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Meet Matthew Kim

by Matthew Kim

In 1979, I wrote an autobiography, published in Korea, titled *Without Sail*. I wrote it to show that I was just like everyone else. I was the first disabled person in Korea to speak publicly about having a disability. The book was adapted into a successful movie. The movie and the book helped establish a disability movement in Korea.

My background is quite varied. I am identified with many different groups. I am proud of my Korean heritage and I wish to retain it, but I am also proud of being an American. I have continued in my determination to disability awareness by opening memberships of the Disabled Students Union (DSU) to all students. In addition, I served as the first vice president of the Board of Trustees at the North Los Angeles County Regional Center to have a disability.

My first experience with AAC occurred when I met the physicist Dr. Steven Hawking at Berkeley. He used Word + to interact. I did not think much of it until I started student teaching and my speech impairments interfered. I used Word+ for IEP meetings and first two weeks of the school year only, because my students did not like it. However, using it in the beginning provided a bridge between my students and me until they became familiar with my teaching.

My experiences with promoting disability awareness make me a qualified writer. Throughout my life, I have been dedicated to the cause of increasing awareness of disability. I write so that society will know that the people with disabilities have the same potential as everyone else. With my passion for writing and activism, I returned to the project of my youth in Korea: I released my old book with new title, *Sail My Way*, in 2005.



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