

# At the Olympics

## As a Volunteer, a Spectator and a Chinese Citizen

by Wendy Shang '11



Wendy in front of the Bird's Nest Pavilion

### As a Volunteer

Volunteering at the Olympics fulfilled one of my greatest dreams. I have learned a lot from it. I volunteered at the Olympics Commitment Building, which means I was one of the lucky ones who got the inside view of how the Olympics ran, particularly on the administrative side. My daily job included checking in documents, dispensing documents to different departments, and checking out documents. The documents covered all kinds of topics, from suggestions to help those with disabilities, to disagreements about policies at the

Olympics Youth Camp; from arrangement of a fifteen minute press conference for Goger to highly confidential issues that could not be shared; from approval of a McDonald's Hamburger Competition to approval of some adjustment to the opening ceremony. The majority of the documents were so trivial that I questioned my supervisor why such documents needed to be approved from the busy executive leaders. Mrs. Wang answered, "From the view of an outsider, the Olympics seems huge and integrated; but in fact the event is comprised of millions of tiny ideas, plans, and efforts with the help of countless people and organizations." For a lot of others, seeing how many medals Michael Phelps would win might be the most exciting part of the Olympics; for us, to ensure that there were enough energy drinks for each Olympic route bus driver was as important as serving Michael a nice breakfast! Everyone who worked for the Olympics carried out their own duties with great responsibility no matter how insignificant their jobs seemed to be. No one would compliment you if you did a good job; nonetheless, a little careless mistake might have huge consequences. No matter how imposing the challenge of carrying out the Olympics was, as long as we took on the challenge step by step with great patience

and care, it would be possible to accomplish it.



*Mrs. Wang, my instructor and supervisor processed more than 300 documents from different departments every day.*

## As a Spectator



*At the volleyball semi-final, Chinese filled most of the gymnasium and there was great hope for China's team. Even though we lost, the audience was still appreciative.*

The fun of watching the Olympic Games on site was beyond description. The extraordinary heated atmosphere, the colorful costumes worn by people from different countries, and the cheering in different languages were so unique at the Olympics. You would see American men watching beach volleyball in their bathing

suits and Japanese cheerleading teams preparing posters with every pitcher's name on them and encouraging the audience to cheer for their team. Of course, it is not hard to imagine how exciting the whole gymnasium would become when China's teams participated at the Games since, for most of the time, at least half of the audience was Chinese! People did not blame anyone if the athletes they supported did not win. The final results were not as important as the perseverance the athletes showed, the opportunity to communicate with people from the other side of the world, and the idea of the gathering of a whole human family. At this time when Beijing became the center of the world, we felt a sense of familiarity with everyone we met, even if the person in front of us spoke another language or was of a different skin color. Everyone was equally a human being. No country, no group, or no individual deserves to endure war or discrimination. We should be so close all of the time, but realities sometimes tear us apart. During the Olympics, however, this familiarity brought diverse people together as a united entity. The Olympics is a miracle!



*People everywhere watched a live broadcast of the table tennis semi-final; on the bus, at stores, and even in some bathrooms.*



*Mrs. Liao, one of the torch bearers, said to me: "The Olympics torch is no more than 1 kg.; but while I was carrying it, I could feel the heaviness of hope from all over the world."*

### **As a Chinese Citizen**

I am proud to be Chinese. I love China with all my heart. First of all, I am very touched by the Chinese people's determination to host a successful Olympics which required us to overcome all kinds of difficulties. In order to resolve the traffic problem and reduce air pollution in Beijing, even number cars were allowed to be on the road only on even dates from July 20 – September 20; the same scenario with odd number cars. Such policies of course created trouble for a lot of families, but people readily followed them because everyone wanted to contribute something to the Olympics and would not mind these 'little' inconveniences. On August 8, I went to watch the Opening Ceremony at the National Stadium. The performance greatly moved me. Recalling it now, perhaps the Opening Ceremony was not the best show in history amongst a lot of other performances, but as a Chinese citizen, hearing the China national anthem sung,

seeing the Chinese flag and the Olympics flag, watching our culture presented to the

whole world and seeing the athletes of more than 290 nationalities marching into the 'Bird Nest', fired my heart with a strong belief that we would conquer any difficulty to give the world a successful, impressive, and safe Olympic Games. Two weeks after the Opening Ceremony, we fulfilled our promise. However, at the same time, I won't deny that Beijing still needs a lot of improvement in the future. It is nearly impossible to make everything perfect. Meanwhile I do know that Beijing has tried its best to minimize difficulties and competently deal with complaints. Since the moment China accepted the task of hosting the Olympics, we made up our mind to make it the best Olympics possible.

This past summer was one of the most unforgettable times of my life. I opened my eyes, stretched my mind and experienced meaningful moments that may never happen again in my lifetime. At the same time, I also truly understand and will remember the simple and deep significance of the five Olympic rings: all people from all continents united and going forward – One World, One Dream!



*The administration department had a gathering to celebrate 10 days counting down to the opening ceremony.*