

Korean Focus NW

Welcome to **Korean Focus NW**, (KFNW), which locally calls itself "**Mugunghwa**," in honor of the beautiful and resilient Korean national flower.

Korean Focus NW is a local chapter of the national Korean Focus group based in Washington DC. For years, a group of Seattle area families had been actively, but informally, participating in playgroups, social and cultural events. In 2005, our group recognized the need for a more organized avenue of support for Northwest families with children adopted from South Korea.

Our mission is to provide support to families with children of Korean heritage through social activities, educational offerings, and cultural events. Korean Focus NW will reach out to newly created adoptive families and work to form strong bonds between families built through Korean adoption and the Korean American community.

Korean Focus NW looks to draw members from newly created adoptive families, the adult Korean Adoptee and Korean American communities, and any person with an interest in Korea. We embrace families built through Korean adoption, and we welcome the chance to work together to build a wonderful future for our children, as beautiful and resilient as the Korean national flower

Join Korean Focus NW

We invite you to join Korean Focus and support our activities! Family Membership dues are \$20.00 per year. A membership application is at our website at www.koreanfocusnw.org.

Mugunghwa

*The Newsletter for Members of Korean Focus NW
Providing support for families with children of Korean heritage - through
social activities, educational programs and cultural celebrations.*

Spring 2006

"Children are the future of our nation. Let's show respect for children. Children who grow up with ridicule and contempt from others will become people who disrespect others, while children who grow up with respect from others will become people who respect others in turn."

-Pang Chong-hwan, founder of Korean Children's Day

Celebrate Children's Day with Korean Focus NW

Join the members of Korean Focus NW on **Sunday May 7 from 1pm to 3pm** to celebrate Children's Day. This year's event will be held at the Tye Middle School, Allen Road, Bellevue. **Pre-registration is encouraged** – use the website form at www.koreanfocusnw.org and mail in your check early for a **discount**. There will be games and crafts for all ages, Tae Kwon Do demonstrations and a special "**Hip Hop**" beginner's class taught by Patty Pomplun! Please contact Jeni Skuk at vic-jeni@juno.com *if you would like to help*.

KFNW will have Korean Friendship bracelets for sale (\$2) at our Children's day celebration, May 7.

A Message from our Chairperson

I am so pleased and excited to write this column for the first edition of **Mugunghwa** – the newsletter of Korean Focus NW! For so many years our active members have been discussing the idea of more structure and systems in place so others could benefit from our supportive and thriving community of friends and families. Starting out with informal playgroups and bagels afterward and a one page dog eared "roster" of names and phone numbers, we planned pumpkin patch outings, picnics and mom's discussion nights, always realizing the considerable value of what we were doing for our families, *especially our Korean born*

children. We appreciated the needs of families who are newly adopting from Korea and wanted to offer opportunities for their families to enjoy the camaraderie and support we have enjoyed.

Our “informal” group has mainly communicated by e-mail over the years and has grown to over 70 families who have all adopted at least one child from South Korea over the last 15 - 20 years. ***Korean Focus NW*** now has 27 member families, comprised of Korean adoptive families as well as Korean American families. We anticipate having year round activities and a quarterly newsletter, along with monthly e-mail bulletins with information on upcoming events and other news. ***And we have a new Website!***

Here are some highlights of what we’ve accomplished. In May 2003, we organized a picnic and invited members of the Korean American community to attend. As American parents of Korean born children, we are dedicated to the needs of our children to appreciate and honor their Korean heritage and cultural identity. We felt that having connections with the Korean American community would give our families a more meaningful and authentic experience.

In May of 2004, we held our first Children’s Day celebration offering games for our kids and delicious Korean food. Our families planted and dedicated a weeping cherry tree at Morning Star Korean Cultural Center in honor of all Korean Adopted Children. Our Chusok festival in September 2004 attracted over 100 participants. In December, our children played games and created colorful Korean kites at a Lunar New Year children’s games day sponsored by Morning Star.

Many families have expressed interest in Korean language classes, cooking lessons, help with shopping in Korean markets, weekend culture “camps” available to all ages of children and adults, mentoring programs for our kids and more opportunities to build community and learn about the history and culture of South Korea. Korean Focus NW is an ideal vehicle to make this all possible – with your help and support. Please let us know what classes and activities you would like to see, and of course ☺, what you will be willing to do to help make it happen! Our monthly board meetings are open and ***every member is more than welcome to participate*** in discussion and on committees. KFNW is a non-profit, ***volunteer*** run organization. We have great momentum and many dedicated individuals in our midst. The possibilities are endless...

I look forward to many more opportunities to nurture and foster our knowledge and awareness of Korean culture, make new friends and generally have a great time watching our kids enjoying the friendships they are making as well. When I asked my first grade

daughter what her favorite part of the very fun annual summer camping trip is, she enthusiastically replied “PLAYING WITH MY FRIENDS!” There you have it ☺

In compassionate community,
Lauren Soliday, Chair, Korean Focus NW
admin@koreanfocusnw.org

Member Profile

Lauren and Gary Soliday have two children, a son Devin and daughter Marie. They adopted Marie through WACAP and traveled to Korea to welcome her to their family in 1999. Lauren has served on the board of the Korean Identity Development Society (K.I.D.S) and Morning Star Korean Cultural Center. In July of 2004, she traveled and played the Ching with the Samulnori ensemble when Morning Star toured South Korea and Vietnam. Marie, Gary and Lauren have all taken lessons at Morning Star and all three have performed together on stage. Lauren works part time for Nature Vision, Inc. as an environmental educator.

Newsletter

Our newsletter, **Mugungwha**, will be issued four times a year. Our next issue will be produced in July. If you have information to include, please email your information by **June 15th** to Kristin Glenn at glennmk@olympus.net.

Korean Children's Day

Children's Day is a South Korean national holiday celebrated in Korea on May 5. Children's Day was founded in 1923 by the Korean children's writer Pang Chong-hwan as a way to instill a sense of independence and national pride in the country's children. Children's Day highlights the dignity of children and their need for love, care, and respect. *It is also a day to honor adults who have contributed to improving the lives of children.*

On Children's Day, children of all ages are celebrated and the entire community is involved in the festivities. Many cities hold parades and public activities, museums, zoos, amusement parks, and movie theaters offer free admission to children. Traditional games, including yut, are played, parents give gifts to their children, and traditional foods are an important part of the celebration. Tae Kwon Do demonstrations are often part of the Children's Day activities.

Information Source:

<http://teacherlink.ed.usu.edu/tlresources/units/Byrnes-celebrations/korea2.html>

Korean Focus NW Website

Visit our website often for more information about upcoming events!

www.koreanfocusnw.org

Mugungwha - A quarterly newsletter of Korean Focus NW www.koreanfocus.org

Providing support for families with children of Korean heritage through social activities, educational programs and cultural celebrations.

Mark Your Calendars! Upcoming Korean Focus NW Events

Korean Focus NW sponsors educational events, including museum visits and Korean language and cooking classes; organizes informal picnics, playgroups, and a popular family camping trip each August; and celebrates Korean holidays, including Lunar New Year, the fall harvest festival Chusok, and Children's Day in May. In Korean Focus NW, education and mission come together with feasts of bulgogi and mooncakes, giggling children playing hide-and-seek, and lots of camaraderie. *Please join us!*

Sunday May 7, 2006 1 to 3pm Children's Day Celebration. Please email Jeni Skuk at vic-jeni@juno.com if you want to help. Check our website for more details www.koreanfocus.org.

Mentoring Program for our Children

There will be an informational "mom's and dad's night" gathering in May to discuss the possibility of a future mentoring program for our children. There are a number of Adult Korean Adoptees who are interested in working with our group to set this up. The possibilities and benefits for our families are tremendous – look for more information. Interested? Email admin@koreanfocusnw.org with your thoughts on a mentoring program.

July 2006: Denny Creek family hike and outing. Summer Night concert at Magnuson Park. More information to follow.

August 24 - 27, 2006: KFNW Family Camping at Bay View State Park. Open to all. Don't miss this event. Your children will love it and so will you! Eileen Aker is coordinating - details to follow.

October 2006: Annual KFNW Chusok Fall Harvest Celebration. Morning Star Korean Cultural Center, Lynnwood, WA. Date TBA www.morningstarkcc.org

Community Events

5th Annual Multicultural Fair

Saturday, April 22, 2006 12:00 PM - 5:00 PM.
Lynnwood Convention Center, 3711 196th SW,
Lynnwood - Morning Star will perform traditional Korean dance and music at 2:00 p.m. Arts and crafts activities for all ages. For more information contact Pam Graham 425-670-8984 ext. 4

'unexpressions' Sunday April 23, 2006
4:00 pm & 7:30 pm Created/Performed by Patty Pomplun Directed by Michelle Lockhart, Featuring Walayn Sharples and Connie Kim **T4 Theatre**, 4th Floor, Seattle Center House. Info: pattysang@yahoo.com

Rainbow Bookfest

Saturday, April 29, 2006, 10 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Multicultural Fair & Celebration of Authors of Color
FREE ADMISSION Asian Resource Center 1025 S. King Street, Seattle International District

Spring Symposium with Adam Pertman, Author of Adoption Nation

Saturday April 29, 2006, 11 am - Adoption in the Schools, Bellevue Masonic Temple. see the FCC website at <http://www.fcc-nw.com/events.htm>.

Poetry Reading by Ko Un

Korea's foremost, most prolific and revered poet, essayist, novelist, editor and literary critic.
Thursday, April 27, 2006 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
University of Washington, Physics-Astronomy Auditorium A102, Sponsored by the UW Korea Studies Program and the East Asia Center.

Lela Lee: Author of the comic strip, Angry Little Asian Girl.

Wednesday, May 10, 2006, 7:30 p.m.
Edmonds Community College www.edcc.edu/boxoffice
(425) 640-1313

Asian Adult Adoptees of Washington (AAAW)

Mini Gathering for Adult Adoptees
May 18- 21, 2006 in Seattle
Go to: www.aaawashington.org
for more information about this special event.

MAVIN Foundation - 3rd Annual Mixed Heritage Student Leadership Retreat

June 23 - 26, 2006, Seattle, Washington Any student or person aged 16 years or older is invited to apply. There will be a \$75 registration fee for participants. www.mavinfoundation.org for more information.

WACAP Kids Day Annual Picnic

Saturday, July 15, 2006, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.
Seward Park, Seattle, Wash.
(206) 575-4550 – www.wacap.org

Classes / Discussions:

Moving Beyond Racial Boundaries

Raising an Asian child in a Caucasian world.
Wednesday, April 26, 7-8:30 p.m.
WACAP Office, Renton – www.wacap.org
Class is free. Call 206-575-4550 to register.

Adoption Medicine

Presentation by Dr. Julian Davies

Saturday, June 3, 2006, 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

WACAP Branch Office 2100 24th Ave. S., Seattle, Call
206-575-4550 \$10 per person www.wacap.org

KAAN 2006 Conference

(Korean American Adoptee Adoptive Family Network) 8th Annual KAAAN Conference - **Han Ma Eum One Heart And One Mind**, Renaissance Seoul Hotel, Seoul, S. Korea June 30 to July 2, 2006.

KAAN's website <http://www.kaanet.com/>

KIDS Korean Culture Camp

July 10 - 14, 2006 in Bothell. www.koreanidentity.org

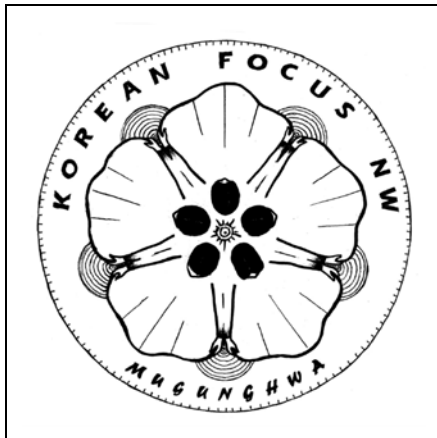
Multiracial Interracial eXperience or MIX

(www.mix-seattle.org) group for multiracial people, transracial adoptees, interracial couples and families, sponsored by MAVIN Foundation (www.mavinfoundation.org).

Submit news for the KFNW website.

Our website is brand new and continues to be revised and updated with new information and events all the time. If you have any links, resources, event or general information that should be included on our website, please e-mail admin@koreanfocusnw.org. Thanks!

About our LOGO ~ Many thanks to Allie and Frank Fee for their excellent and creative talents in designing the beautiful Mugunghwa Flower logo. Look closer - you'll see children reaching their arms out from the center. It's truly a work of art!



The Mugunghwa Flower

The national flower of Korea is the Rose of Sharon, or Mugunghwa as it is called in Korea. Every year from July to October, a profusion of Mugunghwa blooms grace the entire country. They are remarkably tenacious and able to withstand many adverse conditions. *Mugung* means **immortality**, and *hwa* means **flower**, thus it is a flower symbolizing the immortality, determination, and perseverance of the Korean people.

Mugunghwa Plant Care and Feeding

If you still have your small seedling you received from our Chusok celebration last fall, give it some warmth and full sun, water when it feels dry, and keep your fingers crossed. If all goes according to the plan, our plants have been in dormancy throughout the winter and perhaps will start shooting some new growth in the coming spring months. Come May or June, transplant outdoors in a medium sized container with full sun, but close by so you can water and nurture it some more. Next spring 2007, it should be ready to plant in the yard. Don't give up quite yet!

Open your Home to an International Student

By Kathryn Gardow

We have opened our home to four international students through the FIUTS (Foundation for International Understanding Through Students) program at the University of Washington for the last four Septembers. FIUTS is a community non-profit organization that has been around since 1948. Their mission is “to enhance international understanding and promote cultural exchanges between UW internationals and Americans.”

Three of our international students were from Korea and one was from Germany. Our most successful homestay was with a young woman, Il Ju, from Korea. We picked her up at the airport upon arrival from Korea and spent the next week with her, helping her get to know the Seattle area. She was often busy during the day, registering for classes and attending University sponsored events. At the end of the week, she moved in an undergraduate dormitory.

Through her year at UW, she joined our children at our Korean language classes, celebrated Halloween at our house, and came to dinner many times where we shared conversation about world events, cultural issues and many more topics. We also got to know several of her other Korean friends, too.

Who Can Host?

Anybody can host a student provided the family is within about one hour of the University and has a spare bed. Preferably, the student would have his or her own room. Our spare bed is in the basement room where our TV is. For one week each year, we can give up having easy access to the TV!

Working parents can also sponsor a student, since the students are often busy during the week. Students can also be expected to take the bus to and from the University, so you are not obligated to provide transportation either. Most students arrive to start the September school year, so the greatest demand for host families is in late August to mid-September of each year. There are other opportunities throughout the year, too.

Other families in our Korean adoptive community have also hosted students through FIUTS. I actually found out about the program from Jean Seeley, another adoptive Mom! And her family lives in Issaquah!

More information can be found on the FIUTS website at:

<http://www.fiuts.washington.edu/forCommunity/homestayFC/index.htm>

Consider opening your home to an international student! It is a wonderful way to build connections with people from our children's birth country or other places in the world. Also, feel free to give me a call at 206-527-3272 or e-mail me at kathryn@gardow.com, if you would like to learn more.

** A heartfelt **thank you** to *Margie Persheid* of the Korean Focus DC group for all her support and mentoring to help get our group going!

Getting Involved with Korean Focus NW

We all have great hopes for the future where activities and classes can broaden our understanding of Korean culture and help us build community with not only those adopting children from Korea, but with the Korean American's living in this area as well. In order for things to happen, as with any volunteer group, the effort, ideas and realization have to come from the members. Please consider volunteering for an event, and if you have some ideas for an activity, gather a few other people to help plan and create it. As Board Chair, I can offer that our board is open to new ideas from members for things to do and will try to help with networking and getting the word out as much as possible. As a new organization, it may take more planning and time initially, but the benefits will be worth it! And you make new friends serving on committees, etc. I feel this small effort on my (our) part will magnify into something much more beneficial for our children in the future – hopefully we will look back with pride and feel grateful for the friendships we have formed and opportunities created for our children to have a sense of identity and pride in their Korean heritage. Our vision and goals are to reach out to adoptive families and form strong bonds between families built through Korean adoption and the Korean American community in the Northwest. Please support us with your time and dues – thank you very much. Lauren Soliday, Chair, Korean Focus NW

Mugunghwa

The Newsletter for Members of Korean Focus NW

*Providing support for families with children of Korean heritage - through
social activities, educational programs and cultural celebrations.*

Spring 2006

Korean Focus NW Board of Directors

Lauren Soliday, Chairperson
Karen Barrett, Vice-Chairperson
Kathryn Gardow, Secretary
Patti Miller, Treasurer
Allie Fee, Member at Large
Jeni Skuk, Events
Cindy Schroeder, Events
Vic Bloomfield, Membership
Gary Soliday, Website
Steven Hsu, Website pictures
Kristin Glenn, Newsletter Editor

Information Contacts

www.koreanfocusnw.org

Kathryn Gardow (Seattle) 206-527-3272
Cheryl Goedhard (Renton) 425-271-0810
Kristin Glenn (Olympic Peninsula) 360-582-0474
Suzanne Paola (Bellingham) 360-738-4084
Cindy Schroeder (Snohomish) 360-668-9492

admin@koreanfocusnw.org

Mailing Address: Korean Focus NW
c/o 23611 48th Ave. SE, Bothell, WA 98021

Mugunghwa - A quarterly newsletter of Korean Focus NW www.koreanfocus.org

Providing support for families with children of Korean heritage through social activities, educational programs and cultural celebrations.

Spring 2006 – Page 6 of 6