

JACL *en*

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Fred Korematsu Speaks Up Event

November 30, 7:00pm

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In Pursuit of Justice for Grace Watanabe

By Karen Kanemoto, JACL Chicago Member and Carol Yoshino, Board Member

The plight of Grace Watanabe has been widely reported in Chicago's print and electronic media over the past several weeks. Ms. Watanabe is a 97-year-old former Poston incarcerated whose life savings were allegedly siphoned away in the course of a year by employees of Symphony of Lincoln Park nursing home.

On Monday, October 15, members of JACL Chicago and Japanese Mutual Aid Society (JMAS) were present in Judge Aicha McCarthy's courtroom at the Daley Center for a status hearing with Charles Golbert, Acting Cook County Public Guardian, and Dawn Keller, Supervising Attorney of the Financial Recovery Unit of Cook County. Mr. Golbert and Ms. Keller updated us on where things stand in this case. They related that six people — including the nursing home's former business manager, activity directors, receptionist, and hair stylist — took advantage of Ms. Watanabe's age, isolation, and diminished mental acuity, and allegedly withdrew a total of \$600,000 in large increments from her bank accounts from March 2017 to May 2018. The Public Guardian's office has filed civil suits against these individuals, as well as Symphony of Lincoln Park, which claims no responsibility for their employees' actions. Symphony's legal representation was also present in the courtroom on an informational basis.

Mr. Golbert, Ms. Keller, and Judge McCarthy acknowledged the presence of JACL Chicago and JMAS, confirming the importance of visible community support. The next hearing is scheduled for 10 am, December 5, at the Daley Center, 50 W. Washington Street, room 1810. Anyone interested in this case is welcome to attend.

According to Mr. Golbert and Ms. Keller, there are several ways in which our community can help Ms. Watanabe in resolving her case:

- **Show up to the next court hearing** at the Richard J. Daley Center, room 1810, at 10:00 am on Wednesday, December 5th. Demonstrating community support is extremely important.
- **Spread the word** to friends, family members, and the public at large of Ms. Watanabe's case and this egregious violation of trust by those who were meant to care for her.

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 12/14/18.

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

Contact Us

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Email: info@jaclchicago.org
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Pursuit of Justice continued

- **Keep this case in the public eye** by encouraging continuing coverage by media outlets at all levels, including community newspapers, church bulletins, special-interest blogs, and hyperlocal news sites.

If our Japanese American community can keep her story before the public throughout the legal proceedings, the outcome will be safer, more trustworthy, and more accountable care for all current and future nursing home patients. 🙏

Congratulations Bill Yoshino!



Photos: Robert Brown

BILL YOSHINO WAS RECOGNIZED FOR HIS YEARS OF DEDICATION TO CIVIL RIGHTS AND EDUCATION, AND WAS PRESENTED WITH THE ORDER OF THE RISING SUN, GOLDEN RAYS WITH ROSETTE BY CONSUL GENERAL OF JAPAN, NAOKI ITO.

Leadership and Program Development Opportunities for Youth & Young Professionals

By Eric Langowski, Midwest District Youth Representative

As part of JACL's commitment to youth and young professionals (all those between 18 and 35 years of age), I have been able to serve the Midwest District of JACL for over two years as Youth Representative. From Minneapolis to Omaha to Indianapolis, I have been able to meet young Japanese Americans (and allies) from seven different states and organize events in five. As my time in this role ends, my final responsibility — to secure a replacement — remains unfulfilled.

Here are three opportunities which can be transformative:

Youth Representative

This role instantaneously provides an opportunity to connect with a national network of AAPI organizers and a platform to gain real-world experience with non-profit program management as a member of the National Youth/Student Council (NY/SC), JACL's National Youth Board. Expectations include three weekends of travel per year (all expenses

covered) for meetings and conferences (in 2018 travel was to Philadelphia, Los Angeles, and San Jose) and organizing an event around an issue you are passionate within about 12 months of beginning the role (training and event funding included). This is a unique opportunity for those interested in civil rights organizing and is only available to those between 18 and 25 years of age.

Youth Chair

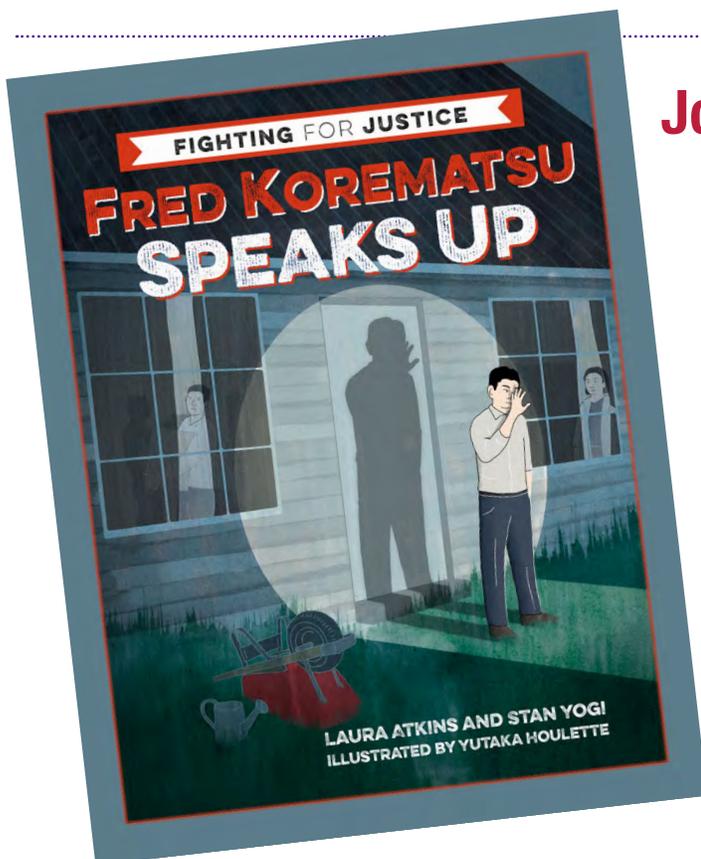
This position is typically for organizers with some previous experience looking for further resources or connections to promote their advocacy on a local level. Expectations include two weekends of travel per year within in the Midwest (reimbursement available) for meetings (in 2018 travel was to Milwaukee and Minneapolis) and organizing a local event around an issue which you are passionate (event funding included). If you are looking for additional resources to expand your impact, are interested in building a network within the Midwest Japanese American community, and are

between 18 and 25 years of age, this is a great opportunity. Expect also to collaborate (with me) on a trip to Rohwer War Relocation Center in early 2020 for district youth.

Young Professional's Caucus Representative

A new position on a new board, the Young Professional's Caucus (YPC) is a national board of organizers and activists who have begun their careers (~22 years and older). This position offers a great opportunity to become more involved in JACL with a relatively low commitment and gives you access to funding and a national network to support your advocacy work.

Please contact me at nysc@jacl.org with any questions (or interest!) in any of these opportunities and to subscribe to the NY/SC newsletter to stay updated with youth programming. The main ingredient for success in these roles is enthusiasm not experience. 🙌



Join us for a dynamic talk with authors Laura Atkins and Stan Yogi!

Friday, November 30
7:00pm - 8:00pm

Christ Church of Chicago
6047 N Rockwell St
Chicago, IL 60659

Free Event, All Ages Welcome

Midwest District Council Meeting Recap

By Lisa Doi, Vice President

This fall's Midwest District Council meeting was held at Historic Fort Snelling in St. Paul, MN. The Midwest District discussed important issues of our district including specific membership needs in the Midwest and our role in get out the vote work in key states. The district was joined by David Inoue, JACL Executive Director, to continue conversations around re-hiring in the Midwest District office in Chicago. The entire district advocated strongly for the re-hiring of this position as mandated in a resolution passed at this year's National Convention. In addition to our business meetings, MDC members received a special tour of the Courage and Compassion traveling exhibition on display at Fort Snelling. The Twin Cities JACL Education Committee put together

a great series of panels for the exhibit as well as speakers for our meeting—highlighting the important history of the Military Language School and *Nisei* teachers and translators. Finally, there was a youth summit held in conjunction with the meeting. Young people from across the district to discuss histories of Japanese Americans at Midwestern colleges and universities during World War II as well as *Yonsei* responses to incarceration.

A few action steps from the Midwest district meeting:

1. Support hiring a Midwest Regional Director! Let David Inoue, JACL Executive Director, and Marissa Kitazawa, National Board VP for General Operations, know why this role,

and having an advocate for civil rights in the Midwest, matters to you. You can email them at dinoue@jacl.org and mkitazawa@jacl.org.

2. The Midwest District is forming an education committee. The purpose of the committee is to share resources and best practices from chapters across the district. If you're interested, please email staff@jaclchicago.org to get in touch with the district.
3. The Pacific Citizen is asking readers to submit stories. If you have a story you would like to share or an event you want highlighted in the Pacific Citizen, you can share it with them at pc@pacificcitizen.org. 📧



2019 JACL Chicago Scholarship Program

Apply for a JACL Chicago Scholarship!

Scholarships range from \$1,500 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.

Applications to be released in December, visit our website for more information:
www.jaclchicago.org

Osh's Corner



By Michael Oshita, Communications Co-Chair

The Work of The Gregg and Robyn Oshita Foundation

I wanted to start off this column by first thanking everyone for their outpouring of support the past year. In seeing my sister and I each get married, losing my mother to cancer, starting a new job and forming a non-profit, one might think that's a lot for one person to go through in such a short time span. And you would be right. But the reality is I wouldn't have been able to do it without the support of those closest to me. They know who they are. So to those individuals near and far, from the bottom of my heart, thank you.

In founding The Gregg and Robyn Oshita

Foundation shortly after my mother's passing, our goal from the start was to support families battling blood cancers in whatever way we could. Whether that's fundraising for leukemia research, hosting blood drives to help supply those fighting with the vital units they need, or even doing something as simple as telling our story, all with the goal of hoping one day for a cure and for no family to have to go through the pain and heartbreak that mine did. At first, we had no idea what we were doing but as time passed, we understood what was important to us and where we wanted to go as an organization to do the most good.



COMMUNITY MEMBERS GATHER AT PANERA BREAD IN SUPPORT OF THE GREGG AND ROBYN OSHITA FOUNDATION.

Photos: Robert Brown

This past March, in partnership with the JASC, Heartland Blood Center, and Be the Match, we held our inaugural blood and platelet drive. Over the course of 4+ hours, we had 29 people donate blood and platelets and 8 sign up for the National Bone Marrow Registry. We also raised over \$1800 for the foundation. To say the event was a great success was an understatement.

In October, we had two events highlighted by walking in my mom's memory during The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's annual Light the Night walk to build awareness of blood cancers as well as raise money for research and support of patients and their families. We also held our own fundraiser in partnership with Panera Bread where a portion of the proceeds benefitted the foundation.

It's hard to imagine it has been a year already. I miss and think about my mom almost daily and not being able to talk to her has been the hardest part. Her memory is the reason the foundation exists and I know she would be proud of the progress we've made as an organization. The work never stops. We're already planning our 2nd annual blood drive next March and hopefully we can get even more donors and registrants. Having this foundation allows us to not only tell our story, but also make a difference to help those in need. As long as I'm around, I want everyone to know what an amazing person my mom was—not only professionally (working her whole life as a nurse giving back to those in need), but of course personally as well.

Many times I have heard people compliment what a great person my sister and I are. Well, the truth is, my sister and I turned out the way we are thanks to the wonderful upbringing and lessons taught by my parents. And it's important that I carry on the legacy and pass it along to generations to come. I hope you'll come along this journey with me and one day, we can cure AML and make the world a brighter place. 🌟

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Retrospective: the state of JACL's next generation

By Eric Langowski, Midwest District Youth Representative

With the support of this community and my friends, I have been able to accomplish much as your District Youth Representative and I offer these parting thoughts. Together, we have recast JACL's Creed for the 21st century, created spaces to discuss Midwestern Japanese American identity, and better understood how the model minority concept is an instrument of anti-blackness. Your work before and alongside me has been the foundation upon which I have built up two stories important to me: the effects of incarceration on *Yonsei* (through an intergenerational haunting) and the systematic denial of education to *Nisei* at Midwestern colleges. In youth spaces and intergenerational spaces, in service and in solidarity, together, we have remembered our ancestors and reimagined our past.

During incarceration, our communities were broken, and our bodies criminalized. Today, we stand much absolved from that trauma after redress, but "never again" still happens every day. Entrusted with the legacy of incarceration, my generation grapples with how to truly "remember." Can we remember our ancestors without embracing racial solidarity? For example, during Day of Remembrance, should we say that incarceration was a fluke in an exemplary America or one (egregious) act in a long line of oppression and dismemberment of minority communities? Does a true remembrance of what happened to my ancestors in Amache (a camp my great-grandfather never left) include causes like Black Lives Matter, net neutrality, abolishing ICE, and questioning the same government which stripped our citizenship due to "military necessity" when they use a "national security" justification for the Muslim Ban?

In remembrance, I invite you to explore these questions and be open to dialogue as we work to create a space which affirms the exemplary work done by life-long volunteers and appeals to young activists weary of an organization set in its ways. In my work, often bridging these two spaces, I have seen how much more we have in common than not and I am excited to see what we do next. 🍄

John Okada: The Life & Work of the Author of No-No Boy

Wednesday, November 28
6:30pm - 8:00pm

Japanese American Service Committee
4427 N Clark St, Chicago

**Event is free. Parking will be available in the JASC lot.*

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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

Wednesday, November 14
6:30pm - 8:30pm

JACL Chicago Annual Meeting
Midwest Buddhist Temple, 435 W Menomonee St, Chicago

Wednesday, November 28
6:30pm - 8:00pm

John Okada: The Life & Work of the Author of No-No Boy
Japanese American Service Committee, 4427 N Clark St, Chicago

Friday, November 30
7:00pm - 8:00pm

Fred Korematsu Speaks Up
Christ Church of Chicago, 6047 N Rockwell St, Chicago

Wednesday, December 5
10:00am

Grace Watanabe Case Court Hearing
Richard J. Daley Center, 50 W Washington St, Room 1810, Chicago

Wednesday, December 12
7:00pm - 9:00pm

JACL Chicago Board Meeting
JACL Chicago Office, 5415 N Clark St, Chicago