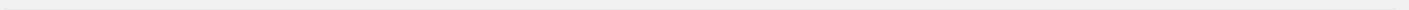




# REFLECTIONS

Collection of  
interviews

Edition #3



**THEME:**

**INTERVIEWS WITH  
ELDERS AND  
VOLUNTEERS**



# Editor's Note

Through my conversations and interviews with elders, I've gained a profound understanding of how writing serves as a powerful bridge, connecting people in ways I hadn't fully realized before. Hearing them speak about how the elderly writing workshop motivated them to step out of their homes, overcome isolation, and share their life stories taught me that writing is not just an individual exercise—it's a communal one. The process of putting their challenges into words helped them heal and find a sense of purpose. It made me realize that writing holds the power to foster human connection and bring people closer, even across generational divides.

From the volunteers, I learned a different yet equally meaningful lesson: that true impact doesn't always come with a physical reward. The smiles of the elders, the small moments of joy, are proof enough that a positive difference has been made. Knowing I played a part in creating these moments for others has shown me that the emotional and intangible rewards are far more lasting. These experiences have strengthened my commitment to continue writing, not only for myself but for others. I've come to see my writing as a tool for healing and connection, and I will strive to use it to leave a positive impact, bringing people together one story at a time.

# Sponsor Seunghee Lee, Spreading Positive Influence

**Q: Hello. Can you briefly introduce yourself?**

A. Hello. My name is Seunghee Lee and I run a dessert cafe and workshop called 'Dalbodre'. For about 10 years, I have been working with a volunteer group called Angel Brad, and have been regularly sponsoring desserts and volunteering.

**Q. Is there a reason why you started sponsoring rice cake cakes at the Pohang Northern Welfare Center for the Disabled?**

A. At first, I visited Pohang Northern Welfare Center for the Disabled as a birthday cake delivery volunteer. While volunteering, I learned that the existing cake sponsor had a problem and was looking for a new sponsor. Since baking is what I do best, I thought I could donate cakes to welfare centers, so I decided to do both delivery volunteer work and cake sponsorship.

**Q. Is there anything you would like to say to those who are hesitant to donate?**

A. I think the reason many people hesitate to donate is because they perceive it as a difficult task that requires a lot of time and money. As a result of my experience sponsoring and volunteering at various organizations in Pohang, I learned that sharing is actually a very easy thing to do when you have time and do what you like and are good at. I like baking, so donating desserts might be the easiest sharing activity. For instance, if you have a lot of educational knowledge, mentoring might be the easiest activity.

**Q. I am curious about what sponsorship and volunteering means to you.**

A. I didn't think about it in a grand way. I think it can be defined as an activity that can enrich my heart. When I go to deliver the cake I made myself, I feel very proud and rewarded when I see them holding my hand and repeatedly saying thank you, because it always makes my heart feel full.

**Q. I'm curious what your future plans are.**

A. I plan to continue doing this job now that I can bring joy to others through baking, which I love and am good at, and I want to do it for as long as possible.



# Depressed Minds Become Brighter Together



The specialized elderly care service is a project to reduce depression and revitalize social relationships by providing individual case management and group activity programs to seniors over 65 years old living in the Buk-gu area of Pohang who are struggling with mental health issues.

We listened to the reflections of the past year from two senior citizens, Kim Geum-ja and Choi Soon-ja, who left a special impression with their friendly appearances.

## **Q. How did you come to use the specialized elderly care service?**

A. Kim Geumja: I was worried that my daily life was boring and lifeless as I was living alone. My support person in charge found out that I was taking medication for a long time due to depression and recommended a specialized service. I didn't have the confidence to do it alone, so I applied with my close neighbor, Soon-ja, thinking it would be a good idea to do it together.

Choi Soon-ja: I have also suffered from depression for a long time and have always had a dull, lackluster life. At the recommendation of my older sister, who knew this fact, I started a specialized service. I didn't have much time due to household chores and it was my first time, so I was worried, but I tried to be brave.

## **Q. I am curious as to whether there has been any change in the senior's mind and life after using the specialized service.**

A. Kim Geumja: I used to feel so down when I stayed home, but now I just wait for the day when there is a program. On that day, I dress carefully, hang out with people, and have a good time. As I grow the flower pots I made while gardening and look at them every morning, I feel like I have more time to feel happy instead of depressed.

Choi Soon-ja: I think I cured one of my illnesses after participating in the specialized service program. I used to get frustrated with housework, but now I feel relaxed and happy. I feel like I have some time for myself by going out regularly, and I've started to pay more attention to my appearance so I can go out neatly. I also got into the habit of writing down and remembering the program date, so my memory improved.

## **Q. Is there a most memorable moment while using the specialized service?**

A. Kim Geumja: I really enjoyed going to the cherry farm. I didn't even know there was such a place, but I liked and enjoyed finding, picking, and tasting cherry fruits. There were many other places we remembered so much that the two of us took a bus to visit again after the program. And I don't think I would have been able to participate well if I was alone, but I still came out consistently because of Sunja and I think I found joy in it.

Soonja Choi: I also remember the cherry farm the most. I even started sweating as I walked around the farm looking for trees with delicious cherries. And it's nice to have someone who cares for each other, talks with you, and shares things with you. Seeing my sister brighten up makes me feel brighter too, so I remember all the days I participated in the program.

## **Q. Lastly, if there is anything you would like to say, please tell us.**

A. Kim Geumja: At first, I was very hesitant and worried, but when I actually participated, I felt like I received a lot of help. Seeing the bright changes made everyone around me envious, and every time I participate, I can feel the sincerity of the teachers, so I would like to express my gratitude even more.

Choi Soon-ja: Through the specialized service, I had a variety of experiences this year and felt at ease. It's hard to recognize because it's a mental illness, not an obvious one, but now that they see a bright change, my family cheers me on and tells me to have a good time. I would like to continue to have fun participating in specialized services like I do now.



# The Espresso You Ordered has Arrived ~

The Pohang City Northern Welfare Center for the Disabled's vocational support team conducted training to acquire barista certification for elders with developmental disabilities who wish to get a job to acquire expertise and improve performance. Let's hear the story of a vocational trainee who participated in barista certification training.

**Q. Hello. Please introduce yourself.**

A: Hello. My name is Park So-young, and I am a vocational trainee at Pohang Northern Welfare Center for the Disabled.

**Q. What made you decide to get a barista certification?**

A. My dream is to become a barista. After receiving barista training, I felt happy making a variety of delicious coffee and serving it to customers. When customers tell me that the coffee is delicious, I only think about what they said all day. When I realized that I needed a certificate to prove myself in order to work as a barista, I decided to get a barista certificate.

**Q. Can you tell us about the difficult and interesting aspects of receiving barista certification training?**

A. The most difficult task was frothing the milk. It was very difficult for me to hold a cup of milk with one hand and quickly turn and wind the operation button with the other hand. My other friends were good at creating foam quickly, but I was afraid of the heat and I remember being upset because the milk would only spin and not produce foam. But now it foams really well. Although making coffee was difficult, what made participating in the barista training enjoyable was being able to drink the coffee I made myself. I liked my own coffee, which changed from tasteless to delicious.

**Q. What are your future plans as a prospective barista?**

A. My goal is to become a barista who can give happiness to customers. To be honest, I will be upset if I don't get my barista certification, but I will try again to get the certification and think about how I can make my customers happy. I will always try to keep a smiling face to be kind to customers.

**Q. Lastly, So-young, in your opinion, what defines a barista?**

A. I think that being a barista is someone who gives warmth. A good barista always delivers good feelings of warmth and kindness.

# Friendly Grandparent Teachers



## **Q. Hello. Please introduce yourself.**

A. Hello. I am Kwon Tae-kyung (age 74), a social guidance participant at Pohang Senior Club, and am currently teaching Chinese characters at 'Eujin Daycare Center.'

## **Q. What prompted you to participate?**

A. After retiring as an elementary school teacher in 2011, I had some free time. Around this time, my grandson was born, and children's language and emotional expression became a new interest. I wanted to be a good grandfather who plays well with my cute grandson. I was curious about the characteristics of the child's world and looked for ways to easily communicate emotions. Then, I learned about the Pohang Senior Club's job guidance project for the elderly, and I decided to participate because I thought I could combine my professional experience with what I had learned for my grandchildren. As a result of my activities to provide job guidance for the elderly, I also acquired a child care teacher certification.

## **Q. Since when have you been participating in the senior job creation project?**

A. I started in March 2012 and have been going on for about 10 years now.

## **Q. Please introduce your work.**

A. We provide Chinese character guidance activities for ages 5 to 7.

On Mondays, we prepare learning materials that will help you learn Chinese characters in an easy and fun way.

On Tuesdays and Thursdays, we conduct learning activities to learn Chinese characters.

By learning 2 to 3 letters a day, you can learn about 100 letters a year.

On Wednesdays and Fridays, we help with learning assistance activities, preparing learning materials, organizing learning outcomes, decorating the environment, and conducting games and events.

## **Q. Are there any episodes you remember while participating?**

A. When I first met the children, they asked, "Why is your grandfather a teacher?", "What is a Chinese character teacher?", "Why do you have long hair?"

As encounters that started with curiosity and excitement became more and more familiar, the naughty boys showed closeness by sneaking up on me, opening their bags and turning their socks inside out. One kid even said with an absurd boast, "Teacher, today is my sister's birthday." During learning activities, Chinese characters are shown. We create 'Chinese character gymnastics' and perform these movements together for about 3 minutes at the end of class. We have a very fun time expressing expressions that symbolize or give meaning to over 30 Chinese characters through various movements and postures such as standing, sitting, rolling, and lying down.

## **Q. What did you feel while participating in senior citizen jobs?**

A. After retirement, it is fun to get away from the relaxed daily life and go to work at a certain time and meet the children. When I go to work, I am proud of myself for putting my mind and body in order, recalling what I have learned, and trying to make it useful. I also find it rewarding to feel lighter and clearer in body and mind while working with children.

## **Q. What does a job for the elderly mean to me?**

A. It is an opportunity to show off my abilities and a source of energy for my life. The senior job is my second job after working as an elementary school teacher, and it is a great opportunity to build social relationships and develop my skills. Regular living is an important vitality that protects your health and provides economic benefits, helping you live a stable life in old age.

# O'Recipe Pohang Branch

O'Recipe Pohang Changpo Branch is a corporate-linked business unit of the Gyeongbuk Pohang Community Center. As a social cooperative, they cook and sell side dishes and soup, and has continuously sponsored side dishes from 2021 to the present.

**Q. Kim, a participant of the O-Recipe Changpo Branch Self-Reliance Labor Project Group, please briefly introduce yourself!**

A: Hello. My name is Kim and I am currently working as a participant in the self-reliance work project group at O'Recipe Changpo branch. It has been about 4 years since I started working at O'Recipe, and I acquired a Korean food cooking certificate while participating in the employment success package. Since then, I have developed an interest in cooking, so I naturally joined O-Recipe, which cooks and sells side dishes.



**Q. Are there any memorable episodes from your time working at the Self-Support Workforce (O'Recipe)?**

A. Some customers come to the store in electric wheelchairs. I was very worried because one of the customers didn't come for about two weeks. Later, he said he couldn't visit the store for two weeks because he was hospitalized due to a broken bone from a fall, and he wanted to eat the egg rolls sold at our store throughout his hospital stay. Soon, after my workplace started donating side dishes to a welfare center for the disabled, my interest in the disabled grew. The fact that he was reminded of the egg rolls I cooked in the kitchen throughout my hospital stay made me think, 'I need to work harder at cooking food in the future!' I still remember that moment.

**Q. Are there any memorable memories or rewarding moments while cooking sponsored side dishes?**

A. I always feel proud while preparing side dishes, not just the sponsored side dishes. I feel happy when I think about the side dishes and soups I carefully prepare going to consumers' tables. I believe that food that is made with sincerity tastes better, so I always add love and sincerity to every cooking process.

**Q. Is there anything you would like to say to those who are hesitant to donate?**

A. I would like to tell you that 'a little sharing can bring great comfort.' It's not easy to make a commitment to support and I keep wondering, 'Will I be able to do it consistently?', but I think it's important to give it a try. Please don't forget that even a small donation can bring great comfort and encouragement to someone!

**Q. Lastly, what does sharing of support mean to a sponsoring organization?**

A. What is sharing of support? I think it is 'four basic arithmetic operations'. I hope you all will join us in practicing the four rules of support, which subtract worries, add love, share hardships, and multiply pride!



# Citizen Safety

# Guardians of Haksangol



**Q. Hello, please introduce yourself.**

A: Hello. My name is Kim Jun-deok, and I am the leader of the Haksangol Safety and Self-Government Citizen Participation Group.

**Q. It seems like you have a special sense of responsibility as the leader. How do you feel?**

A. It's my first time in the position of a leader, so it's a bit burdensome, but I'll try my best with the welfare center for our residents.

**Q. What kind of organization is the Haksangol Safety and Self-Government Citizen Participation Group?**

A. This is a citizen participation group that works together with Haksan Police Station, Haksan Community Welfare Center, and Haksan Management Center to make Haksan Valley a safer and better place to live. As the name suggests, the Safety and Self-Government Citizen Participation Group, local residents who are interested in the safety of Haksangol Village gather together and carry out activities.

**Q. What activities does the Haksangol Safety Self-Government Citizen Participation Group do?**

A. We are working to make Haksangol Village and the surrounding Jungang-dong villages safe from various crimes and dangers. We not only carry out regular patrol activities around the village in connection with the Haksan Police Station, but also carry out environmental beautification and facility supplementation activities in cooperation with the Haksan Community Welfare Center and the Haksan Management Office to make the village a safer and cleaner village.

**Q. Do you have any difficulties while working in the citizen participation group?**

A. I think there are still many people around me who don't know much about the Safety and Self-Government Citizen Participation Group. Those who know us give us warm words of gratitude and support when we carry out patrols and environmental beautification activities, but those who do not know us well are still wary and look at us with unfavorable eyes. Therefore, our citizen participation group plans to work harder in the future to bring positive attention and a positive influence to the village.

**Q. What do you remember most from your time working in the Safety and Self-Government Citizen Participation Group?**

A. Last December, while patrolling the railroad forest around Haksan-dong, I met an elderly man who was passed out drunk. I was going to take him to his house, but he couldn't remember his own house, so I checked with the help of Haksan Police Station and found out that he was a neighbor living in Haksan Jugong Apartment. A few days after taking him home, the elderly man held my hand along with a yogurt, saying, "These days, even when people fall, no one cares and pretends not to notice. Thank you for helping me like this." It was a truly rewarding day, feeling how warm those hands were.

**Q. As the leader of the Citizen Participation Group, is there anything you would like to say to residents?**

A. I wish local residents in the citizen participation group would participate more actively. I alone am not enough to make Haksangol a better neighborhood to live in. When I ask other residents to join me, they all say they can't do it because they are old and unwell, but let's work together to make Haksangol a better village to live in while we are young and healthy for just one day.



# Bloom Your Shrunken Shoulders

A counseling program for disabled colleagues is being operated as part of the 2023 Gyeongbuk Community Chest of Korea application project. "Bloom the shrunken shoulders" is a peer counseling program for the disabled that aims to establish a support system in the community. It is a program that trains peer counselors who work together to solve problems of neighbors who need emotional support. Currently, it provides various theoretical education and training with clients. To learn more about the program, we interviewed a fellow disabled counselor.

**Q. Hello. Please briefly introduce yourself.**

A. Hello. My name is Choi Young-im, and I am currently participating in a counseling program for disabled peers at a welfare center.

**Q. What prompted you to participate in the disabled peer counseling program?**

A. Through the guidance of a welfare center employee, I learned that a counseling program for disabled colleagues was being conducted. I participated because I liked the idea of working with people with disabilities who have little social interaction. The fact that someone sympathizes with my story is a great comfort in itself, so I wanted to provide that kind of comfort to someone.

**Q. What was the most memorable thing about the disabled peer counseling program?**

A. What I remember most is that through the training, I was able to talk about my own life and interact with fellow counselors with disabilities. As I talked about my experiences during the peer counseling training for people with disabilities, I realized that we all had similar experiences. And on the day I went to meet the client for the first time after the phone consultation, it was very windy, but the client called me first, worried about the way to get there, and when I saw him come out and wait for me, I thought, 'This is what forming rapport is like!' So, the most memorable day was the day I first met a client while counseling a disabled colleague.

**Q. Were there any difficulties you encountered while conducting the disabled peer counseling program?**

A. I think it was the first time I spoke to the client. My client and I first met over the phone, and I was actually worried about what we would talk about, how we would talk, and whether it would be burdensome to approach her. However, as I learned during training, I chose to approach slowly rather than asking many questions from the beginning. My efforts seemed to have worked, as the client gradually began to tell her story without hesitation. In fact, although I talked about it as a difficult experience, it is also an experience that helped me grow as a counselor.

**Q. Has anything changed while conducting the disabled peer counseling program?**

A. Actually, I am a student majoring in social welfare. However, although I was acquiring theoretical knowledge, I lacked opportunities to apply what I had learned in the field, and I always wanted to experience it. Through this "Peer Counseling Program for the Disabled," I was able to listen to the stories of clients I had never known before, and in the process, have time to think alone about what support services or policies might be helpful to the clients. Through this activity, I became a peer counselor. I think it served as a stepping stone to further growth as a social worker.

**Q. Lastly, is there anything you wish for the welfare center?**

A. I hope that the disabled peer counseling program will not end with this year's program but will become an ongoing program. Also, I think it would be great if there was a schedule for clients to visit the welfare center in person. If you visit a welfare center in person, you will be able to learn more about it than what can be explained in words, so I hope there is a schedule to visit together.

# Memories with Children



**Q: Hello. Please introduce yourself.**

A. My name is Kwak Eun-hye (65 years old), and I am a Mommy Dream participant at Pohang Senior Club and am working at Namuwa Children's Daycare Center.

**Q. What prompted you to participate?**

A. There is a saying, 'If you live a busy day, a year will be long, and if you live a slow day, a year will be fast.' As I entered my 60s, I felt very bored spending time at home and had no place to relieve my frustration. While looking for a job that would allow me to work in my 60s, I found out about Pohang Senior Club, a senior job organization, and applied. I even got excited while I applied for the job and waited for the announcement.

**Q. Please introduce your work.**

A. I work at a daycare center cleaning toys and play equipment used by children. I think of all of them as my grandchildren, from toddlers to those who are running around for the first time, so I can't clean a single area in vain. When I see children who run up and hug me saying 'Grandma~' and are as warm as the spring sun, my energy comes naturally.

**Q. Are there any episodes you remember while participating?**

A. A child gave me a hand-drawn heart painting as a gift. He said, 'Grandma~' and held out a crumpled piece of paper. It was a picture of a big pink heart. I can't help but smile when I think of the hard work he had to do while holding the crayons with his fern-like little hands. I don't know how long it's been since I felt rewarded for my efforts. After participating in the job, I feel like my life has gained vitality and every day is filled with love.

**Q. What did you feel while participating in senior citizen jobs?**

A. As I go to the daycare center 2-3 times a week, I feel a sense of belonging as if I have become an office worker late in life, so my daily life is enjoyable. As I talked to young teachers and received and gave comfort and encouragement to fellow participants, my heart became warmer. And as my heart became warmer, I felt that my life became more colorful. I think this is happiness when you spend time with people you like, laughing at trivial things in everyday life.

**Q. What does a job for the elderly mean to me?**

A. Participating in senior jobs gives vitality and economic power and is another start to a happy life.