



## KOREAN FOREST KINDERGARTEN ASSOCIATION VISITING THE NATURE PRESCHOOL AT IRVINE

Sahm Yook University (Seoul, South Korea sending 44 teachers to learn Irvine's model for early childhood environmental education

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OWINGS MILLS, MD (June 25, 2015) – The Nature Preschool at Irvine Nature Center is hosting a large contingent of South Korean early childhood teachers, directors and affiliates of the Korean Forest Kindergarten Association (KFKA) for a special training. The training will take place on Monday, June 29 (1 – 8 p.m.) and Tuesday, June 30 (9 a.m. – 12 p.m.).

Jiyoun Shin, Ph.D. coordinated her group's visit to Irvine so that the KFKA could learn the U.S.'s nature-based preschool concept. They have already visited Germany and Switzerland to observe their similar "forest kindergarten" programming, but Dr. Shin feels that Irvine's "nature-based preschool concept is more applicable for Korean society, because it combines indoor and outdoor activities, balances formal and informal activities, and connects to a national curriculum."

Director of The Nature Preschool at Irvine Monica Wiedel-Lubinski said, "The expansion of nature-based education for early learners is an international trend." Both nature preschools and forest kindergartens offer models for teachers to instill respect for the natural world and allow children to learn foundation skills while exploring the outdoors. Wiedel-Lubinski said, "We're very pleased to be a major part of this team being able to create a Korean-style nature-based preschool movement."

During this training, Korean educators will discover best practices in early childhood environmental education, as well as share some of their own approaches to forest kindergarten programs.

About Irvine Nature Center: Celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Irvine is an environmental education organization. Its mission is to educate and inspire current and future generations to explore, respect and protect nature. Irvine is located at 11201 Garrison Forest Road in Owings Mills, Md. Call 410-738-9200 or visit [www.ExploreNature.org](http://www.ExploreNature.org) for more information.

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