



Friends of Korea

Dedicated to fostering cultural awareness and
friendship between Americans and Koreans

Annual Report – 2021

If 2020 was the year of the pandemic, 2021 was the year of endless postponements and recurring disappointments. The impact of the COVID-19 virus continued to be felt around the world despite the arrival of an effective vaccine. In this environment, Friends of Korea continued to seek creative ways to reach out to members and partners to promote friendship and understanding between Americans and Koreans.

Response to Anti-Asian Actions

2021 saw an ever-increasing tide of hate crimes and attacks across the United States aimed at Asian Americans. In March, FoK President, Gerry Kzric, in response to the horrific shootings that took place in the Atlanta Metropolitan area on March 16th, issued a statement expressing the sentiment of the FoK Board and membership

FoK's mission of building trust and understanding is more important than ever in light of the rising tide of anti-Asian hate crimes across this country. Friends of Korea unequivocally condemns anti-Asian hate crimes which have increased recently and reaffirms its support for all the efforts to uphold values of diversity, mutual respect, and co-existence.

Friends of Korea made a donation to the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum in support of their work in Atlanta and 13 other cities across the United States creating social, political, and economic change for AAPI women and girls.

Annual Meeting 2021

Friends of Korea held its 2021 Annual General Meeting on Saturday, November 6, 2021. Due to continued travel and health concerns related to the pandemic, the meeting was a virtual one. The meeting program included:

- Welcome remarks by Ambassador Ahn Myung Soo, Consul General of the Republic of Korea to Houston.
- The keynote address, "Stopping Anti-Asian Hate: How To Be an Ally," by Connie Chung Joe, CEO of Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Los Angeles.

- The presentation of 2021 Kevin O'Donnell Award - this year's honoree is Mr. Kim Jong-chan, Retired Protocol Officer and Interpreter, National Assembly of Korea, and Peace Corps Korea Program Director, Language Coordinator and Instructor.

To view the annual meeting program, visit the Friends of Korea website at:

<https://www.friendsofkorea.net/2021-annual-meeting---video.html>

Kevin O'Donnell Distinguished Friend of Korea Award



Friends of Korea (FoK) presented the sixth annual Kevin O'Donnell Distinguished Friend of Korea Award to Mr. Kim Jong-chan, long-time Peace Corps Korea staff person, trainer, and mentor, friend and colleague to many Peace Corps Korea volunteers.

Below is an excerpt from the nomination submitted by Charles Hobbie,

It is time to recognize individuals such as Mr. Kim for their long, dedicated service on Peace Corps Korea staff in support of the Peace Corps program and its volunteers. There can be no more significant contribution to the goals of fostering cultural awareness and friendship between Koreans and Americans than his accomplishment of successfully preparing hundreds of PCVs for service in Korea over a period of twelve years.

The history of Peace Corps Korea eloquently demonstrates that Mr. Kim - significantly more than any other person - had a long, dedicated career of teaching and training Peace Corps Korea trainees. As every PCV knows, by his actions he fostered cultural awareness and friendships between Koreans and Americans to an extraordinary degree - a fostering that continues visibly through his active engagement with RPCVs on-line and during the Korea Foundation revisits program forty years after the last PCV left Korea.

Despite the lingering effects of the global pandemic, the O'Donnell Award was celebrated with an in-person ceremony held in Seoul, Korea and broadcast as part of the FoK Annual meeting on November 6th. [Click here](#) to watch the presentation.

Giving Back Initiative

The *Giving Back Initiative*, which the FoK board launched in 2014, is the organization'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 \$50,000 has been distributed to a variety of social service and educational institutions both in the United States and Korea since 2014.

There were two grants made in 2021 – to Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Los Angeles and to the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum. Both organizations are working to advance the rights and conditions of the Asian American community in the United States. Asian Americans are often portrayed as the 'model' minority – well integrated and successful. However, as with all stereotypes, reality is much more complex and many Asian Americans face a host of challenges. These challenges have been heightened during the pandemic era as hate crimes and violence aimed at Asian Americans have climbed dramatically.

Project Bridge Youth Ambassador Program



2021-2022 Youth Ambassadors – Los Angeles

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.

The program was started in 1993 by [The Korea Society](#) in New York and the [Pacific Century Institute](#) in Los Angeles as a response to *Sa-I-Gu*, otherwise known as the 1992 Los Angeles riots. It cultivates students' understanding of race relations using Korea as a case study and helps young Americans of diverse backgrounds build an understanding of the importance of the US-Korean relationship. It remains a signature program for both organizations. The Maureen and Mike Mansfield Center at the

University of Montana joined as a Project Bridge partner in 2020, introducing a rural demographic to the Program.

Since 1993, each year 16 public high school junior or senior students—8 from New York City and 8 from Los Angeles—are selected through a rigorous vetting process. During the academic year, youth ambassadors participate in bi-monthly workshops and are introduced to a wide range of topics spanning Korean history, the Korean war, education, language, arts and cultural values, and *Sai-I-Gu* race riot. They explore current events, U.S. and regional relationships, and the economic factors that led to the ‘Miracle on the Han.’ Outside experts frequently lead lively and informative discussions.

While the program culminates in community presentations and a graduation ceremony, the study tour to the Republic of Korea is a high point of the program enabling students to experience Korea socially and culturally. During this all expenses paid ten-day tour students have abundant opportunities to engage with Korean high school students and teachers, corporate leaders, government officials, journalists, and many others as they travel around the country experiencing both city and rural life. In the past they have visited ministries, corporations, trade associations, museums, folk villages and universities. They have had home stays with high school students and an overnight stay at a Buddhist temple. Throughout the tour they gain a deeper understanding of the unique and close relationship between the U.S. and Korea

Unfortunately in 2020, in-person events were curtailed and the annual study tour was cancelled. Breaking with 28 years of tradition and given the commitment of the 2020 cohort, most agreed to continue in the program in 2021 allowing them to delve more deeply into an exploration of Korea, examining Korean 20th century history, language, culture, cuisine, Korean-American relations and developing intercultural competence skills. The students participated in joint virtual discussions with one another as well as with students at Jeongbuk Foreign Language High School in Jeollabuk-do and Daedong Taxation High School in Seoul.



The Youth Ambassadors are extremely talented, articulate, interesting and enthusiastic students. With our shared interest in Korea, they will be an integral part of Friends of Korea moving forward. We are delighted to welcome them!

Webinars

FoK held two webinars in 2021. The first was an opportunity to meet Alana DeJoseph, the director of the award-winning documentary, *A Towering Task*, and Pat Wand, a board member of the Museum of the Peace Corps Experience. Pat shared plans about a major exhibition celebrating the Peace Corps 60th anniversary at the American University Museum. Alana discussed some of the challenges of producing a documentary about Peace Corps.

The second webinar was a discussion on 'American Attitudes Toward the Korean Peninsula' with Troy Stangarone and Juni Kim of the Korea Economic Institute. The US-South Korea alliance has been a keystone of American security and defense policy, and the US-Korea relationship reaches into economic, cultural, and technological cooperation. However, Americans are still more likely to hear about Seoul's northern neighbor in the news. So how does the American public perceive South Korea and the US-Korea relationship? The Korea Economic Institute explored this question in its first annual report on American Attitudes toward the Korean Peninsula.

Korean Consuls General Outreach

Due to the pandemic, in-person gatherings were quite limited. Nonetheless, there were several activities of note held in Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, and Seattle. Here are some highlights:



Mary Broude, in Los Angeles, worked with Korean Consulate to plan a graduation party for 8 Youth Ambassadors from the Project Bridge program. The keynote speaker was California State Senator Dave Min (see photo at left).

In addition, the Consul General, Park Kyung Jae, presented Ms. Broude with a Certificate of Appreciation for her outstanding dedication and service to Korea-American relations.

The Annual New York Consul General Dinner for Friends of Korea hosted by Amb. Won-sam Chang was held at the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the U.N. on December 9, 2021.

Approximately 50 attendees enjoyed an evening of musical and dance performances provided by the Woorigarak Korean Cultural Arts Center. Deputy Consul General Lim gave welcoming remarks. Chef Jae Jung not only prepared a delicious sit-down dinner but also discussed the special menu for the



evening, describing her food selection and her approach to Korean cuisine. Participants included former Peace Corps volunteers, Fulbrighters, KOICA volunteers and Project Bridge Youth Ambassadors. A very good time was had by all!

In May, Consul General Won-jik Kwon visited Portland for three days visit. While there he had the opportunity to meet for in-person breakfasts, lunches and dinners with officials from Port of Portland, former Peace

Corps/Korea volunteers, Multnomah Co. Commissioner (Korean adoptee), Mayor of Wilsonville (Korean War Memorial), etc. Greg Caldwell, former FoK Board member and Honorary Consul for the Republic of Korea, was instrumental in making these arrangements.



Governance

Three new members joined the Friends of Korea board at the fall annual meeting. They are Paul Courtright, Esther Im, and H. Sook Wilkinson. 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.

Membership & Communications

As of the November annual meeting, FoK had 292 dues paying members and a mailing list of just over 3200 names. There are also 46 donors and 4 honorary members. Our Facebook page, started in November of 2012, now has over 2800 followers. The FoK website attracted almost 5,190 users in 2021 with 9980 page views. FoK continues to welcome anyone with an interest in enhancing cultural awareness of and friendship with Korea.

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

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