



STAFF PHOTOS BY JAY BAILEY

Yunbin Im goes through an exercise in Korean with her students in the Chattanooga Christian Academy, a new school of language, music and culture at the Korean Presbyterian Church.

# Talent to spare

Korean Presbyterian Church offers music, language, culture academy with classes for all ages



Minjeong Won, left, teaches Lina Park how to play the violin at the Korean Presbyterian Church. Its new academy places a heavy emphasis on music, using it as a universal language.

BY CLINT COOPER  
STAFF WRITER

It's not even 10 on a Saturday morning, but the Korean Presbyterian Church is a beehive of activity.

At the end of one building, three young adults are bowing the strains of "Baa Baa Black Sheep" on violins. On the other end, a handful of kindergarten-age students are practicing their Korean alphabet and vowels.

On the second floor of an adjoining building, several young people and adults are piping out notes on flutes. Downstairs, snacks are being prepared for the busy students while pungent Asian vegetables are stewing in a soup being prepared for the following day.

The students all are enrolled in the Chattanooga Christian Academy, a newly minted school of music, language and culture at the

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STAFF PHOTO BY JAY BAILE

Daekeun Park teaches an introductory Korean class at the Korean Presbyterian Church.

## Academy

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church in Rossville, Ga.

"We're always searching for a way to serve the Lord," says So Young Ko, a member of the church. "It's funny how God has put our certain talents together in a small community."

The 15-week program — the cost is \$150 for 15 lessons — is just the first the congregation hopes to offer its member families and the community.

"We have a lot of talented people around here," says the Rev. Andrew Moon, pastor of the church for six years. "We want to share the kind of gifts we have with each other, but it's also a good source of outreach."

He had been considering such a program for a while when one of his former students, Daekeun Park, arrived from North Carolina with the experience of having taught in a similar program.

With Park on board as director, the academy opened earlier this year and offers instruction in violin, flute, guitar, music and culture, and in Korean, Chinese and English languages.

Andrew and Eunsuk Tudor live in Ooltewah and are not members of the Korean Presbyterian Church but received a letter about the academy

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music/culture. And while Park is glad for the opportunity, she wonders whether her daughter is mature enough to be motivated by the classes.

"I don't want to push her to do something," she says. "I want her to love to listen and enjoy it first. If she's into it, I want her to learn it."

Daekeun Park, who teaches advanced Korean in addition to his duties as director, says the academy's "goal is to encourage children to find their talents."

Kiran Park, who compares her music/culture classes to kindergarten in Korea, says her students — all under 5 — learn the Korean language, songs and crafts such as origami.

"They like singing and dancing and paperwork," she says.

Minjeong Won, a church member and University of Tennessee at Chattanooga graduate student in orches-

tra, teaches violin to several students in two age groups. She even borrowed violin from UTC so no one had to buy them.

In her homeland of Korea she says, she instructed more than 500 children on how to play the instrument with the idea "to make them interested, but don't push them."

Flute instructor Minsu Shin was previously a paid teacher of the woodwind instrument in Korea and Los Angeles. Her volunteer work she says, "is a ministry for the glory of God."

Ko says he wasn't a fan when the church first began discussing opening an academy.

"I wasn't really for it," he says. "I thought it was more important to focus on the gospel itself. When I saw how this thing was coming together, I thought, 'This is good.'"

Now, Ko thinks he might like to get in on the action if the academy can find a teacher.

"I really wanted to learn the saxophone," he says.

However, he says, laughing, "some [people probably wish] I could take voice lessons."

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