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LOOK WHO IS LEARNING CHINESE:
TUITION FREE CHINESE IMMERSION CHARTER SCHOOL COMING TO QUEEN CITY

CHARLOTTE—Six-year-old Arabella Kushner has been praised by the Chinese President as “a little star” after President Donald Trump showed off her video singing and reciting poems in Chinese during his recent visit to China. Arabella is one prime example in the new trend of learning Chinese in prominent families around the world, such as those of Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg, Amazon founder Jeff Bezos’ children, Princess Elisabeth in Belgium and Princess Catharina Amalia in Dutch. Coming to Queen City in the fall of 2018, East Voyager Academy will be the first whole-school Chinese immersion charter school for families enthusiastic about graduating their children with not just English-Chinese proficiency but also strong academics and intercultural competence.

Starting with a lonely one in 1981, there are 247 Chinese immersion programs in the U.S. as of November 2017, according to the Mandarin Immersion Parents Council. There have been double digit increases in numbers every year since 2006. From 2011 to 2015, the growth of Chinese immersion programs counted for 83% of the total growth of all language immersion programs in the U.S. It is not hard to understand why Chinese has become so popular. China has become the second largest economy in the world. It is the destination of more than \$113 billion of U.S. exports. As the world becomes more interconnected by technology, the demand for an English-Chinese bilingual work force will also increase.

Parents in the immersion program community in Queen City have been talking about a “new kid on the block”—East Voyager Academy. At the school fair hosted by the Charlotte Observer on November 9 and 14, quite a few parents came to EVA’s booth. Many parents inquiring about the school program are bilingual or multilingual. One parent also shared his experience of taking Chinese in high school. Most parents are aware of the benefits of a language immersion program and are very excited about the new opportunity in

Charlotte. A consultant from Charlotte School Search also concurred with the increasing inquiries and interests in language immersion programs among parents selecting education choices for their children.

EVA requires no prior knowledge of Chinese for children to enter the program. Parents do not need to have any background in Chinese to monitor their children's academic progress. The program in general uses the same core curriculum and English textbooks for core subjects as all North Carolina public schools do. However, EVA's unique whole-school Chinese immersion model and departmentalized instruction will make effective acquisition of content studies and language skills occur at the same time.

A focus on strong academics is one of EVA's core missions. EVA also aims to graduate students to be competent in intercultural communication and proficient in both English and Chinese. The school recently launched a "Look Who is Learning Chinese" campaign on their Facebook page. "Families in Queen City will soon join the famous Chinese learners to show off not just their kids' Chinese proficiency but also academic achievements and appreciation of diverse cultures" said Dr. Dandan Liu, Vice Chair of the Founding Board of Trustees at EVA.

East Voyager Academy is located at 7429 Tuckaseegee Road, Charlotte, NC 28214. Open enrollment for pre-K to 4th grade for fall 2018 is underway until January 31, 2018. Its next information session is scheduled for early December. For more information, please visit www.eastvoyager.org or follow EVA @EastVoyager on Twitter and Eastvoyageracademy on Facebook.