Parents of LGBTQ Korean Americans Launch Effort to Build Acceptance in Korean Immigrant Communities

*Korean American Rainbow Parents (KARP) will kick off its outreach program in New York City with a film screening and community discussion, to be followed by a day-long seminar in Washington, D.C., for parents, activists, and allies from across the U.S. and Korea.*

**NEW YORK CITY, September 5, 2016** – Today, Korean American Rainbow Parents (KARP) announced the start of a national program of outreach and education for family members and allies of LGBTQ Korean Americans.

The initiative starts in New York City, with a **film screening and community discussion on September 11, 2016**, co-hosted by The Least of These Church in downtown Manhattan, the only LGBTQ-affirming Korean church in the Greater New York area. LGBTQ Korean Americans will share their stories and experiences of living with LGBTQ identities while being part of a community often known to be homophobic and transphobic. The event will also feature a screening of “Dol (First Birthday),” a short film by a Korean American director, Andrew Ahn, who made the film as a way of coming out to his parents as gay.

KARP’s outreach and education series will continue with a **national seminar in Washington, D.C., on October 15, 2016**, which is expected to bring dozens of Korean American parents and allies from across the country and from South Korea together for the first time. This watershed event will be the first chance for parents from across the country to build community with one another and start a conversation around how to support their LGBTQ family members’ struggle for rights and acceptance. **Professor Namsoon Kang** from Brite Divinity School will give a keynote address on acceptance of LGBTQ people in Christian communities.

The goal of KARP’s initiative is to provide Korean American families, especially those with LGBTQ-identifying members, with tools and strategies to see beyond their initial feelings of guilt, shame, and fear – and to instead celebrate their loved ones and help make the world safer and more accepting for them.

The need for KARP’s national effort is tremendous: Even within the broader Asian American and Pacific Islander community, LGBTQ Korean Americans face some of the strongest homophobic and transphobic pushback from their families and friends. Many cultural and historical forces drive Korean anti-LGBTQ sentiment. This has torn families apart, forced many Korean Americans to leave the community as they came out. And so far, there have been no known efforts by Korean American parents and allies to visibly support the LGBTQ community.

KARP – a coalition of accepting parents who openly support their LGBTQ kids – aims to change that. With the continued struggles of LGBTQ people in both South Korea and the U.S., it’s a crucial time for closeted parents and family members to come out in full solidarity with their LGBTQ loved ones.
Members of the media interested in learning more and/or attending both the New York City and Washington, D.C. events may contact Clara Yoon at karp.lgbtg@gmail.com. Interviews with Korean American parents and their LGBTQ loved ones may also be arranged by request.

NEW YORK CITY EVENT:
September 11, 2016
4-6 PM
The Least of These Church (Judson Memorial Church, Garden Room), New York, NY 10012

WASHINGTON D.C. ALL-DAY SEMINAR:
October 15, 2016
Holy Cross Korean Episcopal Church
Fairfax, Virginia

These events are being sponsored or supported by following Korean American LGBTQ and Ally organizations:
Nabi USA - Washington DC (Butterfly for Hope Fund)
Coalition of Korean American (National and DC Chapter)
D.C. Korean Methodist Church
Holy Cross Korean Episcopal Church, Fairfax, Virginia
AAPI LGBTQ Parent Support Group of Greater Washington DC
API Rainbow Parents of PFLAG New York City (ARP PFLAG NYC)
The Least of These Church, New York, NY
Dari Project
National Queer Asian and Pacific Islander Alliance (NQAPIA)*

*NQAPIA is our fiscal sponsor.

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