

Opening Speech of Bridging Generations 2015

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Thank you: Korea War Veterans of America and Chapter 299, Andover Public Schools, Andover Food Services, Jackson Walnut Park Schools, Doherty and Wood Hill Middle School. We are also grateful to Master Shin and his Tae Kwon Do Team, Lawrence YMCA, all Avalon chaperons.

As a director of EDR, my staff and I organized this event in order to bridge generations as indicated in the event title. We intend to bridge generations in three ways: by learning history, the appreciation for others' sacrifice, and finding of humanity.

First of all, we want our children to learn history. The Korean War is called the 'forgotten war'. But it cannot be forgotten. To me personally, the Korean War's history is not a book, but a human. I remember the Korean War with a scar on my father's leg. When I was a child like you, I tried to know from my father how he fought in the bloody battle. If my father did not survive the war, I would have never existed. My father passed away a long time ago, but I am really happy to meet his combat friends, American soldiers. You fought along with my father, thus you are my father's friends. I respect you as I respected my father. Now I want to tell my lovely Korean students: History is not a paper book, not a video. History is of humans who are now living and lived in the past. At this moment, please close your paper book, and instead talk to real history, the Korean War heroes sitting near you. Likewise, I want to tell respectable veterans: History is not a paper book, not a video. History is of humans who are now living and will live in the future. At this moment, please close your photobooks, and instead talk to real history, the young generations from South Korea, sitting near you. You will be happy to see the happy and well-nourished kids of the country where you saw starving orphans crying for their parents and food.

Korean children, you are a lucky generation. We are now living in a world where

you can live peacefully with other nations. Everyone in every nation can become your friends, not enemies. Even North Korea, we now understand that the regime and the dictators are bad, but humans living in North Korea are the same humans as you. Many North Koreans, after escaping the country for freedom, live around you. Korea now has become a global economic power. Koreans are often considered beautiful and nice, perhaps thanks to Chun Jiyeon at the Korean TV drama of "You from the Star," or Sai's horse-riding dancing of "Kangnam Style."

It is good to feel pride and happiness at present. However, please do not forget who contributed to your prosperity of today. Just seventy years ago, your or your friends' grandfathers and grandmothers struggled to survive like this picture. Some tragically had no luck and died, falling in the cold winter sea. They survived the horrible lives, thanks to American grandfathers' sacrifice. Just in the battle of Chosin Reservoir, almost 6000 soldiers of the First Marine Division died from the cold and injury, calling for their mothers, in a foreign country which they had never known. Many Korean survived thanks to American grandfathers' humanity. After the battle of Chosin Reservoir, American officers and soldiers were willing to throw away their heavy weapons in the sea to take as many refugees as possible in the ship of *Victoria* at the port of Hamheung, North Korea. The number of passengers in the ship was a Guinness-book world record high so even going to the toilet was not possible. South Korea's success was built on the sacrifice of American grandparents as well as your Korean grandparents. We Koreans are decent people, who must thank the American grandparents for their sacrifice. Luckily, you are today meeting these historic American grandfathers. As a child, you may think you have no power. No. Wrong. You are cute, but very powerful messengers, even more powerful than any Korean government officials. You can deliver South Korea's genuine message to the heroes of the Korean War. "We Koreans will never forget you forever." Now you come to know: History is not a book, but of humans.

It is with my great pleasure to introduce educational leader who has played an incredibly important role in the intercultural leadership program- facilitating the kids learning and embracing the program's mission as his own. Dr. Jorge Allen, World Languages Program advisor for Andover public schools.



Dead soldiers of Marine 1st Division in the battle of Chosin Reservoir



Refugees waiting for ships in the Heungnam Port



Refugees full of a US navy ship.