

## **Community Impact Statement: Korean Language and Culture Foundation for the 13<sup>th</sup> Kimchi Making Event**

The 13th annual *I Love Kimchi* event, hosted by the Korean Language & Culture Foundation and supported by City of Santa Clara, Im Soon Ja Kimchi and the KYAC (Korean Youth for Advancement of Culture) Parents Association, made a meaningful and far-reaching impact on the Santa Clara community. Held on November 2 at the Montague Multi-Purpose Room, the event served as a vibrant cultural bridge, bringing together families, educators, community leaders, and youth from diverse backgrounds.

Centered around kimchi—an iconic dish that embodies the spirit, identity, and pride of Korean culture—the event successfully introduced Korean culinary traditions to the broader Santa Clara community. By inviting participants to experience kimchi not only as food but as a cultural symbol, the event strengthened cross-cultural understanding and created an inclusive space where community members could learn, interact, and celebrate together.

One of the most significant impacts of the event came from the participation of local youth. Students from KYAC played key roles as emcees, volunteers, performers, and helpers. Their bilingual hosting set a welcoming tone for both Korean- and English-speaking attendees. The recognition they received from elected officials—including Rep. Ro Khanna, Assemblymember Alex Lee, and Assemblymember Patrick Ahern—not only celebrated their service but also emphasized the importance of youth engagement in community building.

Santa Clara City Councilmember Kevin Park also highlighted how unique and valuable this event was for her own cultural learning experience, reinforcing the role of the Korean Language & Culture Foundation in fostering meaningful cross-cultural education within the city. Such acknowledgment strengthened the event’s reputation as a model for community enrichment and cultural exchange.

Interactive program elements added further depth to the event’s impact. The lively Kimchi Quiz energized families and sparked curiosity about Korean food traditions. Performances by the Bay Senior Tenor ensemble, the KYAC Boys group, and student ensembles created a joyful, intergenerational atmosphere. The shared experience of learning and singing the “I Love Kimchi Song” connected participants through music, regardless of age or cultural background.

The most memorable and unifying activity was the hands-on kimchi-making workshop led by

the Sookmyung Women's University Alumnae Association. Working together in teams, participants prepared Baek-Kimchi, gaining insight into Korean culinary techniques while fostering teamwork and interfamily connections. Children preparing kimchi alongside their parents created an especially heartwarming scene, reinforcing the event's mission of connecting generations and cultures.

The evening concluded with a communal Korean dinner prepared by KYAC parents. Sharing a meal served as a natural and powerful way to build community bonds, leaving attendees with a sense of warmth, belonging, and appreciation for cultural diversity.

Overall, the I Love Kimchi event significantly enriched the Santa Clara community by promoting cultural awareness, celebrating diversity, empowering youth leadership, and strengthening intergenerational and intercultural relationships. Through food, music, education, and shared experience, the event demonstrated how cultural traditions can bring a community together in meaningful and lasting ways.