



BARRINGTON CHINESE IMMERSION COUNCIL

Be in the Know with BCIC

Upcoming Events:

- Encourage incoming kindergarteners to register for CI!
 - To help, contact Erin Lales at elales@bcic220.org
- BCIC Year End Party
 - Wednesday, May 27 from 5:00-7:00 pm
 - Location: North Barrington Elementary
 - [Registration REQUIRED. Register here.](#)
 - [19 Volunteers needed. Sign up here.](#)

An End of Year Message to Families

As summer begins, we wish all of our families a season filled with rest, adventure, sunshine, laughter, and maybe at least a few days without checking the school calendar. Thank you for another wonderful year of partnership, support, and community. We look forward to seeing returning families in the fall and welcoming new families into our program next school year. To our graduates and promoting students, congratulations on reaching these important milestones. Your next chapter awaits!

On behalf of the BCIC board, I want to extend our deepest gratitude to all of our BCIC families for your participation, enthusiasm, generosity, and unwavering support of both the Chinese Immersion program and BCIC. This year was full of growth, celebration, learning, and connection—and none of it would have been possible without you and this amazing community. Like every school year, this one came with its share of challenges, unexpected changes, shifting schedules, and the occasional logistical puzzle worthy of a graduate-level problem-solving course. But through collaboration, resilience, and a shared commitment to our students, we continued to move forward together. The strength of this community continues to shine brightest not when things are easy, but when we work together through the complicated moments.

This past year was packed with memorable and meaningful experiences that strengthened our program and brought our families together. We give thanks to those that walked with or cheered along the sidelines at **D220's Miami Nights Homecoming Parade** in cool shades on a sunny, hot day. We sampled mooncakes and participated in Chinese cultural activities at our first ever **community wide Mid-Autumn Festival** at Countryside. Students and families saw the future doors that CI could open while strengthening community connections at our annual **Career Exploration** event which we partner with Xilin School. BCIC supported language development and community as younger students practiced songs and listened to stories at our **K-2 Storytime** event at Barrington Area Library, while our upper elementary students enjoyed playing games and using more of their Mandarin language skills at our **3-5th Grade Games** event. In honor of the Year of the Fire Horse, CI families, friends, teachers administrators, and alumni gathered at BHS to partake in our greatest and largest **Lunar New Year Party** and fundraiser complete with an outstanding lineup of cultural events. Current middle school students served on a panel to curb any fears of our incoming 6th graders and their families at BCIC's **Transition to Middle School Panel**. We were amazed by the language skills of our elementary students at the annual **Character Bee**! We are incredibly proud of and thankful for the 29 graduates BCIC honored at their CI High School **Graduation Party**. Congratulations!

BCIC welcomed families to hear from our esteemed guest speakers across our 5 open board meetings this year. Honored speakers included: **Becky Wiegel**, Director of Language Programs, Grants, & Family Engagement who will be shifting to a new role within the district; **Dr. Kathryn Wolfkiel**, BHS World Language Department Chair who is retiring; former Directors who served on the BCIC Board (**Alex Bernardi, Mary Cook, Cory Flahaven, Jay Murphy, & Jennifer Naddeo**); and **Nate Rouse**, Director of Equity, Race, and Cultural Initiatives.

BCIC and families additionally supported and participated in D220 events including their first annual **Embracing Diversity: Multicultural Night** and **Parent University for Chinese Immersion**. We enjoyed being a part of Barrington's **Winterfest** tradition as well as Multicultural/Art/Reading **PTO events** at our elementary schools. We partnered with our community at large by making Thanksgiving cards for **Greencastle** residents and hosting booths at events like **Barrington's KidFest** as well as promoting our CI program through storytimes and crafts at **many local preschools**.

Through generous family donations as well as personal donations, BCIC was able to not only organize and partake in these great events, but we were able to also support our classroom teachers and staff. BCIC ensured that teachers who needed additional classroom materials got those through our **wishlist initiative**. Every Mandarin CI teacher was also given a mid-year **arts and crafts stipend** to provide a special cultural art opportunity to the students in their classroom. Throughout the year, BCIC reminded our teachers and staff how appreciated they are with **holiday gifts, teacher appreciation gifts, complimentary tickets to our Lunar New Year and Graduation Parties, and horse pins**. These gestures are small compared to the impact our educators make, but we hope they serve as a meaningful reminder of how valued and appreciated they are.

Our students were also directly and profoundly impacted by your generosity and BCIC support. Whether through cultural programming, enrichment opportunities, celebrations, classroom support,

or simply seeing their community rally around them, each child benefited in countless ways from a strong and engaged parent organization. Thank you for helping us create not just a program, but a true community.

Of course, none of this would be possible without the incredible teachers, staff, and administrators who make our program thrive every day. We are deeply grateful for your dedication, flexibility, patience, and passion for our students. I'd especially like to thank **Mrs. Weerts** and **Mr. Yu** for serving as teacher liaisons to our BCIC board.

Leadership transitions are an important part of keeping our organization strong, and we are excited for what is ahead. Please join me in welcoming our Board of Directors for 2026-27.

Leeann Chang, President leeannchang@bcic220.org

Deepta Ramesh, Vice President deeptaramesh@bcic220.org

Matthew Benkert, Treasurer matthewbenkert@bcic220.org

Erin Lales, Secretary erinlales@bcic220.org

Zaoli Zhang, Director zaolizhang@bcic220.org

Kate Xu, Director katexu@bcic220.org

Tracy Lauffer, Director tracylauffer@bcic220.org

Jen Crawford, Director

Annie Xiang, Director

There are 2 additional open seats on the BCIC Board for the 2026-27 school year. Information about joining the board will be shared in a newsletter in the fall. Until then, please reach out to BCIC at bcic220.org if you are interested joining the board or even just being a volunteer!

I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all of our current board members for their service this year. Serving on BCIC takes many hours behind the scenes—planning events, managing finances, coordinating volunteers, answering questions, advocating for the program, and ensuring the countless details all come together successfully. I am incredibly grateful for each of you.

Becca Patchak*, President

Deepta Ramesh, Vice President

Leeann Chang, Secretary

Yiming Wang*, Treasurer

Michelle Chase*

Zaoli Zhang

Erin Lales

Matthew Benkert

Kate Zu

Tracy Lauffer

*I'd like to recognize and sincerely thank the outgoing board members whose years of service have made a lasting impact on BCIC. Thank you to **Yiming Wang** for 2 years of dedicated service and Director **Michelle Chase** for an incredible 10 years of service to our families and students. Your years of leadership, commitment, time, energy, and dedication have helped shape this organization in countless ways; your contributions will be felt for years to come.

Serving as your BCIC President this past year and on the BCIC Board for the past 7 years has been such an honor. Thank you for the tremendous privilege of serving our CI community.

With gratitude,
BCIC President, Becca Patchak



Spread the Word to Join CI Now



To date, District 220 has provided no update regarding the plans for next fall's K/1/2 CI cohorts at Countryside since the 4/7/26 BOE meeting. Please refer to [BCIC's April Newsletter](#) for a detailed summary of the district's announcement and BCIC's response.

What can YOU do to help?

1. *Email district leadership* to share your personal concerns, opinions, ideas, and preferences.
2. *Join the BCIC Recruitment Committee* as we make a final push to recruit new families to our program. Please fill out this [Recruitment Committee Interest Form](#) if you would like to join the effort!
3. *Recruit and Refer!* - Please speak to your friends, neighbors, teammates, etc. about the Chinese Immersion program. Please connect any prospective families to Erin Lales at ErinLales@bcic220.org.

The Community is Invited to Celebrate with BCIC at the End of Year Party

Wednesday, May 27 from 5:00-7:00 pm

North Barrington Elementary

As in past years, Kona Ice will be available for purchase (from 5:30-7:00) with a 20% kickback going back to BCIC.

New this year--Kurbside Pizza truck will be on site for purchase as well. Pizzas are \$14. Drinks are \$3. Sweets are \$5.

Feel free to bring your own food if you prefer as well. BCIC will have a few snacks as well.

In addition to the playground and blacktop at NBS, BCIC will have a wide array of activities to keep everyone busy--crafts, Chinese games including weiqi & mahjong, sensory stations, and more!

IMPORTANT: [Registration is required for ALL ATTENDEES. Speed it up by pre-registering.](#)

Check in at the tent on the blacktop near the big playground. You will receive your concession tickets at check.

[WE STILL NEED A LOT OF VOLUNTEERS! Please sign up here!](#)

We have 1.5 and 2 hour slots available and need help with checking families in, and assisting with games, crafts, concessions and general help.

If you have questions, please contact Leeann Chang at leeannchang@bcic220.org.


[Register Here](#)
[Volunteer Here](#)

Congratulations to the CI Class of 2026!

On Sunday, April 26, BCIC honored the 29 CI graduates of the Class of 2026 for their outstanding accomplishments and their remarkable rejourney. Graduates of our 4th graduating cohort were joined by their friends and families as well as well as esteemed D220 administrators and teachers—past and present—to celebrate this special event. Surrounded by an ambience of friendship and nostalgia, guests enjoyed a delectable Chinese dinner and a special program which included beautiful speeches reflecting on the past and looking into the future from students, a presentation of certificates and gifts, and a video montage complied by CI parent and teacher, **Mrs. McKee**. Graduates ended the program by singing two songs to commemorate their graduation—A Cut of Plum Blossoms 一剪梅 and Goodbye 再见. We thank the students and families of this extraordinary cohort for your invaluable contributions to the legacy of CI and BCIC.

Special thanks goes to **Dillon and Michelle Streit**, CI parents and owners of Pier 91, for generously providing the beautiful space for this joyous occasion. BCIC would especially like to extend their appreciation to **Mrs. Yang** and **Mrs. Weerts** for helping

*BCIC with this party! BCIC would also like to thank **Harathi Srivastava, Steve Wang, Betty Kong, Matthew Benkert, Michelle Chase, Leeann Chang, and Neta Elam** for volunteering at the party. Much gratitude goes to graduation chairs and BCIC board members, **Becca Patchak and Deepta Ramesh** for organizing the party.*







???? Attention Graduates and Their Families!

Parents, once your children graduate, you will no longer get the BCIC monthly newsletter that is forwarded on to you from the district. If you want to stay in the know about all things BCIC, you will need to personally subscribe to it.

We also encourage our graduates to subscribe to our newsletter as well. Soon after graduation, the email accounts provided by the district will be shut down, so be sure to use your personal emails!

Scroll to the bottom lefthand side of the website and fill out the 3 buttons to subscribe.

Subscribe to the BCIC newsletter with your personal email

Thank You: KidFest Participants and Team

*BCIC had a wonderful turnout of visitors to our KidFest booth at Citizen's Park in early May. Local families with children of all ages stopped by to play weiqi, try their hand at pitchpot, learn calligraphy, and enjoy our sensory table. This annual event is a wonderful opportunity for young families to learn more about the Chinese Immersion program. Thank you to the parent volunteers, **Alice Brinkley** and **Ann Barton**; student volunteers, **Ava** and **Marielle**; BCIC Board Members, **Leeann Chang**, **Tracy Lauffer**, **Zaoli Zhang**, **Erin Lales** and **Matthew Benkert**; and our Station Middle School Chinese Teacher, **Mr. Yu**, that kept our booth running smoothly while answering questions from curious families.*











Thank You: Nate Rouse

*At the May 7th BCIC Board Meeting, **Nate Rouse: Director of Equity, Race & Cultural Diversity Initiatives at D220**, gave an engaging and informative presentation on the districts goal of 'Building Belonging Through Equity and Student Voice' and upcoming plans for incorporating these initiatives throughout all grades in our district. Nate answered questions from our CI community which lead to a strategic and dynamic discussion. If you have additional questions, please send an email to nrouse@barrington220.org*



Thank You: BCIC Booths at D220 Multicultural Events

April was a busy month packed with several multicultural events! BCIC hosted tables at the Early Learning Center, Barbara Rose, and Countryside. These events showcased student performances and offered opportunities for all students to engage in Chinese games and activities. These multicultural nights help to strengthen BCIC's partnerships with school PTOs while building bridges between CI and traditional education students. Special thanks go to:

*ELC Multicultural Family Dance - Board Member, **Erin Lales***

*Countryside Multicultural Night - Board Member, **Zaoli Zhang and Family***

*Barbara Rose Multicultural Night - Parent Volunteers: **Amy Kim, Alice Brinkley and Melissa Zierk** and Board Member, **Erin Lales**; Student Volunteers, **Calvin, Marielle and Bella***

*NBS "COLT PRIDE" Countdown - Parent Volunteer, **Victoria Bleibel** and Board Members, **Erin Lales and Matthew Benkert***

*Countryside Kindergarten Buddy Day Visit - Board Members: **Erin Lales and Tracy Lauffer***











Congratulations to our CLASS National Junior Honor Society Honorees

*On Monday May 11th, **Mrs Weerts** and **Mr. Yu**, along with D220 Director of Language, **Ms. Wiegel**, hosted a ceremony at Station Middle School to recognize our remarkable 7th and 8th grad CI students who have been honored as CLASS National Junior Scholars for Excellence in Chinese by the Chinese Language Association of Secondary-Elementary Schools (CLASS). Their effort to develop and understand the Chinese language and culture, along with their performance in both Chinese Language and Chinese Immersion History classes (A or B in both), is deserving of recognition. BCIC is incredibly proud of the 7th graders and 8th graders who received their certificates and this great honor. Keep up the good effort in your Chinese studies!*





Congratulations to our Midwest Chinese Speech Contest Contestants

*On May 9, 6th grade student **Austin** won the gold medal at the Midwest K-6 Chinese Speech Contest (spanning nine states). He competed against highly skilled Minnesota contestants, and his exceptional talent even drew national attention. We want to congratulate Austin on his incredible hard work and achievement!*

We also want to celebrate our other wonderful participants who entered the contest:

6th Grade: Claire and Keira

4th Grade: Tiffany, Marielle, and Amador

3rd Grade: Ibrahim, Maryam, Gayatri, and Catherine

*A special thank you to **Mrs. Weerts, Mrs. Du, and Mrs. Zander** for working so hard to prepare all of these students!*





Every spiritwear order helps support BCIC!

Do you need a BCIC shirt to wear to our BCIC events? Maybe the Homecoming parade next year? We've got t-shirts & sweatshirts--and lots of other fun gift ideas too!

Showing 1-12 of 35 results

Default sorting 



BCIC - 2025 SENIOR FAN FAVORITE TEE
\$28.00
[Select options](#)



BCIC - BLACK CREWNECK SWEATSHIRT
\$28.00
[Select options](#)



BCIC - BLACK SHORT SLEEVE BODYSUIT
\$15.00
[Select options](#)



BCIC - CINCH SACK
\$15.00
[Select options](#)



BCIC - GRAY CREWNECK SWEATSHIRT
\$28.00
[Select options](#)



BCIC - HEATHER GRAY SHORT SLEEVE BODYSUIT
\$15.00
[Select options](#)



BCIC - LASER ENGRAVED ORNAMENT
\$15.00
[Select options](#)



BCIC - RED SHORT SLEEVE BODYSUIT
\$15.00
[Select options](#)



BCIC - SMOKE AND HEATHER GRAY 3/4 SLEEVE BASEBALL TEE
\$24.00
[Select options](#)



BCIC - BLACK SWEATSHIRT STADIUM BLANKET - CORNER LOGO
\$30.00



BCIC - GRAY SWEATSHIRT STADIUM BLANKET - CORNER LOGO
\$30.00



BCIC - GRAY SWEATSHIRT STADIUM BLANKET - LARGE CENTER LOGO
\$40.00



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Your donation will help us to more generously support our events, students, & teachers! BCIC welcomes donations of any size. We very much appreciate all company matches.

[This link](#) is a general donation towards BCIC that helps with all the things we support.

[This link](#) is specifically for a donation towards books to be used in our CI classrooms.

[This link](#) is specifically for a donation towards recruitment efforts.

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