

## Erin Knight '19



When was your first plane ride? Before September of 2019 I was 22 years old and had never taken a plane ride! I decided it was about time to see the world and I started to look at some options. I wanted to use my Early Childhood Education degree to the fullest and decided to earn a TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) certificate so that I could experience teaching in a different culture. A professor in the Education department at Lake Superior State University is from Shanghai and we had a few discussions about Shanghai. In my Early Childhood classes, we had discussed the Chinese school system, and had visitors from Shanghai. So naturally my desire to teach in Shanghai grew. Shanghai has lots of English teaching jobs available and plenty of opportunities to see parts

of the world, so I thought, "If I'm going to take my first plane ride, why not make it a long one?"

I'm not going to sugar coat it, my first week in Shanghai was rough. There are so many tall buildings, cultural difference, and . . . people. Shanghai has over 26 million people, whereas, Sault Ste Marie, has 13,552 people. Before my first week was over though, I had started to settle in, and was noticing what was good in this city- the city has amazing scenery, and serves up delicious food from all parts of the globe. A few weeks later, it started to feel like my home away from home.

I had researched possible job opportunities before I arrived, and found the perfect school for me – Giraffe English. Giraffe English stood out to me because it provides a 3-month training period in which you receive training on all of their courses, as well as any ESL essential training you may need, fully preparing you for your first class. The school also offers the opportunities to improve yourself outside of teaching as it has multiple career development paths. These include mentoring, recruitment, management, and more. I was very excited to apply, and did so while I was still doing my TEFL certificate. My first impressions of Giraffe were that it was very kid-friendly company, and has a really welcoming staff, so I'm looking forward to see what's in store for me here. During my application process the recruiter, Alex, told me that Giraffe is just like one big family and since starting my new position here, I can see that he's right. I have my family away from home. Check out Giraffe English at <http://careers.egiraffe.com.cn/> or @GiraffeEnglishShanghai

