

International Aid for Korean Animals

Summer 2009 Newsletter



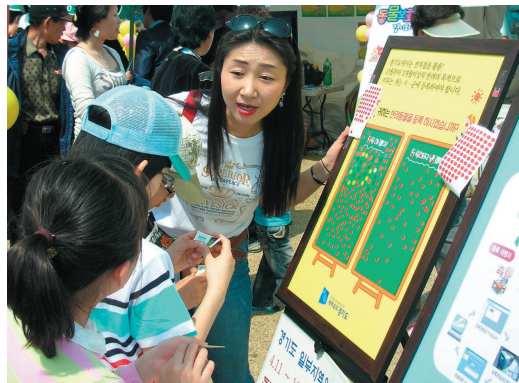
Our Summer Schedule Ramps Up

As summer rolls around, I am pleased to report that our activities with KAPES, our companion organization in Seoul, are expanding. The exciting news from our KAPES director, Haesun Park, comes in so fast that the trouble is in translating it all to relay here fast enough! Her diligence is always inspiring, but never surprising: though we are working with very limited funds, Haesun always manages to work creatively and with devotion. That said, it is my pleasure to reveal some very important news regarding our work in Korea.

First, we have partnered with an organization in Seoul, Chang-pa, to begin an Assisted Animal Therapy (AAT) program in South Korea. Bringing AAT to Korea has long been a goal of mine. Aside from the proven benefits to the health of the recipients of AAT, bringing friendly dogs into hospitals, nursing homes, and homes for children and the disabled will help foster an improved human-animal connection within Korea. AAT programs have been implemented with great success in other Asian countries, like China. I am quite excited for our AAT program to begin its work.

IAKA supporters will recall that, in our last newsletter, we talked of instituting a program of TNR (Trap,

Spay/Neuter, Release) for the feral cat populations of Goemun-do, a remote island off the south coast of Korea. In this edition, you will find a story detailing the action, which was organized by KAPES. Though the veterinarians who made the trek out to Goemun-do were forced to leave



KAPES Director Haesun Park educates Korean youth about cat and dog care at our Gyeonggi Province event.

due to stormy weather (they have planned a return visit), I still regard the project as a success. Programs like these, which are rare in Korea, are part of our comprehensive plan to change the way animals are treated there.

KAPES' educational activities continue unabated as well. In this newsletter, you will find a story about another children's animal festival, sponsored by the Ministry of Agriculture and organized by

Haesun Park. Children learned about the proper care of cats and dogs, veterinary care was provided, and adults were introduced to guide and rescue animals. I am, as always, very proud of Ms. Park's important work.

Finally, we have published a letter from one of our supporters about her beloved rescue from Korea, a dog named Kimchi (after the famous traditional Korean pickled cabbage). An English teacher, she did the right thing in adopting the dog, providing her with a home and saving her from a potentially dangerous situation. Unfortunately, in Korea, this practice is not widespread. With our planned Adoption and Education Center, for which we are currently raising funds, and our current programs designed to foster an improved human-animal connection, we hope to change that.

I wish you a restful summer.

Sincerely,

Kyenan Kum
IAKA & KAPES Founder

"green green grass" photograph by Wade Kelly www.flickr.com/people/wader



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TNR Comes to Korea's Islands, Part II

A Plan for the Feral Cats of Geomun-do

In our last newsletter, we mentioned that preparations were underway to send a team of veterinarians and volunteers to the rural islands of Geomun-do, where they would begin a program of TNR (trap, spay/neuter, release) on a feral cat population living there.

On April 18, 2009, a KAPES-organized team did just that. Sponsored by donations, as well as in-kind gifts from Natural Balance Pet Food and the Korean Veterinary Association, a team of 15 vets and 3 student assistants made the nine-hour trip from Seoul to the remote island. The plan was ambitious: spay/neuter 500 feral cats, provide free spay/neuter services to local animals, and vaccinate all animals treated for rabies, all over a period of two weeks. The student assistants would come along to assist and learn from the vets, and to conduct research pertaining to feral cat populations and the environment of the island.

Yeo-su City, the governmental body which controls Geomun-do Island, saw the travelers off. They have supported the action, and will be promoting it as an example of their government's green environmental policies at an upcoming city expo. KAPES director Haesun Park, who had organized the trip, was

unable to make the journey due to her responsibilities in Seoul.

As the veterinarians and their assistants set off by ferry, bad weather was beginning to make itself evident. However, they decided to press on. When they reached the island, a full-blown storm had gathered. The veterinarians quickly set about their work, trapping the cats and performing surgery when possible. Unfortunately, they determined that with the severity of the storm, it would be impossible to reach their goal of 500 cats trapped and spayed/neutered.

All said, when the vets left the island, 81 cats had been fixed and vaccinated. We consider this a significant achievement, and a step in the right direction in terms of policy towards feral cat populations. The veterinarians have planned a follow-up trip for July, and we will report again when this occurs.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: A volunteer with two spayed/neutered and vaccinated housecats; veterinarians prepare TNR cages; volunteers and veterinarians gather near the water for a picture; A veterinarian places a cage; and a released cat looks over the island.



Animal Education Events in Gyeonggi-do

KAPES' busy springtime schedule has not stopped us from making our appearances at the most important animal protection festivals in Korea, or even from organizing them! In May, KAPES director Haesun Park and the Gyeonggi-do Province government teamed up to present an Animal Protection and Education event, to promote animal registration via microchip, the Animal Protection law, and the practical, humane use of rescue and guide dogs. KAPES, which organized the festival, was able to pass out plenty of educational material. Activities included children's contests for animal artwork and animal imitation, as well as pet obedience and training classes. There was a booth for free animal health consultations, provided by the Veterinarian's Association, and another booth showcasing guide and rescue dogs. Our campaign to win hearts and minds continues!



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: Supporters at our booth sign up for KAPES activities; children and parents learn about petcare, and a learner receives a KAPES certificate of



KAPES Brings Assisted Animal Therapy to Korea

AAT (Assisted Animal Therapy) is finally coming to Korea. Inspired by other successful AAT programs that have been implemented in Japan and China, our AAT program will bring ambassador dogs into hospitals, disabled homes, and to disabled children to foster a connection between dogs and people in need.

Our AAT program will be the result of a partnership between KAPES and an organization called Chang-pa. Located

in Taegu, Chang-pa is headed by Mrs. Lee Yoo-sook.

RIGHT: Chang-Pa director Mrs. Lee Yoo-Sook and KAPES Director Haesun Park display a plate commemorating our new partnership.



Kimchi's Story

Adopted from a letter by Clare Browne

Here at the IAKA office, we receive emails and letters daily from English teachers, members of the US military, and other concerned foreigners who are living in Korea. Usually, these letters are heartbreaking, informing us of a dog tied up with no food, a pet store with horrible conditions, or stories of starved, mistreated stray animals. It is a stark reminder of how far Korea has to go, in terms of the treatment of animals.

Unfortunately, in these situations, there is little IAKA can do. We always forward the information to our office in Seoul, where our KAPES team inquires to see if there is anything that can be done.

We decided to highlight Kimchi's story as a positive example of an English teacher in Korea making a difference.

My partner and I went to Korea in 2006 to teach English. We wanted to experience another culture, do some travel and earn some money, but I never planned to get a dog. However, after only seven weeks I had rescued Kimchi – a little female Papillion-cross – and it was one of the best things I have ever done.

My partner and I were living on a military base in Gyeongsangnam-do. The base was like a park with many animals living wild, including dogs. I heard that there was a dog in the

building and told myself not to get involved: I couldn't possibly take care of a dog in Korea – what would I do with it when it was time to go back to New Zealand? However, as soon as I saw this little puppy sitting there, shaking with fear, I knew I had to help her.

We took the puppy home with us that night. She was terrified of our feet and had obviously been treated badly. She was malnourished and covered in ticks. She was vomiting a lot and we later found out she had a stomach ulcer (caused by stress and being fed human food). But worst of all was the injury to her eye: veterinarians told me that it was caused by a trauma – probably a kick – and she is now permanently blind in that eye. She slept for hours – a sign of a very stressed dog. During her time with us her personality shone through – she was so playful and fun to be with, and I fell in love with her very quickly. We wanted to choose a Korean name for

her and we chose "Kimchi" because it's got to be one of Korea's most distinctive traditional foods.

Today, Kimchi is living in New Zealand and she could be one of the happiest dogs in the world. Her life is fantastic. Our backyard is almost 1,000 square metres, she lives with my other dog and chews bones every day. I cried many tears when making the decision whether to keep her or not – but I have never regretted it since. You can't place a monetary value on a life; I have given Kimchi a whole new life – and that's the best thing I could have done for her.



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