

Welcome to SENIA-Beijing, a volunteer organization committed to support, teach, and learn from parents, teachers, students, learning support professionals, counsellors, and anyone involved with education for differently-abled people!



Image source:
https://embracinginspiration.files.wordpress.com/2017/02/img_7460.jpg

Dear all,

What can I say? This year has been an incredible journey so far. We have been facing big challenges and great opportunities to rethink the way we live. In the midst of this turbulence, compassion could be our compass to lead the changes and growth required.

All of us aim to live happy, peaceful lives and how we perceived this goal is profoundly influenced by culture, gender, personalities, etc. Coming from the “West” or the “East” can also play a role in our perception of compassion and, ultimately, of self-compassion. Self-compassion could even be mistaken for self-centeredness or narcissism. Nevertheless, as well said by Christopher Germer, while we all have innate self-compassion in relation to physical injury, our ability to take care of ourselves can be quite different when we deal with our own emotional pain. As an emotionally-positive self-attitude, self-compassion can help protected us from self-judgment, isolation, and rumination. Self-compassion is the road to compassion.

“Compassion pushes us to understand how we have structured the world and, to ask how we can structure it better, not because we may suffer but because others are suffering and that is not how the world should be”¹. Trough compassion, we can better cope with situations with which we may completely disagree; a compassionate heart helps to distinguish actions from the persons doing them. It can support us to understand that actions do not define a person, and that everyone can change. It can bring the opportunity to act responsibly and kindly under stressful circumstances. Compassion is a journey that starts by accepting ourselves first, through an open-minded, experimental, and flexible approach. Let us be guided by our compassionate hearts and reshape our world for all.

By Juliane Karlsson

¹ Sandro Galea. “Compassion in a time of COVID-19”, The Lancet, 395 (10241), 20/June/2020.

How to say farewell?

Some of our board members are leaving, and it is time to say farewell. It has been a great honor to work with you, **Reed, Tanya, and Katy** over these last years.

In Beijing, we are used to see people come and go. I may confess that this was hard at first, but it has taught me to shift my perception from *I am "losing" someone* to *I am glad for having this amazing time with you.*" Having said that, the COVID-19 outbreak has made things harder again. Friends left earlier than expected, others got stuck somewhere, many leaving things not properly finished.

Farewells also make me think of modern life and how it drives us by our arbitrary *to do* lists. Many of us may live *full speed ahead* these days; without time to *just be*. Sometimes, this *autopilot mode* seems to guide us blindly throughout our days. However, *farewell time offers a unique occasion to express our gratitude, love, and admiration for those who have inspired us.*

Luckily, technological advances made the world more connected, wherever we are. Despite geographical distances, those who brightened our lives will can also be with us forever in our hearts, minds, and actions.

Thank you, Reed, Tanya, and Katy for being part of SENIA-Beijing's life an history. And a special thank you to you, Reed and Tanya, for opening this space/time more than 10 years ago!

The SENIA-Beijing community helps us to strengthen our compassion, commitment, and learning process. It shows how far we can go by working together. Our best wishes are with you! We know that the light shined by you here, will be lighting other places and people. **We love you!**

By Juliane Karlsson



Image source:

<https://www.facebook.com/DIRFloortime/photos/a.324642700172/10163461436130173/?type=3&theater>

Farewell Letters

Dear all, here we provide a space for our former members to share their experience in the SENIA-Beijing group and a few goodbye words.



My farewell

By Reed Rhodes

SENIA-Beijing is celebrating its 10th year anniversary this year. We were asked to write a few words for this final Newsletter of the school year. I would like to share the history of our network start.

I arrived in Beijing in the 2007-2008 school year; having been hired to set up the learning support program at Beijing City International School (BCIS). As a newcomer to China and the only learning support teacher at my school, I felt isolated. Fortunately, the secondary school principal told me to contact Tanya Farrol who was one of the key learning support teachers at Western Academy (WAB). Tanya told me about a group called the **Special Education Network In Asia (SENIA)** that, coincidentally, was having its yearly conference at WAB in the 2007-2008 school year. I not only attended, but also submitted a proposal to present a workshop at the conference; and my workshop was selected. It felt wonderful to walk into the conference and mingle with so many people who worked with special needs children.

The conference made such an impression on me that I decided to host the SENIA conference the following year at my school - BCIS. In those days, most of the participants came from China. When I checked the list of attendees, I realized that about 80% of them were from Beijing. That gave me an

idea. The following school year (2009-2010), I attended the next SENIA conference in Manila. I was hooked on SENIA.

During the 2010-2011 school year, I contacted Tanya Farrol, and we met for lunch at Element Fresh in Sanlitun. I shared my idea that we start the first local chapter of SENIA in Beijing. We decided to call it **Special Education Network In Beijing (SENIB)**, which was our name for eight years. That was the beginning of our network.

About two years ago, SENIA changed its name because the organization was expanding into other parts of the world. The new name was **Special Education Network and Inclusion Association (SENIA)**. At that time, there were about ten local chapters. So for consistency, each local chapter was asked to change its name. SENIB became **Special Education Network and Inclusion Association - Beijing (SENIA-Beijing)**.

In the early years, SENIB held yearly conferences at BCIS, WAB, ISB, and Dulwich College. Over the past two years the SENIA-Beijing Board has trialed half-day conferences called meetings.

I have served on the SENIB and SENIA-Beijing Board from the beginning. The past two years I have served as Board Chair. After 13 years in Beijing, I am leaving to begin a new job as a LS teacher in the elementary school at International School of Nanshan Shenzhen (ISNS). It is with mixed feelings that I leave. With the departure of Tanya, Katy, and me, the Board has added an additional four members to make a total of 6 members. As I step out the door, I wish the new Board all the best and I look forward to starting a local chapter of SENIA in Shenzhen.

My wish for all of our members is to be happy, healthy, and safe. Farewell and keep in touch.

Reed Rhodes

Good-bye SENIA-Beijing

By Tanya Farrol

It has come time to say goodbye to the **SENIA-Beijing** community. Over the past 10 years, Reed and I have worked to foster relationships in the special needs community and promote inclusivity in Beijing. We have hosted many conferences, established membership and networked with special education professionals. It has been wonderful to see our community grow into the large conferences that are held nowadays. People and schools have been generous with their time and space to volunteer to hold conferences and share their expertise. A highlight of our SENIA-Beijing's growth is the establishment of a board to lead initiatives in the community and bring people together to share

resources. As a result, Beijing is becoming more inclusive every year due to our members involvement and dedication to special education. For me, it has been a wonderful and exhilarating journey! I look forward to hearing about the future direction of SENIA-Beijing and I will miss the community that so eagerly embraced me.

Good luck to you all and know that I am thinking of you and cheering you on. Until we meet again!

Tanya Farrol

Bye-Bye SENIA-Beijing!

By Katy Cameron

It has been a privilege to be part of the **SENIA-Beijing Board** during the past two years. I have met some incredibly talented and committed people and I have learnt a huge amount through the sharing and networking opportunities that SENIA-Beijing has provided. Some highlights have definitely been the SENIA-Beijing conference hosted by Dulwich College and my attendance at the SENIA Conference in Hong Kong. This is a hugely exciting time to be in China, as knowledge and awareness of SEN continues to grow. SENIA-Beijing is at the forefront of educating the local community about research, resources and expertise that are available to support our members. As I return to the UK, I will hold a piece of SENIA-Beijing in my heart and who knows, I may even start a new SENIA Chapter in North Yorkshire!

Keep up the great work SENIA-Beijing, and thank you for inspiring me!

By Katy Cameron

From SENIB to SENIA-Beijing. Some Moments.



Welcome New SENIA-Beijing Board!!!

We would like to introduce our new Board to you. Here goes a brief overview of the whole board, who we are, and what drive us. We are thrilled to work with our new group and it is a huge pleasure to have such group together. Welcome onboard!



James Rupasinha is an educational and child psychologist, who is continually inspired by the patience and dedication he observes in his teaching and counselling colleagues. His background is with the British government, evaluating schools' provision for under-achieving students and those with high-level safeguarding needs. In and out of China since 2007, James has been with Harrow Beijing since 2016 and he has over a decade's worth of experience in building capacity and resilience within Chinese and British schools.

Faith Peik Hwa Ng is a consultant trainer and clinical supervisor in APAC (education, health and social care). Specialized in child speech, language, communication and feeding development (0-21 years). Experienced in bilingual English-Mandarin evaluation and therapy, telespeech consultation, parent coaching and teacher training accreditation. Competent in business strategy, evidence-based practice and family-centered care.



Petra Zerovnik, originally, from Slovenia, has studied, lived, and worked overseas for over 26 years. She has been an English Language Acquisition and Special Education teacher and Department Leader in the USA, Austria, Belgium, and now in China. She enjoys spending time and traveling with her family learning about various cultures, reading, theatre, movies, swimming and skiing. She earned her Master's in Education and has over 10 years of experience with the IB PYP, MYP, and DP programs. She is an avid advocate for inclusion and equal opportunities for all students.

Janice Bareng-Pineda is a Learning Support teacher/coordinator at Harrow School Beijing for eight years up to the present. Even before she joined Harrow, she had supported students with special needs. She believes that all students, with different abilities or background, should be included in a nurturing and understanding learning environment.

She is graduated in Bachelor of Arts in English major in Language and Literature, certified in Special Education and PGCEi from the University of Nottingham, UK.



Juliane Karlsson has worked over 20 years in education. Her passion for developing better strategies to promote inclusive environments crosses both public and private spaces. She has a degree in education and masters in socio-psychology.

As a teacher, she collaborated in the creation of public policies for schools, courses for child counsellors across the Amazon, and also acts as special needs professional. Her book narrates the children perspective of participation at school. Nowadays, she is the media coordinator of the SENIA-Beijing and is the editor of its newsletter.

Dr. Gerald W. Anthony has been in China since 2002, working as an educator and counselor. He has a doctorate degree in counseling, K-12 educational leadership certification, and a wide range of experiences in the areas of CBT, autism, and language.

Gerald brings over 18-years of education and leadership experience to the SENIA-Beijing board. Currently he serves as Chair of SENIA-Beijing and in the past served as the Co-Chair of Membership and Local Liaison for SENIA-Beijing.



WeChat Guidelines

We are a **bigger group** than before and it is a pleasure to have your support. **Your confidence, respectful collaboration and diversity** are the pillars of our continuing efforts to deliver the best resources possible. Saying that, it is essential to know you a bit more. Keep in mind that **all the information provided, in our online form, is confidential and the only purpose is to strengthen our support efficiently.**



It only takes 2 minutes to fill the form below. ;-)

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=ZA9iClfM0u67zTljyNaHeSTwVK7Wy5NswmAj2dL9eRURUZNU01DOUdLSIBKU0dSM0U1T1FDWTZLMS4u>

Facebook Updates



Looking for more resources? **Check out** our Facebook group page we have **weekly updates!**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1728937867318355/>

SENIA webpage

Our webpage is always a **work in progress**. There you can access our history, newsletter, new initiatives, and upcoming events.

<https://seniainternational.org/beijing/>



And, of course, visit **SENIA International** at: <https://seniainternational.org/>

It is summer holidays! We all deserve a break!

Here go some suggestions; from movies to places to go.



Unforgettable

Synopsis: Are you up to an incredible journey with Sarah Geronimo and Happy? They take us into the discovery of love, friendship, and family.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mPLEvuA70hU&t=32s>

Recommended by Janice Pineda

My Bossy Girl

Synopsis: Hwi-So is a university student, majoring in engineering. He has a warm heart, but he lacks social skills and never had a girlfriend before. One day, Hye-Jin suddenly appears in front of him in her wheelchair. She is an archer and brutally honest to other people.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ERmMnnX4G1o>

Recommended by Janice Pineda



Beijing Happy Valley amusement theme park recently reopened on an appointment basis. Good place for family hangout this summer and autumn.

<https://bj.happyvalley.cn/>

Tour info in English:

https://www.tour-beijing.com/attraction_guide/beijing_happy_valley.php

Recommended by Faith Peik Hwa Ng

Getting in touch. Meet the new Board.

Dr. Gerald Anthony

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(Marketing)

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Facebook

Another way to stay in contact is through our **Facebook** page, titled SENIB - Special Education Network in Beijing. It is a closed group, but you can request to join at:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1728937867318355/>

SENIA-Beijing Newsletter/WeChat

Are you interested to collaborate on our next edition? Ideas, experiences, questions, practices, and much more to share... Get in touch by emailing

Juliane Karlsson

peqjuli@outlook.com

L.I.N.K

Do you want to participate on it? Talk to

Dr. Gerald Anthony

geraldanthony@keystoneacademy.cn

Website

<https://seniainternational.org/beijing/>