

## **Premier Screening of Changing Lives**

### **The film of a journey to China**

Press Invitation to the Private Screening of *Changing Lives*

Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> July

12pm

Colchester Arts Centre

Colchester and Ipswich Museums and The Gilberd School are pleased to invite you to the premiere of "Changing Lives", a film documenting the journey of ten young people as they travelled to China, selecting objects from Nanjing Museum to be exhibited at Colchester Castle as part of Stories of the World, one of the projects at the heart of the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad. The screening will take place on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> July at 12 o'clock at Colchester Arts Centre.

Back at the beginning of the year (20<sup>th</sup> February 2011), ten Year 9 students from The Gilberd School, Colchester left by coach for the airport to embark on an experience of a lifetime trip to China.

Whilst in China the students worked closely with Lisa Wright from Signals Media to record their trip onto video. When they returned to England they worked with Signals Media to compile their work into a short film, enabling them to also work towards achieving their 'Bronze Arts Award'. This is the film we are inviting you to preview on 2<sup>nd</sup> July.

Lisa Wright, Education Co-ordinator, Signals Media said, "The 'Stories of the World: Changing Lives' project has been the highlight of my career. The young people involved have been an amazing group to work with and it has been a real honour and privilege to share in this once-in-a-lifetime experience with them. I hope the final film we've made does justice to the time we spent in China, immersing ourselves into the rich history and culture of this beautiful country. I still can't quite believe that I have been lucky enough to travel across the world to shoot a documentary with such an inspiring group of young people, who are a real credit to their school and our community."

The group of young people spent a week engaging with Chinese culture and history and helping to select objects and stories for a major international exhibition *Treasures of China* to be loaned from China and launched at Colchester Castle, Essex in June 2012. They not only choose objects to go on display but also research and interpret the objects they've chosen for the exhibition itself. The group also spent time with students and in lessons at Nanjing Foreign Language School, which enabled the students to meet Chinese children of a similar age and gain experience of life in a Chinese school.

Cllr. Nick Barlow, Commerce and Sustainability Portfolio Holder at Colchester Borough Council said, "I'm delighted that these young people have had such a detailed involvement in creating a major exhibition for our museums and have had the opportunity to experience Chinese culture so closely as part of the project. This is one of a number of ways in which the Museum Service is bringing the world to Colchester, and the exhibition they have helped to create will be a must see for everyone."

Amy Cotterill, Community Outreach Officer at Colchester and Ipswich Museums said, "This is a very challenging and groundbreaking project. The involvement of young people in decision making has been a key theme through all of the 2012 Olympic [Stories of the World] projects. These young people are gaining insight into how museums put on exhibitions, learning about Chinese culture and developing a variety of new and useful skills."

This unique project has been made possible because of the support of Essex County Council and Jiangsu Provisional Government in China who have had a strong affiliation for 23 years which has brought many benefits to both regions. In addition to business and cultural opportunities on both sides, 88 Essex schools are linked with schools in Jiangsu.

This project has been fully funded by the British Museum and through the Museum, Libraries and Archive Council's "Renaissance in the Regions. Funding that is external to Colchester Borough Council.

This trip is part of The Changing Lives project at Colchester and Ipswich Museums. This project is part of *Eastern Exchanges*, a major festival celebrating the culture and colour of the east to mark the London 2012 Games. For the next year museums across the region will be delivering a major programme of international exhibitions and events which will unlock the secrets and stories of China, India and Pakistan. At the heart of *Eastern Exchanges* are the region's young people, creating exciting new ways for visitors to experience our great museums. *Eastern Exchanges* is part of London 2012 Cultural Olympiad<sup>[i]</sup> programme *Stories of the World*<sup>[iii]</sup>.

We hope that you are able to come to the premier of *Changing Lives* and we look forward to seeing you there!

---