

Chabad Jewish Center of Pudong: Where Every Jew is Family

NAOMI SIEGEL

With the High Holidays just around the corner, Rabbi Avraham Greenberg of Chabad Jewish Center of Pudong explains how easy it is for members of the Jewish community to get involved in Shanghai.

Rabbi Avraham Greenberg founded the Jewish Center Pudong in 2006 at the encouragement of his brother, an outreach rabbi. Just five years later, the congregation has grown to over 150 families. Rabbi Greenberg cheerfully describes the group as “eclectic” with “Jews of every background, affiliation, nationality and community”. He delights in the fact that Shanghai’s expatriate community is growing so rapidly, and how that is affecting the community’s demographics.

“In their home countries, [members of the Jewish community] may not have the opportunity to meet with people from all sorts of backgrounds, but here in China, they get to enjoy and learn from all sorts of friends. Women from the community cook our monthly communal Shabbos dinner with the taste and style of their home country, so in recent months, we’ve had community dinners in China featuring

food from Morocco, Ukraine and Italy,” he says. “At these occasions, community members shared their traditions and customs. These dinners were an eye opener for many to be able to appreciate the different cultures and rich traditions within the Jewish people.”

Guided by its mission “to provide a Jewish home away from home, for all Jews residing in Pudong, regardless of their level of observance”, the center offers educational and social services that are designed to “increase Jewish pride, knowledge and commitment”. In addition to a Hebrew school, the center also offers adult education programs, teen groups and a women’s circle. For adults, the rabbi recommends Lunch ‘n’ Learn, a lunch for men and women on the first Tuesday of every month. A new course called “Toward a Meaningful Life” offers kabbalistic insights on things like love, lasting relationships and positive thinking.



Rabbi Greenberg’s plans for Chabad Pudong in the future are limitless. “I see a bright future for the Jewish community here in Shanghai. We expect a lot of growth, and we foresee a flourishing Jewish community in Pudong, both in numerical size and personal spiritual growth,” he says.

To get involved with Chabad Pudong, join the center’s mailing list to receive updates about upcoming programs and activities. In

addition to Friday night services, the center is also holding a Welcome Back BBQ and Shofar Factory event on 11 September “as a way to turn an otherwise dark day into something spiritual and bright”. To kick off the High Holiday celebrations on the first night of Rosh Hashanah, the center will host a large community holiday dinner at a five star hotel.

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Talk with GM

Doubletree by Hilton Qingdao/Chengyang is located in the Chengyang Economic Zone of Qingdao. The property’s general manager explains what makes the hotel unique and a great destination for business and leisure travellers.

Q: You have been with Hilton Worldwide since 1993 and have worked in Hilton for more than 18 years. So what’s the key differences between Hilton and other hotel management groups in your point of views?



Chris Roberts, General Manager from Doubletree by Hilton Qingdao/Chengyang

A: Well, good question. When I first started working for Hilton I was still in college studying Hotel Management. At that time I was excited to have the chance to work for such a professional hotel company with the best brand name in the hotel industry. I thought

‘Hilton’ would look great on my CV for a few years and then move onto other things. Well, here I am, 18 years later and I am still with the company, and very happy to be!

Q: What’s the specialties of Doubletree when compared with the other brands under Hilton?

A: Doubletree is one of the brands of Hilton Worldwide. Each brand has unique difference, and Doubletree starts with the arrival experience. Everyone receives a warm, freshly baked Chocolate Chip cookie on arrival as a gesture of welcome and warmth. (Trust me, the cookies are good... I eat too many each week!) Doubletree is also very environmentally and community focused, which is great. I think in today’s business world it is important for every business to work as one with their community, and this is one of Doubletree’s core pillars. We regularly sponsor community events, care & provide

for the elderly and local orphanages, as well as conduct environmental training for local school children, it’s called ‘Teaching Kids to CARE’. It’s great for the children, and our team members love to help them learn through various community activities.

Q: Qingdao has more than ten 5-star hotels, most of which are international brands, like Shangri-la from Shangri-la Hotel Group, InterContinental and Crown Plaza from IHG and Le Meridien from Starwood. Furthermore, we know that Sofitel from ACCOR will be opened soon in this year. We can say that the hospitality industry in Qingdao is highly competitive, so what’s the advantages of Doubletree by Hilton Qingdao/Chengyang for surviving in this market?

A: I have visited the other hotels, and it’s fair to say, there are some great hotels in Qingdao. Doubletree by Hilton Qingdao has recently been awarded the 5 star award for service, and I truly believe this is what sets us apart, ‘Our Service’. I have been very happy to arrive in Qingdao and work with such a great team. The team’s customer focus and attention to detail is excellent, so I look forward to working with them to enhance this further.

Q: Summer is certainly a peak season for Qingdao, so do you have any suggestions or tips for both business and leisure travelers who are planning to visit Qingdao?

A: Qingdao is truly a beautiful city, I have already fallen in love with it! The weather is warm and mild and everything is clean & green. My tips for any visitors would be to visit the old German districts, especially around ‘Badaguan’, the streets are beautiful, with large trees and European colonial houses. When I walk down these streets I forget that I am China... honestly you could be walking in any European city. Then suddenly you will walk into a food stand with someone selling street snacks such as BBQ meats & fish, and the flavors of China come back!

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