

September–December 2024

No. 152

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JACL Chicago Chapter

JACL *en*

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JACL CHICAGO ANNUAL MEMBER MEETING!

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JACL CHICAGO SCHOLARSHIP OPENS

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Dear JACL Chicago members,

Thank you for your continued support of JACL Chicago.

This year, we brought back Kansha, Too (our all-ages Kansha Project) and continued the Kansha Project and Alumni Leadership Board. At Day of Remembrance (DOR), the



LISA DOI, JAMI NAKAMURA-LIN, AND DR. DONNA NAGATA AT THE 2024 DAY OF REMEMBRANCE EVENT, JAPANESE AMERICAN INCARCERATION: HEALING HISTORIES ACROSS GENERATIONS.

Chapter hosted Dr. Donna Nagata and Chicago-area writer Jami Nakamura Lin, and we added intergenerational discussion groups to the weekend's programs. The discussion groups were so successful that we reprised them later in the year and incorporated them into Kansha, Too. We received a generous competitive grant from Asian Giving Circle to continue them next year. We would not

have been able to accomplish all of this without our amazing staff, volunteers, and board members.

We invite you to join us to reflect on 2024 at our Annual Chapter Meeting on Wednesday, December 11 from 6:30-8pm at the new JASC building at 5700 N. Lincoln Ave. We're excited for the JASC on their move and our members will get a chance to visit their new space. Members can RSVP at <https://bit.ly/2024jaclannualmeeting>.

In just a few months, we will have some leadership changes to announce regarding JACL Chicago. I will be stepping down after six years as chapter president and welcoming in a

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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 March 28, 2025.

The JACler 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

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Dear JACL continued

new executive team led by Ben Nishimura, Lauren Cannon, Joe Galligan, and Jennifer Brown. I am confident in their leadership and commitment to ensuring civil rights for all at such an important time in our nation's history.

We could not do this work without you. Your gift, at any level, will help us advocate for our civil rights and educational work. I look forward to reconnecting next year—to hear what you value most about JACL Chicago. Feel free to reach me at president@jaclchicago.org.

Lisa Doi

President, JACL Chicago



ABOVE: JON SHIMABUKURO ADDRESSES THE GROUP AT THE INTERGENERATIONAL CONVERSATIONS: RIPPLES OF THE PAST PROGRAM. RIGHT: KANSHA, TOO PARTICIPANTS IN FRONT OF THE IREITO AT MANZANAR NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE.



This holiday season and every day...



MEGAN NAKANO
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Asian American Chamber of Commerce of Illinois
Megan@AACCIL.org | www.AACCIL.org

From Kansha to Kansha, Too!

by Mary Clare Nagai

Last year, I was fortunate enough to be a part of the Kansha Project 2023 cohort, and this September, I joined my family on the Kansha, Too trip as well. While we did similar activities, it felt



MARY CLARE'S FATHER, JOHN NAGAI, STAMPING THE IREICH.

like I was attending two different programs in Little Tokyo and Manzanar. The Kansha 2023 cohort was made up of Japanese American

young adults, with only some members having grandparents or relatives who were incarcerated. Meanwhile, many of the Kansha, Too participants had parents, aunts, or uncles who were incarcerated. The Sansei generation felt closer and more raw to the camps, being the direct descendants of survivors. Many Sansei members of Kansha, Too recalled that their parents would not discuss the incarceration camps or their feelings on reparations. Some members of my 2023 cohort said their grandparents discussed incarceration with their grandchildren, but not with their own children. It is critical to disrupt the

tradition of silence and shame to begin healing from the intergenerational trauma.

While on Kansha, Too! this past September, I was shocked to see how much Manzanar had changed since I visited previously in May 2023. My Kansha Project cohort assisted the National Parks Service to recreate Merritt Park in Manzanar based on photos and drawings during incarceration. We laid the irrigation for the rose garden and dug ditches to irrigate the pond and removed tumbleweeds from the apple orchard. In 2023, all we saw were desolate spaces, dust storms, and thatches of tumbleweeds. It felt like the photos of the park from the 1940s were impossible to achieve. But in September 2024, I was shocked to see the project was finished with Merritt Park restored. There was water in the pond, a tea house, and vegetation was growing everywhere—almost like a portal of the outside world in the middle of a prison camp. I showed my 2023 cohort and we were all shocked how much the space has changed, even in a year and a half.

On Kansha, Too, we had the privilege of stamping the Ireichō, which is the most comprehensive list of prisoners during World War II with Japanese ancestry. I was struck by the size of the Ireichō, visualizing the scope of the lives that were transformed by incarceration. It was especially meaningful to stamp my family members' names to honor them with my family. In addition to stamping our family members' names, we also stamped the last name in the book that has not been stamped yet. Even though we did not



KANSHA, TOO! PARTICIPANTS HONOR THOSE THAT HAVE PASSED AT THE MANZANAR NATIONAL HISTORIC CENTER IREITO

know the most recent person who I stamped, we carry their memory and legacy on, by learning more about the incarceration experience and contributing to the Japanese American community. 🌱

Fall Fundraiser a GREAT success!

by Pat Yuzawa-Rubin

On September 4, the JACL Chicago chapter hosted a fundraiser at Thattu, a critically acclaimed restaurant in Avondale. Attendees celebrated the evening with delicious dishes by Margaret Pak (Thattu), Vinod Kalathil (Thattu), and our very own JACL board member Kelly Ijichi (Mom's Chicago). Our celebrity chefs feted us with a variety of culinary offerings from southwestern Indian and Japanese American cuisine.

Margaret is "a self-taught chef with a passion for food" and is co-owner of Thattu with her husband Vinod. Her passion for Keralan fare is rooted in the cuisine of Vinod's home and inspired by his mother's cooking. She received national recognition in 2020 from *Food & Wine Magazine Best New Restaurant* and in April 2023 as a James Beard Awards New Restaurant semi-finalist. Soon after, she received acknowledgement from

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CHEF KELLY IJICHI OF MOM'S CHICAGO AND CHEF MARGARET PAK OF THATTU

the *NY Times* and *Eater's* Best New Restaurants in America.

Chef and owner of Mom's Chicago, Kelly is a culinary graduate of Johnson and Wales University in Providence, RI. She has been engaged in the Chicago Japanese American community her whole life and is passionate about sharing Japanese American cuisine throughout



LEFT TO RIGHT: BRIAN OZAKI, CONAL ABETANGELO, JOAN AMBO, BILL YOSHINO, AND LARY SCHECTMAN

Chicago. Many thanks to Kelly for conceiving this (perfect) idea for a JACL fundraiser and for approaching Margaret and Vinod to join in.

Thattu and Mom's Chicago's collaborative menu consisted of baby beef puffs, bonda (yucca fritters with tamarind chutney), pepper chicken curry and cumin lime rice, chicken karaage, inarizushi, pork belly steamed buns and hiyashi chuka (cold

noodles with toppings). Vinod's unique Thattu handcrafted cocktails were served at the bar while small plates were passed to guests. Black sesame coconut mochi canelé dessert pastry was donated by French pastry chef Marguerite Singson (What Margie Made) and mini-ice cream pops by Pretty Cool Ice Cream made the meal complete. I guarantee, no one left hungry!

The national JACL Silver Pin was awarded to longtime Chapter board members Judy Tanaka and Cary Wong in honor of their "outstanding and exceptional services to their respective chapters for a minimum of 10+ consecutive years." Thank you, Judy and Cary for your many years of volunteer service to us and to the whole Japanese American community!

A silent auction coordinated by Carol Yoshino featured 13 gift baskets and other items curated and donated by community members Clay Cerney, Lisa and Mary Doi, Tonko Doi, Pat Harada, Elaine Kaneshiro, Ami and Joann Kawanaga,



CARY WONG AND JUDY TANAKA AWARDED THE JACL NATIONAL SILVER PIN FOR OVER A DECADE OF SERVICE.

Joyce Morimoto, Megan Nakano, Ron Sakai, Lisa Sloan, Anne Shimojima, Phyllis Tamada Brown, Judy Tanaka, Carol Yoshino, and Joyce Yoshino. Thank you everyone!

Last but certainly not least, thank you to JACL members Joyce and Ron Yoshino for sponsoring this event. Your generous support gave us the energy and freedom to make this event thoroughly enjoyable for everyone who attended.



RON SAKAI'S HELLO KITTY BASKET DONATION

The chapter continues to focus its efforts on fighting hate crime violence, educating the public on the Japanese American historical experience and fostering youth Nikkei programs focused on community connection, identity, and legacy. Proceeds for this joyous event went to these priorities. Learn more about our programs at jaclchicago.org. We hope to see you next year! 🍡

Kansha Alumni Leadership Board Reflection

by Joe Galligan

As many JACLER readers know, the Kansha Project is a formative experience for many young Japanese Americans in Chicago and the Midwest. Attending the Kansha Project in 2022 was a moment that served as the jumping-off point for my involvement in JACL and the Chicago Japanese American community. As a Wisconsin native who moved to Chicago two years ago, without the Kansha Project I doubt that I would feel the same sense of connectedness to this community that I do today. What makes the Kansha experience special is not just the immersive education about Japanese American identity, activism, community, and history; it's being able to go through a significant period of learning and growth with a cohort of other Japanese Americans. The Kansha Project was the first time I was able to explore these



2023 KANSHA ALUMNI LEADERSHIP BOARD AT THE KANSHA CULMINATION CEREMONY

topics with peers who come from similar backgrounds, and it left me hungry for ways to build upon that experience.

After Kansha, I returned to Chicago feeling energized and grateful, and these feelings are what motivated me to give back to the program by becoming part of the Alumni Leadership Board. The Alumni Leadership Board supports the Kansha Project by handling recruitment, marketing, fundraising, and planning for the trip and Culmination Ceremony. As a member of the Programs Committee on ALB, I have helped to facilitate the Kansha Project trip for the last two years. It has been an exciting challenge working with a team to coordinate the program for the trip, and being a part of each new cohort's journey has been incredibly rewarding. While some of the core content may be roughly the same as when I was a participant, with each new year comes a different mix of guest speakers, tour guides, and workshop facilitators that combine to provide their own unique experience. As a facilitator, I have had the privilege of learning something new each year, whether from our guests or from our participants.

Looking ahead to 2025, I'm excited to work with a new group of sixteen alumni to ensure that next year's Kansha cohort has as fulfilling an experience as so many of us have had before them. While applications for ALB may have closed for this year, I would



2024 KANSHA PROJECT PARTICIPANTS STOP IN FRONT OF THE BUN-KA-DO, A HISTORIC BUSINESS DURING A TOUR WITH THE LITTLE TOKYO HISTORICAL SOCIETY IN LITTLE TOKYO, CALIFORNIA

encourage any Kansha alumni who haven't joined ALB yet to consider applying next year or to support us by donating to the program. Now more than ever, programs like the Kansha Project are crucial to ensuring the mistakes from this country's past are not forgotten, and it is up to us as alumni to make sure that Kansha continues to be available to future generations. 🇺🇸

Full Spectrum Education Hosts NEH-Funded Workshop on Resettlement

by Conal Abatangelo

This summer, Full Spectrum Education—a subdivision of Full Spectrum Features—hosted a National Endowment for the Humanities funded institute for K-12 educators focused on Japanese American resettlement in Chicago following incarceration during World War II.



CONAL ABATANGELO AND ELAINE KANESHIRO (CENTER) WITH TEACHERS IN THEIR DISCUSSION GROUP.

While the Japanese American community remained subject to mass exclusion orders on the West Coast until 1945, many individuals and families, including my grandfather and his parents, were allowed to leave incarceration camps and resettle elsewhere

under work, education, or military releases. The Midwest, especially Chicago, where there had already been a small yet active Japanese population, became primary destinations, and in many cases permanent homes for people leaving the camps. Though the Japanese American population in Chicago had been, according to the 1940 census, only 390 before incarceration and resettlement, by the end of the decade the city had become home to over 20,000 Japanese Americans.

Programs took place over the course of one month, one week of which the participants spent in Chicago where other community members and I were able to share our personal and family stories with the educators, as well as with each other. On Thursday, July 25, the educators attended a five-person panel co-hosted by JACL Chicago including Lisa Doi, Jean Fujiu, Ross Harano, Rebecca Ozaki, and Mari Yamigawa, followed by smaller discussion groups through which community members of multiple generations could directly answer questions and establish a dialogue. What took place was not only an exploration of Japanese American resettlement in educational settings, but a dialogue for participating community members through which we were able to shed light on intergenerational experiences in the wake of incarceration.

I had the privilege of meeting and sharing with teachers, librarians, and school administrators who had come from every corner of the nation to participate in the institute, hearing the

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Join or Donate to JACL Chicago 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.

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☐ 1000/Century Spouse	\$50.00
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Chicago, IL 60640

Full Spectrum Education continued

various ways they had implemented or planned to incorporate the history of incarceration into their curriculums. As community members, we discussed the roles of Chicago's prominent Japanese American institutions immediately after the war, the impacts these organizations had on the newly resettled population, and the roles they've continued to play in Chicago's Japanese American community over the last 80 years.

For a subject that, at least in my own experience, is often inadequately addressed in educational settings, these workshops, discussion groups, and lectures were an exciting opportunity for both educators and locals to deepen our collective understanding of the lasting ramifications of incarceration. The institute was an excellent display of community and remembrance toward the early days of resettlement, carrying on the legacy of the post-war community and reminding us of their importance in American history. 🍵

JACL CHICAGO REMEMBERS

PAUL DOI
1936 - 2024

DONNA OGURA
1943 - 2024

SALLY KAWASHIMA
1944 - 2024

KAREN OKABE
1947 - 2024

Their legacies will live on
through community

2025 JACL Chicago Scholarship Program

Apply for a JACL Chicago Scholarship!

Scholarships range from \$2,000 to \$5,000+ and are open to undergraduate and graduate students who have demonstrated a commitment to JACL's mission. Scholarships are open to all, regardless of race or ethnicity.

Previous JACL Chicago scholarship winners applying for a second award should demonstrate sustained engagement with JACL.

Deadline: March 1, 2025

Scholarships will be awarded at the JACL Chicago Scholarship Luncheon, scheduled for Sunday, May 18, 2025.

For more information, visit www.jaclchicago.org/programs/scholarship-program or contact Christine Munteanu, JACL Chicago Scholarship Committee chair, at scholarships@jaclchicago.org.

JACL CHICAGO CHAPTER 5415 North Clark Street Chicago Illinois 60640
p: 773.728.7171 w: jaclchicago.org

ANNUAL MEMBER MEETING

Join JACL Chicago
celebrate the past year and
look towards the future!

**Wednesday,
December 11th
6:30-8PM**

JASC
5700 N. Lincoln Ave.
Chicago 60659

Thank You to Our Generous Donors!

(8.1.2024–11.21.2024)

Emma Almon	Lynn & Sharon Harada	Elaine Ogawa & Steve Arima	Mari Yamagiwa
Steve Arima	Elizabeth Harano	Lydia Omori	Glenn Yamamoto
Desi Bote	Brooke Hashimoto	Lauree Peterson-Sakai	Allison Yasukawa
Clay Cerny	Vi Huynh	Ted Raichel & Donna Melkonian <i>In memory of Karen Suzuki Okabe</i>	Tom Yatabe
Yuko Darcy	David Igasaki	Diane Sakai-Furuta	Ron & Joyce Yoshino
Valerie DeCruz	Glen Inouye	Steve Sato	Carol Yoshino
Tonko Doi	Elaine Kaneshiro	Suzanne Sawada	Carol & Bill Yoshino <i>In memory of Karen Suzuki Okabe</i>
Lisa Doi	John Kato	Susan Sawada	Ron Yoshino
Mary Doi	Rosio Kato <i>In memory of Maomi Asai</i>	Lary Schectman	Jane Yukushiji
Kathy Fuimetto	Suzanne Kawaguchi	Jon Shimabukuro	
Jean Fujiu <i>In memory of Kiyoko Kasai Fujiu</i>	Joann Kawanaga	Anne Shimojima	
Colin Hara	Kenji Kuramitsu	Bruce & Joan Toyama	
Albert & Patti Hara <i>In memory of Karen Suzuki Okabe</i>	Jean Mishima	Todd Tsuchiya <i>In memory of Donna Ogura</i>	
Pat Harada	Christine Munteanu	Violet Uyeno <i>In memory of Karen Suzuki Okabe</i>	
Emily Harada	John Nagai	Mayu Weigl	
Michael & Yvonne Harada	Kenneth Oba		
	Lynn Oda		

INTERGENERATIONAL CONVERSATIONS: RIPPLES OF THE PAST

"To be able to have these discussions with an intergenerational group was healing in ways that I didn't know I needed."
-2024 program participant



SAVE THE DATE:
Saturday, March 1st, 2025
Time & Location TBA
Sign up opens on Dec. 18

Visit <https://jaclchicago.org/programs/intergenerational-conversations/>

USE QR CODE TO LEARN MORE



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WE'RE HIRING!

PART-TIME
PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Visit our website or the QR code below for more details:
jaclchicago.org/news



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Japanese American Citizens League
CHICAGO CHAPTER

Jennifer Brown
Nikki Buscato
Lauren Cannon
Lisa Doi
Tonko Doi
Joe Galligan
Kelly Ijichi
Megan Nakano
Ben Nishimura
Nicholas Rohm
Lisa Sakai
Ron Sakai
Cary Wong
Tom Yatabe
Pat Yuzawa-Rubin

WISHING YOU A
HAPPY 2025

JACL

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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 JACler newsletter (in full color), news and updates via email. See page 2

Calendar of Events

Wednesday, December 6, 2024	Scholarship application opens
Wednesday, December 11, 2024 6-8:30pm	JACL Chicago Annual Member Meeting JASC, 5700 N. Lincoln Ave. Chicago, IL 60659
Saturday, December 21, 2024 11am-1pm	Kansha Alumni Leadership Board Meeting JACL Chicago, 5415 N. Clark St. Chicago, IL 60640
December 23, 2024 – January 3rd, 2025	JACL Chicago Office Closed for Holidays
Wednesday, January 8, 2025 7-9pm	JACL Chicago Board Meeting Virtual Meeting
Saturday, January 18, 2025 11am-4pm	Kansha Alumni Leadership Board Retreat JACL Chicago, 5415 N. Clark St. Chicago, IL 60640
Monday, January 20, 2025	Kansha Project applications released https://jaclchicago.org/programs/kansha-project/
Thursday, January 30, 2025	Fred Korematsu Day
February 19th, 2025	83rd Annual Day of Remembrance
February 23, 2025 TBA	Day of Remembrance event Chicago History Museum, 1601 N Clark St, Chicago, IL 60614