

Friends of Korea

Dedicated to fostering cultural awareness and
friendship between Americans and Koreans

Annual Report – 2022

This was a year of returning (somewhat) to normal as the impact of the global pandemic subsided. For nearly three years, lives had been upended and new norms established to manage and mitigate the virus. There was palpable excitement at the lifting of mask mandates and other restrictions. Going out to dine at restaurants and meeting family and friends was once again possible, as was travel. In this environment, Friends of Korea continued to reach out to members and partners to promote friendship and understanding between Americans and Koreans.

Annual Meeting 2022

Friends of Korea held its 2022 Annual General Meeting on Saturday, November 5th at the LBJ School of Public Affairs in Austin, Texas. This was FoK's first hybrid annual meeting – perhaps the first of many. One of the outcomes of the pandemic has been a reassessment of the annual meeting. Many FoK members greatly appreciated the opportunity to participate virtually in the meeting during the pandemic and have encouraged the board to continue this option in the future.

Robert Oppenheim, Professor of Asian Studies at the University of Texas, Austin gave this year's keynote talk on the "Evolution of Korean Studies with the Development of Korea." To learn more about Professor Oppenheim, his background, publications and research interests visit <https://liberalarts.utexas.edu/asianstudies/faculty/rmo89>

To view the annual meeting program, visit the Friends of Korea website at:
<https://www.friendsofkorea.net/2022-annual-meeting---video.html>

Kevin O'Donnell Distinguished Friend of Korea Award

The 2022 Kevin O'Donnell Award was presented to Mr. Suhkee Kang, former mayor of Irvine, California. Mr. Kang embodies the spirit of Kevin O'Donnell as he has dedicated his life in service to others in the private and public sectors. He served as the President of the Korean American Scholarship Foundation, Western Region and Chairman of the Korean American Coalition, Orange County. From 2004 to 2008, he was elected twice to the Irvine City Council and in 2008, he made history by being elected Mayor of Irvine -- the first Korean American ever to serve as mayor of a major U.S. city.



Presentation of the O'Donnell Award to Mr. Kang by Paul Courtright (l) and Jim Mayer(r)

He is currently serving as Chairman of the Board of KAPA (Korean Americans for Political Action), a non-partisan political organization that empowers the Korean Americans to become more involved in the American political process.

Giving Back Initiative

The *Giving Back Initiative*, which the FoK board launched in 2014, is FoK's primary philanthropic activity – broadly, it is about finding ways that we can give back to the country and the people with whom we have developed such a close and sustained bond. Over \$73,000 has been distributed to a variety of social service and educational institutions both in the United States and Korea since 2014.

There were three grants made in 2022. They were:

- Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Southern California
- Austin Asian Community Health Initiative
- California State University, Fresno Study Abroad to Korea

The first two social service organizations are dedicated to advancing the rights of the Asian American community in the United States, as well as their access to health care services. The CSU Study Abroad Program aligns with our commitment to fostering greater understanding of Korea and Korean culture.

Project Bridge Youth Ambassadors

In July twenty (20) Project Bridge Youth Ambassadors became Friends of Korea (FoK) life-time members through the generous support of the Pacific Century Institute (PCI) in Los Angeles, bringing the total of life-time youth ambassadors to 72 in 2022. PCI has been funding these Project Bridge memberships since 2018. The program was started in 1993 as a response to the 1992 Los Angeles riots to introduce African-American urban students to Korean people, history and culture in an effort to promote greater understanding.

Over the years The Korea Society (TKS) in New York, which initiated the program and PCI, have collaborated on this youth initiative and have expanded the student diversity within these two urban groups, as well as its reach. In fall of 2019 the program piloted the addition of a rural and Indigenous youth perspective and voice with the addition of students from Montana hosted by the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Center at the University of Montana.

Project Bridge, whose name captures the goal of reaching across ethnic and cultural divides, aims to help young people develop insights and skills needed to “bridge” the gaps between people of divergent cultural heritages. By fostering greater intercultural awareness and understanding, it empowers the youth ambassadors to view social and cultural differences as a pathway - not a barrier - to exercise their responsibilities as emerging young leaders in an increasingly interconnected and richly diverse world while educating them on the long-standing and close relationship between the peoples of Korea and the U.S.



Project Bridge Youth Ambassadors at Kim Koo Museum

Annually eight high school students from New York and Los Angeles have been selected through a highly competitive application process to participate in an academic year of workshops where they investigate Korean pre-modern and 20th century history, as well as the economic miracle on the Han and explore inter- and intra-peninsula developments and trends. Further, they delve into language, literature, food, fashion, educational differences, and hone their leadership and intercultural skills. Additionally, they investigate race relations in the U.S., specifically the *1992 Sa-I-Gu* incident, otherwise known as the Los Angeles riots, the impetus for creating the program. In 2022, four students from Missoula, Montana were also selected.

While the majority of the workshops were held in-person at each location, some workshops were held virtually with all three groups participating. For example, new in 2022, the Youth Ambassadors engaged in an interactive and highly instructive simulation of the decision-making process leading the U.S. to enter the Korean War. This was offered virtually by the White House Decision Center at the Truman Museum and Library located in Independence, Missouri—a very special endeavor which will be continued in the curriculum moving forward.

The highlight of the program was the ten-day study tour to the Republic of Korea which after a few delays was undertaken on July 2—the first Project Bridge visit in three years. Youth Ambassadors were able to experience Korea first-hand and meet Koreans in their own environment. The study tour ensured a geographic breadth of exposure to many people, activities, and places in Korea of historical and social significance. During the tour, students met with leaders in government, business, education, and the arts. They visited two high schools, engaging closely with Korean students. Further, on the visit to the American Center in Seoul they engaged virtually in a discussion focused on diplomacy with local Korean students.



FoK welcomes the youth ambassadors and looks forward to their active participation.

Revisit



After two years of having to cancel the Korea Revisit trips, due to the pandemic, FoK was very pleased to have the 2022 trip take place October 22-29. The Korea Foundation generously hosted 33 participants and their traveling companions on another wonderful week-long visit to Korea. The volunteers represented groups as early as K-1, 2, and 6 all the way up to K-50. Once again, the volunteers were amazed at all the changes that have occurred in Korea, but the most memorable moments were those spent at their former sites.

Another trip, which is fully booked, is planned for October of 2023.

Webinars, mixers and trainings

FoK continues to explore new ways of communicating with members and others interested in learning more about Korea. One of the silver linings of the pandemic has been the willing embrace of ‘virtual’ events by so many. Necessity created an environment where technology and capacity combined to make webinars and other virtual events more accessible.

In June, Danny Kim gave a talk on “Historicizing the Model Minority Myth - A Cold War History.” Korean Americans, and Asian Americans more broadly, are subject to an unusual, contradictory form of discrimination. On the one hand, Korean Americans are a quintessential part of the model minority myth, praised for their putative successes in assimilation and their educational achievements. Yet on the other hand, Asian Americans are also characterized as perpetual foreigners – almost American but not quite.

This sentiment came into stark relief with the outbreak of anti-Asian American violence across the United States in the midst of the pandemic, in which Korean Americans were targeted as “outsiders” who brought disease from “there” to “here.” What might explain this paradox, where Korean Americans are touted as the best example of American assimilation and yet never fully American?

This talk incorporated recent research by scholars like Ellen Wu to delve into the history of this issue, tracing how the Model Minority Myth was shaped by the Cold War and transnational black civil rights activism.

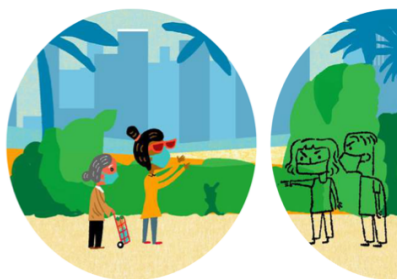
Danny Kim is Assistant Professor of Asian History at California State University, Fresno where he teaches courses on Korean and Japanese History, histories of diaspora, gender and feminism, and popular culture. He is currently working on a manuscript on the Rose of Sharon Alliance (Kūnuhoe), a revolutionary feminist organization during Japan’s colonization of Korea.

In addition to this webinar, FoK hosted a mixer in the spring via Zoom. This was FoK’s third mixer which has proven to be a delightful way of meeting other members of FoK from all backgrounds and all

Bystanders Take Action!

Learn how you can help stop Asian American harassment—safely

Asian American and xenophobic harassment and COVID-19 racism are on the rise across the US — and the world. And victims are experiencing a profound loss of physical safety, emotional wellbeing, relationship stability and financial security as a result.



ages. A short one-hour long event, the mixer enables former Peace Corps volunteers and staff, Fulbright alumni, and others to meet and exchange ideas and stories about Korea.

FoK, in conjunction with Asian Americans Advancing Justice, facilitated a bystander training session for FoK members and supporters in September. The training as meant to address those familiar situations that we have all encountered at one time or another – for example, witnessing someone harrassing an older person on the bus or subway – but no one knows what to do. The challenge is how to effectively intervene.

This bystander intervention training session was designed for these types of situations. Participants were given realistic tools and strategies for these hard to handle situations.



What you'll learn

In this training, we will:

- Reflect on what anti-Asian and xenophobic harassment looks like
- Learn the history of anti-Asian/American harassment in the US
- Learn how to safely intervene to stop harassment online and in-person
- Practice the 5D's of Bystander Intervention



Korean Consuls General Outreach and Recognition

Boston –The Consul General of the Republic of Korea in Boston, the Honorable Ki-jun You, sponsored a one-day symposium in collaboration with Friends of Korea on October 22nd in Waltham, Massachusetts. The symposium, *Korea: Past, Present & Future*, which drew 30 participants, mainly from the New England area, featured an impressive lineup of speakers from Harvard, University of Connecticut and Indiana University on a range of topics including geopolitical issues in northeast Asia, the future of the family unit in Korea, health and the impact of COVID in Korea, as well as social mobility and diversity issues in the education sector.

Participants also had an opportunity to view Neil Landreville’s wonderful ink brush paintings from his time in Korea as a Peace Corps volunteer in the early 1970’s. Charles Hobbie, a Peace Corps volunteer and staff member also talked about his most recent book, *Through Grateful Eyes: the Peace Corps Experiences of Dartmouth’s Class of 1967*. An extraordinary number of graduates in this class accepted invitations to join the Peace Corps and ultimately served in twenty-four different countries.



Consul General Ki-jun You with participants from the symposium

New York - Forty-two Friends of Korea members and guests were invited to a dinner on December 7th hosted by Ambassador Byung Hwa Chung, the Consul General of the Republic of Korea in New York. A diverse FoK group attended the event including members and their guests who were originally affiliated with Peace Corps (21), Fulbright (9), KOICA (1), and Project Bridge (7). The evening celebrated this diversity and the contributions the different groups have made.

In addition to welcoming remarks from Amb. Chung, a panel of five FoK members shared their experiences in Korea and the impact they have had on their lives. Two common threads emerged from the remarks—gratitude from Amb. Chung for what was contributed and from FoK members for what was learned, and opportunities provided. The second thread was of ongoing commitment to service.

Kicking off the evening, Amb. Chung extended warm greetings to all and a reminder that 2022 marked the 140th year of Korea-US diplomatic relations and the ten-year milestone in our countries' mutually beneficial trade agreement. Further, he noted in 2023 the US and ROK will celebrate the 70th anniversary of our alliance. The Ambassador's remarks primarily acknowledged the importance of FoK members' contributions. Below is an excerpt:

When Peace Corps Korea volunteers served in Korea from 1966 to 1981, they provided assistance in various areas focusing on healthcare, education, and technical training. Their work was vital, as Korea was taking its first steps towards joining the global economy. What they gave was more than just help. They instilled in the Korean people our love for freedom and peace. They gave us the courage and hope for a better future. And most of all, they showed what a real friendship is...

Today, Friends of Korea has become more than Peace Corps Korea volunteers. It now includes FOK's first organizational partner KOICA, Fulbright scholars, Project Bridge Youth Ambassadors, and many others. I hope FOK will continue to expand and include more diverse experiences with Korea.

Panelists included *Rob Ichihana* (PCV K-39) who provided a lively take on his work at Euisong Girls Middle School from 1976 to 1978 and his many adventures, particularly meeting his future wife, Anne. Rob has continued in education and in public service throughout his career and served on the FoK Board for seven years.

Talia Cowen, a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant (ETA) from 2016 to 2017, shared how she arrived in Korea not knowing much about the country but her work at a middle school in Cheongju and living with her host family above the duck restaurant they owned, changed her life. In her words, she came to Korea as one person but left as a very different person. Today she is an editor at one of the largest children's publishers in the world working mainly on a magazine for ESL teachers, a job she attributes to her Fulbright experience.



Rehnooma Momo (Project Bridge Youth Ambassador 2017-2018 cohort) shared insights that she gained from the academic year-long workshops she attended and the ten-day study tour to Korea which opened her to the wider world. She keeps in touch with the program and frequently volunteers to help. A recent graduate from Lehman College, CUNY, she intends to pursue a career in education.

Jerry and Barrie Raik (PCVs K-3) taught English in Yecheon from 1967 to 1969; they lived with the same Korean family for their entire stay and shared their

compelling story of how the lives of their host family and their own family interconnected and informed their life journeys. In 1969, they traveled back to the U.S. with their home family's little girl so that she could have life-saving open heart surgery. This experience inspired Barrie to pursue a career in medicine. Jerry continued in education as the director and head teacher of an afterschool Jewish education through the arts program, a kind of 'hagwon' as she described it.

All in all, it was an evening of great food and even greater conversations among all the attendees.



Seattle- The Consulate General of the Republic of Korea in Seattle hosted an appreciation dinner for Peace Corps Korea volunteers in early November at the Kennedy School/McMenamins. Approximately 60 guests, including 26 former volunteers, Consul General Eunji Seo and Consular officials, leaders of the Korean community, board members of the Korean Society of Oregon (KSO) and special guests attended the event.



It was a very special evening with the recitation of a poem about Korea written by former Peace Corps/Korea volunteer Gay Garland Reed, and speeches by Consul General Seo, Dian Odell, a member of the first group to serve in Korea in 1966, and Steve Gallon who recently published a book about his experiences in Korea.

During the program, the Peace Corps volunteers were asked to introduce themselves, tell where they served in Korea, explain their job/role and relate their thoughts on Korea. There was a display of photos showing the volunteers when they were in Korea and there was a map of Korea with pins showing where they served. It was a wonderful evening that showed exactly how much Korea changed the lives of the Peace Corps volunteers.

A highlight of the evening was a special presentation made by Consul General Eunji Seo to Greg Caldwell, Honorary Consul for the Republic of Korea in Northern Oregon. Caldwell was awarded "The Order of the Diplomatic Service Merit Changui Medal" by the President of Korea. The accompanying citation read: "In recognition of and appreciation for his outstanding and meritorious services rendered toward the promotion of friendly relations between the Republic of Korea and the United States of America...by the President of Korea." The medal was accompanied by an impressive citation in both Korean and English and by a Presidential wristwatch. November 13th marked the end of Caldwell's ninth year as honorary consul. At the ceremony, Caldwell stated that he was "honored and humbled by the award."

Greg has served as the Honorary Consul for the Republic of Korea in Northern Oregon since 2013. He is actively involved with the Korean community in Portland, serving on the boards of several Korean organizations. His responsibilities are primarily related to public relations, building

relationships between Oregon and Korea in trade, business, science, education and culture.



Greg joined the Peace Corps in 1971 where he taught English in Jeollabuk-do Province. Ten years later, he returned to Korea on a Fulbright Scholarship and taught at Kangwon National University. He continues to visit Korea on a regular basis.

In 2011 Caldwell retired from Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon where he

served for 35 years as Associate Dean of Students and Director of International Students and Scholars. Greg served on the Board of Directors of Friends of Korea from 2014 through 2020.

Governance

Kenneth Klein, PhD joined the Friends of Korea board at the fall annual meeting. Officers of the board are Gerry Krzic, President; James Mayer, Vice President; David Roden, Treasurer; Janice Gow Pettey Secretary; and Suzanne Crowder Han, Vice President. Nancy Kelly continues to serve as Chief Operating Officer (an unpaid position). For a full list of the board and their bios, visit the FoK website.

A Passing of Note

2022 also saw the passing of one of FoK's staunchest supporters – Mary Broude. Mary served as a Peace Corps volunteer from 1969-1970, teaching English at Seoul National University. A global citizen in every respect, Mary generously supported many causes – both global and local. She served on the FoK Board of Directors from 2012 through 2016.



Mary was the lead organizer of the Peace Corps Korea 50th Anniversary Exhibit at the National Museum of Korean Contemporary History (대한민국역사박물관). She collected, sorted, organized and shipped more than 35 boxes of memorabilia and other items donated by returned volunteers and staff. The exhibit ran from September 12th through November 20th, 2016.

After Mary rotated off the FoK Board, she was quite involved with the Project Bridge Youth Ambassadors in Los Angeles, as well as many other organizations in Orange County. In 2021, the Consul General, Park Kyung Jae, presented Mary with a Certificate of Appreciation for her outstanding dedication and service to Korea-American relations. She was actively engaged in many philanthropic activities as well. Mary was generous with her time and always willing to take on a challenge. She will be greatly missed.

Membership & Communications

As of the November annual meeting, FoK had 295 dues paying members and a mailing list of just over 3200 names. There are also 47 donors and 5 honorary members. Our Facebook page, started in November of 2012, has over 2800 followers. FoK continues to welcome anyone with an interest in enhancing cultural awareness of and friendship with Korea.

For more information on the various activities mentioned in this report and ways to get involved in Friends of Korea, visit our website at www.friendsofkorea.net.

Ver: July 2023