

Boston Globe 2/13/05

CHINA BOUND —

Chelsea Ruggaber was taking care of some last-minute packing Wednesday evening at her Sherborn home, and she acknowledged that some nervousness had kicked in.

She and fellow Dover-Sherborn High School student Catherine Stevenson were due at Logan International Airport at 5a.m. the next day to embark on an experience of a lifetime — a two-month trip to China.

The two students were chosen to participate in their school's China exchange program. They'll spend six weeks with host families in the city of Hangzhou and attend classes at Hangzhou High School. Accompanied by Dover-Sherborn English teacher Joanne Preiser, they'll also visit Hong Kong, Xian, Beijing, Shanghai, and several other destinations.

"Since the summer, obviously, I've been really excited" said Ruggaber, 18. "Then about a week ago, I started getting nervous while getting gifts together and putting together the final details, and thinking about leaving some of my friends and family behind. As soon as I get to the country, I'm sure everything will be fine."

Both girls were selected for the trip after an application process that required recommendations, essays, and interviews.

"I've always been really interested in Asia because the philosophy is completely different and the lifestyle," said Stevenson, 17, who lives in Dover. "I do look forward to staying with the host families to get the perspective of the host sister — what her school life is like, and what she enjoys doing."

The students will post online diary entries during their travels at <http://users.rcn.com/avizulis/DSChina>.