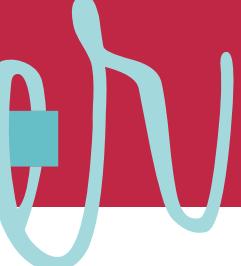


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JACL



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**Join us for our
Scholarship Luncheon**
Sunday, May 19, 12:00pm

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**Contested Histories and
Finding Home**
May 17-19

More information on page 5

Our Story, A Program to Promote Awareness About Incarceration

By Bill Yoshino, Education Committee Member



On April 4, JACL Chicago launched a new program called Our Story, which will tell the story about the Japanese American historical experience focusing on the incarceration during World War II. JACL Chicago believes it's an important story within the larger story about Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States. Unlike a number of other states, Illinois neither encourages nor mandates teaching about the incarceration of Japanese Americans. There is no mention made about the incarceration in the Illinois learning standards or in the state's school code. As a result, the teaching of the incarceration is left to the initiative and resourcefulness of schools, school districts, or individual teachers and without aggressive efforts to promote this content, an important lesson in American history may be lost to students.

Continued on page 2

Our Story Fundraiser

By Tonko Doi and Carol Yoshino, Fundraiser Co-chairs

Our recent fundraiser for the new program, Our Story: The Japanese American Incarceration, held at Maggiano's at Old Orchard, was a smashing success! Plenty of hors d'oeuvres and libations for everyone. Everyone mingled, catching up with friends they have not seen in a while and meeting new friends. The chatter level was high! Our thanks to Consul General Naoki Ito for joining us at our kickoff event.

Bill Yoshino, retired JACL Midwest Director, gave a brief overview of Our Story, JACL Chicago's new education initiative.

Continued on page 3

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 6/19/19.

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

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Our Story, A Program continued

Our Story seeks to provide an opportunity for teachers and educators to include information about the incarceration in their classrooms. Initially, Our Story will establish a speaker's bureau of knowledgeable presenters who will go into classrooms to tell the incarceration story. The program will be pro-active in reaching out to schools and teachers to inform them that this opportunity is available. This is a marked difference from before where JACL Chicago acted passively by waiting to be contacted by teachers and others for requests.

Our Story is currently capable of fulfilling requests from schools with an experienced group of presenters including Anne Shimojima, Elaine Kaneshiro, Christine Munteanu, Mari Yamagiwa, and Bill Yoshino. On April 6, the program fulfilled its first request for a presentation to approximately forty students from Indiana University. The presentation was held at the Northtown Public Library in Chicago.

The JACL Chicago Education Committee is responsible for implementing this program. The Education Committee is comprised of Pat Yuzawa-Rubin, Elaine Kaneshiro, Mary Doi, Anne Shimojima, Lisa Doi, Mari Yamagiwa, Eric Langowski, and Bill Yoshino. The immediate tasks of the committee will be to develop a model slideshow presentation for classroom use, identify potential presenters, set up a training module to train prospective presenters, and promote the availability of this program by reaching out to schools.



Photo: Mari Yamagiwa

BILL YOSHINO PRESENTS ON THE JAPANESE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE TO A GROUP OF STUDENTS FROM INDIANA UNIVERSITY.

As the Our Story program evolves the Education Committee will partner with other community organizations to seek additional ways to create awareness about the incarceration. In addition, the committee will explore ways to make it easier and more fulfilling for teachers to include a unit on the incarceration in their classrooms. This means there will be a need to provide teachers with resources even beyond the classroom presentations of knowledgeable presenters.

There is no denying that public education in Illinois has not been inclusive in its treatment of the Asian American experience. JACL Chicago hopes that Our Story will begin to address that gap by insisting that Our Story is an important part of America's history.

To learn more about Our Story or to request a presentation for your class, community group, or organization, please visit our website at www.jaclchicago.org/our-story.

Japanese American Memorial Day Service

Monday, May 27 | 11:00am

Montrose Cemetery
5400 N Pulaski Rd, Chicago

Our Story Fundraiser continued

Our sincere thanks to our Sponsors (Tonko Doi, Glenn Inouye, Cressey Nakagawa, May, Megan & Matt Nakano, Rick & Karen Okabe, Lisa Sakai, Anne Shimojima, Lisa Sloan, Bill & Carol Yoshino, Ron & Joyce Yoshino, Pat Yuzawa-Rubin), donors (listed on page 6), and silent auction donors for their generous support for this event (listed on page 6).

We also extend our thanks to members of the Next Gen Nikkei and Kansha Alumni Leadership Board who volunteered lending assistance at different stations and to musicians Darrell Kaneshiro, Peter Budd, and Marlene Serikaku from the Na Kupuna Ukulele Club and their "groupies" who joined them onstage, Aiko Kojima, Jane Yakushiji, and Norma Tsuhako. Thank you to Phyllis Tamada-Brown for design of the program and brochure, as well as Bob Brown for taking photos of the event.

A wonderful way to kick off Our Story! 🎉



Photos: Robert Brown



ABOVE: BILL YOSHINO SHARES ABOUT OUR STORY, WITH FUNDRAISER ATTENDEES.
LEFT: ATTENDEES BID ON VARIOUS SILENT AUCTION BASKETS.
BELOW: MUSICIANS PROVIDE ENGAGING ENTERTAINMENT FOR THE ATTENDEES.



Please join us for JACL Chicago's annual

Scholarship Luncheon

Please join us in celebrating the accomplishments of this year's scholarship winners!

May 19, 2019 | 12 - 2pm
Maggiano's Little Italy

Westfield Old Orchard Mall
4999 Old Orchard Shopping Ctr
Skokie, IL 60077

\$50 for adult
\$25 for student/youth

You may RSVP to the JACL Chicago office at
staff@jaclchicago.org or 773-728-7171.

More info online at:
jaclchicago.org/event/2019-scholarship-luncheon

2019 JACL Chicago Golf Tournament

Thursday, July 18, 2019

Glenview Park Golf Club

800 Shermer Road, Glenview, IL



9:00 am

Cost: \$100/golfer

**Lunch will be served and Awards
presented after golf.**

Please RSVP to the JACL office by July 8th.

p: 773.728.7171 e: info@jaclchicago.org

2019 Golf Tournament Registration Form

Please enclose entry fee(s) for all golfers (\$100/person) listed on the registration form. We will inform you of your starting time. **Registration deadline is July 8th.**

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Arts Workshop Helps Chicago JAs Develop Their Creative Voices

By Katherine Nagasawa, Kansha
ALB member

In March, JACL Chicago hosted an interdisciplinary arts workshop aimed at helping Chicago-area Japanese Americans develop their creative voices through a project of their choice. The workshop, which spanned two days, was facilitated by Los Angeles-based creative director and filmmaker Daryn Wakasa. Around a dozen people participated and their artistic mediums ranged from comics and calligraphy to screenwriting and dance.

The first day of the workshop centered around acting and writing exercises that unpacked what it means to be Japanese American.

"There's this mainstream narrative in the community that's always focused on west coast-based, cis-gendered, patriotic descendants of the camps," Wakasa says. "I've seen a lot of people struggling with, what happens if you come from the Midwest? What if you're nonbinary, mixed race, or *Shin-Nikkei*? How do you identify as a Japanese American and carve out your space?"

Wakasa says the exercises were designed to create empathy for other people's experiences within the community and work through certain blockages that prevented participants from fully expressing their voices as Japanese Americans.

"What I was trying to pull out was to not articulate identity verbally, but more in terms of emotions," he says. "How does it feel to be Japanese American? Hopefully that's a better way to give people insight into who they are and how they fit into a community and cultural identity."

Workshop participant Dan Kittaka says one particular repetition activity had a profound impact on him. For the exercise, people paired up and repeated short statements about each other, like "You are Japanese American," "You have a

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strong voice,” or “You are American.”

“Hearing those statements over and over helped me realize how much I craved for my identity to be acknowledged and to feel seen,” Kittaka says. “Each repetition seemed to patch part of a gaping hole that I didn’t fully understand existed.”

Many of the activities involved group exercises followed by individual writing prompts. Participant Kenji Kuramitsu says it was moving to see how the group dynamics affected each individual’s writing.



DARYN WAKASA (LEFT) LED THE INTERDISCIPLINARY ARTS WORKSHOP THAT ALLOWED PARTICIPANTS TO EXPLORE AND EXPRESS THEIR CREATIVE VOICES.

focused on the individual projects. Wakasa says he plans to check in with participants in the coming months to see how their projects develop.

After the workshop, several group members promised to meet up regularly to keep each other motivated and get feedback on their work. Wakasa says this kind of creative collaboration is crucial for building relationships both within and outside of the Japanese American community.

“That’s the key to bridging the gap between communities, especially marginalized communities — through storytelling and art,” Wakasa says. “When you’re able to dig into a story from a place of empathy and emotion, that’s when we’re able to connect to it on a human level.” 

Contested Histories Finding Home - (Re)Building Community in the Second City

As a part of the Japanese American National Museum’s *Contested Histories* Exhibit, that will be at Midwest Buddhist Temple, there is a weekend full of programs called “Finding Home – (Re) Building Community in the Second City”.

Program includes sessions on:

- facilitated **intergenerational dialogues**
- **family genealogy** (how to find historic information about your family’s incarceration experience)
- casual and fun **open mic night**
- **stage-reading of “Garage Door Opener”**, a play from LA-based Grateful Crane Ensemble (Soji Kashiwagi)

May 17 - 19

**Midwest Buddhist Temple
435 W Menomonee, Chicago**

All programs are free, you are welcome to attend as many or as few programs as you’d like.

See more info online at: jaclchicago.org/events/finding-home

Save the Date!

Join us for the
Kansha Project
Culmination

Sunday, June 23

Church of Christ
Presbyterian
5846 N Spaulding Ave
Chicago, IL

*More information
to be announced*

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Japan Fest
Saturday, June 16
11:00am - 5:00pm
Millennium Park and
Chicago Cultural Center
More info: japanfest-chicago.org



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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

Wednesday, May 8
7:00pm – 9:00pm

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

May 17-19

Contested Histories & Finding Home—(Re)Building Community in the Second City
Midwest Buddhist Temple, 435 W Menomonee, Chicago
More info at: jaclchicago.org/events/finding-home

Sunday, May 20
12:00pm - 2:00pm

JACL Chicago Scholarship Luncheon
Maggiano's Little Italy, 4999 Old Orchard Shopping Ctr, Skokie

Monday, May 27
11:00am

Japanese American Memorial Day Service
Montrose Cemetery, 5400 N Pulaski Rd, Chicago

Sunday, June 9
1:00pm - 5:00pm

Kansha Project Fold-a-Crane
JACL Chicago Office, 5415 N Clark St, Chicago and Lakeside Church, 3939 Howard St, Skokie

Wednesday, June 12
7:00pm – 9:00pm

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

Sunday, June 16
11:00am – 5:00pm

Japan Fest
Millennium Park and Chicago Cultural Center, More info at: japanfest-chicago.org

Sunday, June 23
Time TBA

Kansha Project Culmination
Church of Christ Presbyterian, 5846 N Spaulding Ave, Chicago

July 18
9:00am

JACL Chicago Golf Tournament
Glenview Park Golf Club, 800 Shermer Rd, Glenview