree to release VISIONS, its agents and adventure services of any and all liability, waiver of all possible claims, and responsibility for any loss/damage to property or personal injury incurred during the program under the direction of VISIONS, in which my son/daughter/ward is participating. [Notwithstanding, jurisdiction for legal action will be in Gallatin County, Montana in accordance with the laws of Montana.]

I have read and agree to all of the Terms and Conditions of both this Enrollment Agreement and Noteworthy Information. Enclosed with this agreement is a \$600 deposit, half of which is refundable prior to March 15 and non-refundable thereafter. The balance of tuition is due April 1. This is the entire agreement and may be modified only in writing and signed by all parties.

Parent/Guardian's Name (please print)

Signature Date

*Property of Visions Service Adventures

Appendix 5: Host-Family Application Form

Host Family Application Form

***Adapted from Dr. Sarah Elaine Eaton, Eaton International Consulting Inc. – Language Program Marketing Consultancy <http://www.eatonintl.com>**

Does one or all of your children attend The Hope School? YES or NO

Family Information

Host father's name: _____ Family name: _____

Host mother's name: _____ Family name: _____

Host father's occupation: _____ Employer: _____

Host mother's occupation: _____ Employer: _____

Name and birth year of children:

Name: _____ Date of birth: _____

Name: _____ Date of birth: _____

Others who live with you (e.g. grandparents, cousins)

Name: _____ Age: _____ Relationship to family: _____

Name: _____ Age: _____ Relationship to family: _____

Contact Information

Street Address (P.O Box Number): _____

City: _____ Zip code: _____

Landline Phone Number: _____

Host father's mobile number: _____

Host mother's mobile number: _____

Primary Email address of family member: _____

How long is the walk from your home to the location of the school?

Please circle one:

10 – 15 minutes

20 – 40 minutes

Cannot walk to school

Tell us about your family lifestyle

Smoking

Does anyone in your family smoke? YES or NO

If yes, would the family member be willing to not smoke within the home during the host family experience? YES OR NO

Transportation

Does the family have a working form of transportation? YES or NO

Which buses run close to your home from the school? (Bus Number) _____

Family Pets

Name: _____ Type of animal: _____ Age: _____

Name: _____ Type of animal: _____ Age: _____

What activities does the family do together or enjoy?

How often does your family do these activities?

Reasons for hosting

Why do you wish to be a host family for the program?

Appendix 6: Staffing Plan

VISIONS Employment Application

info@VisionsServiceAdventures.com * VISIONS Service Adventures, 321 East Main St
#426 * Bozeman MT 59715 * 406.551.4423 * Fax 406.551.1525**I. Personal Information**Date of Application _____
(Enclosure of photo is optional)

Name (as it appears on passport or i.d.): _____

Preferred First Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Sex: _____ SS#: _____

Permanent Address: _____
Street City State

Zip Code

Permanent Phone: _____ Dates at this location: _____
Indicate home, work, and/or cell.Temporary Address: _____
Street City State

Zip Code

Temporary Phone: _____ Dates at this location: _____
Home Work

E-Mail: _____

We communicate extensively via email; please indicate if you prefer to be contacted via
the phone.**II. Educational Background****III. Work Experience**

List previous employers and describe your responsibilities or attach a current resume:

| Name | Address | Phone | Dates Employed |
|------|---------|-------|----------------|
|------|---------|-------|----------------|

1. _____

Responsibilities: _____

2. _____

Responsibilities: _____

3. _____

Responsibilities: _____

Please explain why you left your last job; can we call your previous employer for a reference?

Describe your experience working with teenagers (ages 14 to 18). Have you worked with adolescents in residential programs before?

IV. Abilities and Interests

Please rate your experience and ability in the following areas. Indicate if you have formally instructed or are certified to lead where applicable. Please keep in mind we seek a variety of skills, many of which do not appear below, and we do not expect potential staff members to be “Excellent” in every category!

| | No Experience | | Above Average | | Briefly, concisely qualify or explain your rating here: |
|--|---------------|--|---------------|--|---|
| work with teens in a residential setting (explain fully) | | | | | |
| practical application of emergency medicine skills (explain fully) | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| outdoor or other leadership (explain fully) | | | | | |
| rock climbing (explain fully) | | | | | |
| water sports: swimming, scuba diving, snorkeling, sea kayaking | | | | | |
| carpentry/construction (explain fully) | | | | | |
| masonry | | | | | |
| environmental work/ trail maintenance | | | | | |
| Other (explain fully) | | | | | |

Why do you want to be a VISIONS program leader? Describe the strengths or special skills you would bring to the program.

Please discuss your experience and/or ability as a teacher, leader, in interpersonal communications, etc.

Briefly discuss any experience in other cultures or subcultures in or outside the U.S.

Please discuss any experience you have in community service or other volunteer work.

How did you hear about VISIONS?

Do you speak Spanish, French, Vietnamese, or Mandarin Chinese? Indicate accurately your level of fluency. _____

Your valid driver's license State and Number: _____

Which types of vehicles you can drive? Standard shift Truck
 Large Van

List any driving infractions: speeding tickets included and the date of last speeding ticket/s _____
 Are you currently under a doctor’s care and/or taking medication? _____ If so, please explain.

Have you ever been convicted of any crimes including sex-related or child abuse crimes? _____ If so, attach a separate page and explain in detail. Note: VISIONS must have a current Criminal Background Record Check on file prior to staff training as a condition for employment.

V. References

List three references that can comment on your work who have supervised you in a work context. NOTE: These should be employers or supervisors, not close personal friends or co-workers. (Out-of-country references will not be called, but will be contacted via e-mail.) If you have rated yourself as a carpenter, or if you have instructed rock climbing, provide a reference for either (or both) among the three listed below.

| Name Relationship | E-mail Address | Phone |
|----------------------|----------------|-------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

VI. Other

1) VISIONS staffers are contracted to work either 6 weeks finishing at the end of July; 7 or 8 weeks finishing early August; or 10 weeks to the end of August. How many weeks are you available?

2) Please tell us what you believe are three critical requirements for working with adolescents

EMERGENCY MEDICAL CERTIFICATIONS

Employment is contingent upon minimum current Standard First Aid and CPR certification valid for the duration of the summer. Alaska, Dominica, Viet Nam, Central and South America staffers must hold CPR and WILDERNESS First Aid Certification

minimum. Caribbean and Mississippi staffers also must hold current Water Safety or Lifeguard certification in addition to CPR and Standard First Aid.

Please include with this application a photocopy of all valid Emergency Medicine certifications that will be current through the duration of your employment or send a photocopy to us immediately upon re-certification.

Check certifications currently or soon to be held: Lifeguard Water Safety
Wilderness First Aid
Standard First Aid CPR Advanced First Aid AWFA WFR EMT WEMT

Please list other advanced certifications you hold. _____

Thanks for your interest in VISIONS! Feel free to attach additional information about your qualifications that you think is relevant to this application. We'll send a postcard or an email confirming receipt of this application.

VISIONS participants are enthusiastic, independent minded teens who want challenging service work; they want to explore, have fun and make new friends, too. They choose VISIONS after a personal home appointment or a telephone interview. We emphasize to all prospective participants that their level of participation and commitment directly affects the success of the group experience.

The majority of our participants come from affluent communities in the U.S. and overseas. Approximately 10% annually receive financial aid from VISIONS and/or other entities. An average of 35 states and 7 foreign countries is represented in the total enrollment annually.

VISIONS has a range of staffing needs. We seek people with specialized skills such as carpentry or masonry as well as folks who are solid all-around 'generalists.' Some programs require fluency* in a second language. We look for individuals with outdoor skills, and we need staffers with advanced safety and emergency medicine certifications. We employ former Peace Corps volunteers, teachers, graduate students, and especially individuals who like teens and have worked with teens in residential settings. Often we employ individuals from the community and/or cultures of our program sites. Within the program framework set forth, we encourage staffers to inject their special strengths into daily program life while insisting that they follow established policies and protocols that ensure VISIONS priorities: the goals of the program, participants' well-being and the overall quality of the experience.

VISIONS emphasizes teamwork, professionalism, and safe conduct. A successful VISIONS program requires active integration on-site of explicit program components, multiple logistics and other variables. A lot goes into and goes on in a VISIONS summer—it is jam-packed and intense. A staffer's job is demanding. If you join VISIONS, you are committing to a work attitude that is fundamentally cooperative, respectful, positive, flexible and safety-conscious. A team player mindset is essential.

Teamwork ensures a sound program foundation, a high quality experience for participants, and successful service work.

A VISIONS staffer is on board for the kids first and should enjoy working with teens. Our staffers are patient guides; listeners, not lecturers. We seek staffers who are accessible, not aloof; who can provide firm direction, not heavy-handed authority. At the same time, we expect that

*Foreign language fluency must be sound—well beyond simply a basic ability to communicate and comprehend.

that staffers will not hesitate to define limits and enforce boundaries with safety in mind; who will make mature decisions about what's appropriate and what's not. Kids need clear guidelines, firm boundaries and genuinely interested adults for a positive summer experience.

While VISIONS prefers personal interviews when possible, we schedule in-depth telephone interviews when necessary. We do not travel beyond the East Coast region specifically to interview staff. However, we do arrange to interview staff candidates during routine annual travel to other regions in the US to recruit participants. Call our office to find out if and when we'll be near your area.

All VISIONS Staffers Must Be...

- At least 23 years old
- Licensed to drive with a good driving record
- Minimum certified for the duration of the summer in CPR and Standard First Aid. Some programs also require Wilderness First Aid, Water Safety or Lifeguard certification. Certifications are not required in order to apply for a position, but must be attained prior to summer employment.

The staff-to-student ratio is one to four or five on every program. Participant enrollment ranges from minimum 17 to maximum 25. A typical program site has five or six staff including the program director. Staffers work six full days a week with one full day and night off.

Staff training/orientation is in Montana, starting mid-June for three days and continues at the program site for at least one week before participants arrive. Minimum summer employment is six weeks or through the end of July / early August. Maximum employment is ten weeks, into the fourth week of August.

Salaries are commensurate with industry standards, experience, job description and tenure. Room and board is included. Transportation to orientation in Montana is the staffer's responsibility. VISIONS covers costs of roundtrip transportation to/from program sites.

VISIONS programs are hard work and demanding. We ask a lot of our summer employees. Yet our experience and the annual staff return rate (43% - 55%) tells us that staffers, like the participants, get back at least as much as they give. Still interested? If VISIONS sounds like a program you can commit to, please apply.

Program Sites in Vietnam, the Caribbean, West Indies, Central and South America, and the United States.

VISIONS is an equal opportunity employer accepting staff of any race, color, creed, and sex, national or ethnic origin.

Appendix 7: Chinese Tourist Visa (L Visa) Information

All applicants must submit:

- 1) A valid passport as well as its information page. Your valid passport must have at least six (6) months remaining validity and at least one blank page in it.
- 2) Application Form: One completed application form for a **single entry**
- 3) Photo: One recent photo of 2x2 square inch (black and white or color is acceptable) glued or stapled on application form
- 4) Participants must submit their Visa application to a consular or embassy within the jurisdiction of your state and capable of processing such information
- 5) If an applicant cannot turn in the form himself or herself, in person, they may hire a travel/visa agency to help with the visa application process
- 6) Mailed in applications are not accepted

Processing Time:

1. All applications will be processed within 4 working days
2. Express service: 2-3 working days processing, additional fee of \$20 will be charged per visa.
3. Same day rush service: emergency only, additional fee of \$30 will be charged per visa (applications should be submitted before 12:30pm, and may be picked up between 2:30pm-3:00pm on the same day).

Application Fee

1. Single entry application fee for United States citizens – USD \$130.00
2. Single entry application fee for other citizens – USD \$30.00

Appendix 8: End of program assessment survey

| | | |
|-------|------|----------|
| Name: | Age: | Program: |
|-------|------|----------|

What was your favorite experience during the program? Why?

What was your least favorite experience of the program? Why?

What do you think you improved upon during your time in the program?

What do you wish you could have experienced on the program?

How was the staff during the program? Helpful, encouraging, understanding, etc?

Appendix 9: Risk Management Plan

Name of Program and Reporting Staff Member

Trip Details

| Date of Departure | Destination | Time to Destination |
|-------------------|-------------|---------------------|
| | | |
| Date of Return | | Time to Destination |
| | | |

Staff Information

| Name of Staff Member | Certifications | Date of Cert. Expiration |
|----------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Medical Facilities

| Name of Facility | Category of Operating Facility | Contact Information |
|------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

List of personal supplies needed:

List of program supplies needed:

Notes/Comments/Concerns:

Appendix 10: VISIONS: China Follow Up

Please take a moment to answer the questions below about your experience on the VISIONS: China program one year ago.

How has this program affected your life now that you've returned to the United State?

Do you plan to return on a different VISIONS program? YES or NO
If no, please tell us why?

What elements of the VISIONS: China program do you think you gained the most from? Please circle one...

Homestay

Hiking

Community Service Project

Why?

What elements of the VISIONS: China program do you think should be removed from the program? Why?

Would you recommend VISIONS to your friends and family?

Would you like to be a VISIONS representative for prospective participants in the future?