

Macalester students' project will provide educational opportunities for migrant students in rural China

St. Paul, Minn. – Macalester students **Lianna Novitz '18, from Canoga Park, Calif., and Haimeng Zhang '18, from Shanghai, China,** have received a grant to undertake a project for peace by providing educational opportunities to migrant children from rural Guoyang, China who have not had access to an educational system.

Novitz and Zhang's project, titled, "Seeing Through a New Lens Together: With the Left-Behind Generation in China," comes with \$10,000 for implementation this summer. A total of 127 winning projects were selected. Students themselves will implement their projects throughout the world.

Their grant is from the Davis Projects for Peace initiative funded by the late philanthropist Kathryn Wasserman Davis who launched Projects for Peace on the occasion of her 100th birthday in 2007. Until her death at 106 in 2013, Mrs. Davis was intent on advancing the cause of peace and sought to motivate tomorrow's promising leaders by challenging them to find ways to "prepare for peace."

In the description of their project, Novitz and Zhang noted that in China, because of educational inequality, migrants' children are discriminated against in public education. Consequently, many migrant parents leave their children behind in their rural hometowns in relatives' homes so they can attend schools that will accept them.

Those young children are the "left-behind generation."

"I studied in China as an exchange student and saw how stressful studying is for children with no creative outlets," said Novitz. "But this project will hopefully be a step towards changing the lacking aspects in education, at least for kids in Guoyang."

Through engaging the youth in photography, creative writing workshops and language classes over a six-week period, the two Macalester students hope to empower the children with confidence to change their futures. And through two public art presentations of the children's creative work, they will raise awareness for the "left-behind" phenomenon of migrant children.

The project is in Zhang's rural hometown in China. It's important and meaningful to both students.



Lianna Novitz '18, from Canoga Park, California

[Download](#)

[//d2ihvqrbsd9p9p.cloudfront.net/contentAsset/raw-data/0f1146f5-0b98-4e0d-a710-6cac3b2b30bf/image1](http://d2ihvqrbsd9p9p.cloudfront.net/contentAsset/raw-data/0f1146f5-0b98-4e0d-a710-6cac3b2b30bf/image1)

“It’s important because I’m going to do this project in the village where I lived for several years as a child,” said Zhang. “I am fortunate to have studied at the United World College in Mostar, (the center of Herzegovina), and now in the U.S. at Macalester, but those left-behind children would never have access to opportunities like mine.”

The program will take place at the village’s secondary school during the school’s summer break. Novitz and Zhang will recruit around 25 children from the village and give each of them a camera. Their homework will include taking portraits of their neighbors, family, and peers, a piece of nature, or a day in the village.

At the end of the program, the children will help select photographs and writing pieces to be showcased in two exhibitions – one in the village and another in Shanghai.

The Davis family has chosen to honor Kathryn Wasserman Davis’s legacy by continuing to fund Projects for Peace and is heartened by the quality and inventiveness of the projects to be undertaken in 2014. Projects that address conflict resolution and reconciliation, foster understanding, provide opportunity, and community building are among the many winning proposals submitted by motivated students this year. Mrs. Davis was the mother of Shelby M.C. Davis who funds the Davis UWC Scholars Program.

The two friends have thoughts as to what they’ll do once they graduate in 2018.

Zhang has several ideas including traveling around China, continuing her education or returning to Mostar to volunteer. “I love my UWC (United World College), and I hope to teach in UWC schools in the future.”

Novitz isn’t sure. “That’s a daunting question for a first-year, but since high school, I’ve thought about going into the Peace Corps after I graduate from college, or any sort of pack-up and volunteer program.”

The Davis Projects for Peace program is administered through the Institute for Global Citizenship.

Projects for Peace invites all undergraduates at the 91 American colleges and universities that are partners in the Davis United World College Scholars Program (see www.davisuwcscholars.org (<http://www.davisuwcscholars.org>)) to compete for these grants. Other participating institutions include International Houses Worldwide, the Graduate Institute in Geneva, Future Generations Graduate School, Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey and the University of Maine.

Macalester College, founded in 1874, is a national liberal arts college with a full-time enrollment of 2,045 students. Macalester is nationally recognized for its long-standing commitment to academic excellence, internationalism, multiculturalism, and civic engagement. Learn more at [macalester.edu](http://www.macalester.edu) (<http://www.macalester.edu/>).



Haimeng Zhang '18, from Shanghai, China, [Download](#)

[//d2ihvqrbsd9p9p.cloudfront.net/contentAsset/raw-data/0f1146f5-0b98-4e0d-a710-6cac3b2b30bf/image2](http://d2ihvqrbsd9p9p.cloudfront.net/contentAsset/raw-data/0f1146f5-0b98-4e0d-a710-6cac3b2b30bf/image2)

April 1 2015

- [About Macalester \(http://www.macalester.edu/about/\)](http://www.macalester.edu/about/)
- [Academics \(http://www.macalester.edu/academics/\)](http://www.macalester.edu/academics/)
- [Admissions & Financial Aid \(http://www.macalester.edu/admissions/\)](http://www.macalester.edu/admissions/)
- [Life at Mac \(http://www.macalester.edu/lifeatmac/\)](http://www.macalester.edu/lifeatmac/)
- [Support Mac \(http://www.macalester.edu/supportmac/\)](http://www.macalester.edu/supportmac/)