

SEP/OCT
2015

PSCORE Newsletter

People for Successful COrean REunification



Meeting with the United Nations Special Rapporteur

On September 7, PSCORE was invited to attend a meeting with the United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), Marzuki Darusman.

Together with other organizations in attendance, we discussed the current situation of human rights violations in the North, and shared the research and findings we have conducted and obtained over the past year. We were also delighted to learn of the plans to officially raise the issue of the human rights of North Korean laborers broad at the UN General Assembly later this year, after PSCORE raised the topic at the last UN Human Rights Council (HRC) Meeting.

In all, it was a fruitful session where we exchanged our views and reaffirmed our commitment to the betterment of the rights of the North Korean people.

Raising Awareness



Campaigning at National Assembly Station

In the month of September, we continued to conduct our monthly street campaign—this time, at the National Assembly Station.

During our week-long campaign from 14 to 18 October, we put up information boards that lined the walls of the busy subway station. Our booths attracted commuters from all walks of life, who took the time to browse our displays. We also received kind donations from passers-by who felt moved to make a contribution.

Our intern, Gina, who worked tirelessly during the week-long campaign, commented, “I enjoyed seeing the people showing interest when passing through the station these five days even if there was a language barrier.” Indeed, we were all very heartened by the willingness of the passengers to set aside time from their busy schedules to learn more about the subject.

PSCORE is grateful for all the contributions—big or small—that we received, and we would like to thank everyone who gave us their support during the week!

Raising Awareness on a Beach in Busan

In the following month, we brought our campaign out of Seoul and into the lovely city of Busan. Specially planned to coincide with the Busan International Film Festival so we may extend our reach to a wider audience, PSCORE set up an awareness booth from 2 to 4 October at the popular *Haeundae Beach*.

The response was overwhelming—crowds of visitors at the beach stopped by on their way to the Film Festival activities, taking time to read the testimonies and information that we had put up.

What set this campaign apart from the others we have had in Seoul, was the larger diversity of people that we managed to communicate with. Most visitors were in Busan for the Film Festival, and that included not only locals from different parts of the country, but also foreigners from all over the world. Regardless of their country of origin, however, they demonstrated a keen interest in our booth, and many also came forward to request for more information on the topic. Those curious to learn more were given a PSCORE publication of testimonies by North Korean defectors on the topic of human rights violations in the North.

“It is important for younger Koreans to learn about the history and the current situation, and I am glad we are able to help with that.”



Alyssa, a PSCORE intern who went on the trip, was particularly encouraged by the responses of the general public. Relating how she heard a man answering his child's question as to why there is a North Korea *and* a South Korea, she said, “It is great to see that our awareness campaign is generating curiosity in the younger generation about the division of the peninsula and the problems in North Korea. It is important for younger Koreans to learn about the history and the current situation, and I am glad we are able to help with that.”

Given the success of the campaigning event this year—and of past years—we hope to be able to continue this annual awareness drive in Busan in the following years to come. Lastly, but most importantly, a big thank you to everyone who helped make the awareness campaign such a huge success!

Hosting the Korean Studies Workshop Program



On September 28, PSCORE hosted teachers from Australia and the New Zealand under the Korean Studies Workshop Program (KSWP). We invited a North Korean defector to share with the participants her life back in her birth country and the harrowing escape to South Korea.

One participant commented on the event, saying, "Meeting the North Korean defector and hearing her story was extremely moving and gave us so much context for life in South Korea. The dream of education drove her to try to get to South Korea... It was humbling to listen to her." We were also informed by the program organizer that more than half of the participants listed the event as one of their top five highlights of the workshop.

We were very happy to host the teachers, and we are glad that they found it a meaningful session!

Education Program for North Korean Defectors

Wednesday English Class

With the end of the summer break, we had many new students join us at our Wednesday English Class. Held every week at Seodaemun Police Station, the North Korean students in this program are assigned a tutor each. They receive help in the aspects of their English learning that they believe they need most improvement.



During one of our weekly sessions, the students and volunteer teachers received a lovely surprise—food donations from *Cocoon Cakes*, and from a kind police officer! We were very touched by their generous gestures and cannot thank them enough for their kindness.



Later, on the last Wednesday of October, the North Korean students and their tutors each received a Halloween goodie bag that our interns prepared to reward them for their hard work in the classes thus far. For many of the students, it was the first Halloween gift that they received, and they enjoyed picking out the designs of their candies. We hope the snacks were tasty!

■ Cultural Activity: Halloween Party



After a long hiatus, PSCORE is back with its latest cultural activity! The objective of our culture program is to help interested North Korean defectors learn about the festivals and traditions of different cultures by personally taking part in them. It is our hope that the students would be able to expand their knowledge of the world while having fun.

This time, we decided to organize a Halloween Party for our North Korean students. Volunteer tutors were invited to join us too!

Our interns had the night lined up with various Halloween-related activities—including a pumpkin-carving session, during which the students unleashed their creativity and designed their own Jack O' Lanterns. They also had the opportunity to make (and eat) caramel apples!



The caramel apples our students made (and later ate)!

On top of learning about the activities of the festival, it was also a time where the students, tutors and PSCORE staff were able to simply enjoy a nice time with one another.

Special mention goes to Kim, a volunteer with PSCORE, for very kindly offering her place for the party, and for all her guidance and advice on how to carry out the Halloween activities. Thank you, Kim!



Tutors and students hard at work carving pumpkins



The final result: very well-carved Jack O' Lanterns!

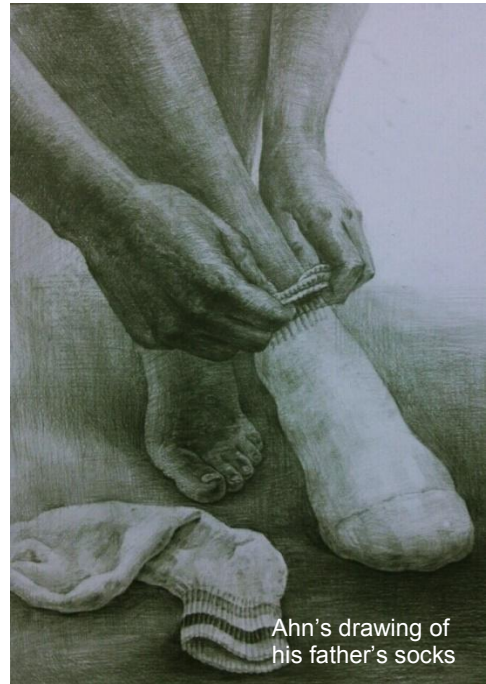
Fundraising Projects

Supporting a Budding Young Artist

PSCORE is initiating a fund-raising event for one of our North Korean students, Ahn Chung-guk.

Anh first began learning how to draw in North Korea because his father had instructed him to. Not only has he come to enjoy drawing, however, he has also developed a desire to become a bridge for Korean reunification, and to become a source of strength for fellow defectors through his art.

Despite his training back in the North and the passion he has for drawing, he had to give up on his dream of becoming an artist while in high school in South Korea, as his family was unable to afford to keep him in an art academy. He is now a student at *Hongik University*, the top art college in South Korea, but art supplies do not come cheap and he needs financial help to continue pursuing his art education.



Ahn's drawing of his father's socks

Inspired by his passion and diligence, we hope to help Ahn keep his dream alive by raising funds for his tuition and art supplies. We seek your generous support to make it come true. To help this young aspiring artist, and to find out more about his inspirations and dreams, kindly visit: <http://www.gofundme.com/Ahnartist>.

Dr. Stephan Gerschewski & the 12th Cheorwon DMZ International Peace Marathon



(Photo credit: Dr. Gerschewski)

Hannam University professor, Dr. Stephan Gerschewski, completed his first half-marathon on September 6, in 2 hours, 8 minutes and 11 seconds. While preparing for his run, the professor also initiated a fund-raiser in hopes of raising awareness on, and also to contribute to the North Korean human rights cause. In total, Dr. Gerschewski raised a staggering amount of KRW 1.075 million through his project. He has donated the full amount to PSCORE, and we are immensely grateful for, and humbled by his dedication and generosity in his effort to help the North Korean people.

To read about Dr. Gerschewski's inspiring experience from when he first decided to join the marathon, his training process, and his thoughts during the actual race, do refer to the article on PSCORE's interview with the professor at: <http://pscore.org/newsletter/index.php/2015/10/19/stephan-gerschewski-marathon-article>.

Thank you once again, Professor!