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## **Fairfax County Teachers Embark on Cultural Exchange to Sister Jurisdiction**

August 2, 2010 – Two Fairfax County English teachers have embarked on a month-long journey to our partner in Korea where they will have the opportunity to meet with Korean teachers and students, and explore the vast cultural offerings of the Songpa-gu district of Seoul, South Korea.

The trip, generously funded by the Songpa-gu government, includes trips to museums and tours of markets and the countryside. Songpa-gu families will host our two teachers, where they will have the unique opportunity to be immersed in the language and culture of South Korea.

We are so honored and happy to accept the offer of our counterparts in Seoul, and its residents, to host our teachers and give them such a great opportunity to learn about Songpa-gu. I thank Mayor Kim Young-Soon for helping initiate this program and look forward to discussing future opportunities with the new mayor, Mayor Park Choon-hee when she visits Fairfax County this fall.

Representing Fairfax County on this trip are two highly respected high school ESOL teachers: Laura Brown of West Potomac High School and Brian Olmes of Robinson Secondary School.

Laura and Brian will spend their mornings in Songpa-gu working at Posung High School, a prestigious boys high school. There, they will meet with teachers and students and teach them about life and school in the U.S. and learn about what it's like to be a student, and a teacher, in Korea. The school is not in session, but will be running a special English program while Laura and Brian are there.

In the afternoons, they will take in all that Songpa-gu has to offer, including the National Museum of Korea, the Dongmaedun and Namdaemun markets, and the National Folk Museum.

The evening time will be spent with their host families, where they will learn first hand about the rich history of our sister jurisdiction.

Laura and Brian arrived in Seoul on July 23, and will return to Virginia on August 23. I look forward to hearing about their experience in Songpa-gu.

Chairman Sharon Bulova

### **Background:**

On July 13, 2009 the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors entered into a Sisterhood Partnership with the Songpa-gu. The government of Songpa-gu sought out Fairfax County after researching several localities and finding many similarities with our county. The district has a population of approximately 620,000 citizens, and hosted the Seoul Olympic Games in 1988.

A delegation from Fairfax County visited Songpa-gu in September of last year, and toured Youngdongil High School during the trip.

Pictured from the Fairfax County delegation in the front row are: Deputy County Executive Dave Molchany, far left; Chairman Sharon Bulova, third from the left; Dan Storck, Mt. Vernon representative on the Fairfax County School Board, center; Barry Bigger of Visit Fairfax, second from the right; and Christina Fullmer, senior aide to Chairman Bulova, far right. Seated third from the right in blue is Youngdongil High School Principal Yong Ran Kwon. The picture was taken on September 24, 2009.

