

SU's Korean students offer cultural lessons to CNY's Korean children

Posted by [msieh](#) April 15, 2008 06:10AM



Lauren LongAnna Lynch, 7, of Liverpool, shows her excitement as Elizabeth Nagle, 20, a sophomore at Syracuse University, gets ready to make Korean dumplings, or mandu, during the second of three spring semester classes organized by the Central New York Korean School April 6 at First Baptist Church of Syracuse. Nagle is president of Big Sibling Mentoring, a program offered by SU's Korean American Student Association that works with the CNY Korean School.

Syracuse, NY.---Ten years ago, the Korean Student Association at Syracuse University formed a mentoring program for Korean children adopted by American families. The program has been on and off for during the last decade.

Last year, it was revived and is going really strong.

For American parents who adopt Korean children, the mentoring program is just one more opportunity to connect their kids to their cultural roots.

[Read my story in today's Post-Standard.](#)

The Korean students carpool to Lunar New Year celebrations and other events organized by the Korean School of Central New York and the American Family Korean Network. The organize events on campus for the children and their families. The students also help out at the Korean School which is relocating from East Genesee Street in Syracuse to the First Baptist Church of Syracuse. [Read more.](#)

[Check out staff photographer Lauren Long's slideshow on the Korean school and the mentoring program.](#)



Lauren Long/The Post-Standard. Harry McTernan, 6, of DeWitt, checks out a Korean treat while on the lap of his mom, Liz Myers, during the first of three spring semester prep classes organized by the Central New York Korean School March 2 at First Baptist Church of Syracuse in Jamesville. The classes give McTernan and other Korean adoptees and their families a taste of the traditional Korean school.



Lauren Long/The Post-Standard. Jongwoo Han, principal of the Central New York Korean School (holding chopsticks at

left) demonstrates how to hold a set of chopsticks during classes hosted by the school March 2 at the First Baptist Church of Syracuse in Jamesville. The Korean Student Association's Big Sibling Mentoring Program pairs Korean college students with Korean children adopted by American families

When Robert and Elaine Polak adopted their twin boys from Korea, the couple decided that they'll do everything to educate 6-year-olds Jacek Min and Jarek Kwon about their roots.

When the boys signed up for the mentoring program, they got a great connection. They were paired with the group's president, Elizabeth Nagle, who is adopted and a twin.

"Our boys got matched with Elizabeth and it turns out Elizabeth is an adopted twin," Elaine said. "It was just so funny. What a connection."

Elaine says her family celebrates three cultures. She's Italian and her husband is Polish. During Easter or Christmas, Elaine explains to the boys why she prepares certain dishes to celebrate Italian heritage or Polish heritage. The family celebrates Lunar New Year.

"You want to feel as a family unit. You want to feel as one," she said. "However, you have to recognize a person's heritage because that's their roots, that's their beginning. It's important to how somebody is. My husband is Polish. I'm Italian. They're Korean. We talk about everybody's culture and everybody's traditions."

Kathy and John Woodruff signed up their two children, Alex, 8 and Celia, 6, for the program in September.

Kathy is co-president of the American Family Korean Network.

The network supports the program because it gives their kids role models, especially as they become teen-agers, Kathy said.

The Woodruffs live in Canastota and so their children have only met their mentors at social gatherings organized by the network, Kathy said.

"All these young men and women in the group are incredible. They're so busy with their studies, but they're willing to take time off."

I'm interested in hearing your thoughts on this story. Post a comment.

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inajeep says...

That is a wonderful program. I'm in Southern New Jersey, does anyone know of a program or even resources I can find for my youngest son?

Posted on 04/15/08 at 10:55AM

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