



SUBMITTED

A tai chi class takes place in the courtyard at Bo-Ai International School in China.

## Arkansas students experience China

BY CAROLINE ZILK  
*Staff Writer*

CONWAY — Jing Jing Li of the Confucius Institute in Conway has been hard at work on the relationship between Arkansas and China.

Conferences and educational programs have been going on for months, and in some cases years, to strengthen ties between the two.

The Pulaski County Special School District announced last November that it would offer Mandarin Chinese as a foreign

language at Maumelle High School this August, and the University of Central Arkansas in Conway held the inaugural Arkansas and China Business and Economic Summit on July 21.

Mike Casey, associate dean of UCA's College of Business, spoke at the summit about his hopes for a continued relationship in business and education with the country.

“We want to establish relationships and allow networking opportunities to

SEE CHINA, PAGE 8V

# CHINA

Continued from Page 1V

ry to increase trade with China," he said. "We want to create opportunities for Arkansans to visit and work in China."

For 10 high school students in Arkansas this summer, from July 16 to Aug. 1, that hope became a reality.

The international Confucius Institute organized a summer camp in China for students from schools that included Conway High School East and West, Hot Springs High School, Lincoln High School, Gravette High School, North Little Rock High School and Wynne High School.

Ten Arkansas students, along with their chaperone, Christine Seefeld, a teacher at Conway High School, were



A group from Arkansas and Texas stands at the entrance to the Terra Cotta Warriors Village.

among the almost 600 U.S. students and chaperones participating in the camp.

Li said the goal of the camp was to promote exchange between the youth

of China and the U.S. and enhance the understanding of U.S. high school students of the Chinese language and culture to stimulate their interest in learning more about

the country.

The students visited the cities of Beijing and Shaanxi, where they met local high school students and toured the international Confucius

Institute headquarters.

The tourists participated in traditional activities, including paper-cutting, calligraphy, painting, a tea ceremony and martial arts.

Classroom learning was the largest part of the camp, however.

Students spent three hours a day in Chinese class and 1 1/2 hours per day in a culture class.

"There were 30 hours of language class over the two weeks at the school," Seefeld said.

"Students were divided into two levels of language proficiency and were instructed by a Chinese teacher."

Seefeld said the students enjoyed the classes and learned a lot.

During the few days without classes, Seefeld and the

group from Arkansas enjoyed sightseeing.

"We climbed and bicycled on the city wall, visited the Terra Cotta Warriors, were taken to the Horticultural Expo," she said.

"There was so much to see in such a short amount of time."

Most importantly, the students enjoyed and embraced the experience.

"We had a great group of talented kids who 'jumped in with both feet,'" Seefeld said.

*Staff Writer Caroline Zilk can be reached at (501)244-4326 or czilk@arkansasonline.com.*

SUBMITTED