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JACL *en*

In this Issue:

- page 1 Kansha Project Completes Successful Fourth Year
- page 4 Osh's Corner: Praise for Charleston's Resilience
- page 4 2015 JACL Golf Tournament Registration Form
- page 5 2015 Scholarship Luncheon
- page 6 Bullying a Factor in Middle Schooler's Death
- page 6 Kansha Project Forming Alumni Leadership Board
- page 7 Thank You to Our Donors and Advertisers
- page 8 Calendar of Events

2015 JACL Golf Tournament
Thursday, July 23rd
RSVP Today!

see page 4 for details

NIKKEI PICNIC
Saturday, August 1st, 11am
Bunker Hill, Grove 3
www.jaclchicago.org

Kansha Project Completes Successful Fourth Year

By Christine Munteanu, Assistant Program Director

JACL Chicago successfully completed the fourth year of the Kansha Project in June. This year's ten participants were the most diverse group of the past few years, reflecting the growing diversity of the Japanese American community. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 25, came from various parts of the Midwest, represented both yonsei and shin-Nisei generations, and identified as multiracial, multiethnic, and monoracial. The group's varied and multifaceted experiences of what it means to be Japanese American led to thought-provoking discussion around identity, community, and legacy.

Our trip to Los Angeles followed a similar itinerary to previous years, and included visits to the Go For Broke Monument and the Japanese American National Museum, where we were greeted by Greg Kimura, the museum's CEO. Alan Nishio, long-time community

Continued on page 2



KANSHA PROJECT PARTICIPANTS POSE IN FRONT OF THE RECONSTRUCTED SIGN AT THE ENTRANCE OF MANZANAR NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE.

Photo courtesy of Chika Kondo

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 8/17/15.

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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Kansha Project continued



Photo courtesy of Chika Kondo

KANSHA PROJECT PARTICIPANTS AND CHAPERONES STAND ALONG THE EDGE OF THE MANZANAR RESERVOIR, WITH THE SIERRA NEVADAS IN THE BACKGROUND.

activist, led us on a tour of the Little Tokyo neighborhood, highlighting its history and the way the community has mobilized to preserve and protect the neighborhood's unique legacy and character. Alan emphasized the need for an expansive and inclusive vision of the Japanese American community, themes that resonate in a more dispersed community like Chicago's.

The program also included educational workshops that covered various aspects of the incarceration experience. A session with June Berk and Min Tonai, two former internees, delved into details of daily life in the camps. June and Min, who were both children at the time of the war, commented that while they were protected from the harshest realities of camp life, the experience was devastating for their parents. Dr. Lane Hirabayashi spoke about the long-term, generational, and psychological impacts of the incarceration, in an emotional presentation that struck a chord with many of the participants. Dr. Lily Welty returned for a third year to talk about multiracial Japanese American identity and facilitated a discussion about the future direction of the community. John Tateishi, former JACL National Director, discussed the successful redress movement and the way the community pursued justice in order to ensure that no other group of people would have to experience what the Japanese American community went through.

During our visit to Manzanar National Historic Site, a National Park Service ranger provided a guided tour of the grounds, pointing out some of the many Japanese gardens created by the internees. We also took part in a service project, helping to clear dead brush and debris along the fence line that marked the southern border of the camp. After several hours of work in the hot sun, we relaxed by kicking off our shoes and socks and wading along a small stream. The ranger explained that while the creek now rarely has any water in it, while the internees were at Manzanar, many relaxed and fished along this creek. We also got a chance to visit Manzanar's reservoir: though now empty, it once held a million gallons of water that supplied the camp's 10,000 residents.



LEFT: CHRISTINE MUNTEANU WELCOMES EVERYONE TO THE KANSHA CULMINATION. RIGHT: 2015 KANSHA PROJECT PARTICIPANTS COMPARE THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH PAST PARTICIPANTS.



ABOVE: THE 2015 KANSHA PROJECT PARTICIPANTS. TOP ROW: CHRISTINE MUNTEANU, COLIN WONG, JOY SUGIHARA, JAMES OZAKI, CHIKA KONDO, SHUSAKU ASAI, BILL YOSHINO. BOTTOM ROW: JAMES MEASON, MICHAEL SUGIHARA, AIMA MORI, GRACE YOSHIBA. RIGHT: AFTER PROGRAM SOCIALIZING AND FUN.



Photos: Robert Brown

Over forty community members attended the Culmination Event, where participants shared their experiences during the KANSHA Project, and showcased their reflection videos. The participants' thoughtful videos and their articulate responses to the audience's questions highlighted the impact the program had on the participants' sense of identity, community, and legacy.

The 2015 KANSHA Project participants were: Shusaku Asai, Chika Kondo, James Meason, Aima Mori, Danny Nitahara, James Ozaki, Joy Sugihara, Michael Sugihara, Colin Wong, and Grace Yoshiba. Their reflections videos can be viewed online at the JACL Chicago website. The KANSHA Project is supported by the JACL Legacy Fund Grants program, the Chicago Japanese American Council, as well as many generous community donors who have made this program possible. 🍵

Ginza Holiday Festival
August 7 –9
Midwest Buddhist Temple

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Osh's Corner



By Michael Oshita, Board Member

Praise for Charleston's Resilience

On Wednesday, June 17th, the nation experienced another heinous tragedy when 9 African Americans were gunned down inside the Emanuel A.M.E. church in Charleston, SC. The shooter, 21-year-old Dylan Roof, told authorities he murdered his victims in cold blood because he wanted to start a race war. Included among the victims was Reverend Clementa Pinckney, pastor of the Emanuel A.M.E. for 23 years and also a South Carolina legislator.

On Friday June 19th, Roof appeared in court for the first time via video feed and listened as many of the victims' family members came forward and made statements on the family's behalf. Bethane Middleton Brown, representing the family of one of the victims, Rev. DePayne-Middleton-Doctor, informed the killer that as horrific of a tragedy as her family suffered, "we are the family that love built. We have no room for hate. We have to forgive."

I want to first start off by offering my sincere condolences to the victims and their families. These kinds of mass shootings have become unfortunately almost commonplace; this is the 12th time in President Obama's tenure that he's had to address the nation following a massacre.

But I don't want to draw any more attention to the suspect, I want to instead focus and praise Charleston's resilience following the tragedy. How everyone can come together, regardless of race, and unite as one. Reinforce to the nation that we will not let one's hate win out over us. On Sunday, June 21st, Emanuel A.M.E. had their first service following the shooting. The message to the congregation was simple; evil will not win. Later that evening, thousands gathered arm-in-arm on the iconic Arthur Ravenel Jr. Bridge and marched across in a showing of solidarity and healing. When the marchers from the two sides met in the middle, they cheered, clapped, and sang in unison.

It is demonstrations like this that show the world that even in the face of pure hatred, we will stand together. We shall overcome and we will eventually recover. We did it following Oklahoma City, we did it after 9/11, and we will do it now. No matter how bad the situation, nothing can deter us.

And while we're at it, I also wanted to begrudgingly applaud South Carolina lawmakers for finally discussing the idea of removing the Confederate flag from Capitol property. Although it is 150 years too late, at least the topic is once again up to debate. It is my personal opinion, the flag is old, outdated, and it has no place in our culture. But I will save that rant for another time... 🇺🇸

GLENCOE Golf Club 621 Westley Rd., Glencoe, IL \$85 per golfer (Sign up individually or as a foursome.)

Cost includes a round of golf with cart and a meal following your play.
Please RSVP to the JACL office by July 15, 2015.



2015 Golf Tournament Registration Form

Please enclose entry fee(s) for all golfers (\$85/person) listed on the registration form. We will inform you of your starting time. **Registration deadline is July 15th.**

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ ZIP _____ PHONE _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

Please list other golfers in your group:

AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ _____

Please make checks payable to **JACL CHICAGO**

Mail to: JACL Golf Tournament, 5415 North Clark Street, Chicago, IL 60640-1294

2015 Scholarship Luncheon

By Christine Munteanu, Assistant Program Director

Over 50 community and JACL chapter members attended the 2015 Scholarship Luncheon on May 17 to celebrate the achievements of this year's scholarship winners. Sydney Hamamoto, Ryan Kuramitsu, and Marc Oda were awarded scholarships for their outstanding academic performance and dedication to the Japanese American community.

Becky Ozaki, JACL Chicago Youth Development Committee co-chair, served as the emcee for the afternoon. This year's keynote speaker was Josina Morita, a former JACL Chicago scholarship winner and longtime community advocate. Josina spoke about her journey in discovering and embracing her identity as a Japanese American and Asian American activist, and connected the legacy of the community's wartime incarceration to a continued commitment to social justice and civil rights for all.

The luncheon also highlighted the Kansha Project, which is now in its fourth year. Christine Munteanu, Kansha Project coordinator, spoke about the program's history and goals, and Mary Coomes, a 2014 Kansha Project alum, spoke about her experiences during last year's program. Mary highlighted the impact that visiting Manzanar had on her, and the sense of community that emerged among the participants. Finally, Becky Ozaki, a 2012 Kansha Project

alum, spoke about the continued connection that still exists among the program's alumni, and introduced the Kansha Project Alumni Leadership Board initiative as a means of harnessing that sense of continued engagement to move the program to become more youth-driven and sustainable.

Finally, the program profiled and awarded this year's three scholarship winners. The winners and their awards are listed below.

The Scholarship Luncheon remains one of JACL Chicago's standout events for honoring the past achievements and future potential of young people in the Chicago Japanese American community and for highlighting the many ways JACL Chicago continues to support these young leaders.

JACL Chicago thanks Judy Tanaka for her leadership and dedication as the Scholarship Committee chair, and the scholarship committee for their work in administering this long-standing program of the chapter. The chapter also would like to thank the generous donors who make the scholarship program possible! 🍀



Photos: Robert Brown

2015 JACL CHICAGO SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS AND THEIR PARENTS. TOP ROW: DAVID ODA, JULIE ODA, LORI YAMAMOTO, MARY SYKES. BOTTOM ROW: MARC ODA, SYDNEY HAMAMOTO, RYAN KURAMITSU.

2015 JACL Chicago Scholarship Winners

Todd S. Tomiyama Scholarship:

Marc Oda,
Trinity Christian College

Hank & Mary Sakai Memorial Scholarship:

Sydney Hamamoto,
Niles West High School

John Iwaoka Memorial Scholarship:

Ryan Kuramitsu,
McCormick Theological Seminary



SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE (L TO R): BECKY OZAKI, ROSEMARY LEE, JOYCE MORIMOTO, MEGAN NAKANO, ROBERT BROWN, JUDY TANAKA (COMMITTEE CHAIR), CHRISTINE MUNTEANU

JACL Project: Community!

DAY CAMP

August 3 - 12

JACL's FREE summer camp program
for 7 to 9 year olds.

Applications are Available Online

Go to jaclchicago.org
for more information

Bullying a Factor in Middle Schooler's Death

By Bill Yoshino, Midwest Regional Director

The Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) is deeply troubled by the circumstances and investigation surrounding the tragic death of Emilie Grace Olsen, a Chinese American student at Fairfield Middle School in Fairfield Township, Ohio.

In a letter to parents in December 2014, Fairfield superintendent, Paul Otten stated that bullying was not a factor in Emilie's death. Since then, administrators for the Fairfield City Schools have failed to provide investigative information about the tragedy; instead, they have railed against so-called rumors and misinformation, particularly in the aftermath of a May 13, 2015 investigative report by WCPO Television, which disclosed that emails, school reports, and a social media account did indicate that Emilie was bullied.

According to the television report, Emilie's father repeatedly contacted the school to complain about his daughter's plight and even requested changes to her schedule to avoid being in classes with certain students, which the school accommodated. However, it appears that the bullying persisted and Emilie took her own life on December 11, 2014. The Fairfield City Schools have an obligation to explain their conclusion that Emilie was not bullied, just as they had an obligation to provide a safe environment for Emilie and all students.

School bullying is an unfortunate reality. JACL is very concerned by the extent of bullying directed at Asian American students. A 2013 report titled *One Step Forward, Half a Step Back*, issued by the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund and The Sikh Coalition, found that 50% of Asian students report being racially harassed at their schools. The report also found that Asian students are bullied at a rate 20% higher than whites and 10% higher than other groups of color. Although the report focused on New York City schools, its implications may extend to all schools with Asian American student populations.

The demographics of the Fairfield City Schools show a racial breakdown of 86.7% white, 9% black, and 1.6% Asian. Clearly, students of color can be made to feel isolated and vulnerable. There is a need for Fairfield administrators to reflect on Emilie's tragic death in the context of policies and rules about bullying that are integrated into the culture of their schools, and programs about race, diversity, and multiculturalism that are embedded in a curriculum that reaches every student, teacher, and administrator. 🇺🇸

Chicago Nikkei Picnic

Saturday, August 1, 2015 - 11 a.m. to dusk
Bunker Hill, Grove #3 (see map on back)

The entire **Nikkei community** is invited to share in a day of games, food, sports, sunshine, good times and more food!

Bring a dish that's big enough for your family (plus a little more) and share with everyone at our community food table buffet. We'll supply roast pig, hotdogs, hamburgers and other great eats. Grills, charcoal and limited beverages will be provided. **BYOB** allowed (beer, wine, etc.) - but no glass containers.

The non-stop fun begins at 11 a.m. and includes:

- games for kids and adults
- **Karaoke by Dean Sakurai** (11 a.m. - 4 p.m.)
- horseback riding
- **FREE!** raffle drawing for wonderful prizes
- volleyball, softball and tug-of-war between organizations
- and the ever-popular Dunk Tank!



photos courtesy of Feliz Lanier, Tohkon Judo Academy



This event is FREE!
Please join us and share in the fun!



organized by the member organizations of the Chicago Japanese American Council, Tohkon Judo Academy and friends

Kansha Project Forming Alumni Leadership Board

By Christine Munteanu, Assistant Program Director

JACL Chicago is excited to announce the new Alumni Leadership Board (ALB) initiative of the Kansha Project! The Alumni Leadership Board will leverage the continued investment and connection to the Kansha Project among its alumni to transform the Kansha Project into a sustainable, youth-driven and youth-led program.

The Alumni Leadership Board will be comprised of six to ten former Kansha Project participants, and will be supported during the first year of transition by Kansha Project program coordinator, Christine Munteanu.

ALB members will undergo skills training and a strategic planning process for the Kansha Project in order to develop a shared vision of the program's future. Eventually, ALB members will take ownership of the Kansha Project by tailoring its curriculum, facilitating workshops, publicizing the program, recruiting and admitting participants, planning logistics, and assisting in fundraising efforts. In addition, the ALB will plan alumni engagement events for past Kansha Project participants who are not part of the ALB, in order to foster continued connection to the program and maintain interest in the program for future ALB recruitment.

The Alumni Leadership Board is supported by funding from the Asian Giving Circle and the JACL Legacy Fund Grant.

More information will be available starting in July. Stay tuned! 🇺🇸

Thank You to Our Donors and Advertisers!

(as of 6/22/15)

General

Alyse Azuma
Seon Ricks

Mark and Jo Sugai
(in memory of Frances Sugai)

In memory of Hiroshi Nakano

Arlene and Howard Englander

Jerie Ezaki

Sharon Harada

Myrna Kulp

Rick & Joyce Morimoto

Patricia Nakai

Paul Park

Caroline Schmitt

Lisa Sloan

David & Joan Takada

Mike Takada

Bob and Nancy Takagi

Bob Brown &
Phyllis Tamada-Brown

David & Jeanne Toguri

Tom Yatabe

Bill & Carol Yoshino
(for the building fund)

Pat Yuzawa-Rubin

In honor of Megan Nakano and Matt Nakano

Amy Kawamoto

Hisako Kawamoto

Donna Ogura

Kansha Project

Sam Ozaki

Daniel Yoshiba

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- Century Club \$350.00
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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

July 13–15	JACL National Convention Las Vegas, NV
July 18–19	Japan Day 2015 Arlington International Racecourse
Thursday, July 23 9:30 AM	JACL Golf Tournament Glencoe Golf Club, 621 Westley Rd., Glencoe IL
Saturday, August 1 11 AM	Nikkei Community Picnic Bunker Hill Forest Preserve, Grove 3
August 3–5 and 10–12	Project: Community! Day Camp JACL Chicago Office, 5415 North Clark Street
August 7–9	GINZA Holiday Festival Midwest Buddhist Temple, 435 W. Menomonee, Chicago
Wednesday, August 12 7–9 PM	JACL Chicago Board Meeting JACL Chicago Office, 5415 North Clark Street
September 9–12	Kansha, Too! Los Angeles, CA