

Describe your project:

The Let's Eat! Celebrating with Food temporary exhibit was a partnership between the Raupp Museum and Korean Cultural Center of Chicago (KCCOC), designed to share food and culture from American and Korean viewpoints. The exhibit was open from September 13 to November 24, 2021.

At the end of 2020, the Raupp Museum was interested in creating diverse cultural connections between Buffalo Grove and communities in the surrounding area. To start the process, the curator from the Raupp reached out to the KCCOC in Wheeling, who were also interested in finding new outlets to share Korean Culture with a wider audience. This temporary exhibition was the result of this exciting new partnership.

The exhibit had two parts: an overview of food history and an exploration of harvest holiday traditions. The first part focused on food, culture, and technology in 20th century Buffalo Grove and in Korea, comparing the two cultures. For example, one section examined how cabbage could become two very different dishes: sauerkraut and kimchi. Visitors could look at different types of kitchen technologies and how traditional food production influence those technologies, like refrigeration and rice cookers. In the second part of the exhibit, visitors explored harvest holiday traditions, Thanksgiving and Chuseok (Korean Thanksgiving). There was a traditional American Thanksgiving table setting and Chuseok table setting, in addition to clothing and photographs that explored the traditions of each holiday. This allowed visitors to see the similarities and differences in harvest holiday traditions and reflect on their own family and cultural traditions.

All exhibit labels were bilingual, printed in English and Korean side-by-side. There was a collection of artifacts from both institutions in both parts of the exhibit, supplemented by photographs for reference. Artifacts from both institutions included food storage jars, recipes, eating and drinking utensils, and clothing.

The exhibit also featured two interactive elements. One interactive was a map of Korea and the United States, where visitors could indicate how far they had traveled for harvest holidays. The other interactive allowed visitors to write down their harvest holiday traditions and pin it up for other visitors to read. At the opening reception, visitors experienced a demonstration of the Chuseok ceremony, performed by members of the KCCOC.

Planning Process:

The exhibit was designed and built by four individuals: The Raupp Museum Curator and the Museum Registrar & Public Educator, along with two individuals from the KCCOC, the Program Coordinator, and the Marketing Specialist. The Raupp Museum staff provided the expertise on American food cultural traditions related to Buffalo Grove, and the KCCOC staff provided expertise on Korean food cultural traditions.

Raupp Museum staff met with the KCCOC Director at the end of 2020 and we discussed the goals of a partnership between our institutions and the possible ways we could collaborate, deciding that a joint exhibition was the best way to connect our communities. In January 2021, Raupp staff met with additional KCCoC staff, who led the exhibition development from their end. The exhibit planning went

from January 2021 to September 2021, a majority of which happened remotely. The Raupp Museum Registrar designed some exhibit theme ideas and presented them to the KCCOC in February 2021. The four staff met in February 2021 to go over the themes and decide on how labels would be written. Staff worked remotely, sharing labels and information over Google Docs between February and June 2021. Labels were edited and design finalized in June and July 2021, and printed in August 2021. During the last week of August until September 13, both organizations met and mounted the labels and set up the artifacts and displays at the Raupp Museum. The exhibit was open from September 13 to November 24, 2021.

Goals:

Our three goals for this exhibit were to build a relationship with the KCCOC, to inspire other member groups to consider working with us, and to welcome new audiences into the Museum. The main goal of this project was to build a working partnership with the KCCOC that would last far into the future, and we decided that jointly creating an exhibition was the best way to reach that goal. An exhibit allowed both organizations to share cultural traditions in an accessible way to a wider audience than a program or presentation, since the exhibit was free and open 5 days a week. The exhibition format was also a format conducive to reaching our second and third goals of sharing diverse historical and current cultural traditions among our visitors, and to inspiring others to consider working with us, since it was a free exhibit and open at different dates and times, making it accessible to a wider audience.

Budget:

The Raupp Museum was primarily responsible for funding this exhibit, with a total budget of about \$543.00. This included \$193 on foam board, \$120 on four gallons of paint, \$20 on mounting tape, \$20 on glossy paper, \$50 on poster paper, \$50 for printed postcard advertisements, \$100 for opening reception food and booklet gifts for visitors. No income was generated from this exhibit, as visiting the exhibit was free and there were no sponsors. The KCCOC provided added support by purchasing food and small exhibit furniture.

Implementation:

Raupp Museum staff (Curator, Registrar), and KCCOC staff (Program Coordinator, Marketing Specialist) produced the exhibit. The exhibit labels were written by all four individuals involved, half by Raupp Museum staff and half by KCCOC staff. The KCCOC staff translated all English labels from the Raupp Museum into Korean.

The Raupp Museum Registrar designed and printed all labels using Adobe Illustrator. She learned new graphic design skills in Adobe Illustrator to create colorful labels that evoked traditions related to food from both cultures, combining iconography from Chuseok and Thanksgiving. She worked with KCCOC to learn more about Chuseok traditions and incorporate this into the label design. For example, the harvest holidays labels featured typical Thanksgiving gourds and pumpkins, and incorporated Chuseok iconography like persimmon trees and the moon.

The exhibit layout was first designed in SketchUp. Raupp Museum staff, with help from two other Park District staff, changed the 10 moveable walls into the desired layout for the exhibit and painted the walls. Labels were printed using a large poster printer, available at the Buffalo Grove Park District main office (their parent organization). The KCCOC and Raupp Museum staff worked together to mount labels

on sticky foam board and talked through the placement of each label and artifacts to provide an ideal visitor flow. Artifacts were pulled from the Raupp Museum and KCCOC collections. The work in the gallery space took about 8 days to complete.

Evaluation:

We were able to achieve our three major goals, to varying success. Our three goals for this exhibit were to build a relationship with the KCCOC, inspire other community partnerships highlighting the diversity in and around Buffalo Grove, and to welcome new audiences into the Museum. Our primary goal of building a relationship with the Korean Cultural Center was met and we have sustained that relationship beyond the exhibit. We have done 2 additional events with them at the Museum, one being an activity day related to traditional Korean children's games. We are excited to share that we are planning another event for spring 2022, which is still in development. Our second goal of inspiring other local community members to work with the Raupp Museum is ongoing, but we did have interest from the Indian community, with a family and members of the Bilingual Parents group at our local school district express interest in working with the Museum. While we did not do formal evaluation of our last goal, the exhibition was made free to the public and we welcomed over 232 visitors to the exhibit over several months. Some visitors noted that they had learned about the exhibit through the KCCOC. Several visitors of all ages participated in the interactive elements, sharing foods and traditions from around the world on the harvest holiday traditions interactive element. Overall, we felt the exhibit was a huge success in bringing our organizations and communities closer together.