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JACL Chicago Chapter

JACL

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Scholarship Application Deadline is February 1

See our website for details:
[www.jaclchicago.org/programs/
scholarship-program](http://www.jaclchicago.org/programs/scholarship-program)

Join us for the Day of Remembrance

**Sunday, February 16
1:30pm at Chicago History Museum**

See page 3 for details

JACL Chicago in 2020 and Beyond, Kodomo No Tame Ni

By Lisa Doi, President

Happy New Year!

On April 15, 1945, JACL Chicago was incorporated by a group of pioneering new residents, forced from their lifelong homes on the West Coast and set adrift on the shores of Lake Michigan. This year, we celebrate their legacy and 75 years of advocacy by the *issei*, *nisei*, *sansei*, *yonsei*, and *shin-Nikkei* to defend civil rights and civil liberties for Japanese Americans, Asian Americans, and all Chicagoans. In 2020, we will continue our signature programs as well as embark on some new projects.

Our strongest programmatic commitment continues to be our youngest members. The Kansha Project, which brings college-aged Midwestern *Nikkei* to Little Tokyo, Los Angeles and Manzanar National Historic Site, will send our ninth group this year. For the past several years, the Kansha Project has been run by alumni of the program. Many

Kansha alumni and other younger Japanese Americans have also built out Next Generation Nikkei (NGN), an educational and social group that develops and co-sponsors frequent events.



Photo: Lisa Doi

IN 2019 JACL CHICAGO EXPANDED ITS YOUTH PROGRAMMING TO INCLUDE BRIDGE BUILDERS, A PROGRAM THAT BRINGS JAPANESE AMERICAN AND ARAB AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ON A PILGRIMAGE TO IMPORTANT SITES IN TENNESSEE AND ARKANSAS.

We have seen the power of this investment in younger members as our future leaders and have expanded our programs focused on younger folks. In 2019, we launched Bridge Builders, a partnership with the Arab American Action Network. A group of Japanese

Continued on page 2

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 2/18/20.

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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JACL Chicago in 2020 continued

American and Arab American high school students traveled from Chicago to Memphis, TN, and Little Rock, Rohwer, and Jerome in Arkansas. We not only built bridges between communities, but bridged past and present: from WWII Japanese American confinement history to the 1960's era Civil Rights Movement to post 9/11 anti-Arab and anti-Muslim discrimination. We also started Our Story, a speakers bureau designed to develop a new generation of historians who can visit schools, community groups, and more to educate others about Japanese American history. If you would be interested in scheduling a speaker, please visit www.jaclchicago.org/our-story/.

Finally, JACL Chicago is excited for new programs and partnerships in 2020. In April, please join us to celebrate our 75th anniversary! More information will be shared on our website as it is available. JACL Chicago is also a co-sponsor of Tsuru for Solidarity, a nonviolent, direct action project of Japanese American social justice advocates working to end detention sites and support front-line immigrant and refugee communities that are being targeted by inhumane immigration policies. In June, Tsuru for Solidarity will host a national gathering in Washington, DC. We hope you will join us in DC or by folding cranes in Chicago. More information will be shared with our members or you can visit www.tsuruforsolidarity.org. Finally, in September JACL Chicago will reprise Kansa Too, a historical and educational trip to Little Tokyo and Manzanar. Please visit our website or social media for the most up to date information on our events.

As we start 2020, I have been thinking about the phrase *kodomo no tame ni*, meaning for the sake of the children. When my great grandparents and grandparents first came to Chicago, I imagine it was for the sake of the children, the *Nisei* and *Sansei*, who might have a better life away from barbed wire, away from West Coast racism. It was also for the sake of the children that our forebears built organizations like JACL Chicago, girls clubs, sports leagues, churches, temples, cemeteries, and more. In a time and place that asked them to assimilate, for the sake of the children, they retained and remade an ethnic community. It is an honor to shepherd JACL Chicago into our next 75 years and to remain a vibrant civil rights advocate, *kodomo no tame ni*.

With gratitude,

Lisa Doi



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Introducing Our New Chapter Board Members

Josh Fidler

Josh Fidler is thrilled to be joining the JACL Chicago board as the Youth Chair. He is passionate about social justice and the Japanese American (JA) community. After participating on the Kansha Project, Josh joined the Kansha Alumni Board, where he assisted in leading the program. His enthusiasm for building bridges and bonds with the community continued with his election as Co-President of the Next Gen Nikkei board, where he has worked alongside dedicated *Nikkei* to increase the opportunities for youth involvement in the JA community. He has worked in youth development and leadership for his entire career and plans to continue to do this work through his involvement in the JACL Chicago board. In his spare time, Josh likes to play with his dog Pinky, spend time with his family and friends, and play board games.



Photo courtesy of Josh Fidler



Photo courtesy of Brandon Lee

Brandon Lee

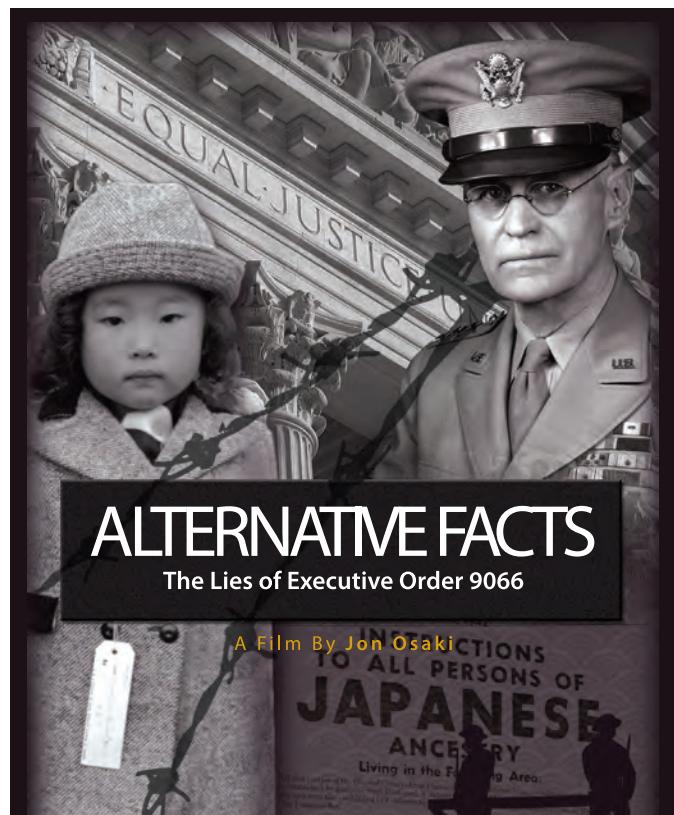
Brandon Lee is excited to be joining the JACL Chicago board in 2020! He is eager to continue building a strong community with JACL members and connect our shared experience with the broader movement for justice and civil rights in Chicago right now. Brandon is a *yonsei* who brings over ten years of community organizing experience through his time as a student in the Asian American Studies program at UIC and as a staff member with Asian Americans Advancing Justice | Chicago. Currently, Brandon works with the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights on their Census 2020 campaign. Brandon also enjoys the Cubs, the Bulls, everything Star Wars, and collecting baseball caps.

DAY OF REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 16 1:30 PM - 4:30 PM CHICAGO HISTORY MUSEUM 1601 N CLARK ST

Signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on February 19, 1942, Executive Order 9066 called for the incarceration of 120,000 Japanese Americans during WWII. Every year, the Japanese American Community in Chicago comes together to commemorate EO9066 as a reminder of the fragility of civil liberties in times of crisis and the importance of remaining vigilant in protecting the rights and freedoms of all.

Day of Remembrance 2020 features “**Alternative Facts The Lies of Executive Order 9066**” - a film by **Jon Osaki** that sheds light on the people and politics that influenced the signing of the infamous EO9066. The film exposes lies used to justify the decision and the cover up that went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. Alternative Facts also examines the parallels to the current climate of fear, attitudes, towards immigrant communities, and similar abuses of power by the government.

This event is free and open to the public.



Lakeview Walking Tour Puts JA History On The Map

By Kat Nagasawa, NGN Board Member

On November 2, JACL's Kansha Project hosted its first-ever walking tour of Lakeview's Japanese American (JA) history. Historian and Chicago-born *yonsei* Erik Matsunaga led the tour group, which included around 30 attendees and guest speakers. The tour peeled back the layers of the Lakeview neighborhood to reveal rich stories and details about our history that are hidden in plain sight.

The event was inspired by Matsunaga's 2014 Discover Nikkei article about the JA community that developed in Lakeview from the 1960s to the 1990s. The piece included quotes from former residents as well as a detailed map of current and former JA businesses, community organizations, and religious institutions. Matsunaga used the map to develop the walking tour route, which featured seven stops spanning from the Japanese Culture Center at 1016 W. Belmont Ave. to the Nisei Lounge at 3439 N. Sheffield Ave.

The tour group met in front of the Belmont "L" stop, where Matsunaga shared the history of JA incarceration during WWII and the subsequent resettlement of around 20,000 JAs to Chicago. He explained that this was part of a government initiative to redistribute and assimilate JAs across the country. As part of these efforts, the government strongly discouraged them from congregating into a designated "Japantown" like the ones they left on the West Coast. However, several informal JA enclaves developed in Chicago over time, including the Lakeview area.

After the historical overview, Matsunaga led the group on the mile-long tour

route. He stopped along the way to share details about former businesses and institutions, and also invited guest speakers to tell personal stories related



Photos: Christine Matsunaga

to the neighborhood. Fred Sasaki shared memories of growing up around his family's business, Barry-Regent Dry Cleaners, and taking aikido classes at the Japanese Culture Center. Former JASC board member Ross Harano spoke fondly about the *sansei* youth dances and activities held in Viking Hall, the former headquarters of the JASC. Joe Takehara shared his experience as a founding member of the Illinois Aikido Club, which used to rent

a storefront along Clark Street. Paul Yamauchi shared stories about his father's restaurant, Hamburger King, and the summer he spent bartending at the adjacent Nisei Lounge.

The tour ended at the Nisei Lounge, one of the few remaining Lakeview businesses with roots in the old JA community. Attendees had the opportunity to chat with the tour's guest speakers as well as additional guests Rev. Patti Nakai, who grew up in Lakeview, and Mike Tanimura, a lifelong neighborhood resident. Matsunaga

also set out an array of old neighborhood flyers, photos, and advertisements for everyone to peruse.

In the canon of Chicago ethnic neighborhoods like Greektown or Ukrainian Village, it's

easy to overlook Lakeview's JA community because it isn't memorialized in statues or street signs. Remembering Lakeview's history as a JA enclave helps put us on the metaphorical map and pushes back on the government's directive to not form a JA neighborhood in Chicago — it says: we were here, and we won't be forgotten. 🗺



Meet Our Young Adult Boards!



Photo courtesy of NGN board

THE NEXT GEN NIKKEI BOARD MEETS TO PLAN COMMUNITY EVENTS FOR 2020.

BACK ROW, L TO R: LAUREN CANNON, ERIC LANGOWSKI, JOSH FIDLER, LANE MITA, SJ DOI

FRONT ROW, L TO R: ANNE WATANABE, KRISTI LIN, KATHERINE NAGASAWA, EMILY HARADA, JJ UEUENTEN, BRITNEY WITTES

NOT PICTURED: MIA SATO

Next Generation Nikkei (NGN) Board is a young adult led program of JACL Chicago that strengthens community relationships through youth engagement, leadership development, social justice education, and advocacy. The NGN board strives to cultivate joy and empower the next generation of *Nikkei* leaders.

You can follow NGN and their efforts on Facebook (facebook.com/nextgennikkei) or Instagram (@NextGenNikkei). If you'd like to be added to the email list, you can contact us at ngn@jaclchicago.org.

Kansha Project Alumni Leadership Board (ALB) is an initiative that allows Kansha Project alumni to be active partners in leading and shaping the future of the program.

The Kansha Project is a JACL Chicago program that connects college-age (18-25) Japanese Americans to the continuing legacy of the Japanese American incarceration during World War II. The program centers around an educational trip to Los Angeles' Little Tokyo neighborhood and the Manzanar National Historic Site. You can learn more about the Kansha Project on our website at www.jaclchicago.org/programs/kanshaproject.

You can stay up-to-date with the Kansha Project and ALB on Facebook (facebook.com/kanshaproject) or Instagram (@KanshaProject). Keep an eye out for the 2020 Kansha Project applications soon!



Photo: Amy Chow

THE KANSHA ALB MEETS TO PREPARE FOR 2020 KANSHA PROJECT.
BACK ROW, L TO R: SARA PYNE, SJ DOI, CHRISTINE MUNTEANU
FRONT ROW, L TO R: FORREST JOVE, VERONICA MURASHIGE, MARI YAMAGIWA, AMY CHOW

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Chicago, IL 60640

Never Again Is Now: Mass Incarceration Workshop

By JJ Ueunten, NGN Board Member

On December 8th at JASC, Next Generation Nikkei held a "Never Again Is Now: Mass Incarceration Workshop" that invited participants to draw connections between the incarceration of Japanese people in the U.S. during World War II, and mass incarceration in the U.S. today. An intergenerational, mostly Nikkei group of about 15 people participated.

Facilitators SJ Doi, Kristi Lin, and JJ Ueunten led the group through discussion of the reasons behind the incarceration of 120,000 Japanese people during WWII, and then moved into ways that the U.S. government pressured Japanese Americans to give up their culture and assimilate into white American culture during and after the war. People talked about how the incarceration and pressure to assimilate related to the later labeling of Japanese Americans as "Model Minorities" portraying Japanese Americans as hard working, quiet, and eager to fit in, while using this portrayal in blaming Black and Latinx people for struggling, rather than recognizing the ways that government policy harms those communities.

Facilitators then presented on the state of mass incarceration in the U.S. today, sharing that the prison and jail population has more than quadrupled between 1980

and the present, with the U.S. having the largest percentage of its population incarcerated in the world. They highlighted the ways that incarceration targets and disproportionately impacts marginalized communities, particularly Black, Latinx, and indigenous communities.

While noting significant differences between present day mass incarceration, and the incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII, participants identified connections

between them. For example, in both cases, politicians and the media unjustly paint a group of people as dangerous, and use the need for safety and security as a justification for incarcerating them.

While safety and security were the stated reasons for incarceration, participants identified that in both cases political opportunism, economic interests, white supremacy, and inaccurate media representation were underlying drivers of incarceration. Participants also discussed commonality in the impacts of incarceration in both cases, including separating families, attempting to destroy the cultures of people of color, dividing people of color against each other, and the use of incarceration to make an example of

people and exert control over the wider population.

The workshop concluded with both facilitators and participants sharing ways to get involved locally in the struggle against unjust incarceration, including the incarceration of immigrants and refugees. 🗣



Photo: JJ Ueunten

TOP: WORKSHOP ATTENDEES DISCUSS CONNECTIONS BETWEEN JAPANESE AMERICAN INCARCERATION AND PRESENT DAY MASS INCARCERATION.
RIGHT: CORI LIN CREATED ILLUSTRATED NOTES BASED ON THE WORKSHOP.

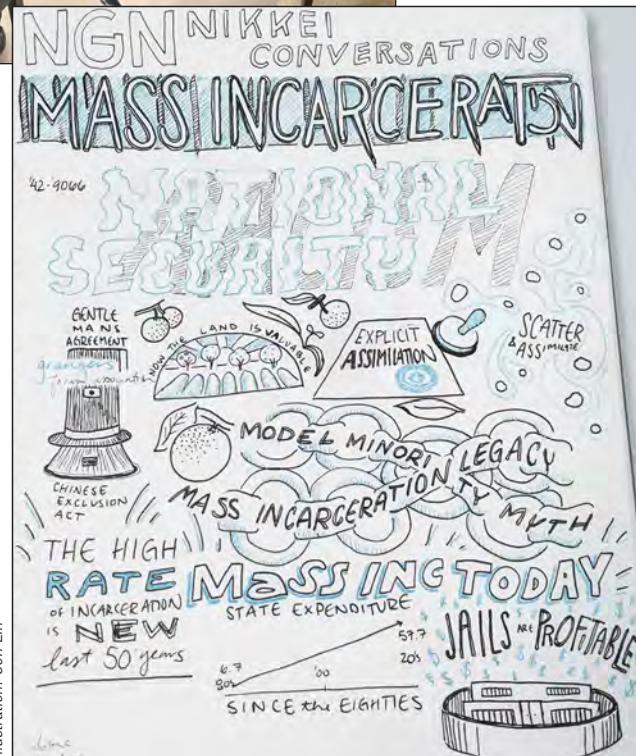


Illustration: Cori Lin

Kansha Project 2020

Details and applications will be available on January 27th!

See our website for more info: www.jaclchicago.org

Follow Kansha Project on Facebook (facebook.com/KanshaProject) and Instagram (@KanshaProject)!

Thank You to Our Donors and Advertisers!

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Kansha Project

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Kristin Osakada

Brian Ozaki

Rebecca Ozaki

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Seesha Takagishi

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JJ Ueunten

Anne Watanabe

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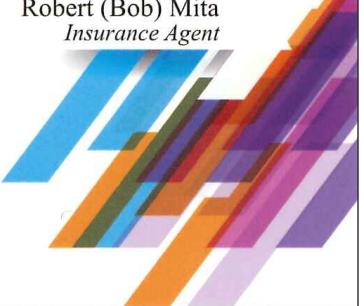
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The Japanese American Citizens League is a non-profit human and civil rights organization dedicated to preserving the civil liberties of Japanese Americans and of all Americans.

We welcome your participation.

Go Green! Receive the JACLe newsletter (in full color), news and updates via email. See page 2

Calendar of Events

Wednesday, January 8
7:00pm – 9:00pm

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

Monday, January 27

Kansha Project 2020 Applications will be available!
Visit our website at www.jaclchicago.org for more details.

Saturday, February 1

JACL Chicago Scholarship Deadline
Applications must be received or postmarked by February 1.
See www.jaclchicago.org/programs/scholarship-program for details

Wednesday, February 12
7:00pm – 9:00pm

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

Sunday, February 16
1:30pm – 4:30pm

Day of Remembrance
Chicago History Museum, 1601 N Clark St, Chicago

Saturday, March 21
8:15am – 3:00pm

The Gregg and Robyn Oshita Foundation Blood Drive
Japanese American Service Committee, 4427 N Clark St, Chicago