



# American Public Diplomacy Envoy

Michelle Kwan and Under Secretary of State Karen Hughes Visit China

“I’ve always wanted to somehow serve our country, to contribute and to make a difference,” said figure skating champion Michelle Kwan who was appointed as the first American Public Diplomacy Envoy, a role in which she promotes the positive aspects of American culture and democratic principles.

For her first trip in her new capacity, Kwan accompanied Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Karen Hughes to China. During their trip, January 17-27, 2007, they visited the cities of Beijing, Guangzhou and Hong Kong where they met with students, women’s groups, business and community representatives, government officials and the media. In Beijing, Kwan visited the Dandelion Middle School, a school for migrant children where students were overjoyed with her visit and crowded around to greet her. At the Beijing Sports University, Under Secretary Hughes and Kwan handed out medals to athletes at the Special Olympics Sports Day and visited with their families. In Guangzhou, Kwan visited Changle Elementary School and took part in reading to students while Under Secretary Hughes went to Guangdong University and spoke to journalism and communications students. In Hong Kong both Hughes and Kwan met with representatives from the Hong Kong Girl Guides Association (HKGGA). Kwan took



part in an organized discussion with members from HKGGA in which they exchanged ideas and reflections on leadership, setting goals, shared cultural and family values, and different international experiences. “We share common values, common dreams, whether you’re American or Chinese,” said Kwan. “Listening to the girls talk about developing self-confidence and learning more about other countries and cultures was very inspiring” commented Under Secretary Hughes. In a public-private partnership, Disney, an endorser of Kwan, donated 1000 Baby Pooh Bear plush dolls and 300 DVD’s that were given to children in each city.



Extensive media coverage of the trip judged Michelle Kwan’s first performance as an American Public Diplomacy Envoy as near flawless. Kwan credited her career as a skater in helping her feel so comfortable in her new role. Under Secretary of State Karen Hughes was very impressed with Kwan and commented, “I want to take her everywhere... people recognize her and are very proud of her. Young people relate and respond to her.”

