

VOLUNTEERS

PROFILE: LIU YIGE

A learning experience for keen French student

College freshman Liu Yige has become fluent in her major, French, thanks to her volunteer experience.

During the chef de mission seminar of the second Summer Youth Olympic Games this March, Liu was an assistant of the National Olympic Committee and was responsible for reception of the head of the delegation from the Republic of Chad.

"That's a very challenging task for a university freshman and I was so stressed back then," she said.

However, thanks to all the volunteer training and the homework she had done, Liu was up to the task of helping the head of the delegation throughout the seminar and also showed him around the city.

"I'm so proud my introduction left a very positive

impression on him about Nanjing, including the modern downtown architecture and ancient cultural relics and historical sites," she said.

Liu said she has also learned a lot of other things by becoming a volunteer.

"Proficiency in a foreign language is not all about speaking clearly," she said. "You also get to carefully weigh up a person's words and closely watch his expression, assessing his thoughts while observing his behavior, which you can't learn in a class.

"You also get to know his moods and interests so as to better understand him and work with him," she said.

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime experience and will be beneficial throughout my life," she said.

— ZHENG XIN



Liu Yige is the first torch bearer during its relay in Nanjing on Tuesday. PHOTO BY WEI XIAOHAO / CHINA DAILY

PROFILE: LI PENGJU



Li Pengju is a flag-bearer during the Nanjing Youth Olympic Games. PHOTO PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The tough life of a proud flag-bearer

Before Li Pengju signed up to be a flag-bearer at the Nanjing Youth Olympic Games, he often wondered how cool it would be to lead a delegation into a stadium.

"My parents would be so proud of me and my friends so jealous," said the member of the flag-raising ceremony team of Nanjing Tech University.

However, the daily training can be a bit of a grind, particularly in the tropical heat.

The group of eight volunteers starts practicing at 5 am each day and they are soaked in sweat after an hour of training.

According to Li, sunstroke and stinky feet due to new pairs of leather shoes are occupational hazards.

However, for Li and his partners, it is all worthwhile.

Despite all the sweat, odors and months of hard training, the flag-bearing volunteers will only appear before the public for a few minutes during the opening ceremony and prize presentations.

"One minute on the

stage takes 10 years of practice," said Li. "But what you gain will pay big dividends throughout your entire life.

"My parents are very supportive of me devoting to the cause of volunteering," said Li.

"The memories of this summer might be the most awesome ever."

— ZHENG XIN

THEY SAID...

Zhang Zhengyi,
a 62-year-old volunteer

"Instead of taking sips of jasmine tea while looking after my grandson in the baking-hot sun, I found volunteering for the Games makes me more comfortable. It feels like I'm in my 30s again while working with the young volunteers. I'm loving it."

Kalsangtso, a Tibetan volunteer

"I was there during the Wenchuan earthquake in 2008 and was very impressed by the volunteer services from home and abroad. I want to extend my gratitude to others and extend the volunteering spirit. The volunteering is not only an extremely rewarding personal experience; it is an invaluable contribution to the community you live in."

Jiang Lican,
a volunteer on the ceremonies team from Nanjing Tech University

"A minute on the stage takes 10 years of practice and that is especially true for the ceremonial team. You put on the high heels and practice etiquette for months just for a small moment. But when you are there, every bit of hardship becomes well worth it."

Guo Min,
a sophomore at the College of Civil Aviation of the Nanjing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics

"My job during the Games is to put on the costume of the mascot while greeting people passing by. It's muggy and stuffy inside and you barely make any public appearances in front of the TV cameras. But we are just as proud to be part of these Games."

Liu Nianqi,
a sophomore majoring in athletic rehabilitation at the Nanjing Sport Institute

"I lost as much as 10 kilograms while volunteering for the Asian Youth Games in Nanjing last year. I guess that's part of what they say by 'intangible rewards'. I signed up to be a volunteer the moment I knew of the recruitment."

Nihad,
an international student with the Nanjing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics and an assistant with the International Olympic Committee

"I can speak six languages and I believe my proficiency in English and Chinese will help foreign athletes better adapt to the city. My family is very supportive of my decision to not go back home but stay here as a volunteer. My father has also booked a ticket to Nanjing to watch the Games."