

CHICAGO'S METRO WEST  
**DUPAGE** COUNTY  
CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

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**Students Travel from China to Tour DuPage**  
*Visit puts county on an international stage*

OAK BROOK—As part of its DuPage Discovery Tours program – an international student program that expands cross-cultural understanding, develops platforms for various languages and promotes higher learning, the DuPage Convention & Visitors Bureau welcomed its first group of students from the People's Republic of China today. This visit exemplifies the DCVB's efforts to gain greater international exposure for DuPage County as a global leader in education and science.

Ten top students and two teacher chaperons from the city of Zibo, China will spend more than a week visiting attractions and participating in an immersive cultural exchange program in DuPage.

"This cultural exchange is a fantastic opportunity to pique students' interest in other cultures at a young age," said Beth Marchetti, executive director of DCVB. "We hope this visit will spur more students from China to explore our community, and in turn spark interest from DuPage students to travel the world."

Huantai 1<sup>st</sup> Middle School is one of the highest ranking schools in the Shandong Province, and has been considered a "Provincial Elite School" since 1961. In addition to DuPage, Huantai 1st Middle School also works with educational institutions in Australia, Japan, South Korea, and Canada.

The Chinese students selected are some of the best in their school, Huantai 1<sup>st</sup> Middle School. The school has almost 6,000 pupils and is located in the historical city of Zibo, in the Shandong Province. Zibo is known as the birthplace of Cuju, a game that FIFA recognizes as one of the earliest forms of modern soccer.

The high school-aged students will attend a welcome reception this evening at the Hilton Chicago/Oak Brook Suites at Oakbrook Terrace. During their stay, the students will

follow a customized itinerary that emphasizes learning about American culture and language. For example, the students will visit a variety of educational and cultural attractions, such as Argonne National Laboratory, Cantigny Park, DuPage colleges and universities, as well as the University of Chicago and Northwestern University. They will also shadow students at DuPage District 88 Schools, giving DuPage students the chance to learn more about Chinese language and culture as well.

"Cultural experiences like these can have an enormous impact on a young person's life," said Scott Helton, District 88 superintendent. "We look forward to hosting more students from abroad in the future."

Last October, DCVB co-hosted the Chinese Consul General, Mr. Hong Lei. Bill Liu, DCVB's global brand ambassador and his counterpart Will Chang, have been instrumental in heightening awareness of DuPage County as a Midwest destination.

"There are so many attractions in DuPage, it can be hard to fit everything into one visit," Marchetti said. "Through programs like DuPage Discovery Tours, we're able to create tailored visits for national and international guests, so everyone gets the most out of their time in DuPage County."

DCVB will hold a graduation ceremony for the students on February 10 at Maggiano's Little Italy, Oak Brook.

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*The DuPage Convention & Visitors Bureau is the official sales and marketing organization for DuPage County. The DCVB was formed to attract business and leisure travelers to DuPage County's 38 communities and is responsible for generating billions of dollars in revenue every year in the form of hotel nights, tourist attractions, meals and more. The DuPage CVB is the only Illinois State certified not-for-profit organization authorized to represent DuPage County's tourism and convention business.*