

JACL *er*

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Alternative Facts Screening and Director Q&A

Saturday, April 6, 6:30pm

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Day of Remembrance: Never Again is Now!

By Lisa Sakai, Board Member

On February 19, 1942, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 which illegally and unconstitutionally imprisoned 120,000 Japanese-Americans during WWII. On Sunday, February 17, 2019, the 77th anniversary marking the event was held at the Chicago History Museum. This year's Day of Remembrance, "Never Again is Now!" was framed to highlight the similarities between what happened to Japanese Americans in 1942 and what is happening today with America's Muslim and Latinx communities.

As people entered the auditorium, a slide show of photographs put the similarities into context. Flashing on the screen were pictures of graffiti on Japanese American homes and on Islamic Centers, pictures of children behind barbed wire in incarceration camps and sleeping in cages on the floor of immigration detention centers.



Photo: Robert Brown

KAREN KOREMATSU LEADS A PANEL DISCUSSION WITH MUHAMMAD SANKARY, LEAD ORGANIZER AT ARAB AMERICAN ACTION NETWORK AND MONY RUIZ-VELASCO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PASO, THE WEST SUBURBAN ACTION PROJECT.

Officially opening the program was the posting of colors by the Nisei Post and a welcome by Ryan Yokota, Development & Legacy Center Director, JASC. Next, Mona Noriega, Commissioner of the Chicago Commission on Human Rights read the Mayoral

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 4/17/19.

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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Day of Remembrance continued

Proclamation and Evan Tatsui, from Niles North High School, read the Civilian Exclusion Order. Anna Takada, JASC/CJAHS Oral History Project Coordinator spoke briefly about the project Untold Stories: Oral Histories on Chicago's Japanese American Community and showed two short videos from the project that will be released later this year.

The keynote speaker was Karen Korematsu, Founder and Executive Director of the Fred T. Korematsu Institute. Karen spoke about the work the Korematsu Institute does to advance social justice through education. Following her keynote address, she led a panel discussion with Muhammad Sankary, Lead Organizer, Arab American Action Network and Mony Ruiz-Velasco, Executive Director of PASO, the West Suburban Action Project. They discussed the impact the current political climate has on their

communities and the importance of communities to band together to protect the civil liberties of marginalized groups.

As part of the Day of Remembrance, Next Generation Nikkei also held two programs at the Museum for young adults and children. 🇺🇸



TOP: KAREN KOREMATSU SHARES ABOUT HER FATHER, FRED KOREMATSU'S LEGACY AND THE IMPORTANCE IN SPEAKING UP TODAY. RIGHT: THE NISEI POST NO. 1183 COLOR GUARD PERFORM THE POSTING AND RETIRING OF COLORS. BOTTOM: AUDIENCE MEMBERS DURING THE PROGRAM.



Photos: Kat Nagasawa

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Never Again is Now: DOR Youth Workshop

By Britney Wittes, Next Generation Nikkei Board Member

JACL Chicago's Next Generation Nikkei Board took on the role of hosting a youth program during the main event of Day of Remembrance (DOR) held at the Chicago History Museum on February 17th, 2019. We thought that it was very important to hold a program to empower the youth while their parents were also being empowered down the hall in the main DOR program. It is important to us to start teaching the younger generations about incarceration so we can see change happening in our communities and the world.

This was a very successful few hours with the kids who learned how to fold paper cranes, worked on a Japanese American coloring book created by Kansha Project alumna, Sara Kuramitsu, and had a reading with a discussion of the book *Fred Korematsu Speaks Up* by Laura Atkins and Stan Yogi. We had a discussion on what Day of Remembrance is and what terms like incarceration

and Executive Order 9066 are. And we considered together why it was important for Fred Korematsu to stand up.

We also explored the concept of justice and we asked the youth: What does justice mean to you? What words come up when you think of justice? We discussed the injustice of Japanese American incarceration and current issues in the world and in their daily lives, such as bullying. The group thought of ways to create fairness in situations of injustice and that speaking up when something isn't fair. It was such an engaging book that the youth asked us many questions which opened up this discussion even further into incarceration from past to present day.



Photo: Mari Yamaguchi

NEXT GENERATION NIKKEI MEMBERS DISCUSS THEMES OF JUSTICE WITH YOUTH WHILE READING THE BOOK, *FRED KOREMATSU SPEAKS UP*.

After the reading and book discussion, we gave the youth a chance to experience a few different activities throughout the workshop, while still being in conversation about DOR. As we colored and folded the cranes the conversation continued. They were fully engaged throughout the entire time and were such a pleasure to talk to and learn from as well. 🌱

Courage and Compassion Exhibit

March 2 - May 4, 2019

"Courage and Compassion: Our Shared Story of the Japanese American World War II Experience" chronicles the stories of Japanese Americans during and immediately after WWII, and highlights stories of bravery, integrity, and extraordinary support of Japanese Americans from the Chicago area.

**Trickster Gallery
190 South Roselle Rd
Schaumburg, IL 60193**

Never Again is Now: DOR Young Adult Workshop

By Anne Watanabe, Next Generation Nikkei Board Member



Photo: Kat Nagasawa

Prior to the main Day of Remembrance program, a diverse and multiracial group of young adults participated in a workshop organized by JACL Chicago's Next Generation Nikkei Board. The workshop asked participants to draw connections between the incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII, and mass incarceration and immigrant detention today, with a goal of encouraging people to use their knowledge and understanding of past

injustices to better understand current injustices, and take action toward justice.

The workshop began with participants working in small groups to share information on the incarceration of Japanese American (JA) people during WWII, mass incarceration today, and immigrant detention today. The groups worked to answer questions about the different forms of incarceration such as, "Who is affected?" "Who benefits from this and who is/was harmed?"

Continued on page 5



JACL CHICAGO ANNOUNCES

A NEW EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM
Our Story: The Japanese American Incarceration



Our Story is a program to provide opportunities for educators, students, and the public to learn about and understand the Japanese American incarceration and its impact on individuals, the community, the Constitution, and the values of democracy.

PLEASE JOIN US FOR A COCKTAIL & HORS D'OEUVRES RECEPTION & FUNDRAISER

THURSDAY, APRIL 4, 2019 | 6-9 PM

MAGGIANO'S LITTLE ITALY AT OLD ORCHARD

\$125 per person
\$75 students (with ID)

Please RSVP by Monday, March 18 or reserve online at <https://jaclchicago-ourstory.eventbrite.com>

Our Story: The Japanese American Incarceration

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Japanese American Citizens League

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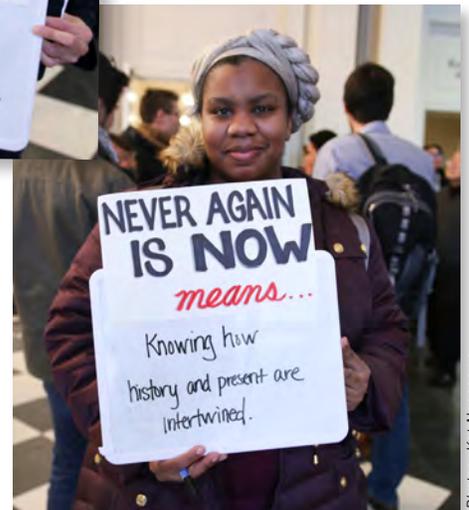
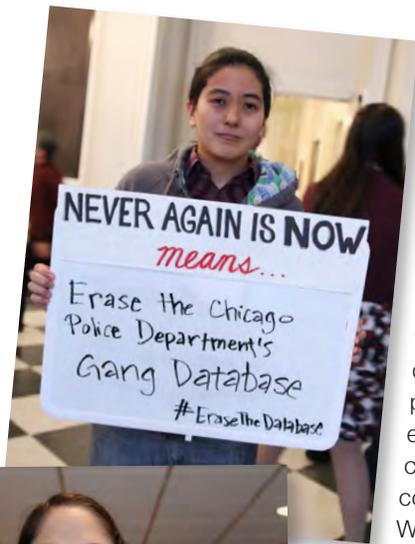
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773.728.7171 or reserve online at
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Tickets: \$125 per person
\$75 students (with school ID)
All proceeds from this event will benefit the Our Story program.

and “What was the public’s response/media portrayal?” Then, the groups came together to share information, and identify common themes and differences across the different forms of incarceration. While different racial and ethnic groups were primarily targeted by the different forms of incarceration (Japanese people during WWII, Black and Latinx people by mass incarceration, and Latinx people by immigrant detention), some common themes that participants identified were that certain groups or companies profit from incarceration, politicians benefit by pushing for incarceration, racism, and that stories about incarceration being necessary for safety and security are used to justify incarceration.

The workshop shifted to focus on a local example, the Chicago Gang Database, which is currently the focus of a class action lawsuit and has been widely criticized for its inaccuracies, arbitrary policies, violation of constitutional rights and use of racial profiling in order to enter people into the database, regardless of whether any crime has been committed.

Participants learned about the Gang Database and the coalition of racial justice organizations fighting to erase and investigate



the gang database. Participants then explored the connections and similarities between the Chicago Gang Database and Japanese American incarceration during WWII, such as state agencies creating lists of people to target them for incarceration or deportation; the use of fear and misinformation to justify the violation of people’s rights; and the violation of due process. Finally, to close the workshop, participants were given an opportunity to explore ways to take action by sharing the conversation with others, or continue drawing connections between JA incarceration during WWII and present-day injustices, especially the Gang Database in Chicago. When reflecting on the final questions such as, “What does never again is now mean to you?” many participants shared that pushing back against present day forms of racial injustice and incarceration, and activating these conversations in their communities, are an important part of “Never Again is Now”.

The Ito Sisters Chicago Premiere

The Ito Sisters captures the rarely told stories of the earliest Japanese immigrants to the United States and their American-born children.

Saturday, March 16

2:00pm - 4:30pm

The Wilmette Theatre

1122 Central Ave, Wilmette

Tickets: asianpopupcinema.org/tickets

DAY OF REMEMBRANCE ATTENDEES SHARE WHAT “NEVER AGAIN IS NOW” MEANS TO THEM.

Photos: Kat Nagasawa

Statement of Interest in the Grace Watanabe Case

According to a petition filed in the Circuit Court of Cook County by the Cook County Public Guardian, employees and others at Symphony Residences of Lincoln Park “robbed” financial assets exceeding \$600,000 from bank accounts belonging to Grace Watanabe, a 97-year-old Japanese American who had resided at the facility since 2010. (The amount has since been adjusted to over \$750,000)

The Chicago Chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) is keenly interested in supporting efforts to seek restitution for Ms. Watanabe for the harm caused to her. JACL Chicago’s interest stems from our mission and history of protecting the welfare of members of our community. During the 1940s, JACL Chicago provided support to ease the transition of Japanese Americans from their confinement in concentration camps to their resettlement in Chicago. In the 1980s, JACL Chicago actively participated in a successful legislative campaign to provide an apology and monetary restitution to Japanese Americans who were detrimentally affected by the unjust actions of the federal government in 1942.

During World War II, Grace Watanabe was among 120,000 Japanese Americans forcibly removed from their homes on the West Coast and confined in American concentration camps. Racial prejudice and false government claims about the national security risk posed by Japanese Americans resulted in the denial of their due process rights and their liberty.

In 1942, Grace Watanabe was targeted because she belonged to a vulnerable group incapable of defending itself against a tide of racism and government hostility. At Symphony where she should have been cared for and protected, Grace Watanabe fell victim to those who targeted and took advantage of her because she was no longer capable of handling her own personal finances. JACL Chicago deplores the behavior of Symphony employees including its ownership and management.

JACL Chicago supports efforts to seek restitution and justice for Grace Watanabe. Members of JACL Chicago have met and will continue to meet with and support the actions of the Cook County Public Guardian, the Chicago Police Department,

the Cook County State’s Attorney’s Office, and others associated with this case. We will continue to monitor progress in the case, provide advocacy when needed, interact with our organizational partners, and explore the long-term need for strengthening deficiencies in state laws and regulations that may have given rise to the abuse suffered by Grace Watanabe.

What you can do

- Community members are welcome to write letters to Ms. Watanabe. The committee will deliver the letters to the Public Guardian’s office to give to Ms. Watanabe. Letters may be addressed:

Grace Watanabe
c/o JACL Chicago
5415 N Clark St
Chicago, IL 60640

- Come out to next hearing on the case:

Thursday, March 21
10:00am
Richard J. Daley Center
50 W Washington St, Room 1810,
Chicago, IL 🇺🇸

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.

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Yoshimi Golden

Screening of *Alternative Facts* and Director Q&A

*ALTERNATIVE FACTS: The Lies of
Executive Order 9066* is a one-hour
documentary feature film about the
false information and political
influences which led to the
World War II incarceration of
Japanese Americans.

**Saturday, April 6
6:30pm - 8:30pm**

Lakeside Church of Chicago
3939 Howard St
Skokie, IL 60076

Free event, free lot and street parking available

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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.

Calendar of Events

March 2, 2019 - May 4, 2019	Courage and Compassion Exhibit Trickster Gallery, 190 South Roselle Rd, Schaumburg
Thursday, March 7 3:00pm - 5:00pm	“Deemed Inadvisable”: The University of Chicago, Hyde Park, and Japanese America Regenstein Library, Room 122, 1100 E 57th St, Chicago
Wednesday, March 13 7:00pm – 9:00pm	JACL Chicago Board Meeting JACL Chicago Office, 5415 N Clark St, Chicago
March 15 (7pm) & March 17 (2pm)	An American Dream Harris Theater for Music and Dance, 205 E Randolph St, Chicago
Saturday, March 16 2:00pm - 4:30pm	Ito Sisters Chicago Premiere The Wilmette Theatre, 1122 Central Ave, Wilmette
Thursday, April 4 6:30pm - 9:30pm	Our Story Reception & Fundraiser Maggiano’s Little Italy, 4999 Old Orchard Shopping Ctr, Skokie
Saturday, April 6 6:30pm - 8:30pm	Alternative Facts Film Screening and Director Q&A Lakeside Church of Chicago, 3939 Howard St, Skokie
Wednesday, April 10 7:00pm – 9:00pm	JACL Chicago Board Meeting JACL Chicago Office, 5415 N Clark St, Chicago
Sunday, April 28 Time TBA	All Camps Reunion & Talk with Greg Robinson Japanese American Service Committee, 4427 N Clark St, Chicago