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meeting place

A MAGAZINE BY THE COMMUNITY, FOR THE COMMUNITY ... CONFERENCE 2015 EDITION



Ceramics and photographs by Rosita Gonzalez

JUNE 2015
KAANet.org



INTERSECTIONS

A special thanks to
EXPLORE ST. LOUIS
for their generous support of
KAAN 2015



Congratulations and Welcome to the
KAAN 2015 CONFERENCE

and to all who have worked so hard for its success.

A special recognition to
Ellen Heitzig, St. Louis Coordinator,
for bringing the national conference to St. Louis.



BEST REGARDS,
Judge Judy Draper
Honorary Consul, Republic of Korea



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF ST. LOUIS
MISSOURI

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June 26, 2015

Korean American Adoptee Adoptive Family Network
St. Louis, Missouri

Greetings:

It is my great pleasure to welcome everyone attending the 17th Annual Conference of the Korean American Adoptee Adoptive Family Network being held in St. Louis from June 26 through June 28, 2015.

The conference is designed to bring adoptees, their families, and other community members together in pursuit of common ground and positive change, and I hope that the conference will provide you with the opportunity to exchange new ideas, make new acquaintances, and renew old friendships.

I invite you to take advantage of everything St. Louis has to offer its visitors. A city of history built west from the Mississippi River, St. Louis offers fine examples of architecture, culture, and art. From Laclede's Landing to the Old Courthouse to Grand Center and onward to the Central West End and Forest Park, there is much to see and do.

Best wishes for a successful conference and an enjoyable stay in our great city!

Sincerely,

Francis G. Slay
Mayor, City of St. Louis





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Carolyn Hathaway, Eric Hathaway

FIRST-TIME PARTICIPANT GREETER

Katie Naftzger

EXHIBITOR/VENDOR GREETER

Terra Trevor

MISSION

To improve the lives of Korean-born adoptees by bringing together the community for dialogue, education, and support.

VISION

- ◆ To provide annual conferences that renew and connect individuals and organizational leaders, especially Korean-born adoptees and also including other Koreans and Korean-Americans as well as family members through birth, adoption, marriage, or parenthood. We also welcome members of other international or interethnic adoptive communities.
- ◆ To offer an ongoing source of community information and conversation through our website, e-newsletter, blog, and social media options;
- ◆ To serve the community with a spirit of collaboration and respect.

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IMPORTANT

Refer to the one-page conference schedule insert (called "session matrix" for short) for the most up-to-date schedule and for locations for each event. This insert contains details not available at press time.





STACY SCHROEDER, EXEC. DIRECTOR/PRESIDENT

Every year about this time (a few weeks pre-conference), the adrenaline kicks in and I find myself growing excited. While much planning and thought goes into the schedule and goals of the conference, in the end it is the dynamics of the community members who gather that determines the final outcome. It is so much fun to watch that take shape.

This year our theme is *Intersections*. As you browse this magazine and attend sessions, you will see this topic repeated again and again. You will find intersections of experience, of knowledge, and of belief ... occurrences that will affirm and strengthen you. You will also encounter intersections that challenge and offer new perspective. It is our hope that you will explore these trickier intersections as fully and openly as you do those you find familiar.

It is not an easy task, as an organization, to hold together so many personalities and points of view but it is that very diversity that makes us unique. Our entire conference is an intersection of all those connected to Korean adoption and even beyond. Let's make the most of that meeting place and our weekend together.

Thank you for taking time to be a part of this community. Be kind to each other, listen, and share!

As the events unfolded in Ferguson, MO last summer, I realized that as a community KAAN needed to critically engage the question of why #BlackLivesMatter to adoptive families. To ignore how systemic and institutionalized racism affects transnational and/or transracial adoptees and communities of color, more broadly, would be a devastating oversight. Given our location in St. Louis, I felt particularly compelled to organize Saturday's breakfast plenary session. Adoptive families need to recognize how their adopted children will encounter explicit and implicit racism and be open to honest discussions of race. I encourage those here to listen to the words of the breakfast plenary keynotes and learn from their lived experiences. KAAN continues to be a space where we discuss topics and current events that impact members of the adoption constellation.

KIMBERLY MCKEE, ASST. DIRECTOR / SECRETARY



At the same time, KAAN is a place to build community and friendship. To better understand and meet the needs of our community, I am working with the organization and conducting two survey studies of Korean adoptees and adoptive parents. If you are interested in learning more about the study, please visit page 14 for the study announcement. This study aims to allow KAAN's leadership new insights about our constituents and where you see the organization heading in the next decade.

staff greetings

Welcome to St. Louis, KAAN family! I am extremely excited to share my city with you. I hope you all have a chance to explore this wonderful city while you are here. It is full of entertainment, attractions, and amazing restaurants if you are a foodie. I am extremely excited to be this year's local coordinator and even more excited that KAAN is finally here in St. Louis for the first time. St. Louis is a culturally diverse city, and I am happy this city is getting exposed to yet another piece of the Korean American culture.

The KAAN conference is not just an annual get-together. To many, it speaks volumes and provides a place of found identity and connections. It provides year-round support to adoptees, families, and supporters. KAAN has personally given me an inside look at different adult adoptee perspectives on adoption. I have had the opportunity to openly share my own story as well as hear the stories of others. KAAN has also increased my sense of pride, particularity this year, being here in St. Louis. Again, I am excited to share the amazing City of St. Louis with you all and I hope you fall in love with this city as much as I have.

ELLEN HEITZIG, ST. LOUIS COORDINATOR



MICHAEL STANLEY, TREASURER

Each year as the KAAN conference approaches, I can't help but think about when I was adopted. I was six, hurting (I had an abstract tooth), confused, and afraid. I wish I could go back to that six year old and tell him everything's going to be alright and hold him. I think in some ways it would have been comforting to know that I wasn't the only person going through what I was going through.

While I'm not six, I still have a lot of questions and there are times when I'm still hurting, confused and afraid. But today, unlike the six year old, I have a community to lean on. A community that understands my story. I don't know who needs KAAN more, me today or that six year old. But I do know that, as a community, we need each other.

Meet Me in ST. LOUIS ...



Welcome to St. Louis, site of the KAAN 2015 Conference *Intersections*. We invite you to peruse this magazine to learn more about the people and topics that will be at the heart of our weekend together. To start us off, here are some facts about our beautiful host city, courtesy of Explore St. Louis. We encourage you to spend time in the city. Maps and tour guides are available at the registration table and more information can be found at explorestlouis.com.

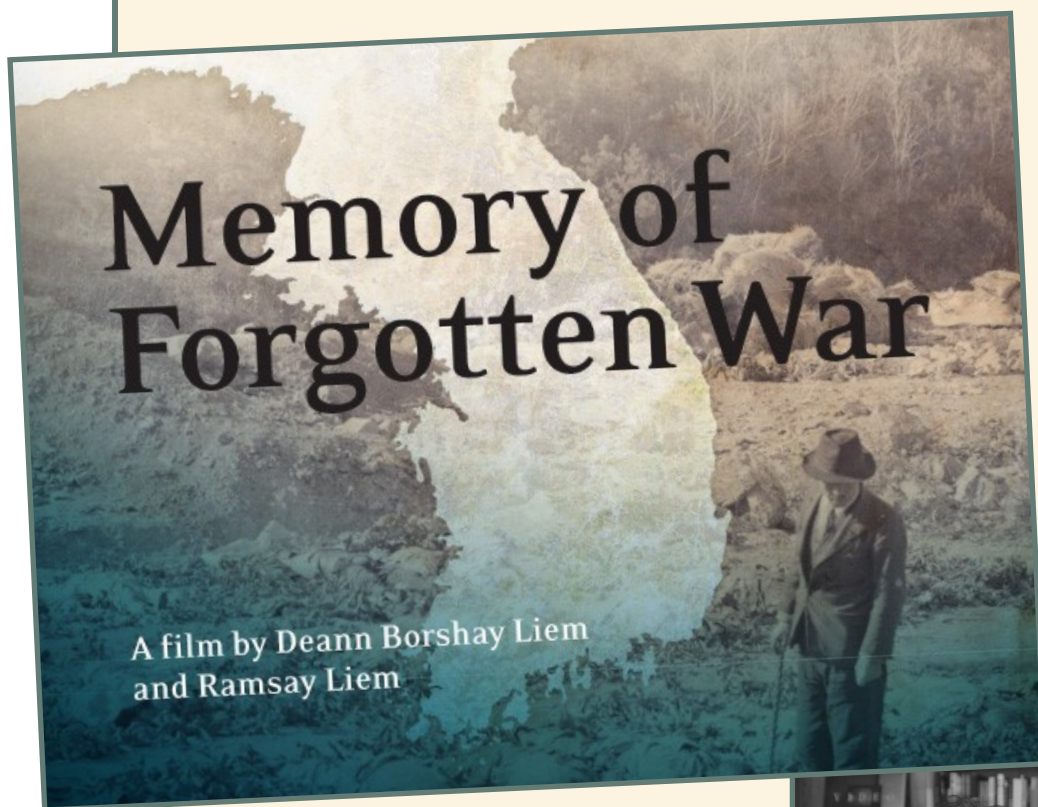
ST LOUIS TRIVIA *(continued on page 29):*

- * St. Louis' McDonnell Douglas Corporation, now Boeing, designed and built the space capsule that carried the first astronauts into space in the 1960s when the company was known as McDonnell Aircraft.
- * The Eads Bridge, completed in 1874 over the Mississippi River, was the first arched steel truss bridge in the world. When it was first proposed, it was scoffed at as impossible to build.
- * The 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis popularized a number of new foods, including the hot dog, ice cream cone, and iced tea. In 1904, the first Olympiad to be held in the U.S. was held in St. Louis at Washington University's Francis Field.
- * St. Louis is home of the nation's second oldest symphony, and has been touted as one of the best in the country.



DOCUMENTARY SCREENING

MEMORY OF FORGOTTEN WAR conveys the human costs of military conflict through deeply personal accounts of the Korean War (1950-53) by four Korean-American survivors. Their stories take audiences through the trajectory of the war, from extensive bombing campaigns, to day-to-day struggle for survival and separation from family members across the DMZ. Decades later, each person reunites with relatives in North Korea, conveying beyond words the meaning of family loss. These stories belie the notion that war ends when the guns are silenced and foreshadow the future of countless others displaced by ongoing military conflict today.



The film's personal accounts are interwoven with thoughtful analysis and interpretation of events by historians Bruce Cumings and Ji-Yeon Yuh who situate these stories in a broader historical context. Additional visual materials, including newsreels, U.S. military footage, and archival photographs bring to life the political, social and historical forces that set in motion the tumultuous events of the War and its aftermath.

More at www.mufilms.org





LISA MARIE ROLLINS ... SUSAN HARRIS O'CONNOR

#BlackLivesMatter and Its Significance to Adoptive Families

Saturday Breakfast Plenary Panel

Get to breakfast early on Saturday morning because you will want to give your full attention to this powerhouse panel on a topic relevant to the times, our location, and all of our families—a true intersection worthy of our attention.

We had already selected St. Louis as this summer's conference site well before the 2014 shooting of Michael Brown. Even if we had been in a different location this year, the events at Ferguson would have held a central piece of our conversation. While KAAN's core is made up of Korean adoptees and their families, we also recognize commonalities of experience across other adoptive communities and with other people of color. We welcome the four credentialed speakers who lend their wisdom to this year's breakfast plenary panel (*which will be moderated by KAAN Asst. Director Kimberly McKee*):

Judge Judy Preddy Draper: Judge Draper lives in St. Louis and knows the community well. As a state judge, she is limited from commenting directly on Grand Jury decisions on the Michael Brown case but

can discuss general judicial processes, racial bias, and her experiences as a biracial person.

Robert O'Connor: Robert's background as a social worker, professor, consultant, and presenter on issues of transracial adoption well qualify him for this panel. We look forward to the big picture analysis and specific suggestions he will bring.

Susan Harris O'Connor: Susan was our closing keynote in 2014, sharing a dramatic reading from her book *The Harris Narratives*. She charmed and taught us through her humor and eloquent insights; we anticipate more of the same this year.

Lisa Marie Rollins: KAAN 2011 participants may remember Lisa Marie presenting a monologue from *Ungrateful Daughter* at our conference in Atlanta. Lisa Marie is creatively driven and also passionately devoted to transracial/international adoption education and advocacy. We are pleased to welcome her back to KAAN and include her in this panel.



JUDGE JUDY P. DRAPER ... ROBERT O'CONNOR

Saturday Luncheon Keynote



HOLLEE MCGINNIS

Holley McGinnis is an academic and a leader who has accomplished much for the community in the last twenty years. She is the founder of New York City's Also-Known-As, a nonprofit adult intercountry adoptee organization active since 1996. She worked as the Policy and Operations Director of the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute (now called The Donaldson Adoption Institute) from 2004-2009. In 2007, she wrote a series of thought-provoking articles for *The New York Times* on Relative Choices: Adoption and the American Family (still available online).

Currently pursuing her doctorate at the George Warren Brown School of Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis, she recently returned from a year abroad in Korea as a Fulbright Scholar. She has also studied at Yale, Columbia, and Mount Holyoke College.

McGinnis' luncheon keynote "Strengthening Adolescents' Lives: Youth in Korea's Orphanages" is drawn directly from her recent dissertation research in Korea. We are excited to hear this current information from a scholar who has a true heart for serving the community and who also currently calls St. Louis home.



DAN MATTHEWS DAN AKADAN

Saturday Gala Dinner performer

DANakaDAN is an alternative hip hop artist based in Los Angeles, CA. You may know him from the recent Fung Bros video making the rounds on social media "11 Things About Asian Adoptees." He speaks with two friends while eating a meal in an Asian restaurant and is completely comfortable with both the topic and the camera. Browse Dan's website (dan-aka-dan.com) and you will see further evidence that he is fully versed in expressing himself professionally via many modern media outlets.

Dan recently produced a documentary series detailing his very personal journey with meeting his biological family for the first time, including an identical twin brother he never knew about (who also raps). Dan will share a segment of this film on Sunday morning of the conference.

Saturday night, however, will be all about the music. Join us to hear this Kollaboration performer and artist share his music and story.

DOOREI DRUMMERS

Friday afternoon performers

DooRei, a traditional Korean drumming group based in St. Louis, performs at many community events. The group is comprised of Korean-born Korean-Americans and other locals with ties to Korea and a love of its music.

DooRei has organized several small cultural camps at local churches in the past and is dedicated to sharing Korean music and culture with those who are interested. Members have traveled to training workshops in other states and have even met last year's conference performance group Shinparam. DooRei will share several songs on Friday afternoon, including a song on the kayagum. The group hopes you enjoy their music and even take some time to try out some of the instruments afterwards.

"Lichwick is a star" LA Theatre Review

yellow dress

*By: Marissa Lichwick
Directed By: Desdemona Chiang*



MARISSA LICHWICK-GLESNE

Sunday Closing Coffeehouse performer

"Yellow Dress was born out of an experience I had in December 2006, when I suddenly received a letter from my estranged birth father after twenty one years of living with my adopted family in America," says Lichwick. "I decided to go back to Korea to reunite with my biological family, not quite understanding what it meant to go back as an Ebyoung (adoptee). I don't think I'll ever fully understand my trajectory in Korea, but I'm grateful for the lifetime of stories that came as a result of that visit."

Inspired by Lichwick's life, *Yellow Dress* is the deeply personal story of Rachel, a young Korean orphan, and her experiences as an adoptee in America. It chronicles Rachel's early years on the streets of Seoul, abused and unwanted by her caretakers, and her strange journey to a new and bewildering land when she is adopted and becomes part of a family of ten in upstate New York. A kaleidoscopic one-woman performance featuring over twenty characters, *Yellow Dress* is a tapestry of fantasy, humor, and pathos that delivers a powerful human experience.



Get Involved with KAAN

This is KAAN's 17th year of serving and connecting the community. We have grown and changed in some ways but still pursue the same goal ... to improve the lives of adoptees and their families. This year, we began discernment on a **five-year strategic plan** to guide us to 2020. As this plan solidifies, we will share more with you.

These pages list some great opportunities to participate in KAAN. In addition to those posted elsewhere, you can:

- * Apply for the Advisory Council (*form available on our website*);
- * Share information about KAAN with your friends and family and invite them to attend;
- * Donate to support our work and mission (*gifts are tax-deductible*);
- * Pass on ideas for conference speakers and topics to info@KAANet.org.
- * Complete your conference evaluation at survey-monkey.com/s/KAAN2015eval by July 15.

CALL FOR SESSION PROPOSALS

for

KAAN 2016

Pittsburgh, June 24-26, 2016

**** Submit Aug 15–Nov 1 ****

Details at www.KAANet.org

Some of our best sessions have grown out of conversations at previous conferences. Got a topic you feel should be addressed? Jot down your thoughts and submit a proposal for KAAN 2016. Our theme and other proposal details will be posted on our website by mid-August.

Dear Wonderful You, #FliptheScript: For the Next Generation

Brought to you by: The AN-YA Project, KAAN, The Lost Daughters



(members of the collaborating organizations) who answer the question "What would you say to a younger you?" The purpose of this project is to compile a broad spectrum of adoptee reflections and wisdom as support and encouragement to our youth. This campaign run March–November 2015.

The public may participate in this campaign, via social media, using the hashtags—#FliptheScript; #4theNextGen. Share the videos widely, especially with young adoptees and foster youth. A link to the YouTube channel can be found on the AN-YA Project's page at www.anyadiary.com.

If you are an adoptee who would like to be participate in the series, contact KAAN at info@KAANet.org.



Korean American Adoptee Adoptive Family Network
Box 714, Camp Hill, PA 17001

Dear KAAN Attendees:

Hello. My name is Kimberly McKee. I am an Assistant Professor in the Department of Liberal Studies at Grand Valley State University. My current research project, "Examining the Past, Considering the Future: The Impact of KAAN (Korean American Adoptee Adoptive Family Network) in the Lives of Adult Adoptees and Adoptive Families," will provide insights into how the national organization (KAAN) supports the Korean adoption community, facilitates community building, and complements adult adoptee organizations and initiatives.

There are three main goals of the study:

1. Increase knowledge concerning adult Korean adoptees racial/cultural socialization in childhood and adulthood, including their experiences with KAAN and the adult adoptee community;
2. Foster better comprehension of how adoptive parents understand their child(ren)'s racial/cultural identity and the role of KAAN and its conference in their families;
3. Document the historical memory of KAAN, its effectiveness as a community-building organization, and discuss the organization's future trajectory to meet the needs of the evolving Korean adoption community.

I am particularly interested in capturing the voices of adult adoptees and adoptive parents who have attended at least one KAAN conference. The survey will be available to interested participants from February 2015 – November 2015. The study's participants will be limited to adult adoptees between the ages 18 and 65 who were adopted into American families and adoptive parents between ages 22 and 75. All participants must have attended at least one KAAN conference.

If you are an adult adoptee or adoptive parent interested in participating in the survey study, please access the following links:

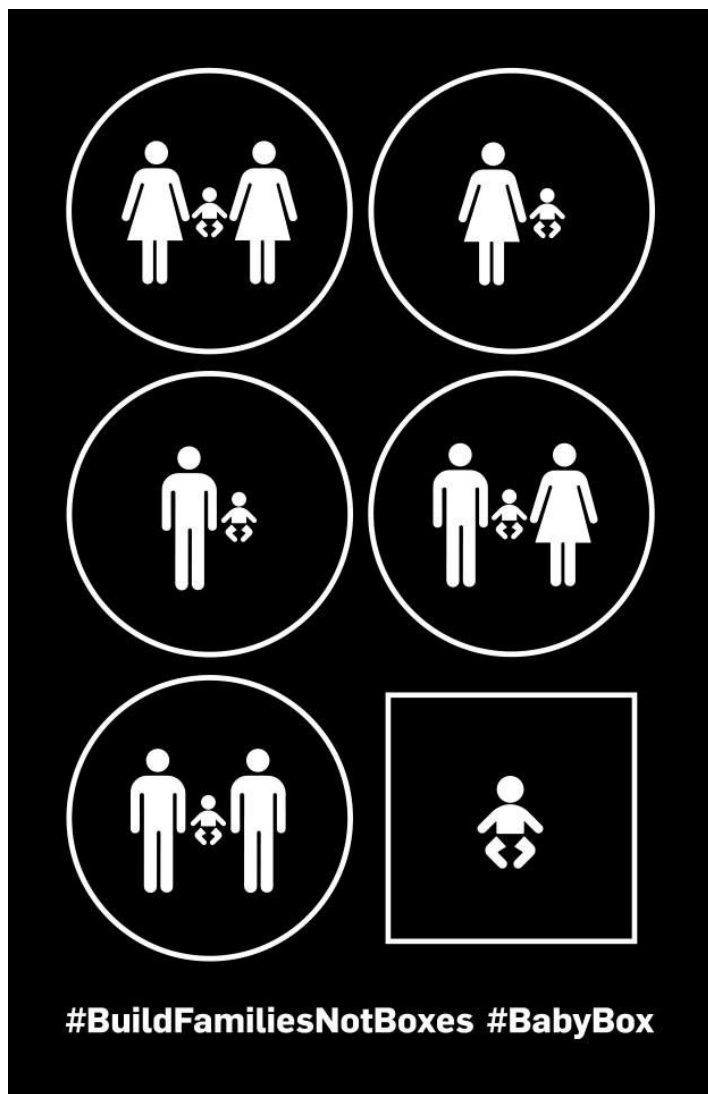
- Adult Adoptee Survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/KAANAdultAdoptee>
- Adoptive Parent Survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/KAANAdoptiveParent>

The survey will take an estimated 30-45 minutes to complete.

For more information concerning the survey, please contact me via email (mckeeki@gvsu.edu) or phone (616-331-8196). For information concerning your rights as survey participants, please contact the Grand Valley State University Human Research Review Committee via email (hrrc@gvsu.edu) or phone (616-331-3197). Thank you in advance for your time.

Best,

Kimberly McKee
Department of Liberal Studies
315 Lake Ontario Hall
Grand Valley State University
Allendale MI 49401



THINKING OUTSIDE THE BABY BOX

by Andrea Kim Cavicchi

outside of his home. This baby box makes it possible for anyone, specifically unwed mothers, to anonymously abandon their children. *The Drop Box* celebrates Pastor Lee's efforts by presenting a narrative of his life, his rationale behind creating the baby box, and the work he is doing to care for his own adopted children and others he temporarily fosters, mainly children who face mental and physical challenges. As described on *The Drop Box's* official website, this film explores "the physical, emotional, and financial toll associated with providing refuge to orphans that would otherwise be abandoned on the streets." The website points out that this "is also a story of hope—a reminder that every human life is sacred and worthy of love."

I want to make one thing clear: I believe that Pastor Lee has a heart full of good intentions, and his unwavering concern, love, and devotion for these children is extremely admirable. He has dedicated his entire life to protecting some of society's most vulnerable children at the expense of his own health. The film highlights the lack of support for Korean children who struggle with physical and mental challenges and Pastor Lee's steadfast efforts to care for those whom he has adopted or fostered. Pastor Lee's commitment to these children is moving.

That being said, I also believe *The Drop Box* presents a limited, distorted, and strategically contrived perspective of the baby box. The baby box is a temporary band-aid fix for systemic problems, and the film does little to address these. *The Drop Box* glorifies the baby box and, in doing so, exacerbates these problems by presenting child abandonments as inevitable while demonizing unwed mothers. What concerns me is

"Imagine a large river with a high waterfall. At the bottom of this waterfall hundreds of people are working frantically trying to save those who have fallen into the river and have fallen down the waterfall, many of them drowning. As the people along the shore are trying to rescue as many as possible one individual looks up and sees a seemingly never-ending stream of people falling down the waterfall and begins to run upstream. One of other rescuers hollers, "Where are you going? There are so many people that need help here." To which the man replied, "I'm going upstream to find out why so many people are falling into the river." – Saul Alinsky, in Shelden & Macallair

INTRODUCTION

On March 3, 2015, *The Drop Box*, a documentary film, was released in select theaters for three days throughout the United States. Directed by American filmmaker Brian Ivie and presented by Focus on the Family, a conservative Christian group, this film tells the story of Korean Pastor Lee Jong-rak who built a "baby box"

that the film does not examine nor even acknowledge any of the economic, cultural, or social factors that have forced many unwed mothers[1] and vulnerable families into relinquishing their children. What is even more alarming is the film's inaccurate and harsh portrayal of unwed mothers as potential baby killers or selfish women who will recklessly abandon their children on the side of the road.

Stephanie Robinette, a Korean American adoptee, personal friend, and advocate of family preservation, included the waterfall metaphor in a recent blog post (journey2motherland.wordpress.com/2015/03/02/move-upstream-build-families-not-boxes). She cogently pointed out that Pastor Lee and his supporters are channeling their energy downstream to fix a problem, which is commendable. However, it is time for us to move upstream to address the root cause of child abandonment and relinquishment. An enormous disconnect exists between *The Drop Box*'s narrative and what adult adoptee, unwed and single mother activists, and advocates are doing in Korea. I do not want to exacerbate the "us versus them" mentality when engaging in dialogue about this film and its related issues. Instead, I believe it would be far more productive to work on bridging this disconnect by engaging in meaningful discussions, moving upstream, and then taking proactive steps toward social justice and the promotion of family preservation.

ADOPTEE SOLIDARITY KOREA-LOS ANGELES

Adoptee Solidarity Korea-Los Angeles (ASK-LA) is one organization that has committed itself upstream by continuing the work that is already being done by adult adoptee, unwed mother, single mother, and original family organizations in Korea. Established just this past January, ASK-LA is a group of adopted Koreans based in Los Angeles, led by a five-person steering committee that is interested in examining adoption issues, generating discussion, and increasing awareness. ASK-LA is not anti-adoption. Rather, its members aim to create space for critical dialogue and refocus attention on the social, cultural, and economic structures that facilitate Korean adoption.

The original organization, ASK in Korea, was established in 2004 by a group of adult adoptees who lived and worked in Korea. Julayne Lee, one of the current steering committee members of ASK-LA and my friend since 2007 when we played on Global Overseas Adoptees' Link's (G.O.A.'L) soccer team together, was one of the original

members of ASK in Korea. Julayne approached me last summer in Seoul and asked what I thought about the possibility of establishing a branch in Los Angeles. This is how ASK-LA was born.

ASK-LA organized a street teach-in at *The Drop Box* premiere in Downtown LA as a way to disrupt and expand the mainstream dialogue around the baby box and film. In conjunction with this action, ASK-LA revived KoRoot's #BuildFamiliesNotBoxes social media campaign, which was started by adoptee Laura Klunder as a way to refocus the media hype around the baby box on family preservation for single parent and economically disadvantaged families. Adoptee Tiemen Hilbers created the original black and white image that reflected KoRoot's aim to redefine the meaning of family in Korea. The steering committee of ASK-LA, adoptee supporters, and allies gathered outside of the theater holding signs and distributing informational flyers that challenged moviegoers to think outside the baby box. Written by ASK-LA and artistically designed by adoptee Hyunju Chappell, the signs and flyers contained facts and statistics that highlighted the systemic problems that *The Drop Box* glosses over.

A woman who attended the movie premiere on Tuesday night asked us, "Why do you want to talk about the struggles of Korean unwed and single mothers when this film is about one pastor's mission to help disabled children?" In my opinion, this question reveals only one of the many knowledge gaps between *The Drop Box* and baby box supporters and those advocacy and activist organizations that support family preservation in Korea.

REFRAMING THE ISSUES

Here are some of the main issues that I believe need to be reframed and why we should think outside the baby box:

Infanticide

"This is a matter of the heart. There needs to be a huge overhaul in our thinking, the thinking of our youth of what life is, and the inherent value. Because if that inherent value of the baby's life is not there, there is always going to be babies dumped in the trash, flushed down the toilet." -*The Drop Box*

The film cites that 60% of the mothers who abandon their children in the baby box are teenagers. They will kill their own babies or leave them on the side of the road if it were not for the baby box.

This citation inaccurately describes, dehumanizes, and demonizes unwed mothers in Korea. According to Dr. Helen Noh of Soongsil University from the Department of Social Work, the average age of unwed mothers who are raising children is 25.1 years, and 77.3% of adult unwed mothers have college degrees. Moreover, according to a *New York Times* article in 2009, nearly 96% of Korean unwed pregnant women choose abortion. Among the 4% who carry their babies to full term, about 70% are believed to give up their babies for adoption. Though illegal, abortion is widely practiced in Korea. Therefore, it is possible to deduce that a woman who carries her baby to full term has considered the possibility of raising it herself. I want to emphasize that abortion is rarely an alternative to abandonment. Relinquishing a child to adoption or leaving it in the baby box is an alternative to parenting. Baby box abandonment is certainly not the best solution. But to some who are unaware of their rights, options, and obligations, it may seem like the only viable one.

Moreover, the number of infanticides has remained stable since the creation of the baby box. The women who abandon their babies in the baby box are not likely the same women who commit infanticide. Women who have serious mental health issues are the mothers who kill their own babies. Even with the existence of the baby box, infanticides continue to happen in Korea. However, one alarming statistical change is that the number of abandonments has dramatically increased since the creation of the baby box and the spike in its media coverage starting in late 2012. In 2008, the year before the baby box was established, 63 children were reported abandoned. In 2013, 225 children were reported abandoned, 208 of whom were left in the baby box.

Abandonments in South Korea

| | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009* | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 |
|--------------------------|------|------|------|-------|------|------|------|------|
| Baby Box Abandonments | – | – | – | – | 4 | 25 | 67 | 208 |
| Non-Baby Box Abandon- | 88 | 87 | 63 | 52 | 58 | 102 | 72 | 17 |
| Total Number of Abandon- | 88 | 87 | 63 | 52 | 62 | 127 | 139 | 225 |

Source: Ministry of Health and Welfare (2013)

*Baby Box first set up in December 2009

Lack of Social Welfare Support

Through the majority of the film, *The Drop Box* draws a link between the baby box and children who face physical and mental challenges.

The lack of social welfare support for families with mentally and physically challenged children is a serious problem. We need to work upstream to address the reasons that these children's parents feel compelled to abandon or relinquish their children for adoption. The Korean government needs to provide greater support and resources for these children and families. This enormous undertaking should not all fall on the shoulders of Pastor Lee. What he is doing is sincere and commendable, but it is only a temporary solution to systemic problems that need to be tackled by the Korean government. My concern is that the film blurs the distinction between the pastor's non-baby box, adopted children, most of whom have physical challenges and Down Syndrome, and the babies who have passed through the baby box. The majority of baby box babies do not have physical or mental challenges despite what is implied throughout the film. According to a pamphlet distributed by Jusarang, Pastor Lee's church, 37 of the 289 babies who came through the baby box had physical or mental challenges. However, it is important to note that premature babies are categorized as physically challenged, which accounts for a large percentage of these 37 babies.

The Drop Box fails to connect baby box abandonments and social and economic struggles that unwed mothers face in Korea. Unwed mothers with children under 12 years old are provided a mere 70,000 won (\$63 USD) a month by the

government, only if the mother earns less than 1.2 million won (\$1,082 USD) a month. According to Korean Women's Development Institute, only 15.6% of 213 unwed and single mother respondents received support from their children's fathers. Fathers are legally responsible for financially supporting their children. However, in order to hold fathers accountable, mothers must locate the fathers, establish paternity, and enter into a long litigation process, which, in most cases, does not result in a ruling favorable to the mother. Lastly, unwed mothers also face discrimination in the workforce and are oftentimes fired on the spot when their status is discovered. Korean unwed mothers may often feel as if they have no choice other than to anonymously abandon their children or legally relinquish their parental rights because of these factors.

Reclaiming Abandoned Children

According to an article published by SBS (2014), 383 babies or children were left in the baby box between December 2009 and February 2014. Of these 383 babies and children, 120 of their parents returned to the baby box to reclaim them.

The Drop Box highlights the number of children who have been abandoned since the creation of the baby box. However, it makes no mention of parents who returned to reclaim their babies a day, days, or any period of time after leaving their child in the baby box. The fact that 120 parents changed their minds, returned to the baby box, and brought their babies home to raise them, suggests these parents did not have the intention of killing or leaving them on the streets to die. To put it another way, if you build it, they will come. The baby box provides women, who are most likely in an emotionally vulnerable state, with a quick, easy, yet *illegal* solution to parenting struggles. I believe that many mothers would exercise other options if the baby box did not exist, such as legally giving up her child for ethical adoption or choosing to raise her baby. The baby box facilitates and encourages illegal abandonments. Abandonment is illegal in Korea. A more constructive action would be to educate expecting mothers on their rights, options, and obligations to their children. Additionally, there will always be mothers who are unwilling or incapable of raising their own children. In this case, I support legal relinquishment at adoption agencies, hospitals, police stations, etc., and legal and ethical adoptions.

Orphans Who are Not Orphans

Following the premiere of *The Drop Box* movie was a pre-recorded panel discussion with director, Brian Ivie; Mary Beth Chapman, president of Show Hope, an internationally recognized voice for orphan advocacy; Kelly Rosati, Focus on the Family's vice president of community outreach; and Dr. Sharen Ford, Focus on the Family's program director of adoption and orphan care. In an interview with WORLD news group, Brian Ivie shared that he "became a Christian while making this film. What I didn't expect is that when I was going to go make a film about saving Korean babies that God was going to save me." The panelists, including two American adoptive parents, urged the audience to follow God's will by supporting orphans throughout the world and adopting them.

In Korean adoptee Susan Cox's essay collection, *Voices from Another Place* (1999), she writes: "Adoptees are usually identified and defined as children. That we mature, grow up and come into our own wisdom is often not acknowledged. We can and wish to speak for ourselves." I am a Korean adoptee who has struggled for ten years to obtain my adoption records from Holt, my Korean adoption agency. I have never even been allowed to touch my file. I

The Baby Box is not the only option.
**Every mother has the right
to raise her child with dignity.**

**Faith
+ Hope
+ Love
=**

**Having compassion
and supporting
unwed mothers
and their children.**

#BuildFamiliesNotBoxes #ThinkOutsidetheBabyBox!

“[Korean] single mothers are often told that it’s selfish of them to want to keep their children, that the kids will be better off with another family.”

**#BuildFamiliesNotBoxes
#ThinkOutsidetheBabyBox!**

Unwed mother families in Korea receive \$64

per month in government support, only if the mother’s income falls below the poverty line (less than \$1090 USD per month).

Let’s demand greater support for unwed mothers and their children.

#BuildFamiliesNotBoxes #ThinkOutsidetheBabyBox!

spent eight years searching for my Korean mother, only to stumble upon what may or may not be her burial site last year. I recognize the challenges she faced as an unwed mother, and the mental health issues that affected my Korean family. I know that I was never an orphan that needed to be saved.

The babies who are left in the baby box are not orphans. Moreover, the baby box is creating a population of people who will never have access to their own information, including personal and medical histories. It is a human right, not a luxury, to know this information. For adult Korean adoptees, birth family searches can be filled with multiple challenges. Some searches may take just a few weeks before adoptees and original families are reunited, while others may span years or even decades and yield few answers. Restricted access to adoption records, incorrect information, and falsified records are some of the obstacles that hinder the reunion process. Children who are anonymously abandoned in the baby box will never have access to their information. Pastor Lee’s intentions are sincere, but the baby box is a temporary solution that facilitates illegal abandonments and grows the population of Korean adoptees who will never have access to their personal histories.

False Dichotomies

“What does the baby box symbolize?” “Life. The baby box is the protection of life.” - *The Drop Box*

In an attempt to reframe the issue of baby box abandonments, I ask why this film presents only two possibilities: life saved by the baby box or death at the hands of one’s mother. What about a third option: life with one’s original family. I believe that the focus should be on promoting family preservation by supporting unwed mothers and other vulnerable families. To start, unwed mothers have the right to raise their children with dignity and should be provided with more economic support than \$63 per month from the government. If we truly value human life, then we need to support families from being torn apart by financial difficulties, social stigma, and discriminatory policies.

Acknowledging a problem is the first step to solving it. Fortunately, a number of Korean and Western media sources have recently recognized and reported on the struggles of Korean unwed and single mother families. One article in *The Korea Herald* (2014) shared, “Unwed mothers lose their livelihood by choosing to keep their children. Ninety-nine percent of pregnant, unwed workers will experience a career break because they feel they cannot work, they face great social prejudice, and they are ostracized by their colleagues.” *Korea JoongAng Daily* (2014) described the case of an unwed mother who applied for a scholarship to study in France. Administrators told this mother that

she could not apply as a ‘nonmarried’ single parent, and they advised her to lie and say she was divorced. Another article in *Christian Science Monitor* (2014) stated, “Single mothers are often told that it’s selfish of them to want to keep their children, that the kids will be better off with another family.”

CONCLUSION

The Drop Box film fails to humanize unwed mothers and empathize with their struggles to raise their children with dignity. I fully support the activism and advocacy work that unwed mothers, single mothers, adult adoptees, and their allies are doing in Korea to prioritize family preservation. These coalitions are pushing for law revisions that would do the following:

- provide unwed and single mother families with greater financial support;
- enforce child support obligations for fathers;
- increase the privacy of the registration system so that only unwed and single mothers can access their registries;
- create an agency that provides counseling for unwed and single mothers so that women are correctly informed about the Special Adoption Law, their options, rights, and obligations to their children;
- make it illegal to discriminate against unwed mothers in the workforce;
- prioritize family preservation over adoption.

One of ASK-LA's street teach-in posters read: "Every mother has the right to raise her child with dignity. Faith, hope, and love means having compassion and supporting unwed mothers and their children." I hope we can collectively move upstream to enact legal reforms, pressure the Korean government into providing greater resources and support for Korean unwed mother families and other vulnerable members of society, and focus on the root causes of family separation. As I mentioned earlier, *The Drop Box* stresses that "every human life is sacred and worthy of love." I am hopeful that this conviction will someday be applied to all members of society, including unwed and single mothers, and that we will empathize with and love those who need our support the most, free from judgment.

MOVING UPSTREAM, HOW TO HELP

What can we do once we think outside the baby box and move upstream? I recommend supporting Korean Unwed Mother Families Association (KUMFA/kumfa.or.kr), an organization started and run by Korean unwed mothers that provides unwed mother families with emotional and material support and advocates for single mother families. KUMFA provides a number of programs and a temporary safe house for single mothers and children in need. (To donate via Paypal: kumfa.volunteer@gmail.com).

KoRoot (koroot.org) is another great organization that serves as an advocate for adoptees rights, unwed mother rights, and the rights of those Korean families who have lost a child or children to adoption practices. Serving as a guesthouse for adoptees visiting Seoul and an NGO that engages in advocacy work, KoRoot is maintained by Pastor Do-hyun Kim, his wife, staff members, and volunteers. (Visit website for donation options.)

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For more information and to follow ASK-LA's #BuildFamiliesNotBoxes #ThinkOutsideTheBabyBox campaign, please visit us on Facebook (facebook.com/AdopteeSolidarityKoreaLosAngeles). ASK-LA Steering Committee: Nicholas Alt, Andrea Cavicchi, Jenna Cho-Ness, Beth Kopacz, and Julayne Lee.

[1] *Unwed mother*, the preferred term of unwed mother activists, refers to women who have children outside of marriage. Discernibly different, the term *single mother* describes all mothers who are single, including unwed mothers, divorced mothers, widowed mothers, etc.

Andrea Kim Cavicchi is a Korean American adoptee, Ph.D. Candidate of Modern Korean History at UCLA, and also holds a concentration in Asian American Studies. She was a Fulbright scholar who worked with the community of overseas Korean adoptee returnees and, by extension, unwed mother organizations during her fieldwork in Seoul, Korea. Andrea is currently completing her dissertation, which focuses on the multiple ways that adoptee returnees practice resistance in their country of birth. E-mail: andreakim@ucla.edu.



PLEASE NOTE

Adoptee-only sessions are marked in red italics.

Schedule accurate as of press time. Check your magazine insert for up-to-date listings and room assignments. Detailed session descriptions begin on page 25.

FRIDAY, JUNE 26

2:00-5:30PM

Registration, Exhibit Hall, Food Truck

4:00-4:30M

Drumming Performance

5:30-7:00PM

Adoptee Mixer (*adv. reservation necessary*)
Community Dinner (*optional, order off menu*)

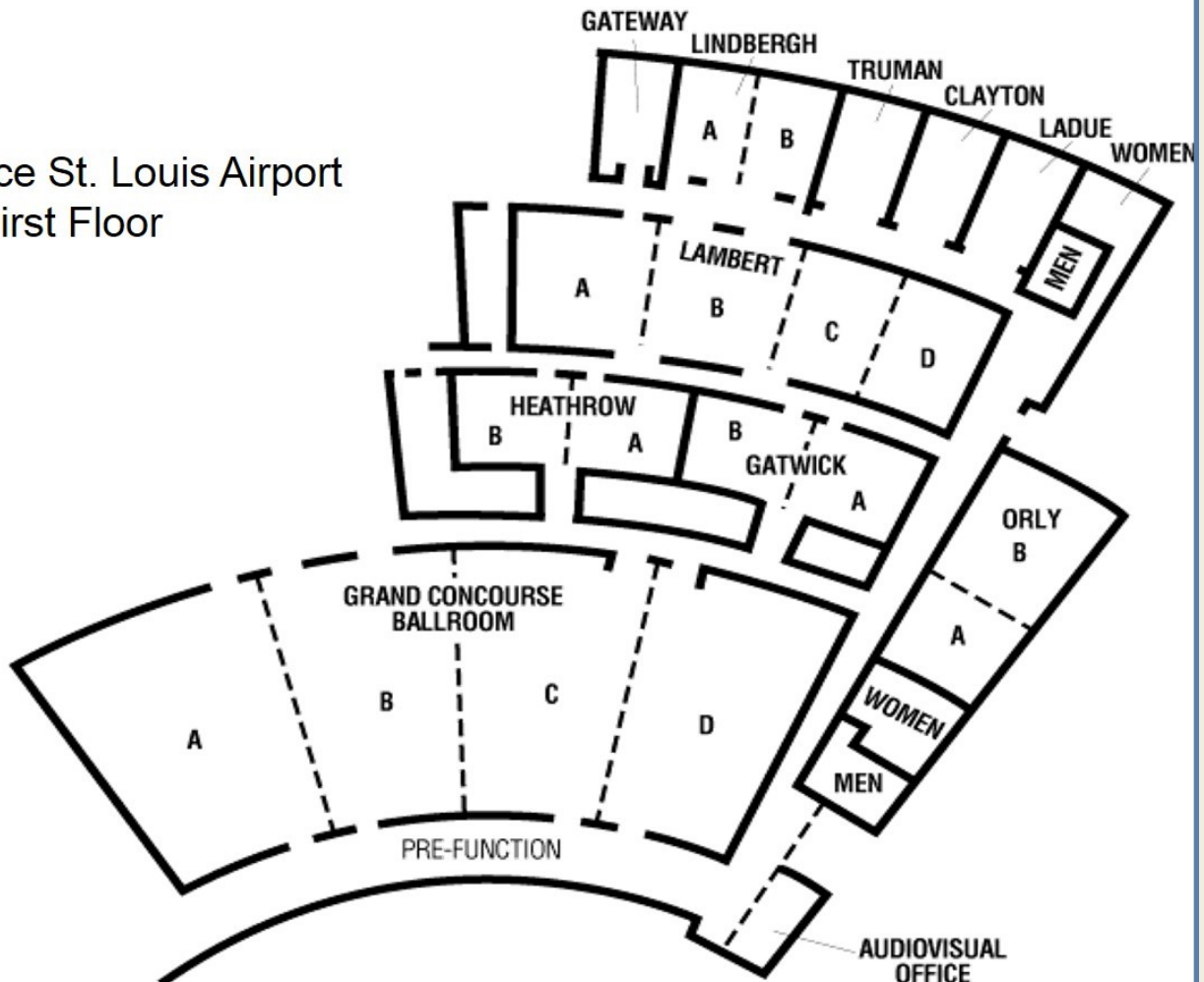
7:00-8:00PM

Registration, Exhibit Hall

8:00-9:30PM

Film Screening/ Q&A — *Memory of a Forgotten War*
Family Film Screening — *Pirates*

Renaissance St. Louis Airport First Floor



schedule

SATURDAY, JUNE 27

7:00-8:30AM Continental Breakfast

- ◆ 7:30 First-time Participant Meetup
- ◆ 7:30 Youth Breakfast Meetup
(Field trip 9-4:45PM)
- ◆ 7:30 Registration & Exhibit Hall Open
- ◆ 8:00 Keynote – #BlackLivesMatter

9:15AM-10:30AM – Session Block 1

- ◆ Origins of Yellow Fever
- ◆ Theology of Adoption
- ◆ #BlackLivesMatter – Pt 2
- ◆ *Birth Family Search*
- ◆ What Happened to Dad?

10:45-Noon – Session Block 2

- ◆ Mental Health Services
- ◆ Voice of the Spouse
- ◆ Geography and Identity
- ◆ Queer Perspective
- ◆ *Adoptees in Reunion*

12:15-1:45PM Luncheon

KAAN Update, Connect-a-Kid Intro
Keynote – Hollee McGinnis

2:00-3:15PM – Session Block 3

- ◆ Culture Camp
- ◆ Initiating Dialogue
- ◆ *End of a Fairytale*
- ◆ Racism and White Privilege

3:30-4:30PM – Session Block 4

- ◆ *Origins of Yellow Fever*
- ◆ My Mind's Blueprint
- ◆ Mother-Daughter Relationships
- ◆ How Words Heal in Adoptee Spaces
- ◆ *Male Adoptee Roundtable*

5:00-5:30PM

- ◆ Support Forums
- ◆ Author Book Signing

5:30-6:00PM

Pre-Dinner Social

6:00-9:00PM Gala Dinner

Meal, Recognitions, Adoptee Group Photo
Concert – DANaKADAN

SUNDAY, JUNE 28

7:00-8:30AM Continental Breakfast

7:30-8:00AM

Prayers and Candlelighting (*drop-in*)

8:30-11:30AM – Youth Activities

- ◆ 8:30 Youth Program Medley
- ◆ 9:30 Dear Wonderful You (Youth discussion)
- ◆ 10:30 Good-bye Party

8:30-9:45AM – Session Block 5

- ◆ Documentary Screening: Dan Matthews
- ◆ K-dramas
- ◆ Parenting Teens
- ◆ *Second Losses*

9:45-10:15AM

- ◆ Half-Hour Break for Bookstore Shopping

10:15-11:30AM

- ◆ Closing Performance – *Yellow Dress* by Marissa Lichwick Glesne

11:30-Noon

- ◆ Bookstore and Exhibit Hall Close



YOUTH PROGRAM (AGES 7-17)



the adoptee mentor team from Connect-a-Kid:

Robin Hong Soon Kim (*coordinator*)

Chris Detrych, Ben Henze, Courtney Huber, Heidi Jaehne, Taneka Jennings, Allen Majors

the program:

The youth program is an integral part of KAAN's conference. Many who attend are young adoptees; the program is open to siblings and children of adoptees as well. Our most important goal is to connect youth to the community. We progress from casual activities to ones of deeper conversation. Friendships are frequently forged between participants and with mentors.

Friday afternoon: youth activity table with snacks

Friday evening: a family-friendly film running alongside the adult documentary

Saturday field trip: Zoo and City Museum visits. These activities are designed to give participants time to get to know one another in a fun, non-threatening environment and to give them a positive experience of traveling in a primarily Asian-American group.

Sunday morning: crafts, games, option to attend Dan Matthews documentary, reading and conversation with adult adoptee contributors to the anthology "Dear Wonderful You" (including social workers), and closing party.



session *notes*

friday @ 2:00pm

Registration and Exhibit Hall

Sign in, pick up conference materials, and browse our exhibit and vendor tables.

Seoul Taco Food Truck and Local Treats

Experience the Korean fusion food truck craze firsthand. The owner of Seoul Taco is graciously providing free tacos to all conference participants. He'll be in the parking lot just outside our registration area. Come back inside to sample local specialties like Fitz's root beer, toasted ravioli, and ooey gooey butter cake. Come early ... food available from 2:00-4:00PM or whenever it runs out.

friday @ 4:00pm

Music Performance

DooRei

Come to the ballroom to enjoy a performance by local drumming group DooRei, comprised of Korean-born Korean-Americans and other locals with ties to Korea and a love of its music.

friday @ 5:30pm

Adoptee Mixer

Ellen Picklesimer

Join other pre-registered/prepaid adoptees for appetizers and a cash bar in Renaissance Ballroom (top floor of the hotel). Pick up your ticket for admission at the registration desk.

Community Dinner Meetup (optional; open to all)

A section of the hotel restaurant will be blocked off for us and everyone will be able to order off the menu and pay the hotel directly. Families can eat together; there will be space for special interest groups such as spouses/partners of adopt-

ees and parents of adult adoptees to connect as well.

friday @ 7:00pm

Registration and Exhibit Hall

Sign in, pick up conference materials, and browse our exhibit and vendor tables.

friday @ 8:00pm

Film: *Memory of a Forgotten War*

Ramsay Liem, PhD

Join us for this special screening which features a subsequent Q-&-A period with the film's creators. *Memory of a Forgotten War* conveys the human costs of military conflict through deeply personal accounts of the Korean War (1950-53) by four Korean-American survivors. Their stories take audiences through the trajectory of the war, from extensive bombing campaigns, to day-to-day struggle for survival and separation from family members across the DMZ. Decades later, each person reunites with relatives in North Korea, conveying beyond words the meaning of family loss. These stories belie the notion that war ends when the guns are silenced and foreshadow the future of countless others displaced by ongoing military conflict today.

Family Film: *Pirates*

Martha Crawford, host

This family film—sort of the Korean complement to *Pirates of the Caribbean*—has been playing at all the Korean film festivals, played at Brooklyn Academy of Music, was a hugely popular film for families in Korea, and is available streaming online with subtitles. Official description: On the eve of the founding of the Joseon Dynasty, a whale swallows the Emperor's Seal of State being brought to Joseon by envoys from China. With a big re-

ward on whoever brings back the royal seal, mountain bandits led by Jang Sa-jung go out to sea to hunt down the whale. But he soon clashes with Yeo-wol, a female captain of pirates, and unexpected adventure unfolds.

saturday @ 6:00am

Exercise at Forest Park

Neil Heitzig, Ellen Picklesimer Heitzig

Enjoy a morning run or walk at Forest Park, a beautiful park in the heart of the St. Louis that is 500 acres larger than New York's Central Park. Transportation will leave from the main lobby promptly at 6:00AM and return by 7:15AM, leaving about 45 minutes for exercise. **Advance RSVP required.** Contact empickles@gmail.com by June 25.

saturday @ 7:00am

Continental Breakfast

Continental breakfast; please wear conference name tag.

saturday @ 7:30am

Youth Breakfast Meetup

Meet up with other conference youth at a special table in the ballroom prior to heading out for the day's activities. (Parents must stop by table to sign in their youth.) Group will travel with adoptee mentors from Connect-a-Kid to fun St. Louis area sites, including the Zoo and the City Museum.

Breakfast Meetup for Adoptive Parents Attending KAAN for the First Time

A brief gathering for adoptive parents new to KAAN. KAAN offers so much value to adoptive parents but it can also be overwhelming and at times disheartening to parents who haven't thought about

these issues and are in the early stages of parenting. Please join us to get prepared for the day ahead!

Registration and Exhibit Hall

Sign in, pick up conference materials, and browse our exhibit and vendor tables.

saturday @ 8:00am

Conference Welcome and Opening Keynote: #BlackLivesMatter and Its Significance to Adoptive Families

Kimberly McKee (moderator), Judge Judy Draper, Lisa Marie Rollins, Robert O'Connor, Susan Harris O'Connor
Given our location in St. Louis, MO for this year's KAAN, we would be remiss if we did not discuss the grand jury decisions in the deaths of Michael Brown (Ferguson, MO) and Eric Garner (Staten Island, NY), #BlackLivesMatter activism, and the police deaths of other people of color. We recognize the importance of discussing issues such as white privilege, racial profiling in policing, and the impact of implicit bias within our families. We also realize that transracial and international adoptive families cannot overlook the role racism and race have in the lives of adoptees. A panel of local and national experts, facilitated by Dr. Kimberly McKee, will examine this important issue.

saturday @ 9:15am

From Geisha to Miss Saigon: Locating the Origins of Yellow Fever

Kimberly McKee

The concept of racialized sexuality produces contradictions on the bodies of female Asian adoptees. As infants they are fetishized as adoptable commodities, while in adulthood, their bodies become attached to legacies of Oriental fantasy. No parent wants to realize that his/her son or daughter will be targeted for any type of harassment based on race or gender. Yet, from my experience as an adult female adoptee and academic research interests, I know that all too often

unsolicited remarks will be said from time to time. By not having conversations regarding this type of racialization within our families, we do a disservice to both our daughters and sons. Teaching our daughters to constructively confront and grapple with this kind of harassment will also equip them to negotiate other situations in which women are targeted. Teaching our sons to problematize and question when such racialized and sexualized incidents occur will also make them more self-aware.

#BlackLivesMatter and Its Significance to Adoptive Families – Pt 2

Judge Judy Draper, Lisa Marie Rollins, Robert O'Connor, Susan Harris O'Connor

A continuation of our opening plenary presentation for those who want to extend the conversation.

The Holy Triad: Re-thinking a Theology of Adoption

Stephen D Johnson

In recent years, there has been a revival of interest in inter-country adoption within conservative, Evangelical Christianity in the United States. This session seeks to deconstruct this dominant theological narrative, while exploring a more thoughtful, holistic framework based on current research. Discussion and dialogue will be encouraged.

Advice on Birth Family Search

*** ADOPTees ONLY ***

Ellen Picklesimer Heitzig, Elizabeth George, Aaron Niggli

A chance for adoptees who want to search or who have begun searching for their birth families to share recommendations, questions, and concerns. Will be facilitated by an adoptee who regularly leads Korean family search trips and others who have been involved with search as well.

What Happened to Dad?

David Amarel, Aerial Ashlee, Matt Schroeder

There's one figure often missing from discussions of birth family origin - Dad. The adoption triad has no room for the birth dad and oftentimes the adoption process has little presence by the adoptive dad. Why? We'll discuss the varying roles and responsibilities of fathers in adoption from birth to parenting.

saturday @ 10:45am

Assessing Adoption Competency in Psychotherapy and Mental Health Services for Adoptees and Adoptive Families

Martha Crawford, Joy Lieberthal, Katie Jae Naftzger, Melanie Chung-Sherman

A panel of adoptee mental health providers discuss the psychological and systemic challenges to finding and engaging in adoption competent therapy and counseling services.

Adopted: Voice of the Spouse

Uhriel Edgardo Bedoya, Mike Tavenner, Jannie Kruse, Jenn Tavenner

Korean adoption combined with adult relationships and marriage create specific and unique complexities. For these two couples, KAAN has been critical in bringing to light issues of privilege and of burden. We will focus on concepts such as control, frustrations and conflict, and our journeys to overcome.

Person, Place, Identity: How Geography Influences Identity Formation

Ellen Picklesimer Heitzig, Mark Hagland, Sook Wilkinson, Margie Perscheid

Midwest Asian Americans are an invisible minority within the mostly coastal U.S. Asian American community. Midwestern Asian adoptees experience yet another layer of invisibility. "Person, Place, Identity" will examine how being an invisible minority within a minority influences identity formation of Asian American Midwesterners and adoptees.

Intersections: The Queer Adoptee Perspective

Erica Gehringer, Michael Burdan, Alex Wager, Kate Zielaskowski

This panel aims to share different experiences and perspectives of people with both queer and adoptee identities. It will also be open to questions or comments from others about our stories. We aim to provide a foundation for conversations about how we can be inclusive in queer and adoptee spaces.

Adoptees in Reunion

*** ADOPTEES ONLY ***

Kimberly McKee

Join other adoptees who have reunited with members of their birth families for a conversation about the gains, challenges, and commonalities of the experience.

saturday @ 12:15pm

Luncheon and Keynote

KAAN leaders will give a status report on KAAAN, followed by a brief introduction to Connect-A-Kid by Courtney Huber.

Strengthening Adolescents' Lives: Youth in Korea's Orphanages

Hollee McGinnis

Overseas adoptees share a legacy with other children who, in the aftermath of the Korean War and subsequent decades after, were cared for in alternative settings. While much attention has been placed on the use of intercountry adoption as an intervention for children in need of care over the past sixty years, during the same period nearly two million children had been cared for in orphanages. Currently, Korea continues to disproportionately rely on institutions for children, with approximately 17,000 children residing in 238 child welfare facilities. This presentation will provide an overview of the current situation of adolescents growing up in institutions including the resilience and challenges these youth face in Korean society, and the complexity of the current

child welfare system in South Korea.

saturday @ 2:00pm

The Processes of Cultural Reconciliation and the Future of Culture Camp

Joy Lieberthal, Martha Crawford

Cultural reconciliation is a complex and multilayered process, more than fluency or assimilation. Relationships between and among diverse cultural norms involve developing proactive attitudes and practices that make community possible. Culture camps have an important role to play in such a process.

Initiating Authentic Conversations Between Transracial Adoptees and their White Families

Aeriel Ashlee, Kyle Ashlee

Talking about race can be scary, but in transracially adoptive families it's also incredibly important. This session will introduce VITAL (Vulnerability, Identity, Trust, Authorship, and Liberation) Dialogues an originally designed approach to engaging in authentic conversations across difference.

The End of the Fairytale

*** ADOPTEES ONLY ***

Jannie Kruse

A discussion time for those who were adopted into homes with abuse, mental illness, addiction, suicide or other issues. A safe space to share adoption stories and feelings with those who have dealt with trauma in the adoptive home.

Racism and White Privilege: Adoption Discussion

Mark Hagland, Susan Harris O'Connor, Uhriel Edgardo Bedoya, Terra Trevor, Jen Hilzinger

Understanding the core concepts of race, white privilege and racism is made more complex and nuanced by the phenomenon of transracial



adoption. A panel of discussants with extensive experience around all four subjects—transracial adoption, race, white privilege, and racism—will guide attendees in a meaningful discussion of these topics.

saturday @ 3:30pm

From Geisha to Miss Saigon: Locating the Origins of Yellow Fever

*** ADOPTEES ONLY ***

Kimberly McKee, Katie Naftzger

The concept of racialized sexuality produces contradictions on the bodies of female Asian adoptees. As infants they are fetishized as adoptable commodities, while in adulthood, their bodies become attached to legacies of Oriental fantasy. No parent wants to realize that his/her son or daughter will be targeted for any type of harassment based on race or gender. Yet, all too often unsolicited remarks will be said from time to time. By not having conversations regarding this type of racialization within our families, we do a disservice to both our daughters and sons. Teaching our daughters to constructively confront and grapple with this kind of harassment will also equip them to negotiate other situations in which women are targeted. At the same time, teaching our sons to problematize and question when



such racialized and sexualized incidents occur will also make them more self-aware.

My Mind's Blueprint

Susan Harris O'Connor, David Amarel (discussant)

In this autobiographical narrative performance, Susan tells the story of how her mind fights to maintain its sanity, integrity, and ability to love as it moves within a society that challenges, and at times, hates, her identity constellation. Following the performance, Susan and David Amarel will co-facilitate an interactive discussion.

Mothers and Daughters: Fragile Relationships

Terra Trevor, Aerial Ashlee, Dawn Downey, Sara Campbell (moderator)

Perhaps one reason women need women friends so desperately is that only another woman can understand from the inside the relationship that a daughter and mother have and the power of that relationship to mold, comfort, irritate, support or devastate one. Within transracial adoption the dynamics shift, bringing issues that are anything but simple. This panel will provide time for heartfelt conversation around these important relationships.

How Words Heal in Adoptee Spaces

Rosita Gonzalez, Amanda Transue-Woolston, Soojung Jo, Michelle Lahti, Grace Newton, Annette-Kasaye, Lisa Marie Rollins

The Lost Daughters website has become the voice of women adopt-

ees. Join a panel of Lost Daughters to see how writing heals and also works to "flip the script" as founder Amanda Transue-Woolston coins the phrase.

Male Adoptee Roundtable

*** ADOPTEEES ONLY ***

Michael Burdan, Stephen Johnson

A chance for those who identify as male adoptees to gather and talk informally about issues and commonalities of their experiences.

saturday @ 5:00pm

Author Book Signing

Stop by the conference bookstore to meet some of our KAAN 2015 published authors and to get your copies of their work autographed.

Support Group Meetups

A quiet place to decompress and process feelings from the day. No formal session ... just a safe place to talk. Separate spaces for first parents, adult adoptees, parents of adoptees, and partners and siblings of adoptees.

saturday @ 5:30pm

Pre-Dinner Social

Head to the ballroom early to mingle and get good seats for the night's festivities. Cash bar available as well as light appetizers.

saturday @ 6:00pm

Saturday Gala

Stacy Schroeder, Kim McKee, DANakaDAN

Enjoy dinner, cash bar, and conversation with your tablemates before

we begin our evening program and festivities. Program will include recognition ceremony, adoptee group picture, a performance by alternative hip hop artist DANakaDAN, and more.

sunday @ 7:00am

Breakfast

Continental Breakfast ... please wear your name tag.

sunday @ 7:30am

Prayers and Reflection

Visit this quiet place for prayer, meditation, or reflection. Come and go as you want ... there is no specific service or structured gathering.

sunday @ 8:30am

Vendors and Exhibitors

Come check out the work other organizations are doing and purchase items from our vendors.

"aka DAN" Documentary Screening

Dan Matthews

"aka DAN" is a documentary series about an adoptee musician's return to Korea to reunite with his biological family including an identical twin brother he never knew about. Dan will discuss the production behind the documentary, emphasizing the role of social media and how it impacted the series.

Hallyu Adoption: Korean Adoptees, Adoption from Korea and Single Mothers in the Korean Wave

Sara Campbell, Michele Miller, Margie Perscheid

Love K-dramas? Ever scratched your head at a portrayal of an adoptee, or wondered if the experience of a single mother was accurate? Hallyu Adoption will investigate adoptees, adoption, and single mothers in popular Korean dramas and film. This is the essential session for everyone riding the Korean Wave.

Parenting Adopted Teens into Adulthood

Katie Naftzger

Parenting adopted teens can be challenging. What does your adopted teen need from you? Katie will address this question and discuss ways to help your adopted teen begin to shift into adulthood.

Second Losses

*** ADOPTEEES ONLY ***

Kerry Bondy, Alysha Flynn

How do adoptees experience the loss of our adoptive parent(s) in addition to the loss of our first or (birth) parent(s)? Panelists will share their experience surrounding the loss of an adoptive parent and facilitate an open discussion about this potential second loss in a supportive, non-judgmental environment.

Youth Program Medley

Robin Hong Soon Kim, Heidi Jaehne, Ben Henze, Chris Detrych, Taneka Jennings

Youth can choose from a variety of options, including crafts, games, and

a chance to watch Dan Matthews' documentary of his trip to Korea.

sunday @ 8:30am

Youth Program: "Dear Wonderful You: Messages for Young Adoptees" Rosita Gonzalez, Amanda Transue-Woolston, Soojung Jo, Mei-Mei Ellerman

"Dear Wonderful You, Letters to Adopted & Fostered Youth" is a powerful book filled with heartening and inspiring letters written by a global community of adult adoptees and adults who were fostered. In this session, youth participants will be divided by age. A panel of contributors will read their letters and reach out to young adoptees, so they know they have a network of adults who "get it," "get them," and have been in their shoes. This program is also appropriate for siblings and children of adoptees, who will deepen their understanding of family members who were adopted.

sunday @ 10:00am

Closing Coffeehouse and Performance

Marissa Lichwick-Glesne

Yellow Dress: A Solo Show

Based on Marissa's life, it is the personal story of Rachel, a Korean orphan, and her experiences as an adoptee in America. It chronicles Rachel's early years on the streets of Seoul, her journey to a new and bewildering land when she is adopted and becomes part of a family of ten, and then her fateful journey back to Korea.

Youth Closing Party

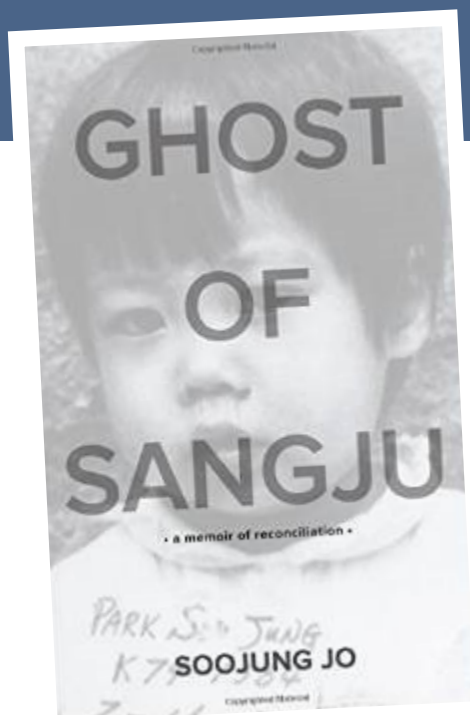
Robin Hong Soon Kim, Heidi Jaehne, Ben Henze, Chris Detrych, Taneka Jennings

Gather with friends and mentors for games and yummy treats.

ST. LOUIS TRIVIA *(continued from page 8)*

- * The Climatron at the Missouri Botanical Garden, built in 1960, was the world's first climate-controlled geodesic dome designed as a greenhouse. Today, it houses a re-created rain forest filled with plants and uses E-feron glass to help it use solar energy more efficiently. The Garden also is the site of the largest Japanese Garden in North America.
- * The first United States kindergarten was started in 1873 by Susan Blow in St. Louis.
- * In 1944, Saint Louis University was the first university in a former slave state to welcome black students and faculty members.
- * St. Louis was the site of the first major horse show in the United States.
- * The first successful parachute jump from an airplane took place at St. Louis' Jefferson Barracks in 1912.
- * Several important aircraft were built or first tested at St. Louis, including the CD-25 Coupe business aircraft (later the AT-9 Jeep in wartime service), the CW-20 twin-engine airliner, the C-76 Caravan, and the C-46 Commando of the Second World War.
- * George Coleman Poage, a runner from the Milwaukee Athletic Club, was the first African-American to win a medal in a modern Olympiad. He won bronze medals in the 200 and 400-meter hurdles during the 1904 Olympic Games in St. Louis. After the Olympics, he stayed in St. Louis to teach at Sumner High School.
- * The first International Balloon Race was held in St. Louis in 1908.
- * The Municipal Theater of St. Louis, also known as The Muny, is the first and largest outdoor musical theater in the United States.
- * In 1917, Clara Bell Walsh hosted a party at her father-in-law's home that has been called the first cocktail party.
- * America's first wine region took root just west of St. Louis in the mid-19th century. Immigrants from Germany's Rhine River valley planted vineyards, built cellars and created a wine culture that flourishes today.
- * Scott Joplin, known as the Father of Ragtime, spent some of his most productive years in St. Louis and introduced his new "ragtime" style to the world for the first time at the 1904 World's Fair.

BOOK REVIEW



by Dr. Kimberly McKee

Ghost of Sangju: A Memoir of Reconciliation. By Soojung Jo. Minneapolis, MN: CQT Publishing, 2015.

Adoption does not end neatly upon the child's arrival into their new family. Rather, adoption leaves an imprint on the birth parents, the child, the adoptive

parents, and the family the adoptee creates in adulthood. Soojung Jo reveals the complexities of adoption in her new memoir *Ghost of Sangju: A Memoir of Reconciliation*. Jo interweaves memories of the conditions that led to her relinquishment, her reunion with her birth mother and extended maternal family in South Korea, life in the United States, and personal negotiations of motherhood.

In bridging the perspectives of Jo and her omma, *Ghost of Sangju* exposes the varied conditions that generate one's adoption and complicates the reunion narrative. Far too often adoptees are given a one-dimensional narrative concerning relinquishment. Through flashbacks Jo constructs a holistic portrait of the circumstances that led to her adoption. In doing so, Jo effectively raises the question of whether adoption would have been considered an option if economic and social supports were available to omma.

This is particularly important when considering omma's life in conversation with contemporary activism for family preservation. *Ghost of Sangju* asks readers to grapple with the question, what does it mean for the adoption community when it becomes clear that relinquishment was a result of a constrained reproductive choice?

At the same time, Jo provides insight into the reunion experience. She includes her initial reactions after receiving emails from her cousin, completing a DNA test to confirm maternity, and exchanging letters with her biological family. By sharing these intimate details, *Ghost of Sangju* does something that many other memoirs do not. Jo allows us inside the most vulnerable aspects of reunion – the communication in the initial moments of reunion when adoptees are at their most raw. Readers witness the *realness* of what it means *to be in reunion*. Reunion is not just a noun in this case. Rather, reunion is a process of its own. Acknowledging how reunion like adoption does not have a finite end is revolutionary as search and reunion is frequently discussed in fixed terms.

These reflections on her birth family are interspersed with discussions childhood encounters with racism. Jo mentions the racial slurs and taunts aimed at her in elementary school. She also recalls her father's anti-Asian sentiment concerning Japanese executives touring US factories. The inclusion of these recollections makes evident how these moments of invalidation have a lasting impact. She powerfully states: "But mostly, I'm

an outsider even though I've grown up in this town just like everyone else. I'm from a different place, and my face never lets me or anyone else forget it. I hate this face" (29-30). This comment underscores the tensions produced by the everyday racism adoptees, more broadly, encounter in their lives. Colorblind rhetoric and notion that "love is enough" does not automatically translate into acceptance nor erase individuals' anti-Asian sentiments.

Linking these seemingly separate lines of inquiry and exploration is Jo's experience with biological and adoptive motherhood. As a mother she must grapple with the messiness of what it means to be a parent. This becomes especially salient when

she and her husband adopt an older daughter from China. She must contend with her own emotions concerning her own adoption as well as deeply engage with the politics of becoming an adoptive parent. Her self-reflexivity reveals her unease at times with how this adoption is impacting her daughter. As a mother, Jo must grapple with how parenthood affects her understanding of self and how entering the adoption process influences her negotiation with one's adopted identity. These questions are central to understanding how *Ghost of Sangju* effortlessly weaves narratives of mothers – birth, adoptive, and the adoptee.

KAAN 2015 BOOKSTORE



Every year, our conference bookstore offers books and other products created by our talented speakers. Profits from these sales go directly to speakers, sometimes with portions donated to KAAAN. It's a great place to shop, get your book autographed, and avoid shipping and handling costs. Please support our community by purchasing these great resources!

In addition to *Ghosts of Sangju*, here are some of the other new items for sale this year:

Dear Wonderful You, Letters to Adopted & Foster Youth, edited by Diane Rene Christian and Mei Mei Akwai Ellerman.

Asian Americans in Michigan: Voices from the Midwest, edited by Sook Wilkinson and Victor Jew.

Visit our store near the conference registration area to view our full selection of items.

HAPAS: moving forward from adoption

by Dawn Tomlinson

The term "hapa" has been picked up by many half Korean adoptees, from a pidgin word for "half", which originated in Hawaii. Its meaning has been debated, and its usage flexible. The recent tour to Korea for half Koreans adoptees was called "Mosaic Hapa Tour 2014", incorporating the word to describe adoptees who are half Korean and half caucasian or black.

When Korean orphans were sent away from their birth country to be adopted internationally, a new definition of what it is to be Korean was created. With an estimated 200,000 adoptees sent from Korea for international adoption across the globe, these Korean adoptees are claiming their ethnic heritage. And of these, a meaningful percentage is Hapa.

But even as the word is newly defined for the previously defined Amerasian adoptees, another group is moving forward: the children of adoptees. Many adoptees raised in non-Korean communities find themselves married to non Koreans. Their children are mixed race, hapas, although not adoptees. This new demographic, I believe, will find themselves with an entirely new identity : Hapas, the children of Korean adoptees. Yet, unlike immigrants coming to America, we adoptees and our children experience a broken cultural tie to Korea.

Early KADs (Korean Adoptees) were mainly Amerasian, and brought into homes which encouraged integration without concern for the birth country connections. We were brought up to be white, with little acknowledgement of our Korean half. There were no culture camps or other activities, and no means to connect to other Korean adoptees, or our birth culture. The closest my mother got to giving me Asian food was the Chung King chow mein in a can. For years, I thought that was pretty exotic.

As a Hapa KAD, and a parent of a twenty year old daughter in college, I have had many years to consider what role adoption has played in my life, and in my daughter's life. After years spent not even glancing at my Korean heritage, I married, and had children. Suddenly, I was filled with a need for my

children to know their Korean roots. It became important not to let this part of my life disappear, and I enrolled them in a Korean adoptee day camp.

From Korean Culture Camp, we discovered a Korean dance group. My daughter, Phoebe, was in second grade then. We loved being with the other families, learning about Korean culture and eating a lot of Korean food. This became a large part of our lives. My daughter was developing a community of friends which centered around Korea. Most of these girls were adopted, and my daughter's life became one filled with talk about adoption, both at home and with her dance community. Unwittingly, in my quest to bring Korean culture to my daughter, I had placed her in a position of being more exposed to adoptees and adoption culture than I had ever been. Yet she was not the adoptee. For many years, this was a conundrum for us.

She attended Camp Choson, and is currently a Day Camp Counselor there, continuing her connections to camp. One of the parents, an adoptee, approached me last year, asking if Phoebe would be returning as a counselor. "Yes," I replied, and this parent expressed how happy she was that her own daughter would be able to have Phoebe as a mentor at camp. Phoebe was like her daughter, the biological child of an adoptee, and also not fully Korean.

It has always been an ethical question for me: How much do I bring my daughter into my personal issues with being a Korean Hapa adoptee, part of my life originating in Korea and part of my life originating in America? How fair is it that she is thrust into this legacy of being a part of the Hapa Korean adoptee experience? She did not ask for this, any more than I had asked to be a Korean Hapa adoptee, sent to America. It is an identity that she has inherited.

She has gained much through this community. There were friendships and sleepovers and performances. She learned how to follow her teachers and how to lead younger girls. She gained poise through numerous performances. We have traveled to Korea more than once, including a drum performance in Gwangju. My daughter has been part of

interesting events and experiences. As a parent, I place a high value on these things. If we are heading towards a global world, then my daughter should be armed with the ability to be open to new cultures and customs.

She has also faced challenges. During camp discussions about being adopted, Phoebe felt awkward. I imagined her sitting there, listening to the conversations about being adopted. I wondered if she saw me in a different light. I wondered how she saw herself, a non-adoptee in an adoptee culture.

Frankly, knowing that she heard those conversations from the lips of adoptees left me feeling exposed. How much could my daughter, who is not an adoptee, understand about the experience of being adopted? Would she gain a sense of increased sensitivity to transracial adoptees? How does it impact our relationship, my daughter and I, each having our own identity in the adoption culture?

Although my daughter is not specifically Hapa, (she is 1/4 Korean and not half), I see a world of increased numbers of people like Phoebe. As the world becomes more global, I see a new identity emerging; an entire culture belonging to the children of Korean adoptees. How they see their own ethnic and cultural identities will open up the next wave of study. Some of their roots lie in Korea; some of their roots lie in America, or any of the other countries to which their parents have been adopted. They are the next wave of Koreans.

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Dawn attended the University of Minnesota's Design Department, with emphasis on Graphics and Textiles. Dawn has been an active member of the international adoption community for years. In addition to serving on the Board of AdopSource as Treasurer, she has served as a parent volunteer at her daughter's traditional Korean dance troupe. Dawn is also the Parent-Workshop Coordinator at Camp Choson and serves on the Camp Choson Board of Directors. She is a member of the Dakota Arts Board and is a bead artisan. Dawn takes a special interest with the integration of the arts into the adoption community. Dawn is an Amerasian Korean adoptee.

Resources For & By Hapas

MOSAIC HAPA TOUR

www.meandkorea.org/hapa-tour1.html

BIRTH SEARCH

The mayor of Paju City (an area near the DMZ home to several American military bases and camptowns) has announced that he will establish an organization that supports birth searches. The group will work with the Paju City Volunteer Center and local municipalities to communicate directly with people in the local villages. To search through the network, contact *Me and Korea's* Minyoung Kim at minyoung@meandkorea.org.

BOOKS

Part Asian, 100% Hapa
Kip Fulbeck

What Are You? Voices of Mixed Race Young People
Pearl Fuyo Gaskins

WEBSITES & ARTICLES

HalfKorean.com
An online community for mixed race Koreans

HapaVoice.com
For those who get asked, "What ARE you?"

KoreanHapa.com
Photos, food, and other stuff to like

MixedHeritageCenter.org
Large database of resources

HapaStories.com
A collection of non-fiction pieces about hapa identity

Homeland Tour for Biracial Adoptees
written by Katherine Kim and Dawn Tomlinson
iamkoream.com/homeland-tour-for-biracial-adoptees

Multiracial/ Hapa Asian Americans
asian-nation.org/multiracial.shtml



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our fantastic hotpots.



WEAPONS OF THE WEAK

by Stephen Johnson

We are walking open wounds,
no scabs to keep
the micro-aggressions out.

A time-lapse of torment and oppression,
Remnants of the war never ended.
Broken.
And fractured.
And forgotten.

Yet, the scars on our mother's skin
Prove our existence.
Her bones ache from the memory
Of a million things
I don't know how to say.

Profits increase the demand
For our separations
We are transactions,
A cause, and a commission.

But they can't sell us all.
The weapons of the weak remain strong.

We refuse to be forgotten.
Our scars are beauty marks
The wrinkles
The cracks
The quivers
They are not signs of weakness
But symbols of strengths
Yet to be discovered

We can't fly,
But we float between histories.
We can't walk through walls,
But we see the invisible.
We are terrified,
But we are not alone.

Pain is like a home-cooked meal,
Meant to be shared
In the safety of good friends

A break in my voice
Is better than only silence
And the only way to change the world
Is to let our stories breath free.

Stephen D Johnson (정은기) was born in Korea, adopted at the age of four months, and grew up in Texas. In 2011, Stephen reunited with his birth family and, in 2014, met them for the first time. To read previous pieces Stephen has written for KAAN, look up the our last three conference magazines on our website under the About Us/History tab. Right Now (2013) and Small Talk (2012) were written specifically for KAAN. Earlier writings Letter to an Adoption Nation (2011) and The Souls of Clear Folk (2010) are listed under the notes section of our Facebook page.

COMING NOVEMBER 2015

#Flip the Script: Adult Adoptee Anthology



#Flip the Script: Adult Adoptee Anthology is a collective writing and art anthology to be published by The AN-YA Project in November 2015. This anthology will reflect a broad spectrum of adoptee points of view through literature and art.

Inspired by the #FliptheScript social media movement, the anthology will be a diverse collection of personal encounters, viewpoints, artistic expressions, and goals for the direction adoptees are headed – both as individuals and as a collective voice encompassing millions of unique journeys. For more information, visit the AN-YA Project website: www.anyadiary.com.

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SOME INTERESTING INTERSECTIONS

A number of KAAN 2015 presenters have submitted items for consideration in this anthology ... you just might see *Weapons of the Weak* again.

In addition, KAAN 2015 speakers Rosita Gonzalez and Amanda Transue-Woolston are co-editors of the anthology and speaker Mei-Mei Akwai Ellerman is the co-founder of the AN-YA Project, the anthology publisher.



First issue, Fall 1997



Fall 2012 anniversary issue



Summer 2003

Korean Quarterly

is your award-winning newspaper reporting on the diversity of the Korean American community!

Korean Quarterly was formed in 1997 by adopted Koreans, 1st, 1.5/2nd generation Korean Americans and adoptive parents. Our mission is to be a voice for people and ideas not represented in the mainstream media and provide independent and alternative reporting on issues of identity, racism, politics and the arts and be a forum for the ideas and creativity of the entire Korean American community.

Korean Quarterly focuses on the place where identity, creativity and culture intersect. From the Twin Cities to Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, Honolulu, Europe, Seoul and Pyongyang, we have been there to give voice to a variety of viewpoints and issues.

Korean Quarterly is a non-profit/volunteer project that runs on the passion of dozens of contributors. Please join us in our efforts by subscribing!

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Korean Quarterly welcomes your ideas, letters, opinion pieces, short stories, poetry, photography, and other prospective articles

speaker bios

David Amarel, Ph.D.

David is a licensed clinical psychologist in private practice in New York City, where he specializes in couples therapy, trauma, and diverse identity issues. David has received twelve years of intensive training in adoptive parenting from Eli (Inbeom) and Lucy (Sunghee). Along with his wife, Martha Crawford, the family of four resides in Brooklyn. David is proud to be a columnist for Gazillion Voices (gazillionvoices.com).

Aeriel A. Ashlee, M.Ed.

As a transracial Korean adoptee raised in Minnesota, Aeriel developed a passion for facilitating healing conversations about race during her graduate studies at the University of Maryland. Specializing in racial identity development, women's leadership and empowerment, and transracial adoption issues, Aeriel has been a scholar-practitioner in higher education for more than eight years. Last year, Aeriel co-founded Ashlee Consulting with her life and business partner, to intentionally foster brave spaces for others to engage in bold conversations. Aeriel's positivity coupled with her story-centered facilitation style makes her a highly dynamic educator, consultant, and social justice advocate.

Annette-Kassaye

Annette-Kassaye is a Québécoise-Canadian transracial adoptee from Ethiopia. She writes for Gazillion Voices and Lost Daughters and recently co-founded Ethiopian Adoptees of the Diaspora. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and a minor in Human Rights Studies from Concordia University in Montréal.

Kyle C. Ashlee, M.S.

Hailing from a small town in Michigan, Kyle grew up with a knack for community development and rela-

tionship building. Throughout his career, he has discovered that engaging in social justice and anti-racism work has made him happier and healthier. Kyle specializes in working with boys and men around bystander intervention, ally development, and positive masculinity. He also specializes in engaging white-identified folks in conversations about white privilege and allyship. Having worked around the world in places like Switzerland, Poland, the Dominican Republic, the United Arab Emirates, and multiple states across the U.S., Kyle brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to his work as a facilitator, writer, trainer, and coach.

Uhriel Edgardo Bedoya

Uhriel is a native of Panama and has lived in the U.S. for close to two decades. He has done business in over 15 countries and has travelled to over 35, including his first trip to Korea in 2011. He returned with his wife Jannie, a Korean adoptee, in 2014 for her birth family search. In his spare time he likes to perform with his classical chorus and volunteers with Big Brothers Big Sisters. He and Jannie reside in Miami.

Kerry Bondy, MS, PA-C

Kerry is an adult Korean adoptee whose participation in KAAAN has included volunteering, facilitating sessions, and organizing bone marrow donor registration drives. She first became aware of the Korean adoption community in 2001 when she traveled back to Korea on the Holt Motherland tour. She currently works as a Physician Assistant at the University of Michigan in Hematology/Oncology.

Michael Burdan

Adopted at the age of three, Michael was raised in Pennsylvania where he later attended college and grad school. Currently residing in Ar-

lington and studying at George Washington University, he has a degree in counseling and experience in the field of mental health and addictions. Michael has attended KAAAN intermittently as a panelist and workshop leader.

Sara Campbell, MSW

Sara is an adult adoptee who has been involved with the Korean adoption community since 2003. She has been to multiple KAAAN conferences and is a member of KAAAN's Advisory Council. Sara has also been added as a staff member of Connect-a-Kid for the Family Outreach department. She has been able to teach, demonstrate, and display a positive aspect of the adoption triad. She has also worked as a mental health professional for Hope Network (nonprofit) organization for the past eight years.

Melanie Chung-Sherman, LCSW-S, CTS, LCPCAA

Melanie is the clinical director for Post-Adoption Services at ChristianWorks for Children in Dallas, TX. She specializes in adoption-related therapy which serves all members of the adoption constellation. She and her younger brother were adopted from South Korea in the 1970s. She and her husband live in North Dallas and have two energetic boys.

Martha Crawford, LCSW

Martha is a clinical social worker, psychotherapist, and clinical supervisor with a generalist private practice in NYC for the past twenty years. She is a graduate of NYU School of Social Work and Advanced Certificate Program in Clinical Social Work. She is an adoptive parent to two children born in Korea, and the current Parent Liaison for Camp Sejong. She has been a columnist with Gazillion Voices magazine and is the author of the blog What a Shrink Thinks.

Chris Detrych

Chris joined Connect-A-Kid as a mentor in April 2015. Currently residing in Chicago, he is also involved with Korean Adoptees of Chicago (KAtCH). Born in Seoul, Chris was adopted to Detroit at 3 months old and spent his formative years in the surrounding suburbs. While attending the University of Michigan, he co-founded a Korean adoptee student organization. The 2015 KAAAN conference marks Chris' first KAAAN event, so he is eager to get involved, attend the sessions, and meet other participants. Don't hesitate to say hi if you see him around.

Dawn Downey

Dawn is an author and essayist, published in journals and anthologies. In her memoir, *Stumbling Toward the Buddha*, she describes the challenges of being an African American raised by a white stepmother. At the other end of her life, as half of an interracial marriage, she and her former husband raised her nephew from age five to fifteen, as his legal guardians. She lives in Kansas City and uses her blog to foster heart-centered conversations about spirituality in daily life.

The Honorable Judge Judy Preddy Draper

Judge Draper was appointed Associate Circuit Judge on April 13, 2004 by Governor Bob Holden. Judge Draper is a founding member of the Missouri Asian American Bar Association ("MAABA") and served as President from 2001-2003 and now serves as Historian and Board Member. Judge Draper is a member of the Woman Lawyer's Association, National Association of Women Judges, and the National Asian American Bar Association. Judge Draper was also appointed Honorary Consul to the Republic of Korea. She is married to Judge, George W. Draper III, appointed to the Missouri Supreme Court in 2011. They have one daughter who is an attorney.

Mei-Mei Akwai Ellerman, M.A., Ph.D.

Mei-Mei, resident scholar at the Brandeis Women's Studies Research

Center, focuses on memoir writing, social activism, photography, and reiki. She has both spoken and written on adoption-related issues. She is working on two memoirs based on her life journey and her two-decade-long search for her origins as well as her adoptive family's history. Founding director emerita of Polaris, leading anti-trafficking and modern-day-slavery NGO, Mei-Mei is deeply committed to address growing industry of transnational trafficking in adoption. She also serves on the board of Chinese Adoptee Links International and is co-founder of Global Generations. She regularly contributes a blog piece to ChineseAdoptee.com on adoption-related issues, Chinese culture, and history for the vast international community of adopted persons, especially the younger generation. Recent publications as co-founder of the An-Ya Project with Diane René Christian include "Perpetual Child, Dismantling the Stereotype, an Adult Adoptee Anthology" and "Dear Wonderful You, Letters to Adopted and Fostered Youth," which Mei-Mei also co-edited.

Erica Engler, LCPC

Erica is the mom of two sons (5 and 8 years old) adopted from South Korea. Erica strives to incorporate Korean language and culture into her family's life. Professionally, Erica is the Clinical Director at Rockford Sexual Assault Counseling.

Alysha Flynn

Alysha is an adult Korean adoptee who has attended KAAAN in previous years.

Erica Gehringer

Erica is a recent graduate of the University of Michigan, where she studied Sociology and Asian/Pacific Islander American studies. Throughout her time there, she co-created an on-campus Korean adoptee group, wrote a thesis on Korean American adoptees' perceptions of Korean American adoption itself, joined a youth adoptee mentoring program, and helped design a class focused on the topics of international adoption. She plans to

attend graduate school in the near future to continue her work and research as an adoption scholar.

Elizabeth George

Elizabeth was adopted from Korea at the age of four months and was raised in Springfield, Illinois. Growing up, she enjoyed playing sports and attending Korean culture camp. Over the years, Elizabeth has loved visiting Korea for homeland tours, study abroad, and vacation. She graduated from the University of Illinois with a Bachelor's in Education and a Master's in Curriculum and Instruction. Teaching kindergarten, first grade, and fifth grade has been her passion. Currently she resides in Evansville, Indiana with her husband Ron and their dog Toby.

Rosita Gonzalez, MS in Communication Research

Feminist columnist for the *Lost Daughters*, Rosita is a transracial, Korean-American adoptee. She was adopted in 1968 at the age of one through Holt International. Her road has been speckled with Puerto Rican and Appalachian history. While quite content with her role as a "Tennerican," Rosita is now processing her biological roots through ceramics, writing and photography. With the help of G.O.A.'L., she visited Korea in August 2014. She shares her adventures as an adoptee and parent on her blog, *mothermade*. She has also joined the *Dear Wonderful You* project aimed at adopted tweens and teens.

Mark Hagland

Mark is an adult Korean adoptee. He was born in South Korea in 1960 and adopted in infancy by parents of Norwegian-American and German-American descent. He was raised in Milwaukee, WI, and attended the University of Wisconsin (BA) and Northwestern University (MS-Journalism). He has spent 15 years in public spaces discussing and presenting on topics related to transracial adoption, including 14 years' participation in the KAAAN Conference. He lives and works in Chicago.

Ellen Picklesimer Heitzig, MSW, LMSW

Ellen was adopted when she was five months old and grew up in central Illinois with her younger sister, also adopted from Korea. She received her master's degree in social work from Washington University in St. Louis and is currently a district social worker with the City of St. Charles School District. She is also grateful to be able to give back to a community that has given her and her family so much insight into adoption and Korean culture. Ellen is currently the social worker for Sejong Cultural Experience Inc. and travels on the annual Korea trip each year. In this position, she works with adolescents and has facilitated biological family reunions. Ellen was asked to serve as the St. Louis area coordinator for KAAN 2015 and is thrilled to show off "The Lou" and be a part of something so remarkable.

Ben Henze

Ben was adopted at the age of 4 from Taegu, South Korea. He currently resides in Chicago and is involved in the Chicago Connect-A-Kid program. Outside of work, Ben likes work out and supports all Chicago professional teams.

Jen Hilzinger

Jen and her husband have three children - two they adopted from China and South Korea and one born to them. Their children are 20, 17 and 9. Jen has participated in KAAN Conferences for over ten years in many capacities. Currently she serves on the Advisory Board for KAAN.

Courtney Huber

Courtney previously served as the Director of Marketing for Connect-A-Kid and recently accepted the position as CEO of Connect-A-Kid alongside with their President, Robin Kim. Courtney has been active in Connect-A-Kid for 2 years and previous to that helped to form the first Asian American Employee Resource Group at her previous employer, Discovery Communications, and helped to form the first Asian Pacific Islander Club at her alma mater, Salisbury University. She served as a

counselor and attendee at Camp Muji-Gae at the Parsons Child Campus in Albany, NY. Courtney was born in Busan, South Korea, raised in Sparks, MD, and currently resides in West Palm Beach, FL.

Heidi Jaehne

Heidi was adopted at the age of 11 months from Korea. She returned to Korea for her first trip home in 2012 with the Journey program and returned in 2013 to help coordinate on the tour. She attended her first, official, adoptee gathering (KAAN in 2013 in Grand Rapids, MI) as a youth counselor volunteer and presenter for Connect-a-Kid (CAK). Heidi has been the Director of Mentor Recruiting for CAK since the program began in 2012, is a mentor for the Orlando/Tampa CAK team, and has returned to KAAN to help coordinate this year's youth program.

Taneka Jennings

Taneka joined Connect-A-Kid as a mentor in February of 2015. She is thrilled that Connect-A-Kid and Korean Adoptees of Chicago (KAtCH) can partner to make this great opportunity a reality for Chicago-area adoptees and adoptive families. Taneka has been an active member of KAtCH since 2009, currently serving as its President. She resides in Chicago and works in non-profit policy and strategic planning. Her diverse interests include singing, dancing, running, cooking and artistic endeavors, mentoring and volunteering in the community. She enjoys opportunities to meet and connect with other adoptees and adoptive families, building meaningful relationships in the community. Taneka grew up in New Jersey and has one older sister, who is not adopted.

Soojung Jo

Soojung was adopted from South Korea at age 3 and raised in Kentucky. Soojung lives and writes in Southern California with her husband and four children (three biological, one adopted). She was reunited with her first family in 2013 and is now learning to navigate post-reunion life with both Korean and American families.

Stephen D Johnson 정은기, BSW, MA

Stephen is an adoptee, activist and self-identified Evangelical. He studied social work at Baylor University and international development at Eastern University's School of Leadership and Development. Stephen and his partner currently reside in New Haven, Connecticut.

Robin Hong Soon Kim

Robin Kim joined the board of Connect-A-Kid at the end of 2014 and has since taken on a leadership role with the operating organization as President along with Courtney Huber as CEO. As the famous commercial says: "I'm not only the President, but also an active mentor as well" with Connect-a-Kid's second Chicago-based team. Along with Connect-A-Kid, Robin has been active in the adult Korean adoptee community as Treasurer of Korean Adoptees of Chicago (KAtCH). Professionally, Robin works for Wells Fargo where she has spent fifteen years in financial forecasting and analysis and, most recently, project management. She is the chair of the local Diversity & Inclusion Council, president of the local Volunteer Chapter and helped start the local Asian employee affinity group. Robin grew up in northern Iowa, the youngest of five siblings and currently resides in Chicago.

Jannie Kruse

Jannie was adopted at the age of two from Korea. She returned to Korea for her first trip home in 2011 with her husband Uhriel. She attended her first KAAN in 2012 in Albany, NY and it was a revelation to spend time with other adoptees where often words were not needed in order to be understood. She then became a presenter for KAAN 2013 in Minneapolis, MN and is looking forward to reconnecting with everyone in St. Louis.

Michelle Lahti, BA

Michelle is an adoptee, and a contributor at Lost Daughters. Born and adopted in the U.S., she grew up during the closed-adoption era and has been in reunion for three years. She and her husband are parents to three sons

through birth and a daughter through international adoption from Korea.

Marissa Lichwick-Glesne, MFA

Marissa is an actress based currently out of Chicago. She received her MFA in Drama from the University Washington and has appeared at numerous theatre around the country. Favorites include Goodman Theatre, Guthrie Theatre, Denver Center, Steppenwolf, Court Theatre, and the New York Fringe Festival, where *Yellow Dress* made its east coast premiere. More at www.marissalichwick.com.

Joy Lieberthal, LCSW

Joy is a Korean adopted social worker and clinician from New York. She has been active in the adoption community for over fifteen years starting as a policy analyst at the Adoption Institute to working in post-adoption for a private adoption agency. She has been president of Also-Known-As in NYC and created their long running mentorship program.

Deann Borshay Liem

Deann has over twenty years of experience working in development, production and distribution of independent documentaries. She is producer, director, and writer for the Emmy-Award-nominated documentary *First Person Plural* (Sundance, 2000) and the award-winning film *In the Matter of Cha Jung Hee* (PBS, 2010); Executive Producer for Spencer Nakasako's *Kelly Loves Tony* (PBS, 1998) and *AKA Don Bonus* (PBS, 1996, Emmy Award); and Executive Producer for *On Coal River* (Silverdocs, 2010) by Francine Cavanaugh and Adams Wood. She served as Co-Producer for *Special Circumstances* (PBS, 2009) by Marianne Teleki which follows Chilean exile, Hector Salgado, as he attempts to reconcile with former interrogators and torturers in Chile. She was the former director of the Center for Asian American Media (CAAM) where she supervised the development, distribution and broadcast of new films for public television and worked with Congress to support minority representation in public media. A Sundance Institute Fellow and a recipient of a Rockefeller Film/Video Fellowship, Deann is the direc-

tor, producer and writer of the new feature-length documentary *Geographies of Kinship - The Korean Adoption Story*.

Ramsay Liem, PhD

Ramsay is professor emeritus of psychology, Boston College, past co-coordinator for the Asian American Studies Program, and visiting scholar in the Center for Human Rights and International Justice. He is also a co-founder of the Ignacio Martín-Baró Fund for Mental Health and Human Rights, a project of the CHRIJ. He has conducted oral histories with Korean American survivors of the Korean War and directed the multi-media project *Still Present Pasts: Korean Americans and the "Forgotten War"* (www.stillpresentpasts.org) based on this research. *Still Present Pasts* has been shown at fourteen sites in the U.S. and South Korea. He is currently co-director (with Deann Borshay Liem) and executive producer for the award-winning film *Memory of Forgotten War*. His latest publication is "When a Fireball Drops in your Hole: Biography Formed in the Crucible of War" (in G. Yoo (Ed.), *Koreans in America: History, Culture and Identity*. Ch. 40. San Diego, CA: Cognella Academic Publishing, 2012).

Hollee McGinnis, MSW, PhD Candidate

Hollee is a prominent speaker, writer, and community organizer on intercountry and transracial adoptions. She is currently a PhD candidate in social work at Washington University in St. Louis. Her dissertation, funded by the Korea Foundation and U.S. Fulbright, examines the mental health and academic outcomes of adolescents in orphanages in South Korea. Prior to returning to school she was the policy director at the Donaldson Adoption Institute where she headed a national study on adult adoptees' adoption and racial identity. In 1996 she founded Also-Known-As, Inc., a non-profit adult intercountry adoptee organization in New York City.

Kimberly McKee, PhD

Kimberly is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Liberal Studies at Grand Valley State University in

Grand Rapids, MI. Her current book manuscript, tentatively titled *Markets, Children and "Love": Interrogating the Transnational Adoption Industrial Complex*, interrogates the institutional practice of international adoption and traces the origins of what she terms the transnational adoption industrial complex. Her second project explores how racialized and sexualized depictions of Asian/Asian American women circulate within the U.S. as a result of American militarism abroad and its impact on the female adoptee body. She is currently KAAN's Assistant Director and serves on the Advisory Council.

Allen Majors

After leaving Korea in 1961, Allen was raised with my adoptive family on a farm in rural Illinois. His connection to the adoptee community is primarily through group KAtCH, the Korean Adoptees of Chicago, where he served as an executive board member for several years. The adoptee community is a second (third?) family to him, and he feels fortunate to have many adoptee friends in the USA, Europe, and Korea. He is also grateful to be able to volunteer my time and energy in support of other adoptees and adoptee causes. His professional vocation involves negotiating labor contracts and representing clients in adverse employment situations. Travel and travel photography are among his interests. His three sons and two daughters are out of college.

Dn Matthews (DANakaDAN)

DANakaDAN (<http://dan-aka-dan.com>) is an alternative hip hop artist based in Los Angeles, CA. He recently produced a documentary about meeting his biological family including an identical twin brother he never knew. He's also the director of productions at ISAtv where he works alongside influential Asian American entertainment groups Wong Fu Productions and Far East Movement to develop content for a digital network. He's recently put out an album, "Stuntman," discussing identity, addiction, and adoption. It's a companion piece to his adoption documentary "aka DAN."

Michele Miller

Michele is the mother of seven year old Korean adoptee Dane Won Seok. They live in northwestern Illinois and enjoy spending time with family and friends. In her professional life, Michele is the director of marketing and sales for a senior supportive living community.

Katie Jae Naftzger, LICSW

Katie, a Korean adoptee, has worked in the adoption community for more than fifteen years. As an adoption therapist, Katie sees primarily adopted teens, adults and adoptive parents. She has also led online and local workshops for parents of adopted teens and “tweens,” and often talks about empowerment. Learn more about Katie’s work at <http://adoptiontherapyma.com>.

Aaron Niggli

Aaron is a 23-year-old Korean-American adoptee and recent graduate of Southern Illinois University of Edwardsville with a degree in Graphic Design. He works at a small design shop called Aggressive Graphics. In his spare time, he likes to take photos, ride his bike, and spend time with friends and family. He was fortunate enough to come in contact with the founder of Sejong, Mrs. Haekyung Jo. She and other colleagues directed Aaron on a path that has led him to meet his biological mom in Korea. His return journey to Korea is one that has changed his life.

Robert O’Connor, MSW, LGSW

Founder and principle trainer at TransracialAdoptionTraining.com, Robert has been leading transracial adoption training sessions and training engagements for more than eighteen years. He is a highly sought-after child welfare and diversity consultant serving county, state, federal, for-profit and non-profit entities. Robert is an adult transracial adoptee of African-American descent. He and his older brother experienced multiple failed adoptions and foster care prior to being transracially adopted at the

age of four. He grew up as part of one of the first generations of transracial adoptive families. He has used his life experiences to move from state ward to state ward administrator, from special ed. student to college professor, and from cultural isolation to practice innovation.

Susan Harris O’Connor, MSW

Susan is a nationally known solo performance artist and author of *The Harris Narratives: An Intropective Study of a Transracial Adoptee*. She is also a professional coach/consultant and director of quality assurance and adoption services at Children’s Services of Roxbury. In 2014 Ms. O’Connor received the Outstanding Practitioner in Adoption Award from St. John’s University.

Benjamin Kim Oser

Benjamin, born in Seoul and raised in Central New Jersey, has had experience and opportunities to learn and dissect the intricate relationships with identity and self-awareness, as it relates oneself in the Korean community and the broader community. During graduate school he became self-aware of his identity but wasn’t satisfied with just the written materials and set off to immerse himself in the culture by moving to Korea and teach English. Having returned in 2012, Benjamin has been active in Camp Sejong, a cultural heritage camp for children and young adults to engage in and learn Korean culture. In conjunction with the leadership staff of the Sejong Cultural Education Corp. He directs camp for Camp Sejong.

Margie Perscheid, MS

Margie Perscheid is the adoptive parent of two young adults, both of whom were adopted from Korea as infants. She was a co-founder of DC-based Korean Focus, is an advisor for KAA and SKAN, and blogs occasionally at Third Mom.

Lisa Marie Rollins

Lisa Marie is a writer, playwright, solo performer and reproductive justice organizer. She has been a commentator on CNN, HuffPostLive, NPR and is one of Colorlines’ “Innovators to Watch” for her work in reproductive justice / global transracial adoption. As Founder of AFAAD, Adopted and Fostered Adults of the African Diaspora, Lisa Marie helped build one of the first organizations to focus on the needs of Adult Adoptees of African descent. Lisa Marie holds an M.A. in Cultural Studies & an M.A. in African Diaspora Studies from University of California Berkeley. Her future dissertation work focuses on the (de)construction of black women’s bodies in the discourse of domestic and international adoption. She is author of the acclaimed solo show, *Ungrateful Daughter: One Black Girls Story of being adopted by a White Family... that aren’t Celebrities*. She is former Poet in Residence for June Jordan’s Poetry for the People at U.C. Berkeley, a VONA Writing Workshop alum, and a Callaloo London Writing Fellow. She is currently finishing her poetry chapbook, “Anchoring the Compass” and writing on her new play, “TOKEN”. She is a 2015-2016 Artist-in-Residence at Brava Theater Center for Women in San Francisco. lisamarierollins@gmail.com

Rachel Hye Youn Rupright

Rachel (MSW, University of Albany; undergraduate, James Madison University) is a Korean adoptee raised near Binghamton, NY. She currently serves as KAA’s registrar/speaker coordinator and is a member of the Advisory Council. She lives and works in Albany.

Matt Schroeder

Matt is married to Stacy Schroeder (KAA’s Executive Director) and is the proud father of two adoptees, Nicholas and Allison. He has thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated the educational and networking opportunities afforded to him by KAA and is excited to share his experiences with and learn from other adoptive dads and adoptees.

Stacy Schroeder

Stacy is the president and executive director of KAAN and lives with her family in Pennsylvania. She also coordinates Ta-ri, a local group that brings together those with ties to Korea for cultural and community-building activities. In 2007, she organized a weeklong camp for young adoptees and their families. Stacy's previous nonprofit experience includes serving as a full-time camp director, working at a library, and co-authoring a book. It brings Stacy joy when bonds forged at KAAN continue to flourish and bring support throughout the year, including for her son and daughter, who are teen adoptees themselves.

Michael Stanley

Michael is the treasurer for KAAN. He was adopted from Korea when he was six and grew up with his sister Susan, also a Korean adoptee, and parents Joyce and Wray. He is a certified financial planner with Morgan Stanley and board member of Ta-ri, a group celebrating Korean culture and community in south central Pennsylvania. He lives in Elverson, PA.

Jenn Tavenner

Jenn is an adult Korean adoptee. She was born in Pusan, South Korea. This will be her sixth KAAN conference and she is excited to share her experiences. She currently lives in Pennsylvania with her husband and two children.

Mike Tavenner

Mike is a facility manager working in Malvern PA, married to the beautiful Jenn Tavenner. We have two beautiful children. We enjoy cooking, crossfitting, and hanging out around the house.

Amanda H.L. Transue-Woolston, MSS, LSW

Amanda is an author, speaker, activist, and licensed social worker who serves children and families as a therapist and consultant in the behavioral health field. She has served the adoption and foster care communities through individual and family clinical work, group work, writing and presenting, and working for positive policy change. Her writing and presentations have reached broad audiences through multiple books, magazines, major news and radio interviews, and conferences, and she has engaged with legislators at the state and congressional levels on adoption policy. You can find her writing in various publishing corners of the adoption world, but mostly at *Gazillion Voices Magazine*, *Social Work Helper*, *Lost Daughters*, and her personal blog, *The Declassified Adoptee*.

Terra Trevor

Terra (Western Band Cherokee, Delaware, Seneca) is a mother, grandmother and a widely published author whose work is shaped and infused by her identity as a mixed-blood in white and American Indian societies. With her husband she raised three children, who are now grown, two of whom were adopted

from Korea. Terra's memoir "Pushing up the Sky," published by KAAN, is widely anthologized.

Alex Wager

Alex is a working animator and designer in NYC where he has worked for companies such as Tiffany's and Diane von Furstenberg, and is currently directing and animating a short film. He has also been involved with many adoptee organizations over the years, most recently at Camp Mujigae where he served as Co-Director in 2014.

Sook Wilkinson, PhD

Born and educated through college in South Korea, Sook has worked as a clinical psychologist in Michigan for almost 40 years. She is the author of *Birth is More than Once: The Inner World of Adopted Korean Children* and the primary editor of *After the Morning Calm: Reflections of Korean Adoptees*. Her new book, *Asian Americans in Michigan*, is released in 2015.

Kate Zielaskowski, MS

Kate is an adult adoptee who was adopted from Seoul when she was five months old. She is a research project coordinator who lives in the Bronx with her wife and two dogs.

Many thanks to our speakers for volunteering your time and expertise to the community. Your voices are part of what makes KAAN strong.

If you are interested in applying to be a speaker at KAAN 2016, see page 14 or visit www.KAANet.org. Proposal forms will be posted in August 2015.

Thank You . . .

To all of this year's speakers and presenters (pages 37-42)

To this year's youth planning team and adoptee mentors (pages 4, 24)

To all of KAAN's volunteer staff and leadership (page 4)

We send a very special thank you to Korean Adoption Services (KAS) and to the Korean Consulate in New York for their generous support of our work.

We also express deep gratitude to these additional contributing individuals and organizations, businesses, advertisers, exhibitors, and vendors:

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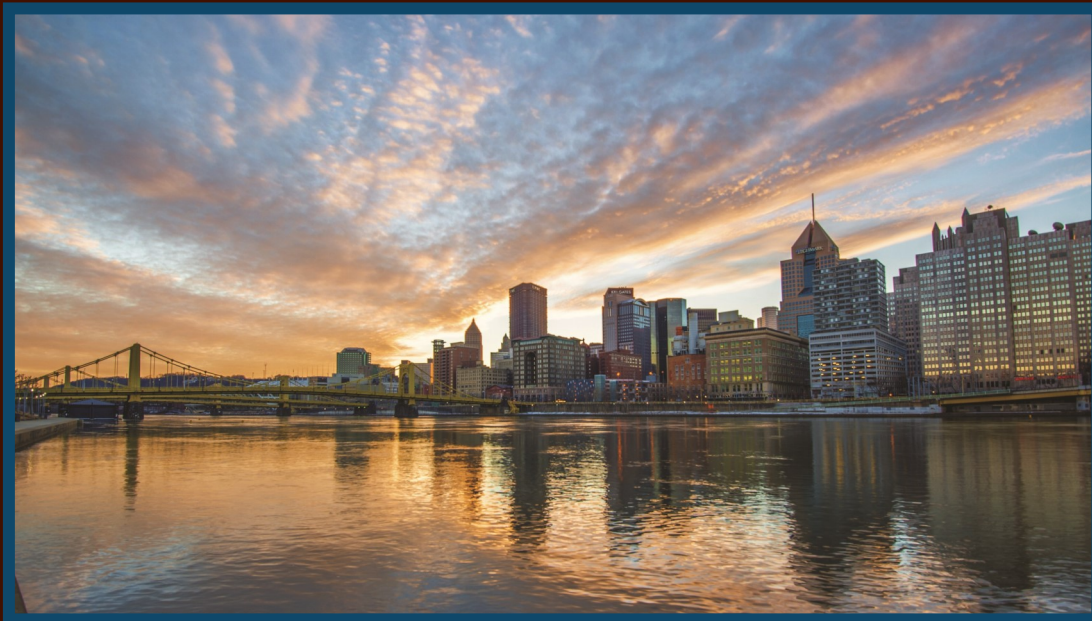


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