

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **VILLA MARIA ACADEMY EXPLORES CHINESE CULTURE**

**Malvern, PA** Villa Maria Academy hosted an assembly featuring performers from the **Main Line Chinese Culture Center** as well as a local immigration lawyer, all in relation to their all-school read: “Girl in Translation” by Jean Kwok. The All-School Read Committee, made up of students and teachers, chose the book for summer reading and planned activities relating to the book. The day started with breakfast for the visiting speaker; an assembly featuring the Main Line Chinese Culture Center and an immigration lawyer. The day continued with students taking part in special activities in their classes and enjoying Chinese food and décor in the cafeteria.

Ms. Julia Chou, Director of Operations for the Main Line Chinese Culture Center, spoke to the students about strong women in Chinese history, and her personal experience of coming to the United States when she was a child. Much like the character in “Girl in Translation”, Ms. Chou lived in New York in the projects and her mother worked for a time in the sweatshops of New York. Ms. Chou worked diligently to get into a charter high school in New York and then earned admission and is a graduate of Cornell University.

Students were treated to performances by Qui Zhong, who played the zither, and Xiaoyang Jing, who performed a beautiful Chinese dance called the Lotus Flower. The assembly concluded with a talk by Helene Astolfi, an immigration lawyer, who helped unaccompanied Chinese immigrant children find homes during the influx of those children in the early 1990’s. Her efforts spared the children life in detention centers, which had been the norm.



**Pictured: Villa Maria students with Ms. Julia Chou of the Main Line Chinese Culture Center.**



Pictured: Ms. Qiu Zhong from the Main Line Chinese Culture Center played the zither for the Villa Maria community at the assembly.

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