KOREAN ALASKAN FRIENDSHIP DAY CELEBRATION SPEECH

FOR

KAP SUN ENDERS

REVISED

Hello everyone and welcome to this year’s annual Korean Alaskan Friendship Day Celebration!! I want to thank all of you for being here. By expressing your interest in our community and by extending yourselves in friendship, we all become a little richer in our hearts, our lives and our experiences. It’s especially exciting as this year as this marks the 8th annual celebration!! In 2008 former Governor Sarah Palin proclaimed June 20th as Korean Alaskan Friendship Day. June is a perfect, busy month for celebrations… from weddings to graduations… to honoring our heritage. We welcome this excitement and look forward to sharing our pride! (**You can acknowledge the dignitaries present here**). I would like to extend special thanks to some of our distinguished guests who have taken time from their busy schedules to share in today’s festivities. Governor \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, Congressman \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, Mayor \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, Representative \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, your presence here reinforces our collective voice in the Korean Alaskan community here in Anchorage and throughout Alaska!! If there is one thing we can all attest to, it is that we are proud of our culture and we love to share our experiences!! We are individuals who very connected as a complete entity. Think of each one of us as a point of light on a vast map of the state and then remember that because of this gathering and commemoration, and as we acknowledge our heritage, as word of our actions and achievements travel, each light shines brighter throughout all of the other Korean Alaskan neighborhoods from town to city from east to west… Our colorful history and respect for tradition form great points of pride for each one of us. Today is our moment to see, hear, feel, touch and taste the vibrancy of our culture. Remember the Korean proverb that teaches us, “ Even though words have no wings, they can still fly a thousand miles… Through old things we learn new things.” Communication is our conduit to connection and as we connect today, let’s remember that our Korean brothers and sisters… no matter where they may be celebrate with us.

There is another old Korean proverb that reminds us, “ A great river does not refuse any small streams.” We may be far from our heritage home, but the force of nature and light that is the Korean Alaskan community grows, solidifies, and shines brighter each year. We have settled and have been raised farm from our roots but we are not alone. We are not isolated. We have our history and traditions that unite us in friendship and understanding as a community.

Anchorage, Alaska is proud to boast one of the largest Korean American communities in the United States. Although California, New York and New Jersey may claim the greatest concentration of Korean Americans, in 2010 Anchorage ranked in the top ten cities with populations greater than 250,000 that can count significant Korean American populations. And thanks to our recognition of traditions, respect for the strength of family and faith, and our love of some delicious Korean delicacies (**name 2 or 3 delicious Korean treats**) like \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, we make a strong and positive contribution to the diverse cultural treasures in our great city. (**If you want to mention some local businesses, you can say the following**). Recognition of the resourcefulness and talents of our neighbors is evident throughout our community. Although I am sure many of us have mothers, grandmothers or aunts that can amaze our palettes with tasty Korean treats, we have wonderful restaurants like \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that bring you the essence of Korea in each tasty offering. We have neighbors (**name some craftsmen or shop owners**) like \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who is know for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who does excellent work as a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ . They are also always proud to share their love and respect for Korean crafts. Everyone in this community has something for which to be proud and it is occasions like this one that bring us together in celebration and acknowledgment.

As I said, one of the beautiful and enduring characteristics of the Korean Alaskan spirit is the innate desire to connect, to share and to experience our cultural uniqueness and blend it with the world around us. Communication is a KEY element in uniting our community and we would be remiss if we did not acknowledge that as the “glue” of our group. It is because of our mutual interest in each other and our community that we congregate, share stories and traditions, and fully appreciate our holidays such as this one.

True friendship is at the heart of Korean Alaskan life and we are grateful to be able to share this with old friends and new ones alike. Thanks again to all of you that have chosen to share your time with us in acknowledgement and celebration of our wonderful Korean Alaskan bond. May we all learn, grow, and continue to make new friends and lasting relationships thanks to the connections we forge and solidify today! Thank you all!