



# the Spalding NEWS

## What's Inside:

SPALDING IN BEIJING  
PAGE 2

KNOWING HOW TO READ:  
KEY TO UNLEASHING  
POTENTIAL  
CONTINUED  
PAGE 3

KNOWING HOW TO READ  
CONTINUED  
&  
YOUNGEST SPALDING  
PARTICIPANT  
PAGE 4

TEXAS TUTOR  
&  
WRTR 2 EXCEEDS  
EXPECTATIONS  
PAGE 5

SPALDING IN BEIJING  
CONTINUED  
&  
ATS TOPS LIST  
PAGE 6

Q. & A.  
PAGE 7

ENGLISH: A GROWTH  
INDUSTRY  
PAGE 8



Spalding Education  
INTERNATIONAL

## Knowing How to Read: Never Too Late to Learn



Olivia Cale is a happy 16-year-old girl with worlds to conquer. Her future is as bright as her smile and, as she has amply demonstrated, unlimited. It

was not always so.

A naturally cheerful child, she entered school eager to learn. In first grade, it became apparent there was a problem. Although Olivia easily scored 100 on her spelling tests, seconds later she could not recognize the same words in a paragraph.

She was diagnosed with “an unspecified reading disability,” but no one at her school, including the Special Education teacher, knew anything about dyslexia.

She suggested that Olivia’s mother attend a seminar given by the Alabama Scottish Rite Foundation, leaders in the state in advocating for dyslexic children.

That was when Wendy Cale first learned that daughter Olivia had all the symptoms of dyslexia.

She immediately asked the school district for an evaluation. The following is Mrs. Cale’s account of her efforts to get help for Olivia.

### **The Mother’s Story**

*Finally in September 2003, when Olivia was in the third grade, she was*

*tested by Mrs. Hettie Johnson, who was associated with the Scottish Rite Foundation. It was determined that Olivia was severely dyslexic and reading at a 2<sup>nd</sup>-grade level in the lowest 12<sup>th</sup> percentile.*

*Although Mrs. Johnson made several recommendations to the Special Education Department of the school district, the only recommendation followed was the purchase of the Scottish Rite Hospital’s dyslexia tapes which were intended to offer immediate intervention.*

*Unfortunately, the Special Education Director delayed the \$400.00 purchase and then failed to ensure the program was administered properly.*

*Despite my continued requests over several years for dyslexia intervention tools and retesting, nothing more was done. Olivia’s IEPs and Special Education curriculum followed the same pattern year after year, despite Olivia’s lack of progress.*

*Finally, in desperation, I threatened legal action. Olivia was retested by Mrs. Johnson in December 2009. It was determined that Olivia was still reading at a 2<sup>nd</sup>-grade level, but now at the lowest 1<sup>st</sup> percentile.*

This is where Spalding Executive Trainer  
*(Continued on page 3)*

# Spalding In Beijing

by David Weemhoff

I had been in Beijing, China eight days. Melody and AJ had moved there one week before I arrived. We figured we were ready to venture into a Chinese restaurant without a Chinese speaker. AJ, having been an excellent Charades player, mimed pouring water into a teapot and dipping a tea bag. It was crystal clear to me, but all we received was hot water.

We thought we had a better chance of receiving our preferred entrees because the menu, though written in Chinese, had pictures. Confidently, we each pointed to a picture. Our waitress, apparently a veteran Charades player herself, communicated that the item to which I pointed was no longer available. "Too bad," Melody remarked. "It must be good if there is none left." I, then, pointed to a different delicious looking entrée.

We didn't know what any of our food was when it first arrived. Melody's choice ended up being a chicken dish that tasted like orange chicken. AJ's choice is still a mystery, but his soup-like entrée was certainly edible. Later, mine arrived. It looked good, but my taste buds immediately recognized it as the liver and onions my mother forced me to eat when I was ten years old. No doggy bag for me.



The orphans and staff prepare to enjoy a meal of grilled fish and colorful vegetables.

Besides enjoying native Chinese food, I taught a *Writing Road to Reading 1* course in Beijing during the first two weeks of June. Yes, this is the Beijing of masses of people, polluted air, and wild taxi rides. This is also the Beijing where many people strongly desire to learn to speak and write English.

The members of my class wanted to help these people become literate in English. The class participants themselves, thankfully, were knowledgeable in English because they were Americans or had resided in the United States.

Although teaching the Chinese people English was important, the primary motivation for the class members was to improve the lives of orphans. Their organization, entitled A Bridge for Children (ABC), is led by Steve Hwang and Ann So from South Korea. (See *The Spalding News*, issue 25-2 for an account of David's WRTR 1 class in South Korea.)

Many young people in China live in orphanages

until they are 21 years old because they lack opportunities. ABC's mission is to teach teenage orphans vocational skills, living skills, and the English language. Of course, they are using *The*



Class celebrates the completion of WRTR 1 Back row: David Hong, Zadok Huang, Brian Chew, AJ Nadeau, and Jonathan Wan Front row: Ann So (ABC leader), David Weemhoff (Spalding Executive Trainer), and Melody Nadeau

## Spalding Method.

After ABC relocates older teens from orphanages to group foster homes, they begin to receive intensive instruction in  
(Continued on page 6)

## The Spalding News

In 1986, Romalda B. Spalding established the Spalding Education Foundation (now Spalding Education International, or SEI) to perpetuate her Method, and to maintain the principles and procedures which have made *The Spalding Method* so effective.

Through ongoing professional development, SEI provides the highest quality literacy instruction to public, private, and home educators, and ultimately to all students. Today, SEI trains teachers and accredits schools in *The Spalding Method*, which continues to be validated by current research about the way children learn.

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## Knowing How To Read *(Continued from Page 1)*

Eileen Oliver enters the story.

### **The Tutor's Tale**

*"I was introduced to 16-year-old Olivia Cale in mid-April of 2010 when I began tutoring her 6 hours per week at the request of the Special Education Director of the school district.*

*Despite 7 years of Special Education, after being diagnosed as severely dyslexic at age 9, Olivia was reading at 2.4 grade level. She knew few vowel sounds and had difficulty with two and three-letter consonant blends. She was also a very hesitant reader and usually asked for confirmation after decoding any "tricky" word.*

*We started, as always, with the two-on-the-clock letters. Her mother reported that by the second week she could hear Olivia saying phonogram sounds in her sleep!*

*We began entering words in Section M and Olivia began learning syllable patterns. By the end of May, Olivia was reading mid-to-high third-grade level books. In mid-June, I was asked to increase the tutoring to 4 hours per day/5 days per week.*

*Olivia is an eager and dedicated student. We take only one short break during these intense four-hour tutoring sessions. Due to her wonderful attitude and tremendous desire to learn to read and write, Olivia has advanced 3 grade levels since beginning tutoring in April.*

*We are now reading 5th-grade-level novels and working on comprehension skills using McCall Crabbs Books B and C.*

*When the Special Education Director came out to see us work together in May, Olivia told her that she had not been able to read her birthday cards the previous year; she was thrilled to report that now she could!*

*Olivia is now a self-assured reader; she knows when something does not make sense AND what to do about it! Although the reversal/substitution/*

*omission of letters in a multisyllable word still causes her difficulty (and probably always will), she now enjoys reading and self-corrects (a new phenomenon, according to her mother).*

*I was once told by a colleague that it was too late to teach junior-high LD students how to read and that I should focus on teaching them "how to cope" with their history and science courses. Olivia has been a wonderful example of the fallacy of that attitude. It is NEVER too late to begin learning how to read!*

*Olivia's success has encouraged the school district to consider Spalding training for their Special Education teachers. I am so excited to know that other struggling readers will have the chance to become accomplished readers, writers, and spellers as Mrs. Spalding envisioned. ALL children can learn! I know what a difference Spalding has made in the lives of my students.*

*Although I began teaching Special Education in 1980 and received a Masters' Degree in Learning Disabilities in 1985, I was not successful in teaching my struggling readers. I felt almost as frustrated as my students. Then I was introduced to The Spalding Method. Because of this program, I have seen defeated, sometimes angry, students blossom into confident, willing learners. What a joy!*

*Olivia's progress was the answer to Mrs. Cale's prayers.*

### **The Mother's Story 2**

*Since Olivia began tutoring with Mrs. Eileen Oliver using The Spalding Method, her reading has vastly improved and so has her overall confidence and self-esteem.*

*I had been told that unless dyslexic children receive successful intervention before age 10, there was little if any hope for improvement. I now know that is simply not true. Olivia is a walking poster child for what The Spalding*

*Method can accomplish with older children."*

### **Olivia Determined**

Beginning at age 14, Olivia entered a volunteer program at the city Zoo. To be accepted required a personal interview, two days of training, passing two tests, and classes to learn about the zoo animals. All were major challenges for a dyslexic child who had trouble reading. That didn't stop Olivia.

She was accepted and volunteered 235 hours at the zoo, feeding and caring for animals, assisting with birthday parties and other special events, working at the zoo's summer camps, instructing visitors, and helping with a recycling program. "I learned that I am a strong person, that I can do many things, and I will not let my dyslexia get in my way," Olivia said proudly.

Last year, Olivia took part in the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program, the largest youth recognition program in the United States based exclusively on volunteer community service.

Olivia filled out the lengthy application form, answering the many essay questions and sent it in. It took Olivia three evenings to complete it. Another hurdle surmounted by this dyslexic teen.

Some 22,000 middle school and high school students from around the country apply to the Prudential program. Prudential awards the Silver to one high school and one middle school student from each state. Olivia was the middle school Silver award winner from Alabama in 2009.

Mrs. Cale explains what happened next.

### **Prudential Award**

*The Silver recipients are flown to Washington with a parent -- all expenses paid for a very magical four non-stop days where the students (110 of them) were treated like rock stars. (Two from each state, two from D.C. and two from Ireland, Korea, Japan, and Taiwan.)*

*(Continued on page 4)*

## Knowing How To Read (Continued from Page 3)

*We attended a wonderful reception/dinner at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History. Mrs. Bush spoke and took questions from the students. Each group had a chance to speak with her personally and be photographed with her. Each student was personally honored and given a check for \$1000.00 from Prudential.*

*The next morning the students visited an inner-city school to deliver books for their library and to read to children. The trip included a great deal of sumptuous food, sightseeing, a dinner cruise on the Potomac, and a visit to members of the congressional delegation for our state. It was a wonderful experience for both of us.*

*For Olivia, it was especially wonderful because she was just like the other kids for a change! She wasn't the "stupid" girl who couldn't read and someone to be bullied and ridiculed. She was an honored guest because of what she had accomplished.*



*Olivia after 8th grade ceremony marking transition to high school.*



*First Lady Laura Bush with honorees David Wilson from Tuscaloosa and Olivia Cale.*

Eileen Oliver shared the paragraph below that Olivia wrote after they had completed the 3rd-grade level biography of Helen Keller. Mrs. Oliver asked Olivia to compare herself to Helen, and she did a wonderful job. This was written in May after 36 hours of tutoring.

*I am Helen*

*I am Helen but I am different because I am Dyslexic. I feel like Helen because I was trapped in my mind like she was.*

*She was trapped by being deaf, blind, and unable to speak. I was trapped because I could not read. Helen was angry because she could not communicate. And I was angry because I could not read. Then a stranger came along and showed Helen how to communicate. Helen's teacher was Miss Annie.*

*Then came along a stranger that is teaching me how to read. That person is named Mrs. Oliver. She has shown me the way just like Miss Annie did with Helen. I love you Mrs. Oliver. I thank you so very much.*

*Olivia Cale* ★

## Youngest Participant Completes ILA 1



**W**e're a little late in sharing this item but we couldn't resist! This is ILA 1 participant David Weetman who accompanied his mother, Naomi to class in Palmer, Alaska.

Naomi reported that he particularly enjoyed phonogram practice. At night she would practice saying the sounds and he would nod right off to sleep.

The class was taught by Eileen Oliver in April of 2008. ★



# Texas Tutor Takes WRTR 2

Many years later, she took her three oldest children out of public school when, in Liz's words, the school "failed to differentiate instruction to meet my children's needs." She was determined to home school them and her youngest child..

She said, "If it had been only one child who was having difficulty, I might not have home schooled. However, the school failed all three on a different level."

Her children are grown now, but Liz is still teaching at home. She tutors 20-25 hours a week and her students range in age from elementary to high school.

Liz has a Texas teaching certificate and a degree in General Science. She tutors reading, math, and science and has a growing list of students. "I began by contacting two schools to let them know that I was available for students needing extra help. Those schools sent me students, but I have never advertised. Since then it's all been word of mouth. My name is passed from parent to parent."

She keeps a tutoring calendar with

the days and times blocked out for each student. Parents watch the calendar for openings. "They'll say, I see you have an open block, may I have it?"

About half her students come for math and science and half for reading help. However, she uses WRTR for all subjects.

Her high school students need help with composition, so she teaches them the writing process. She uses the mental actions in all subjects and grade levels to teach comprehension and study skills.

Her eyes sparkle when she talks about her students. "I have a 10-year-old boy who came to me reading at a 0.5 grade level and in just a year he is reading at a 6<sup>th</sup>-grade level. I have many students whose progress has been dramatic. Many gain 3 years in a year's time."

Liz's enthusiasm for WRTR and her dedication to her students are obvious. Add those qualities to a lively sense of humor and an engaging manner, and it is easy to see why her students succeed and their parents flock to fill her tutoring calendar.

Liz Plake from Houston, Texas attended a WRTR 2 course at the SEI office in June. She had taken the parent course in Houston and, two summers ago, traveled to Portland, Oregon to take IIA 1 (now WRTR 1). WRTR 2 brought her to Phoenix.

But the Houston course was not her first Spalding experience. For Liz, her connection with Spalding began 48 years ago when she was only a baby. Her mother taught her older brother to read with WRTR. Her 4-year-old sister learned to read by listening to the lessons. Liz could not know then that WRTR would become a family tradition.

## "WRTR 2 Exceeded all Expectations"



[information/newsletters,fall2009issue](#)

She came back to take WRTR 2 from Pat Perkins. It's been an eventful year for Yuliana. Her after-school music program expanded into a remedial reading program. "I became known as a reading specialist," she said with an embarrassed smile. She has been delighted with the progress her students have made, but once again she felt the need to know more.

She has had numerous requests from parents to teach their children composition and to help with their reading comprehension. "They don't teach the writing process in the schools and comprehension does not get adequate attention." She knew she needed more training.

Did WRTR 2 satisfy her needs? Her smile lit up the room. "It exceeded all my expectations," Yuliana said. "WRTR 2 has given me the tools I need to help my students become skilled readers and writers. I can hardly wait to get home and share what I have learned with my students."

The weak economy has put her plan to organize a WRTR 1 course in Indonesia on hold. "The schools lack the funding right now," she said.

Yuliana's goal is to become Spalding Certified so she can teach WRTR 1 to teachers. She won't be satisfied until WRTR is taught in all her country's schools.

It was a pleasure to welcome Yuliana Sidje back to Arizona after a year's absence. *Spalding News* readers may remember this Indonesian mom from her 2009 visit when she took WRTR 1 from Spalding Certified Teacher Instructor, (SCTI) Janie Carnal. [www.spalding.org/](http://www.spalding.org/)

## Spalding in Beijing (Continued from page 2)

English for two hours each day. For ABC, this is a cause, or a ministry, to change the lives of these young people for the better. ABC intends to work with the current group of eight orphans until March of 2011 and then expand three-fold and continue that expansion every year.

With support from mentors, each orphan had to apply and be accepted into this program. Many more orphans apply than can be accepted. My WRTR 1 class was held at an ABC facility.

I became well acquainted with all eight of these orphans. I assessed all of them using the Assessment Section of the *Spalding Teacher's Guide* when they came for their two hours of English in the afternoon. It became clear to me that speaking English is a bigger challenge than writing English for these students. The assessments and other observations point to the necessity of teaching English through phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, and high frequency words. Of

course, we know *The Spalding Method* does all that.

I joined the eight young people on a visit to The Great Wall of China. We shared Chinese meals with lots of vegetables and, thankfully, I did not have to choose the food or try to order it. We also dined at an American restaurant in Beijing where the students had American food choices and needed to use silverware rather than chopsticks.

Mrs. Spalding probably never thought about government policies in China that have resulted in millions of orphans. She couldn't know, when she invented the Spalding Marking System, and developed Spelling Dictation procedures, that



*After climbing a steep mountain, the orphans and staff pose on the Great Wall of China.*

orphans on the other side of the world would benefit. However, she did know that helping people acquire the skills and knowledge of the English language would positively impact many lives. The orphans of China are now part of Mrs. Spalding's legacy. ★



## ★ ATS Tops Magazine's Best Schools List ★

**A**lhambra Traditional School, (ATS), was highlighted in Phoenix Magazine's August "Best Schools" issue.

The magazine listed the 36 schools that "aced the AIMS." ATS is at the top of the list in the elementary and middle school categories. You'll notice other Spalding schools on the list as well.

Many thanks to ATS Principal Tracey Lopeman for sharing this exciting news with us.

Under the category of "Best School for Academics," ATS was mentioned as an "other standout" along with Xavier College Prep."

Tracey and her staff should be very proud. All the other schools are East Valley, upper-income communities. ATS is

65% minority with 38% free and reduced lunch. The scores compare, but the populations couldn't be more different.

In her note to SEI Tracey wrote, "Please know that I share this outstanding recognition with you. I know it is our implementation of Spalding that creates the outcomes we -- and most importantly, our students enjoy.

"Thank you for your loyal partnership with ATS."

*Editors Note:*

*In fact, of the seven top scoring public schools in the elementary category, four are Spalding schools; Alhambra Traditional School, Chandler Traditional Academy, Neely Traditional Academy, and Cheyenne Traditional School.*

*In the Middle school category, two out of the top five are Spalding schools, ATS and Neely.*

*Our heartiest congratulations to ATS and the other high scoring Spalding schools. We are well aware that it is the dedicated efforts of teachers and administrators who produce outstanding student achievement.* ★





Editors Note: *Due to a great deal of interest in teaching English as a second language using The Spalding Method, we are reprinting a question and answer that originally appeared on the Spalding Forum. Much interest comes from Asian nations. However, the principles of instruction and methodology in The Spalding Method apply regardless of 'first' language.* The answer was provided by Spalding Teachers Dan and Ya-mei Shaffer.

**Q** I have been teaching Chinese workers beginner English for 2 years. I decided to use Spalding phonics because I had read that it was useful for ESL students. I would be interested to hear from anyone who has experience in teaching English to older teenagers and adults using *The Spalding Method*.

**A** My wife and I are ESL instructors at an aviation academy in the United States. Our principal function is to help Chinese student pilots improve their oral English so they can understand and communicate verbally with their instructors and air traffic controllers.

Most of our students have had 8 or more years of English classes in middle school, high school, and college; yet when they arrive here, they find that they cannot understand what people are saying and people cannot understand them. The reason for this incomprehension lies partly in the way English is taught in China.

Chinese character writing is a symbolic language akin to Egyptian hieroglyphics. It originated as simplified picture writing. For this reason, learning to read and

write Chinese requires no phonemic awareness whatsoever. In fact, it does not even require knowledge of spoken Chinese. A monolingual Russian, a monolingual German, and a monolingual Chinese person could all learn the meaning of Chinese characters in terms of each one's own language and then communicate with one another in writing.

Perhaps as a consequence of the above, English is taught in China primarily as a written language. Students are seldom tested on listening comprehension, pronunciation, or fluency. Students learn the meanings of English words in terms of Chinese equivalents, and spelling is "learned" through brute force memorization that allows students to pass tests, but that often doesn't result in words remaining in long-term memory.

So how can teaching *The Spalding Method* help in teaching Chinese-speaking students? Very simply, it helps students develop the missing phonemic awareness that links the written English language they have studied with the spoken English language that is unfamiliar to them. This is accomplished by first teaching the Spalding phonograms and then modeling how to analyze English words by separating them into syllables and marking the phonograms as appropriate to show the sounds they make.

Most of the Chinese students we teach cannot initially say or "voice" the sounds of "n" or "m" at the ends of words. Mandarin Chinese words simply do not end in a voiced "n" or "m." Try saying "in an airplane" without voicing the "n's and you get the picture. Teaching these students to voice the final "n" and "m" in words requires explicit instruction, modeling, and practice to the point of automaticity.

Second, spoken Mandarin Chinese does not contain the two sounds of "th." Making these sounds is initially very difficult because it involves putting the tongue between the upper and lower teeth--an action that feels unnatural and even embarrassing--like sticking one's tongue

out in public. Again, explicit instruction, modeling, and practice to the point of automaticity are required.

Fourth, in the Romanized form of Mandarin Chinese, the vowel "i" is given its Latin pronunciation, "ee." Students therefore tend to pronounce the word "still" as if it were spelled "steel". Other phonograms and vowel sounds are often mispronounced as well. In Romanized Chinese words, "ai" is pronounced like the second sound of "i" as in Shanghai, so students will pronounce "said" as if it were "sighed" or "laid" as if it were "lied." Lastly, most students from China have little awareness of syllables or syllable stress. Chinese words are monosyllabic--each word is represented by a Chinese character that has only one syllable. This fact makes it difficult for native Chinese speakers to sound out and pronounce English words--even words whose meanings they recognize and which they have learned to spell correctly through endless repetition. It is important to use the correct syllable "stress" when speaking, as stressing the wrong syllable can produce the sound of a totally different word--or a word that is difficult to recognize. "Decent" and "descent", "reefer" and refer" just a few examples that come to mind. Using word analysis to divide new vocabulary words into syllables and teaching the correct syllable stress is very helpful to Chinese students.

We have found *The Spalding Method* to be very effective in teaching English as a second (or third or fourth) language to Chinese students of all ages. We even teach the "five mental actions" to help student pilots study their aviation textbooks more effectively. *The Spalding Method* provides a sound foundation in every sense of the word "sound".

*The Spalding Method* is used with great success in many Arizona schools where there are a large number of immigrant children for whom English is not their first language. ★



## Spalding Education INTERNATIONAL

23335 N. 18th Drive, Suite 102,  
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Take The Writing Road  
to Reading success

## English: A Growth Industry

**Y**ou have only to surf the Internet to see that teaching English abroad is a growth industry.


In *Spalding News* issue 25-2, Executive Trainer David Weemhoff reported on his adventures teaching English in South Korea. In this issue, David tells us about teaching English in China.

Yuliana Sidje, from Indonesia, is back to hone her skills for teaching English composition by enrolling in WRTR 2, and the Q & A page is devoted to Spalding teachers Dan and Ya-mei Shaffer's experience teaching English to Chinese speakers.

Judging from a recent article in the Wall Street Journal, what SEI is experiencing is a tiny tip of a very big iceberg. Rakuten Inc., Japan's largest online retailer by sales, has made learning English a priority for its 6,000 mostly Japanese employees. By 2012, all employees will be expected to be proficient in English.

Japan has been slow to make learning English a priority. The Journal reports: "Among the 34 countries designated as 'advanced economies' by the International Monetary Fund, Japan had the lowest scores last year on the Test of English as a Foreign Language given to foreign students who want to study in the US."

However, that is now changing. In addition to Rakuten Inc., other multinational companies using English include Sony Corp, Nissan Motors, and Fast Retailing Co., Japan's largest clothing chain.

English is the major language of news, business, and government throughout the world. For safety reasons, it is the required language of international air traffic control, maritime communication and, last but not least, entertainment. American music and movies carry the English language around the world. 

### Do You Have A Story To Share?

**T**he *Spalding News* loves to be the bearer of glad tidings. Has your school been recognized for outstanding achievement?

Is there a student or teacher at your school who has been honored?

Do you know a student, teacher, or administrator who has done something particularly noteworthy?

Or do you have an amusing or touching anecdote to share?

If any of the above applies to you, please send your story to [msielaff@cox.net](mailto:msielaff@cox.net). Pictures or newspaper clippings are welcome and make a good story better.

Or, write a letter to the editor for the next issue of *The Spalding News*.

Thank you,  
Marcia Sielaff  
Editor