



Experience Korea at City Hall

CHUSEOK K-FEST 2025

Jersey City

Screenshot



WELCOME REMARKS

SYLVIA KIM – CHAIR, HCCC KOREAN CHAPTER

“CHUSEOK REMINDS US OF SHARED ROOTS AND NEW BEGINNINGS. THIS INAUGURAL CELEBRATION MARKS A BRIDGE BETWEEN HERITAGE AND FUTURE GENERATIONS.”

EMORY EDWARDS – PRESIDENT, HCCC

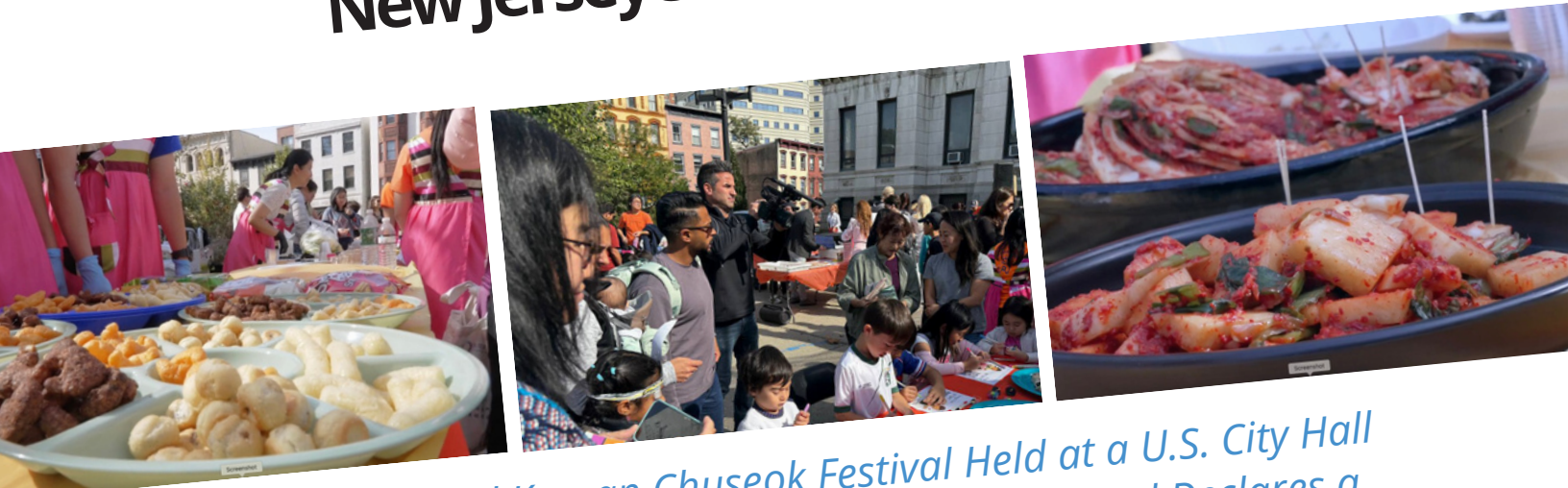
“WE ARE PROUD TO CELEBRATE THE FIRST OFFICIAL CHUSEOK FESTIVAL IN JERSEY CITY—A MOMENT THAT CONNECTS OUR DIVERSE COMMUNITIES THROUGH GRATITUDE AND CULTURE.”

ABOUT CHUSEOK (추석의 의미)

A HARVEST FESTIVAL HONORING ANCESTORS AND CELEBRATING ABUNDANCE—NOW SYMBOLIZING UNITY AND CULTURAL PRIDE WITHIN JERSEY CITY’S VIBRANT DIVERSITY.



Beyond the Melting Pot: Jersey City's Chuseok K-Fest 2025, A New Icon of Culture, Reshapes New Jersey's Cultural Landscape



The First Official Korean Chuseok Festival Held at a U.S. City Hall Shines a Light on Korean-American Leadership and Declares a New 'K-Town 2.0' Vision for the Age of Diversity.



A Historical Moment—Korean Tradition Blossoms at Jersey City Hall

On October 19, 2025, Jersey City, New Jersey, made a significant mark on the history of American cities. The successful hosting of the 'Chuseok K-Fest 2025' was achieved through the collaborative efforts of the Hudson County Chamber of Commerce – Korean Chapter, the City of Jersey City, its Department of Cultural Affairs, and its non-profit partner, Give Chances. This event is recorded as the first official Korean Chuseok Festival to be held inside a U.S. city government building. Held across the Jersey City City Hall Plaza and the City Council Chambers (280 Grove St.) , the event was more than a simple holiday commemoration; it was a historic moment that declared Korean culture and the leadership of the Korean-American community as an official part of the city's identity. The day featured a proclamation reading by Mayor Steven Fulop, cultural performances in the City Council Chambers, and an official recognition ceremony for local community leaders.

This officially placed the Korean heritage onto the city's annual cultural calendar. Unlike previous methods used in other U.S. cities, such as flag raisings to celebrate Korean heritage, this event set a new standard for inclusive cultural recognition by having the local government officially declare and co-host the Chuseok event. While Chuseok is traditionally a Korean harvest festival honoring ancestors and celebrating abundance , this event added a new meaning, symbolizing harmony and cultural pride within Jersey City's vibrant diversity. The festival served as a gathering point for families, artists, business owners, and public officials alike.





A Feast of K-Lifestyle Fills City Hall Plaza (The K-Lifestyle Experience)

From noon (12:00 PM) until late afternoon (3:30 PM), the Jersey City City Hall Plaza was transformed into a bustling "Korean Village," blending Korean tastes, sounds, and modern sensibility. Festival participants actively engaged in diverse programs that allowed for a holistic experience of Korean culture, receiving great enthusiasm:

- **K-Food Market:** Crowds savored popular Korean dishes like tteokbokki, kimbap, and mandu, and watched a live Kimchi-making demonstration. The lively atmosphere of people enjoying the food, as seen in the event video, vividly captured the festival's energy. Community and corporate sponsors, including Eunhasoo Catering and Market Woori, also shared the flavors of Korea through food sampling.
- **K-Beauty & Wellness Zone:** This area, which offered skincare and wellness experiences, consistently drew visitors. K-Beauty sponsors such as Danha and K-Lush LLC participated, introducing the latest Korean beauty trends.
- **Traditional Games & Activities:** Children enjoyed traditional Korean games like ttakji (a flipped paper game), jaegichagi (Korean shuttlecock), and paengichigi (top spinning). A Hanbok photo booth and cultural craft stations also proved highly popular. Give Chances organized these Korean cultural activities.
- **Music:** K-Pop music filled the plaza, showcasing the global communication of Korean culture as people of all ages and races came together to enjoy the festival. The youth-led partner, Give Chances, along with K-Lush LLC, supported the interactive programs and market operations, linking heritage with entrepreneurship. This event played a crucial role in establishing the city's identity, as one attendee noted, calling it "not just a community event... but a historic day where Jersey City officially embraced Korean heritage as part of its identity".



Dazzling Performances and Awards Ceremony in the City Council Chambers (Indoor Ceremony)

The indoor event, held in the City Council Chambers from 2:30 PM to 3:30 PM, was themed "Honoring Our Heritage, Inspiring Our Future". It emphasized the deep integration of Korean heritage into civic life by showcasing the continuity of Korean art, encompassing both traditional and contemporary forms.

Moving Opening and Congratulatory Remarks:

- **Welcome Address:** Assemblywoman Ellen Park (D-37) opened the ceremony with a speech on the importance of heritage in public life. She stressed the significance of the event in showcasing local Korean talent and vendors, given that the Tri-State area has the



second-largest Korean population after Los Angeles, fueled by the popularity of K-Pop, K-Food, and K-Beauty. She also highlighted New Jersey as one of the most diverse states, offering a message of welcome to all people of various ethnic and religious backgrounds. •**National Anthems:** Luca Kang (11) and Shinhee "Eva" Yoon (15) from the Korean School of New Jersey Choir delivered moving performances of both the Korean and American national anthems.

Spectacular Cultural and Contemporary Performances: A diverse group of artists filled the chambers with emotion and applause, presenting the spectrum of Korean art from traditional Gayageum Byeong-Chang to K-Hip-Hop and K-Pop.

•**Traditional Gayageum Byeong-Chang:** Master Junghee Oh presented an inspiring performance that blended ancient melodies with modern narratives.

•**Modern K-Dance 'Cho Weol':** Joy Lee and Gibbum Lee, with their dance company, offered a modern reinterpretation of Korean form, philosophy, and movement.

•**Taekwondo Demonstration:** Master Juwon Kim showcased the artistry and discipline of Taekwondo, Korea's national sport, emphasizing strength and unity.

•**Daegum Solo Performance:** Woosung Jung performed a piece on the Daegum, the traditional Korean bamboo flute, connecting centuries-old sounds with modern sensibility.

•**K-Vocal Art:** Sooyeon Yoon, a versatile actor, singer, and performance artist, delivered a profound and elegant performance, using voice and movement for expressive storytelling that linked traditional and modern feelings.

•**K-Hip-Hop Showcase:** Dynamic young artist Clubby Yoo brought the urban rhythms of Korea to Jersey City.

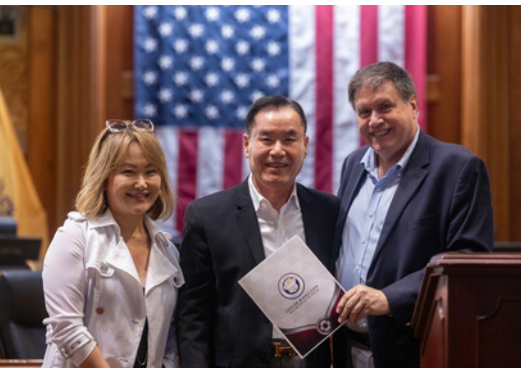
•**K-Pop Dance Finale:** The closing was performed by two teams from the Michelle Dance Academy. Notably, the four-member team of 10-year-olds, "Twilight," who previously won second place in a U.S. K-Pop Dance Competition and performed at the Gangnam Festival in Seoul, represented the next generation of Korean cultural talent.

Korean-American Community Recognition Awards:

The ceremony included the presentation of official City Certificates of Honor, signed by Mayor Steven Fulop, to six Korean-American leaders. Their leadership symbolized the enduring Korean- American legacy within Jersey City's diverse environment across the fields of business, education, arts, and public service:

•**Hyeong Reap Kim (Community Leader & CPA):** Honored for over 40 years of serving as a reliable financial guide and mentor for immigrant families, strengthening local association leadership and cross-cultural ties.





•**Yun Jung Rhee (Artist, Educator, Curator):** Recognized for residing in Jersey City for over 20 years, transforming instruments and textiles into art to inspire conversations about sustainability, and empowering youth through art.

•**Sun Cho (Digital Innovation & Communications Executive):** Honored for over 15 years of shaping strategies for change in the digital era, mentoring the next generation of digital professionals, and focusing on connecting people through technology.

•**Jennifer Yun (Community Activist):** As the widow of the late Councilman Michael Yun, she was honored for continuing his legacy of service and providing encouragement and compassion to the Korean community after his passing in 2020.

•**Grace Chung (Community Development & Communications Leader):** Recognized for her sharp business journalism analyzing market trends and economic policy, sharing the human side of entrepreneurship through storytelling, and helping local residents realize their economic potential.

•**Soojin Jung (Real Estate Broker & Community Builder):** Honored for over 10 years as a trusted guide helping Korean families and small businesses settle in Jersey City, acting as a partner rather than just an agent to strengthen cultural ties and economic growth through community involvement.



K-Fest America and the New Vision for 'K-Town 2.0'

In her keynote address, Sylvia Kim, President of the Hudson County Chamber of Commerce - Korean Chapter, stated, "Chuseok reminds us of shared roots and new beginnings. What started as a festival has become a civic declaration that culture can build community, and community can build an economy".

She announced that K-Fest would become a permanent annual event on Jersey City's cultural calendar and revealed plans for expansion to other cities under the name 'K-Fest America'. Kim emphasized, "K-Fest is no longer just a festival", but will serve as a bridge where "culture meets economy, and diversity is the foundation for sustainable civic growth". This initiative introduces a new cultural economic model, connecting Korean innovation and creative industries with the U.S. civic ecosystem, turning culture into both a community platform and an economic catalyst.

Emory Edwards, President of the Hudson County Chamber of Commerce, also welcomed the event, expressing pride in celebrating Jersey City's first official Chuseok Festival, which connects the diverse community through gratitude and culture.



As Jersey City prepares to welcome global visitors for the 2026 World Cup, this Chuseok K-Fest 2025 is recorded as a moment where the city opened its heart to a new heritage. It laid the foundation for 'K-Town 2.0,' a modern, globally connected cultural district, and 'K-Fest America,' a regional network integrated through diversity and innovation. Kim concluded, "This is not the end of a festival; it is the beginning of a legacy—a culture carried by the community and powered by a vision".



Established in 2025, the HCCC-KC is building cultural and economic bridges between Korea and the U.S. by connecting Korean-American professionals and entrepreneurs with New Jersey's civic and business networks through programs like the Chuseok K-Fest, Korea-NJ Bio Summit, and K-Town 2.0.

The success of this historic festival was made possible through the dedicated collaboration of the Hudson County Chamber of Commerce - Korean Chapter, the City of Jersey

City & Department of Cultural Affairs, and Give Chances, as well as the generous support of community and corporate sponsors, including AAPI New Jersey, Tous Les Jours, Caelum Prep, Arte Museum, K-Lush LLC, Market Woori, Eunhasoo Catering, LBS 복근 사관학교, and Danha. They successfully translated a cultural vision into a civic milestone, proving that culture can be a driving force for growth.

“Honoring Our Heritage, Inspiring Our Future.”

This first Chuseok K-Fest was not just a festival — it was a beginning. A beginning of a story that connects generations, celebrates identity, and reminds us that culture is the foundation of every community. There were many moments when it would have been easier to stop. Resources were limited, the challenges were constant, and the work often felt larger than what one community could carry. But we chose to move forward — not because it was easy, but because it had to continue.

This festival was never about perfection.

It was about purpose — about showing that even in difficult conditions, our community can stand together, create beauty, and carry our legacy forward.

As we look ahead to the coming year and the excitement of the 2026 World Cup, we also envision the steady rise of K-Town 2.0 — a modern, globally connected community built step by step, carefully and boldly.

It will not appear overnight. It will grow through collaboration, creativity, and trust — built by people who believe in something greater than themselves.

Because legacy is not something we inherit

it is something we build, again and again, through courage, vision, and love for the community we call home.

What we began here in Jersey City will not end with this day. It will continue — evolving, improving, and inspiring — so that the next generation can stand stronger, dream bigger, and rise higher.

And this is only the beginning.

With gratitude,

Sylvia Kim, Chair

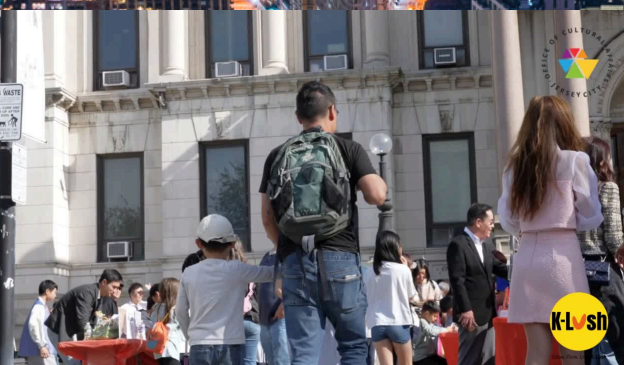
Hudson County Chamber of Commerce -Korean Chapter

Jersey City Chuseok K-Fest 2025—this is just the beginning.

See you next year, with more music, food,
and community spirit!

**"Jersey City's First Official K-Festival was a great success!
Stay tuned — starting this year, we'll celebrate
Chuseok together every year!
We're already planning even more exciting K-Culture
events next year — music, food, art, and community
all in one. See you at the next K-Fest!"**

CHUSEOK K-FEST 2025



Video Available

