US students show their 'love' of China

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Fifteen American college students from eight different states competed in the 17th college-level Chinese Bridge Language Competition at the University of Maryland in College Park on Saturday.  
Student contestants delivered speeches in Mandarin on the theme of "shared values, one community", and demonstrated their creativity through a series of talent shows, featuring Sichuan Opera, tai chi dance, cross talk, calligraphy and traditional Chinese music.  
Raphael Angieri, a senior at Georgetown University majoring in culture and politics, was the winner. In his speech, Angieri recalled his first time in China living with a host family in Beijing six years ago.  
He brought up fond memories of chats between him and his host dad, which ranged from Confucius' thoughts to modern civil education, from ancient poetry to the popular TV show "Voice of China".  
"My host dad was just an average Chinese," Angieri recalled. "He didn't even attend university. But he used China's past as a prism for understanding the present, actively cultivating himself and sharing traditional Chinese culture. His spirit touched me on a truly profound level."  
Katherine Dionne, a freshman at the University of South Carolina, was one of the second-place finishers. Her tai chi dance performance amazed the audience, as well as the judges.  
"On the face of our culture, a lot of things can be different. But when you get down to it, everyone is still just people and very friendly when you get to know them," she said.  
Dionne's parents, who were with their daughter at the competition, said they were very proud and supportive of Dionne's pursuit of Chinese.  
"We want to thank the Confucius Institute for having this program and allowing people like Katie to participate and express their creativity in another culture," Dionne's dad said.  
William Ennals, a senior at the University of Maryland, also participated in the competition and recited a poem by famous poet Yu Guangzhong in three different dialects, which he said he learned from his Chinese friends.  
"My relationships with my Chinese friends have always been about exchanging cultures," Ennals said.  
"Many of the speeches demonstrated the young generations' global vision and international mindset," said Wendy Xiong, an associate professor of World Language and Culture at Winston Salem State University in North Carolina, who also served as a judge.  
"I am not alone," Angieri said after winning the top prize. "Obviously there are a lot of students here with me who show their love for China."

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