



A ROUND TABLE OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Success Stories Sister Libraries

Queens Borough Public Library, New York, U.S.A. / Shanghai Library, China

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Partnership founded: 1997

Queens Borough Public Library (QBPL) in 1997 became the first U.S. public library to sign an exchange agreement with a library in China, the Shanghai Library. This agreement already has provided substantial benefits: a loan exhibition (Shanghai Library Treasures: Historical Rubbings and Letter, held in July 1998), the exchange of library materials and a staff exchange (two QBPL librarians spent two months in Shanghai, and two librarians from Shanghai spent three months in New York learning about QBPL). Queens also has provided its library users, many of whom read Chinese with a direct link to the Shanghai Library. In late 1997, QBPL signed an agreement with the National Library of China in Beijing. Most likely it is first such agreement with a public library.

In June 2006, the Queens Library implemented a 24/7 virtual reference platform with Shanghai Library entitled CORS (Collaborative Online Reference Service). This service is available globally and without a library card. Teams of Chinese and English-speaking librarians from both systems assist Chinese speakers to communicate, via e-mail, with librarians, researchers, and industry specialists from public, academic, and research libraries in China, Hong Kong, Macao, Singapore, and the US. An English language interface is currently under construction. To access CORS, point your browser to www.queenslibrary.org, click on "Chinese language interface" and follow the link that says CORS.

Also in 2006, the Queens Library received an initial donation of 300 titles, and will continue to receive 100 new titles annually, as the first US participant in Shanghai Library's "Window on Shanghai" worldwide promotion. Subjects include China's and

Shanghai's past and future, including literature, history, economics, tourism, cooking, medicine, and philosophy. The collection has been shelved in a specially designated area of the International Resource Center and is identified by distinctive signage and individual bookplates.

Updated May 2007

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