

**NAT SOUND:** Crowd cheering during K-Pop night from 00:00 to 00:05.

**GONZALEZ-QUEZADA:** Making her mark on the K-pop scene in San Antonio is Stacey Jones, also known as Krafty K-pop. She is one of very few people in San Antonio that plan K-pop events. With her business kicking off just a little bit over a year ago, The Mesquite's Daisy Gonzalez-Quezada sat down with Jones to learn more about her journey as a local K-pop event planner.

**STACEY JONES:** How I started was, during the pandemic, before the pandemic hit I was working (in a) doctor's office and use to do back work, I use to answer phone calls, put in insurance information for patients and stuff. And then when the pandemic hit, we started getting a lot of cases at work and then they sent us home for a little while but then my kids had to be homeschooled, so I started to say, "OK I'm just going to stay at home." And then my husband, he had his business (and he said) "why don't you just kind of start a business, you know I have office space why don't you try and see if you can do something." And so I had helped at other cup sleeves before, so I decided let me go ahead and do something for like a K-pop community.

So, first I came up with Krafty K-pop because I wanted to do like arts and crafts with the K-pop kind of theme to it, but then again with the pandemic and stuff, it's kind of hard to have everybody in a closed area and teach them how to do things. So I was like, "let me just do cup sleeves and I can kind of control how many people I have in, see the environment and stuff" so I started doing the cup sleeves. I started looking at different dance teams. On YouTube, I would see people dance inside and stuff so let me mix the dance with the cup sleeves and then I just started having the monthly themed events.

**DAISY GONZALEZ-QUEZADA:** Jones recalls her husband was the one who introduced her to the world of K-pop.

**JONES:** My husband was in Korea, well he was my boyfriend at the time, but he was in Korea in 2005 and while he was there the different soldiers, they would play different music that they like. And he just showed me K-pop and I just kind of stayed in it.

**NAT SOUND:** Crowd cheering during a dance performance in a Krafty K-Pop event from 2:13 and fades out at 2:17.

**GONZALEZ-QUEZADA:** Prior to becoming Krafty K-pop, Jones had already attended other K-pop events.

**JONES:** I have been to a couple of events, there have been (some) here or there. You would hear about some K-pop nights, but I just wanted to mix the cup sleeve with the K-pop nights all together, so when people come out they get either a photocard or they get a cup sleeve to celebrate the event. So I decided to mix everything together and bring people out so at least with this you get to experience the event and also go home with like a cute little goodie bag or something to just remember that event by.

**GONZALEZ-QUEZADA:** Jones had intended to host crafty events, hence the name “Krafty K-pop.”

**JONES:** I was thinking about being crafty with different arts and crafts and then mixing it with K-pop so, for example, you can come with like a photocard and make like a little sleeve or decorate a binder to hold your photocards in and I was going to do different stuff like that.

So I do the cup sleeves and then I also have the K-pop nights and then now that we do have you know (the) vaccine, I am going to start having more of like the paint parties and then the dance nights too. So we mainly do birthday events or anniversary debut events.

**GONZALEZ-QUEZADA:** She has managed to successfully turn her personal interest into her business. Though with any business, there have been challenges.

**JONES:** I like to be passionate about what I do. And I think about the fans and what would entertain them. So I feel very fortunate to have been able to start a business during the pandemic doing something that I love.

It was very challenging last year because we had a lot of the Black Lives Matter happen and we also had Asian hate, and so when I would go to certain businesses, I felt like you would talk professional on the phone and then (when they) see me it would be kind of different. I had one venue, I’m not going to say their name, but when they heard that I was going to be doing an event that’s going to be based on like an Asian person’s birthday they told me that if they get targeted in any way, I would be responsible for any damages. So I decided not to work with them anymore or I decided not to even work with them. So it was a lot of those challenges and also making sure everybody is safe and again when I first started having the event nights, the party nights, dance nights, I would limit to 75 people in a space that is more open.

It’s going to be competition whenever something is a good idea and then we have the people that want to do it too now. Again, I wasn’t the first one to do the K-pop nights and stuff, but I think I’m the first business that’s one hundred percent towards K-pop. Now, there are some fan groups, like I am a licensed LLC business, where other people they’re like “OK, this is a fan club of girls that just get together and say ‘OK I’m going to do this in a boba café, ’” but mine is I’m (an) actual business. So there are other people who do cup sleeves in San Antonio, there are other people who actually have events in San Antonio and you know they’re welcome to it. And you know, you can’t just be the only one and expect a monopoly. There’s always going to be people doing stuff.

**NAT SOUND:** Crowds cheers on a K-Pop dance group during K-pop night from 5:42 to 5:49.

**GONZALEZ-QUEZADA:** Her turnout depends on what kind of event she is hosting, as some K-pop groups draw in more people.

**JONES:** It depends, now BTS is the most popular group. So when we have BTS-themed events people come out. They always come out for those events. My biggest turnout was for the BTS meal night, I think we had over 300 people. Then I had like a hot girl summer event, so it was

like based on girl groups, so we'd have mainly girl group (songs) played. We still had our DJ play a variety of songs, but we were heavily focused on girl groups. So, we have heavily focused (events) on BTS or we also had NCT night, where we play NCT music and then we have a raffle.

My grandpa owned businesses, my mom did too, so I do have sort of like a business brain as far as like, for profit. For example, I like Blackpink, I like Twice, I like Everglow, I like Red Velvet, I like TXT but the big money makers are BTS and I have bills that need to be paid. For example, I can have individual events for the members of BTS and bring out hundreds of people. I can't do that for all the members of ATEEZ. Now, if I were to have one big group (event) for ATEEZ, I would bring out a crowd but it's not going to be as much as it would for BTS.

**GONZALEZ-QUEZADA:** Jones said that so far, her favorite event has been "Borahae Ball," an event to celebrate the anniversary of BTS's debut.

**NAT SOUND:** Event attendees sing along to BTS during one of Jones's events from 7:20 to 7:26.

**JONES:** Well, with that one it was an actual catered event. We had presold like \$50 (tickets) and we had given out deluxe goodie bags. So, I always give out goodie bags with candy and photocards, but this one actually had, I had contacted a vendor, well not a vendor but a shop, and she made special stationery (products). So in there, I had given away like little notepads or things for like different members. I also gave out like little ramen noodles that I know that they (BTS) like. (I gave out) purple stuff, they had like pins, I gave out special stuff, it was a deluxe goodie bag that came with each person that got a ticket and then we also gave out, I gave out the memories from that past year. I also gave out a calendar and a little BTS mood light that they had on their website. So, I'd go to Weverse and buy things... so that one (event) I gave a lot of official merch stuff and then we had catered Korean food.

**GONZALEZ-QUEZADA:** There is plenty more in store for Krafty K-pop. Jones said she only expects it to get bigger and bigger.

**JONES:** Yeah, actually, I am going to focus more on event planning. (In) May of next year, I plan on having a K-pop festival here in San Antonio. I've also been talking to different record labels; I actually want to bring in artists to San Antonio. Only thing is, the reason why like BTS won't come to San Antonio is (because) we don't have the up-to-date equipment. Dallas does, Houston does. The AT&T center needs to be updated for us to have a big concert like that here, but I don't mind planning like other little B-list artists like you know. I'm trying to see if we can get Kevin Woo, I got his contact information, so we're going to see. There's also trainees that I was trying to see if I can get scheduled for our May (festival). So, I do want to start promoting more K-pop artists to come to San Antonio. So I basically want to focus more on the entertainment stuff. Another reason why I want to have my own venue (is to) have more events, build the crowds. (Also) they (K-pop artists) know this is here in San Antonio, if they come to San Antonio, we have a spot that you can come perform at and we have people who will come see you.

Right now, I am working on getting my own spot. (I'm) either going to renovate a warehouse and it's going to be like a venue only dedicated towards K-pop. I'm also looking to either owning a boba shop or having it mixed together. It just depends on what property I get. There's a couple of places I've been looking at but it's definitely going to be a place where I can have karaoke, K-pop karaoke at and a venue where it's going to have enough space for everybody to just enjoy themselves. It's going to be something that's open throughout the week, not just (weekends). So (not only) when I have the K-pop-themed dance nights, but throughout the week it's going to be a place where people can listen to K-pop, see it on TV and like eat ramen or hotdogs and have different vendors come in, different food trucks and stuff. So this is going to be an actual like K-pop spot dedicated just to K-pop.

**GONZALEZ-QUEZADA:** For more information on upcoming Krafty K-pop events, you can follow Krafty K-pop on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).

**NAT SOUND:** A woman sings and cheers during Borahae Ball from 10:58 and fades out at 11:04.