

NK Lounge

Conductor Who Made the Whole

Factory Cry



December 24th, it was the night of Kim Jungsook (Birthmother of Kim Jung-Il)'s birthday.

“Loyalty Singing Assembly” was in progress at a cultural center of a North Korean factory.

As soon as the regional administrator and a party official were seated, the assembly began.

Directors from each office were all nervous, for the first place meant a certificate of award, and the last place meant becoming the subject of criticism for the next whole year.

The MC introduced the singers from the design team office: “Next, the design team will be singing ‘Dandelion of Josun,’ a song that praises comrade Kim Jungsook, the mother of Josun.”

After the MC stepped down, the design team singers started to sing following their conductor's lead: Warm Spring day, so beautiful~~~

When the song built itself up to its refrain, the conductor, who was the design team's superintendent, suddenly wiped his nose with his hands. Seeing this, the singers followed suit by wiping their noses as they kept singing: Dandelion, dandelion, dandelion of Josun...

Then, the regional administrator and the party official, who were watching the performance, wiped their noses as well.

Every factory worker wiped his nose... (Louis Jung)

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We receive comments and suggestions

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NK in USA

North Korea story
by NK defectors in
the U.S.



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About NKUS

- Purpose Statement

North Korean Refugees in USA (NKUS) is a not-for-profit organization founded in September of 2011 by a group of North Korean refugees settled in the United States and people interested in North Korean human rights. NKUS supports market economy and free democracy and aims to aid in the resettlement of North Korean refugees and take actions that are helpful to the reunification of the Korean peninsula.

- Plans

To help improve human rights situation and spread democracy in North Korea

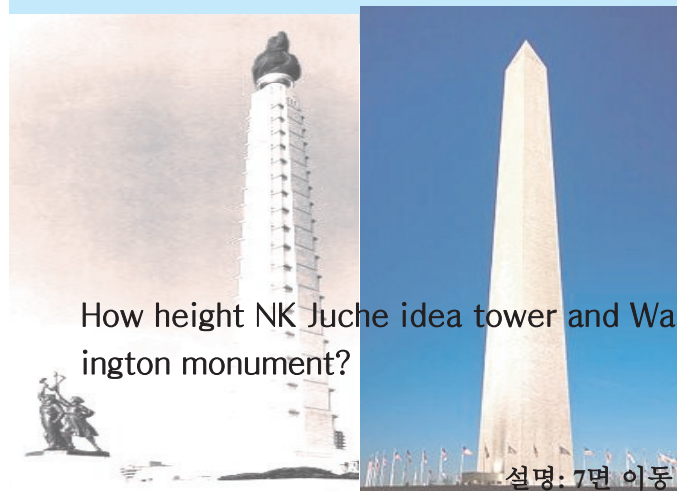
To aid in the resettlement of North Korean refugees in America

To spread international news inside North Korea and to help the world gain a better knowledge of North Korea

- Background

As a result of the passage of North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004, North Korean defectors started to enter the United States as refugees. So far, more than a hundred North Korean refugees have resettled in the U.S, and they are starting to become a new social class in America. As the North Korean refugees experience democracy and exercise their freedom and rights in America, they realize the gravity of human rights situation in North Korea and the evil of the North Korean regime.

As a result, the North Korean refugees start to consider it as their own mission to actively help improve the human rights situation in North Korea. It is now time that North Korean refugees cooperated with other American citizens interested North Korean human rights issues to create a network that can speak for the world toward North Korea.



NK NEWS

1) “We Know Who Kim Taehee is!”

A couple of days ago, I discovered something new while on the phone with a North Korean resident who lives by the Chinese and North Korean border.



Q: “Who are actors most famous?”
A: “The actors who were cast in ‘Iris’, Lee Byunghun and Kim Taehee. I also know that they received the KBS excellence in acting awards in 2009.”

This North Korean resident was talking of South Korean celebrities such as Bae Yongjoon, Jang Donggun, Lee Dahae, Choi Jiwoo, Hyunbin, and Kim Taehee.

She picked Lee Dahae as the best actress, and Jang Donggun and Bae Yongjoon as the best-looking actors. “In Pyongyang, the South Korean drama ‘Iris’ is very popular,” she said, “The love story between Lee Byunghun and Kim Taehee in the series touched the hearts of teenagers in Pyongyang”.

She said South Korean dramas’ main audience in North Korea is North Korea’s privileged class. * They save the South Korean dramas in a USB and watch them later. They used to watch them on CDs in the past, but people prefer a handy USB nowadays. A 8GB USB is currently sold for \$15 dollars.

Apparently, even a Pyongyang prosecutor’s office prosecutor, a former Kim Jung-Il’s bodyguard, tells his relatives, “If you have something good, let’s watch it together.” However, the fact that these high-ranking officials watch South Korean dramas does not mean that they are fond of South Korea. are simply enjoying a little taste of advanced culture at most. Rather, they are concerned that they will lose control as residents start to realize the difference between South and North Korea watching these shows.

* In an attempt to block information from outside, anyone found watching South Korean dramas can be sentenced up to 8 years by Kim Jong-Un regime. Ironically, however, the main audience of South Korean dramas in North Korea is the North Korean party’s and regime’s privileged class.

2) Currency Reform in North Korea

North Korea’s new economic policy depressed the value of the North Korean currency. A resident in Shineeju, North Pyongan Province, recently said, “Nowadays, 100 USD is exchanged for 700,000 North Korean won, and 100 Chinese yuan is exchanged for 110,000 North Korean won.”



“We have to sell 70 of our own grand-daddies in order to buy one foreign grand-dad.”

After the currency reform of 2009, North Korea declared the USD exchange rate to be 1:120, but in reality, the exchange rate is 1:7,000, close to 70 times the original announcement. The CPI tripled within several months after a rumor about a new economic policy broke out.

As the North Korean currency lost its value, merchants started to complain, “We have to sell 70 of our own grand-daddies in order to buy one foreign grand-dad.” The foreign “grand-dad” in this phrase indicates Benjamin Franklin in the 100 dollar bill, and “our own grand-daddies” indicate the pictures of Kim Il-Sung in 5,000 North Korean won bills.

In response to the question, “Does the North Korean government control foreign currency use?” a merchant said, “How can we not use USD when it’s worth so much?” This suggests that the recent attempt at controlling foreign currency use is not effective at all. These days, 2.2 lbs of rice are sold for 80 cents in the market field.

Merchants testify that when dealing with customers trying to receive discounts, “We give a good price to those paying with foreign currencies, but we do not give any discounts to those using the domestic currency.” This reflects the intention of North Koreans to possess as much foreign currencies as possible after realizing that North Korean won counts for close to nothing ever since the currency reform.

<Column> “We must unite in one voice”



수잔 솔티 미국 북한자유연합 대표

Where else in the world does the government turn its back on the buying and selling of its own citizens as the North Korea regime does nothing to stop the selling and buying of its female citizens in trafficking markets in China? Where else in the world have we seen millions of deaths by famine in a so-called industrialized country in the absence of war?

We now see the third successive dictatorship of the Kim family with Kim Jong-Un in power since December. His succession has led to political purges, increased executions, and more people being sent to political prison camps.

Just this year, we have seen a steady decline in the number of North Koreans able to escape to freedom in South Korea and other nations because of the severe crack down on the North Korea-China border. In fact, the Unification Ministry of South Korea has reported a 43 percent drop in escapees earlier this year.

My Foundation, Defense Forum Foundation, has a history of hosting defectors from different totalitarian countries to speak on Capitol Hill on their lives and what led them to defect. We had hosted defectors from what was then the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba, for example, but I also had a desire to hear from a defector from North Korea.

In 1997, we hosted Colonel Joo Hwal CHOI and Young Hwan KO to speak out publicly about North Korea on Capitol Hill. Since then we have hosted over 70 defectors. We have not only given them a platform through our Capitol Hill Forums, but we have also arranged for them to testify in Congress and other venues.

General knowledge

- Juche Tower vs. Washington Monument?

Juche Tower, built by Daedong River on April 15, 1982, in celebration of Kim Il-Sung’s 70th birthday, exemplifies the idolization of Kim Il-Sung. At 558 feet, it is 3 feet taller than Washington Monument. North Korea’s propaganda claims that Juche Tower was built with the genius creativity of Kim Jung-Il.

North Korea is the worst human rights tragedy occurring in the world today. In fact, North Koreans are the only people in the world that do not enjoy one single human right under the thirty articles that are enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The United Nations adopted this Declaration in response to the horrors committed by Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan during World War II. In a terrible irony, that is the same year that Kim Il-Sung came to power—1948—and ensured that no North Korean would enjoy a single one of these universally accepted human rights.

Where else in the world but in North Korea are children born in political prison camps and can be sent to political prison camps along with their entire families? Where else in the world can a man be publicly executed for making international phone calls?

The international community and the USA should fight to improve the human rights situation in North Korea because people who live in freedom have a moral obligation to use their freedom to speak out for those who cannot. There is not a more suffering, isolated people in the world than the people in North Korea.

In order to participate in the North Korean human rights movement in the USA, getting involved in an organization like the North Korea Freedom Coalition is a good start. We have many member organizations that rescue North Korean refugees, shelter refugees, and/or help refugees who have resettled in South Korea and the USA. Just as importantly, we also work side by side with defector NGOs that are broadcasting true information into North Korea and sending messages, money and information via balloon launches. We need to make every effort to reach out to them through all means possible as more and more information is now getting into North Korea and reaching the people of North Korea.

Our first priority is to save lives, which means rescuing the refugees who are in constant peril and advocating for the shutting down of the North Korean political prison camps. Secondly, we must use all means possible to reach out to the North Korean people. Thirdly, we must become advocates in speaking out and raising awareness of these issues. For the first time, the defectors are predicting a collapse of the regime. This will happen, however, only if we continue to raise these human rights issues and get as much information and direct support to the people in North Korea as possible.

There are many other ways we can fight to improve the human rights situation in North Korea. We are at a critical juncture in this fight because Kim Jong-Un’s North Korea is NOT Kim Il-Sung’s North Korea. There have been unprecedented changes in North Korea in recent decades that make this issue more important than ever before.

Suzanne Scholte
President, Defenseforum
President, North Korea Freedom Coalition
9th Seoul Peace Prize, 2008

Due to the severe cold and snow of December, hot water is not available, freezing the sitting bodies at the meeting rooms. Every year, December 24th reminds me of a painful memory.

On December 22nd, 2003, a friend of mine was coming back from one of these events when the bus he was in got into an accident plunging into Daedong River. Due to this accident, over 150 people, including my friend, were drowned to death.

The North Korean government covered up this accident and dragged everyone to yet another political event the next day. We were forced to suppress our sorrow from the loss and dance on the dance floor, for a social event commemorating the birth of Kim Jungsook and Kim Jung-Il was more important than mourning for a friend. It is painful just remembering this. While dancing, I kept remembering the face of my best friend, making it difficult for me to contain my sadness.

What do North Korean residents do on December 24th then? Early in the morning, someone comes knock on the door without fail. It is an *Inmin Banjang*. *Inmin Banjangs* visit each household to collect items for the People's Army. The collected items are sacks of food and toiletry articles.

In the food sack are 5.3 oz of white rice, an egg, five pieces of meat, a fish, and two other types of side dish. In the toiletry sack are a face towel, a bar of soap, laundry soap, a hand mirror, a nail clipper, a lapel for the uniform, toothpaste, and a toothbrush.

Residents cannot rest even after giving *Inmin Banjangs* the food and toiletry sacks. They must attend a congregation where they present flower bouquets and flower baskets before the statues of Kim Jung-Il and Kim Jung-sook. Fresh flowers are rare in the middle of the winter in North Korea. However, because this too factors into the loyalty level evaluation, they must bring at least one flower even if they have to borrow loans to pay for it.

After watching the "Loyalty Singing Assembly," they come back home late at night. In this way, North Koreans are fully occupied with events related to the Kim family. For this reason, there is no way for them to know what Christmas is. I pray that soon we will see the day when North Korean residents finally break away from worshipping the idol in the Kim family but rejoice in the birth of Jesus Christ, decorating Christmas trees together with us.

By Sunny Jung
Entered the U.S. in 2010
Resident of Virginia

Past Activities of NKUS



NKUS Logo Introduction

The United States at the center of the globe signifies North Korean refugees living in the U.S.

The ring around the globe embodies activities for human rights and freedom in North Korea.

"Now it is time for us to give back what we have so far only received."

In February 2012, NKUS awarded individuals who have been dedicated proponents of North Korean human rights.

Picture 1 – Pastor John Yoon

Picture 2 – Pastor Hee Moon Lee

Picture 3 – Suzanne Scholte



March 2012,
NKUS President,
Jo Jinhye, at the
Congressional hearing
on China's
forced repatriation
of North Korean
defectors.

3) Kim Jong-Un: "Wipe out those thinking otherwise"



As Kim Jung-Un took over, the number of North Koreans defecting decreased sharply. Many of the routes across Tumen River and Apnok River have been blocked. A woman in her twenties who was preparing to escape from Hweryong, North Hamkyung Province, told her relatives in Seoul, "It's difficult find a broker here, so please look for one there."

According to a human rights worker rescuing North Korean defectors in China, "Only one out of ten North Korean brokers would undertake the task." In other words, defection rate has decreased by one tenth. Instead, it became more expensive to defect by crossing the river. "These days, it costs about \$5,000 to rescue someone from Musan, North Hamkyung Province," said a human rights worker in China, "It's even more expensive for people living farther from the border in areas such as Cheongjin and Hamheung."

Last October, Kim Jung-Un said to the National Security Department (Bo-wee-bu), "Wipe out anyone showing signs of disloyalty. Show no lenience or mercy." Bo-wee-bu increased the number of secret agents working amongst border control guards to stop their practice of receiving bribes to aid defectors.

These secret agents are directed to watch who are helping defectors. Crackdown on brokers in North Korea has intensified as well. Depending on their accomplishments, these agents may become members of the party or receive recommendations for universities.

In addition, border control posts are replaced monthly lest the guards befriend the local residents. In September, the number of North Koreans defecting declined for the first time in the last 7 years to about 1,000 people.

Confession of Faith by the 100th North Korean Refugee in the U.S.

I was born in Jagang Province, North Korea, and spent 30 years living as a common worker loyal to the party and the eternal leader, Kim Il-Sung.



"I too shall die homeless without having earned any money."

In 2000, I was dispatched to a forest field in Russia where I defected. While wandering around with nowhere to go, I met God and eventually found refuge in the United States. I, Andrew Jo was allegedly the 100th North Korean refugee who entered the United States. It is hard to describe the difficulties we faced during the "March of Tribulation" that swept North Korea in the 90s. However, lives of North Korean laborers in the Russian forest fields were just as miserable as the life in North Korea.

We barely received \$100 a month, and not all of even this went directly into our pocket, for loyalty funds, healthcare fees, and insurance fees had to be paid from this meager wage. In order to save up as much as possible, I ate and spent sparingly, even quitting smoking and drinking. North Korea had not developed any system for North Korean laborers at the Russian forestry fields to send their money. At the end of my first year, I asked my colleague, who was going back to North Korea for some time off, to deliver \$150 I had saved up to my family in North Korea.

Accidents were frequent in the snowfields of Siberia, where even the most basic worker protection facilities were lacking. I saw a worker suffer a severe concussion from being hit by a falling branch. I also saw someone's corpse lying trapped deep in the snow. Seeing these tragedies, I thought to myself in fear, "I too shall die homeless without having earned any money."

Even though such accidents abounded, the North Korean government did not have any measures to respond to these incidents and provided no compensation, not even a token message of saying, "sorry." After a year of working, disillusioned by such an inhumane and powerless regime, my colleagues and I ended up escaping from the forestry field.

After escaping, we started our runaway lives in the foreign and cold Khabarovsk. In 2002, following Kim Jong-Il's order to arrest any North Korean laborers that defected from their working grounds, North Korean public security agents were living in the Khabarovsk area. Also, whenever Russian police saw an Asian person, they stopped and verified his or her ID. I had to hide from the Russian police, and I was forced into investigations multiple times, making it difficult for me to live there. I started to blame myself. I was cursing my own life, and I lamented the miserable reality of people who had to suffer because they were born in the wrong country.

Even in such dangerous situations, I had to keep looking for work while hiding and dodging the eyes of the police.

Also, I had to avoid even other North Koreans. Many of my colleagues who had escaped from the forest fields like me were caught by the police and forcibly sent back to North Korea. I started looking for a shelter that I could entrust my life with. Then, a Korean-Chinese friend introduced me to a small Korean Church.

I met a Korean missionary for the first time who was operating a small church that did not even have a cross or a sign. This was October in 2001. My faith started from there. In fact, going to church for me meant risking my life. One day, the pastor suggested that I attend a service. To the members of the church, he introduced me as a Korean-Chinese. At my first service, I saw the members of the church worship, filled with joy. The worship songs that the congregation sang and the sermon by the pastor were rather pleasant.

The wife of the pastor gave me an old Bible as a present. I read the entire Bible as I worked at the church, and each night, I fell asleep after talking with the pastor about the stories from the Bible, about North and South Korea, and also about our childhood memories. Matthew Chapter 7, verses 1-5, struck me the most. After reading, “Do not judge lest you are judged,” I realized that the North Korean party’s policy of mutual “judgment” was wrong. I really hated the criticisms we had to direct at each other during “Party Life Reviews” and “Ideological Struggle Conferences.” Naturally, each meeting, I used to be criticized as a party member who lacks the spirit of the party.

I wanted to stay behind at church to pray and continue my spiritual life, which the pastor permitted. With a grateful and joyful heart, I cleaned the church, fixed the interior, and undertook many other tasks. Full of energy, I also attended Wednesday evening services and Friday night prayer meetings. I just loved the services and the praise songs as well as the Bible teachings. The pastor and his wife told me about Biblical figures, God, Jesus, and other stories about the Bible. I had to experience and know this living God because I wanted to verify if the Bible—God’s Word—was really a poison that paralyzes one’s mental state and revolutionary mind as the propaganda in North Korea claimed.

In general, North Koreans of my own generation know churches as places that look after the poor and feed them. What the Holy Spirit revealed to me eventually was that the Bible—that is, God’s Word—is not a poison as the North Korean propaganda claims, but a source of inspiration for a healthy mind and life and a guide that gives hope to the hopeless. (Continued in the next edition)

By Andrew Jo
Entered the U.S. in 2010
Resident of Georgia

My First Christmas in Alaska, USA

We had no idea. We had no idea what “Christmas” meant...

I still cannot forget the first Christmas our family experienced after resettling in America in 2007.

I also have a memory from the days of living in hiding from Chinese public security agents in China after defecting from North Korea.

Even in the small village in China I was living in, signs of “Merry Christmas” were plastered all over the streets along with pictures of Santa Claus. Then, people said, “Santa Claus will come down quietly at night to give us our presents...” Others said, “Santa Claus will come down the chimney quietly at dawn to give us lots of presents...” Each time we heard these stories, we too waited for Santa Claus. Also, in the evening, we saw many couples stroll across brightly lit streets as though in a daylight. They looked very happy, and we wondered when we would be able to laugh and enjoy ourselves as freely as they. This was the “Christmas” we had a glimpse of in China.

Then, finally, I was able to enjoy this “Christmas” in Alaska, USA, as a free woman. “Ouch,” my nostrils were frozen with cold and damp air.

December in Alaska was so cold, and it was hard to see in front of us because of the icy fog. As soon as we opened the entrance door, the cold air made it difficult for us to breathe. Snow piled on the evergreen trees, bending and breaking their branches.

Cars, covered with snow, resembled small hills. Rabbits, deer, and moose scavenged underneath inches of snow in search for food. They blocked traffic even during the day.

Moreover, in the winter, 23 hours out of 24 hours were pitch-dark night.

If the cars were not charged, the engines froze, causing them to sit idle for days. Such snow and cold characterized the northernmost and coldest region of America!

The Christmas that we experienced there was filled with moments of joy and wonder.

Christmas was finally here. After placing potted plants with red leaves inside the church sanctuary and by the well-lit windows, we were busy decorating the Christmas tree with colorful lights and bells.

When we finished decorating the tree to our satisfaction, it was 9:00pm. I boarded on a minivan with other members of the church.

The minivan sprayed snow around as it moved. We paid visits to nearby households to give them surprise gifts and sang, “Joy to the World.”



Time flew as we shared the joy of “Christmas,” grateful for the amazing grace that God has shown by coming down to this world to atone for our sins. When it was time for farewell, there were some people who were in tears, grateful for God’s presence with them.

The next day, after hearing the sermon of the pastor, I learnt the real meaning behind Christmas for the first time—the day baby Jesus came down to the Earth to save us from our sins.

Blessed with feelings of gratitude and eating well-prepared delicious food, I fully enjoyed “Christmas.” Even in the midst of severe cold of Alaska, our first Christmas in America was one full of joy and fun that our family could never forget.

Christmas was more special to me, a North Korean defector, because of my memories of the birthdays of Kim Il-Sung and Kim Jung-Il.

Different from their birthdays when I lifted up 2.2 lbs of candy and snacks that the Josun Workers’ Party distributed and said, “Thank you, Supreme Leader,” the birthday of Jesus was a day when I could experience joy and freedom of both the body and spirit.

Our parents, brothers, and sisters who are still in North Korea do not know the freedom and “inalienable rights” that we take for granted now. Nor do they know that “Christmas” is a special day to everyone and a privilege and blessing that surpass anyone’s imagination.

I wait for this year’s Christmas with a hope that someday the meaning behind “Christmas” is known all across North Korea, and my brothers and sisters there may enjoy the freedom and peace that I am enjoying right now.

Jesus, the Prince of peace!

Merry Christmas, and please remember to pray for North Korea!

By Esther Han
Resident of Virginia
12/25/2012

Do North Koreans Know Christmas?



I am a North Korean refugee who has been living in America for three years. If you were to ask a North Korean, “Do you know what day December 25th is?” he or she would probably say, “Not sure, I don’t know.” On the other hand, if you asked, “Then, what day is December 24th?” he or she would reply with confidence, “December 24th is a historic day when our Great Leader and comrade, Kim Jung-Il, was appointed the commander-in-chief of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, and also the birthday of Kim Jungsook (Birthmother of Kim Jung-Il), the mother of Josun.”

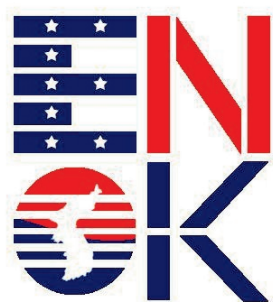
That is right. December 24th is the birthday of Kim Jungsook, the birthmother of Kim Jung-Il, and accordingly, North Korea appointed Kim Jung-Il as the commander-in-chief on this date. Now, I will tell you what happens in North Korea while the outside society is busy making Christmas trees and preparing Santa Claus presents.

First of all, people in North Korea start planning what North Koreans call “Loyalty Singing Assembly” a month prior to commemorate December 24th. Every factory firm, the military, and students from small schools all train for this “Loyalty Singing Assembly.” People must attend the training after work without going home. Everyone is exhausted, but no one is allowed to complain. Why? It is because people’s loyalty level is assessed based on the grade they receive from these training sessions. If you place last, you will be criticized publicly for the entire next year.

Next, a giant *Teuk-Gan-Ho* is prepared. Each workplace and each classroom prepares this *Teuk-Gan-Ho*. People write their oaths of loyalty on a paper-covered wooden plank, 6.6 feet wide and 9.2 feet long. Of course, people are graded on these, too. Moreover, the day before the 24th, the entire country takes the day off to attend various meetings and events. What kind of meetings are they? They are special lectures and memorial events commemorating the birth of Kim Jungsook as well as the appointment of Kim Jung-Il as the commander-in-chief.

Residents from outside Pyongyang must watch the memorial event at the Pyongyang People’s Cultural Palace through TV.

ENoK (Emancipate North Koreans)



ENoK Logo Description

8 stars symbolize the 8 provinces of Unified Korea. Red, blue, and white represent the United States of America. 5, 3, 6, and 4 parts of "E," "N," "O," and "K" imitate the black stripes of the South Korean flag. "O" imitates the Yin-Yang of the South Korean flag and the Korean peninsula.



► In front of the Chinese-Consulate



► In the middle of Michigan Ave. (Magnificent Mile)

Founded in the spring of 2011, ENoK is a not-for-profit organization registered with the Illinois Secretary of State Office. Members consist mainly of 1.5 and 2nd generation Korean-American and other American university students and recent graduates, who share the passion and heart to help suffering North Koreans. ENoK is also a recognized student organization at the University of Chicago. Its mission is to help North Koreans regain their rights to life and liberty, through means including but not limited to:

1. Raising awareness of dire situations and human rights violations being committed in North Korea as well as the plight of North Korean defectors scattered across Asia;
2. Acting in order to facilitate the adoption process of North Korean and half-North Korean and half-Chinese children by prospective parents abroad;
3. Helping North Korean defectors transition to the new society and life through life support programs such as life-skills training, job training, and education; and
4. Engaging in activities that break down unwarranted prejudice against North Korean defectors and remove negative discrimination against North Korean defectors.



► Transition to Biking Symbolizes the arduous trip inside China



► Transition to Biking Symbolizes the arduous trip inside China

Throughout 2011, the year ENoK was established, ENoK has engaged in various fundraising efforts and directly given financial support to North Korean refugees. Andrew Hong, founder of ENoK, participated in Life Time Chicago Triathlon in summer 2011, through which ENoK raised close to \$2,000.

Earlier this year, ENoK organized multiple protests against China's forced repatriation of North Korean defectors, which would result in their imprisonment, torture, and even capital punishment. The first protest took place on February 23rd at the Chinese consulate-general in Chicago, where around 50 people gathered in an effort to give voice to those North Korean defectors who could not speak for themselves.



► Swim in Michigan Lake Symbolizes crossing Tumen River

ENoK activities for NK HUMANRIGHTS



► Lining up before the Chinese-Consulate preparing to march across Chicago downtown



► In front of Wrigley Building



► Exhibit: Illustrations of Prison Camps by North Korean Refugees



► Breaking the 31-Hour Fast

In March, ENoK designated March 20th as "North Korea Freedom Riders Movement," a day of nation-wide protest against forced repatriation of North Korean defectors. ENoK urged other major cities including Washington DC, Los Angeles, and New York City to join them in demonstrating against forced repatriation of North Korean defectors.

As a result, on March 20th, four major cities in America—Chicago, DC, LA, and NYC—saw demonstrators come out at their respective sites to join their voices to speak against China's forced repatriation of North Korean defectors. Particularly in Chicago, 200 people gathered in front of the Chinese consulate-general, and ENoK members led these demonstrators in marching across Chicago downtown, including Michigan Avenue (i.e. Magnificent Mile), in an effort to let Chicago, America, and the world know the plight of hundreds of thousands of North Korean defectors in China.

ENoK members provided information to be used in the "Emergency Hearing on North Korean Refugees in China" on March 5th, 2012 by translating a number of the most up-to-date news articles and petitions regarding the situation of North Korean defectors in China and other articles relating the human rights violations being committed in North Korea. In May, ENoK organized "31 for 31," a 31-hour fasting campaign (first coined by a Princeton for North Korea Human Rights) in honor of 31 North Korean defectors who were repatriated earlier this year.

During this multi-day campaign, ENoK organized film screenings and exhibits in an effort to raise awareness of the dire conditions in North Korea and the plight of North Korean defectors. ENoK saw 54 people join its members in 31-hour fasting, and raised over \$2,513.31, all of which will be used to help North Korean refugees living in America.

On August 31st and September 6th, ENoK, NIM (North Korean Inland Mission), and a monthly prayer group praying for North Korea co-sponsored a North Korean defector's testimony events at Korean Philippi Presbyterian Church located in Des Plaines, IL and the Moody Church in Chicago.

The speaker, Sunshil Lee, lives in South Korea and is a regular guest on a popular South Korean cable talk show called "Meet Now," which invites a dozen of North Korean defector women living in South Korea to talk about their new life in South Korea as well as their life back in North Korea and the difficult journey that finally brought them safely to South Korea. About 100 people came each time to hear the testimony, which opened many people's eyes to the harsh reality of many North Koreans.

On September 22nd, the day China became a signatory to the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, ENoK joined other cities upon Dr. Suzanne Scholte (President of Defense Forum and North Korean Freedom Coalition)'s request by coordinating another march across downtown Chicago in protest against forced repatriation of North Korean defectors.

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