

November/December 2017

No. 124

A publication of the
JACL Chicago Chapter

JACL

In this Issue:

- page 1 George Takei Joins Kansha Alumni at Alphawood Gallery
- page 3 Kansha Project awarded NPS JACS Grant
- page 4 Hello From Your New Scholarship Committee Chair!
- page 4 Meet Our New Board Member!
- page 5 Midwest District Council Fall Meeting
- page 6 Places of Memory/ Memories of Place
- page 7 Thank You to Our Donors and Advertisers
- page 8 Calendar of Events

2017 JACL Chicago Annual Meeting

See Page 4 for details

SAVE-THE-DATE Day of Remembrance

Sunday, February 18, 2018

George Takei Joins Kansha Alumni at Alphawood Gallery

By Kenji Kuramitsu, Kansha ALB Member

On September 7th, members of the Kansha Alumni Leadership Board (ALB) gathered to help lead a tour at Alphawood Gallery for actor and activist George Takei. I opened our time together by sharing a creative definition of *kansha* that two of our ALB members heard at a public workshop this spring. To paraphrase, more than simple thankfulness, *kansha* can connote a living gratitude flowing across the boundaries of time, awakening within us deep wells of energy that remind us of our connection to all things. *Kansha* calls us to look backwards without bitterness, to house our past in the present, and to fight for a more whole future.



Photo courtesy of Amy Chow

KANSHA ALUMNI LEADERSHIP BOARD (ALB) MEMBERS HELPED LEAD A TOUR OF ALPHAWOOD GALLERY FOR GEORGE TAKEI.

Our tour was given by a well-versed gallery employee, but the event's most powerful and decolonial turn for me was the invitation to interrupt and interject our own insights. Leonard Cohen wrote "there is a crack in everything — that's how the light gets in." Though difficult at times to blot out the sea of white faces ringing our group, we carved out such cracks with Mr. Takei through careful spontaneity, seasoning the tour with our

Continued on page 2

JACL

Japanese American Citizens League

CHICAGO CHAPTER

Securing and maintaining the civil rights of Japanese Americans and all others who are victimized by injustice and bigotry.

Article submission deadline for our next issue is 12/18/17.

The JACLe is published by the JACL Chicago Chapter for its members, supporters, and friends. We welcome your comments, suggestions, and article submissions.

For More Information

For information about the JACL Chicago Chapter, call 773.728.7171, or visit www.jaclchicago.org

Contact Us

JACL Chicago Chapter
5415 North Clark Street
Chicago, Illinois 60640-1294

Phone: 773.728.7171
Fax: 773.728.7231
Email: info@jaclchicago.org
Web: www.jaclchicago.org

Go Green!

If you would like to receive a copy of this newsletter electronically, and receive JACL news and updates via email, please email info@jaclchicago.org and let us know you'd like to be added to our electronic mailing list!

Advertise in the JACLe!

Go to www.jaclchicago.org for details on how to place your ad today.

- Affordable Rates
- Targeted Community Audience
- Support JACL Chicago



Follow us on Facebook!
www.facebook.com/JACLChicago

George Takei continued

own intimate perspectives. Manzanar may be dry, sterile anecdote to outside spectators. To us it is fluid, an open wound. Where dominant lenses see only reeling statistics and an indefinable mass of misery, we see our own hands and our ancestors' faces.

As we walked stop-and-go around the gallery, my mind was drawn to an idea sketched by the Jewish philosopher Walter Benjamin, who imagined history as "an angel blown backward through time." Benjamin based this image off an abstract painting he owned in which he recognized an angelic figure drifting away from the object of its intense reflection: the watery depths of history's great traumas.

In Benjamin's interpretation, the past is merely "one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage," congealing into a mesmerizing heap. Despite the angel's desire to undo this suffering and to restore what has been broken, a rogue current has caught their wings, and the figure is violently buffeted into the future to which its back is turned — buoyed away from the past yet enthralled in its contemplation.



Photo courtesy of Amy Chow

GEORGE TAKEI ENCOURAGES THE KANSHA ALB MEMBERS TO CONTINUE THEIR IMPORTANT WORK OF EDUCATION AND ENGAGING IN CURRENT ISSUES.

As Japanese Americans, we should recognize this angelic gaze. The obsession is our own. In reflecting on the incarceration and drawing salient connections to our lives today, we wade forward in time while stretching our hands backwards, arrested by past perditions that remain ever before our eyes.

I left this contemplative experience filled, proud of all Kansha Project alumni, and especially grateful for the careful work of Anna Takada, Ryan Yokota, and all Nikkei

members of the exhibit's Curatorial Committee. Their witness, integrity, and passion made this exhibit possible.

Kansha is, as I said earlier, more than bleached gratitude — *kansha* fills us with living waters which cannot be stilled. If the past is a dark pool — fluid, hypnotic, casting warped reflections — we will splash into those deep waters lifted by the most everyday buoyancies: stepping up, speaking out, writing grants, giving tours, talking story over meals and drinks.

I am grateful for our community's ability to tell our own stories and to heal from past tides as we orbit them still, utterly transfixed. We will tread inches at a time, wave by wave, crest by crest: "So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past." 

Kansha Project awarded NPS JACS Grant

By Christine Munteanu, JACL Chicago Member

JACL Chicago is thrilled to announce that we have been awarded a Japanese American Confinement Sites (JACS) grant from the National Park Service for the Kansha Project. The grant provides federal funding to support two years of the Kansha Project. The grant agreement was finalized in mid-September, and the award period lasts until July 2019.

The Japanese American Confinement Sites Grant Program provides financial assistance to organizations and entities working to preserve and interpret the U.S. confinement sites where Japanese Americans were detained during World War II, in order that present and future generations may learn and gain inspiration from these sites and that these sites will demonstrate the Nation's commitment to equal justice under the law.

The Kansha Project's mission is to empower young Nikkei to take ownership of their role in promoting the stories, lessons, and legacy of the WWII Japanese American incarceration experience by connecting them with their identity, history, and community.

The JACS grant provides funding for many of the travel costs associated with sending two Kansha Project cohorts to Manzanar. This is the core component of the program that allows young Nikkei to physically connect with the incarceration experience in a visceral and emotional way. In addition, the award provides funding for a part-time, two-year grant administrator position, who will provide oversight of the grant by tracking spending, submitting reimbursements, and preparing required documentation and reports. The position will be hired by the end of 2017.

The award also stipulates a \$45,000 cost match, which consists of program expenses that JACL Chicago must either spend (cash) or get donated (in-kind) over the course of the grant period. While much of the cost match will be met through the volunteer hours contributed by Kansha Alumni Leadership Board members, the \$45,000 also represents a fundraising

goal that will ensure the long-term financial stability and future sustainability of the Kansha Project for years to come.

The support provided by the JACS grant allows the Kansha Alumni Leadership Board to expand the scope, depth, and reach of the Kansha Project. In addition to the annual trip to

Manzanar and participants' individual reflection projects, deliverables for the grant include the development of a curriculum/implementation guide to assist other regions looking to replicate the program, and local community education events centered around the Japanese American incarceration experience. The expansion of the Kansha Project through local events will provide ongoing engagement opportunities for Kansha Project participants and the broader Chicago Japanese American community to continue to explore the ways Chicago and our country has

been shaped by the legacy of the incarceration experience. Receiving the JACS grant is an important step in further institutionalizing the Kansha Project as the signature youth development program of JACL Chicago.

We are grateful for the many individuals who have financially supported the Kansha Project over the past six years, as well as the many community members who have generously contributed their expertise, connections, and time. Your support has been invaluable in growing the Kansha Project into the program it is today. We are excited to provide expanded opportunities to engage you in the mission and success of the Kansha Project, and look forward to your continued support. ☮



Photo: John Adachi

THE MANZANAR OBELEISK HAS BECOME A SYMBOL OF THE SACRIFICE AND INJUSTICE JAPANESE AMERICANS EXPERIENCED BY THE GOVERNMENT.

2018 Day of Remembrance February 18, 2018

Watch for more information at www.jaclchicago.org

2018 JACL Chicago Inaugural More Information Coming Soon!

JACL Chicago Scholarship Applications Available Soon!



Remembering Our Past to Protect Our Future

Wednesday, December 6, 2018
7:30pm – 9:30pm

Muslim Education Center,
8601 N Menard, Morton Grove

Hello From Your New Scholarship Committee Chair!

By Christine Munteanu, JACL Chicago Scholarship Committee Chair

I am with great gratitude and humility that I take on the JACL Chicago scholarship program as the new scholarship committee chair.

Both I, as well as dozens of past scholarship winners, owe much to the previous chair, Judy Tanaka, for her steady leadership of the scholarship program over the past fifteen years. Through her careful stewardship, as well as the dedicated hard work of the scholarship committee (most recently including Marisa Fujinaka, Rosemary Lee, Joyce Morimoto, Megan Nakano, and Ken Yoshitani), the JACL Chicago scholarship program has grown into a prestigious program with a stable basis of support.

I am truly grateful to the donors who fund scholarships to support the education

of our young awardees: the scholarship program would not be possible without you. In addition, I am thankful for the many community members who donate their time, talents, and resources to strengthen this important program.

The annual JACL Chicago Scholarship Luncheon is one of my favorite chapter events. From the self-conscious modesty of the scholarship recipients as their accomplishments are shared with the audience, to parents' and family members' pride for their awardees, to donors' fond remembrances of the loved ones their scholarship honors, the scholarship luncheon is a truly intergenerational event that showcases our community's strengths.

For many young people, receiving a JACL Chicago scholarship serves as

their first introduction to JACL and to the Chicago Japanese American community. This introduction represents an opportunity for increased access and inclusivity, and I hope to work to cultivate those relationships to strengthen the JACL Chicago scholarship program and our community.

I look forward to the opportunities for continued growth and innovation afforded by the strong foundation established by Judy, the committee, and our donors. I am also happy to welcome new committee members Doug Ishii, Brandon Ishikata, and Gary Yamagiwa, whose experiences will add valuable additional perspectives. If you are interested in getting involved with the scholarship program, please reach out to me at scholarships@jaclcicago.org. 🙌

Meet Our New Board Member!

Lisa Doi

Lisa Doi currently serves on the Alumni Leadership Board of the JACL Chicago's Kansha Project; she participated in Kansha's first trip in 2012. Lisa grew up in Evanston and returned to Chicago for an M.A. in Social Science at the University of Chicago where her research focused on Japanese American resettlement in the post-war. Professionally, Lisa is Research Director for Neighborhood Factor by DNAInfo, an applied research group studying neighborhoods in cities across the United States. Lisa also serves on the Board of Trustees at North Shore County Day School in Winnetka. Lisa is excited to join JACL Chicago's board to continue to serve Chicago's Japanese American community which has given her so much over her lifetime. 🙌



Photo courtesy of Lisa Doi

Midwest District Council Fall Meeting

Bryan Hara, JACL Chicago President

On the weekend of September 22, 2017, JACL Chicago hosted the Midwest District Council (MDC) meeting. Chapter representatives from the Chicago, Omaha, St. Louis, Dayton, Cincinnati, Wisconsin, Detroit, and Indiana were all in attendance. The weekend was full of important agenda items and events. During the meeting, MDC passed the annual budget for the year, chapters reported on their 2016 programs and events, and the different committees gave their annual reports. The MDC Youth Committee has initiated multiple outreach and educational programs. They will be partnering with the Wisconsin Chapter to run a National Youth Student Council Event alongside the Spring 2018 MDC meeting.



Photo: Bryan Hara

THE MIDWEST DISTRICT COUNCIL MEETING WAS HELD AT JACL CHICAGO'S OFFICE SEPTEMBER 22-24.

The chapter representatives also went on a private tour of the Alphawood Gallery *Then They Came For Me* exhibit. The tour was comprehensive, educational, and exciting. The exhibit depicts the immigration and unjust incarceration of Japanese Americans while exploring the questions around citizenship, immigration, racial discrimination, profiling, economic disparity, civil liberties, equality, and activism.

Overall, the MDC meeting was a huge success and we look forward to the Spring MDC meeting in Wisconsin. 

Kansha Project Applications Available Soon!

Watch for more information at www.jaclchicago.org

Like Us on Facebook! www.facebook.com/JACLChicago

Join or Donate to the JACL Today!

The JACL is a community organization that ensures the protection of your rights. Help us continue to be a strong voice for you and your family by supporting us with your membership or a donation.

Name(s)

Address

City

State Zip

Email

Phone

Membership	Fee
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$75.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Couple/Family	\$125.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Student/Youth	\$35.00
<input type="checkbox"/> 1000 Club	\$200.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Century Club	\$350.00
<input type="checkbox"/> 1000/Century Spouse	\$50.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Millennium	\$1,000.00

Please support the JACL with a Donation!

Amount: \$ _____

In my name:

Anonymous

In memory of:

Please make check payable to **JACL** and mail with this form to:

JACL Chicago

Attn: Membership
5415 N. Clark St.
Chicago, IL 60640

Places of Memory/Memories of Place

By Eric Tokita, IDC (Intermountain District Council) Youth Representative

On October 7th, members of JACL NY/SC came to Chicago from different parts of the country and invited local Chicago Nikkei youth to participate in a film screening and discussion on their family histories, identities, and Japanese American resettlement in Chicago.

Following a film screening of *Seppuku*, members of the NY/SC (National Youth/Student Council) met with local Chicago youth and discuss how our identities and upbringing have shaped who we are today. In a speed-date fashion, we shifted between different members of the community and discussed topics about racial identity, legacies, and other topics we thought were central to the film. I personally met with 5 members of the JACL Chicago, and our discussions revealed many similar motifs that captured the internal struggle of growing up as a minority in today's culture. Specifically, what stood out to me was how people of diverse backgrounds and geographical origins all experienced their race and identity differently, yet everyone shared common themes of racial awareness.



When speaking with one Chicago member, I realized that her experience was similar to mine in that growing up in predominantly Caucasian areas had created a niche in which Asian Americans were expected to operate. We both had close friends growing up who were Japanese, but outside of that group, we were mostly isolated from the rest of the Japanese American community. For the most part, we were treated as equals by our peers, but one or two instances of discrimination, negative or otherwise, reminded us that few saw us as somewhat foreign. As we were thrust into college away from our close friends, this identity issue became more apparent, and we sought organizations like the JACL to remedy this internal struggle. We both wanted to meet other members of the community and learn how others have dealt with this issue.

Another member that I spoke to described how he felt compelled to behave as if his actions reflected that of the larger Japanese

community; as one of three Asian Americans in his high school, he remained conscious that his actions would shape how others viewed his race, and this weariness governed how he lived his life. Whenever a Chinese classmate of his "did something weird" this Chicago native explained to classmates that these actions did not reflect the Asian community. This story stood out to me because it illustrated how despite the progress we as a nation have made to be inclusive of all ethnicities, subtle notions such as this still creep in the minds of our youth.

Both of these stories illustrate the demand for organizations such as the JACL. Despite different upbringings and experiences, many of the people I met that day suggested that their organization has given them an outlet to explore their identity. Meeting with others who are dealing with similar issues have allowed these individuals to experience more clarity in their own situation and have assured them that this process is healthy and productive. In today's political and social climate, it

feels like personal, intimate conversations like these are rare; many youths nationwide are constantly planning for the next phase of our lives and we sometimes forget to take a step back and reflect on the present. For me, this activity gave everyone a healthy opportunity to reflect how we are all unique, yet our heritage draws us together. 🎓



AFTER A FILM SCREENING OF *SEPPUKU*, MEMBERS OF THE JACL NATIONAL YOUTH/STUDENT COUNCIL AND JACL CHICAGO NEXT GENERATION NIKKEI DISCUSS TOPICS INCLUDING RACIAL IDENTITY AND LEGACIES.

Thank You to Our Donors and Advertisers!

(Donors as of 10/11/17)

General

Lorran B. Yano
(In memory of Kenny Maeshita)

In Honor of Bill Yoshino

Clay Cerny
James and Carol Fujimoto
Sharon Harada
Calvin Ishida
Ronald and Jane Katsuyama
Kay Kawaguchi
Jo Ann Kawanaga
Jeff and Jae Kim
Laura Maeda
Toshiki Masaki
Ted Raichel and
Donna Melkonian

Floyd and Irene Mori
Megan Nakano
Richard and Karen Okabe
Chiyo Omachi
Christine Sato
John Suzuki
Soh Suzuki
Robert Brown and
Phyllis Tamada-Brown
Yamada & Associates
Larry Yoshino

Chiye Tomihiro Scholarship

James Loomis



KANSHA Project T-shirts

\$15 plus shipping

**Call the JACL
Chicago office
for details.
773.728.7171**

HOME & AUTO · BUSINESS · HEALTH · LIFE



THE ROBERT T. MITA AGENCY

ROBERT T. MITA
AGENT

5432 MAIN STREET SKOKIE, IL 60077

m 847.899.7065 f 847.966.0982

e robertmita@gmail.com



Cary Wong, CLU®, ChFC®, CFP®

Financial Advisor

CA Insurance License # 0805613

The Prudential Insurance Company of America

10275 W. Higgins Road, Suite 200, Rosemont IL 60018

Tel 847 321-3872 Fax 877 840-7826

cary.wong@prudential.com

www.prudential.com/us/c.wong



Life Insurance • Health Insurance* • Long Term Care** • Annuities • Retirement Funding

*Availability varies by carrier and state.

**Individual Long Term Care Insurance underwritten by insurers not affiliated with Prudential. Availability varies by carrier and state.

Variable Life Insurance • Variable Annuities • Mutual Funds

Offering investment advisory services through Pruco Securities, LLC (Pruco), doing business as Prudential Financial Planning Services (PFPS), pursuant to separate client agreement. Offering insurance and securities products and services as a registered representative of Pruco, and an agent of issuing insurance companies. 1-800-201-6690.

CFP® is an educational certification only.

AL SHIMIZU



NAL'S AUTO REPAIR

MECHANICAL AND ELECTRICAL WORK
ON MOST JAPANESE AND DOMESTIC CARS

773.525.8600

FAX 773.525.8644

1815 W. IRVING PARK RD., CHICAGO, IL 60613

Advertise in the JACLe Today!

The JACLe reaches the entire membership of the JACL Chicago Chapter and chapter friends at very reasonable advertising rates

Go to jaclchicago.org
or call 773.728.7171 for details.

JACL

Japanese American Citizens League

CHICAGO CHAPTER

5415 North Clark Street
Chicago, Illinois 60640-1294
p: 773.728.7171
f: 773.728.7231
e: info@jaclchicago.org
w: jaclchicago.org



The Japanese American Citizens League is a non-profit human and civil rights organization dedicated to preserving the civil liberties of Japanese Americans and of all Americans.

We welcome your participation.

Go Green! Receive the JACLe newsletter (in full color), news and updates via email. See page 2

Calendar of Events

Wednesday, November 8 6:00pm Dinner, 6:30pm Meeting	JACL Chicago Annual Meeting (Free and open to all JACL members) Midwest Buddhist Temple, 435 W Menomonee St, Chicago
Saturday, November 11 10am – 4pm	JASC Holiday Delight JASC, 4427 N Clark St, Chicago
Ending November 19	Then They Came For Me: Incarceration of Japanese Americans During WWII Alphawood Gallery, 2401 N Halsted St, Chicago (Free and open to public)
Wednesday, December 6 7:30pm – 9:30pm	Remembering Our Past to Protect Our Future Muslim Education Center, 8601 N Menard, Morton Grove
Wednesday, December 13 7pm – 9pm	JACL Chicago Board Meeting JACL Chicago Office, 5415 N. Clark Street, Chicago
Wednesday, January 10, 2018 7pm – 9pm	JACL Chicago Board Meeting JACL Chicago Office, 5415 N. Clark Street, Chicago