

# THE RICE PAPER

A newsletter of the Twin Cities Chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League e-mail: info@tcjacl.org website: www.tcjacl.org | @TwinCitiesJACL

**July 2023** 

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### PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

#### お久しぶりです!

Long time no see!

Even though we're still in the middle of summer, it already seems like a long time since our last Rice Paper because of how much has happened. We have seen continued attacks on the basic freedoms and liberties of millions of Americans, including reproductive rights, race-conscious college admissions, transgender rights, voter rights, and even immigrant land ownership (eerily reminiscent of the "alien land laws" that once prevented Japanese American Issei from owning property) to name a few. We must never forget that ALL of these issues affect individuals who identify as Japanese American, so ALL of these issues are deeply personal to our community. Of course, there is far more work to do than our small chapter can do alone, but rest assured that we continue to work in coalition with local and national partners to help wherever we can. If you are passionate about a cause or would like to suggest additional actions, please do not hesitate to reach out to <a href="mailto:advocacy@tcjacl.org">advocacy@tcjacl.org</a> and get involved!

As we look forward to the future, we must also ensure that we do not forget the past. Our chapter has always honored the proud legacy of our Japanese American veterans, and we would like to renew that commitment. TCJACL had traditionally supported an annual Memorial Day Tribute to Japanese American Veterans organized by the Japanese American Veterans of Minnesota (JAVM). Unfortunately, this annual tradition was discontinued when JAVM disbanded after holding their last Tribute in 2010. Now, under the leadership of Sally Sudo, Cheryl Hirata-Dulas, and many others, we are working to restart this important tradition to honor those who have given so much. Please read the full article in this issue to learn more and make sure that the names of your loved ones are included in our Honor Roll Call.

We are also looking forward to seeing everyone soon for the return of the TCJACL Annual Summer Picnic on Sunday, August 6th! This event promises to be a blast, featuring Nakasone Family Barbecue, cotton candy, musical performances, and fun games like tug-of-war! See the flyer in this issue for more details.

And be sure to come see us at this year's Obon Lantern Festival on Sunday, August 20th! We are looking for volunteers to help run our booth, and all volunteers get free admission to the event! More details in this issue.

また今度に会いましょう!

Let's meet up soon!

Chapter President

In solidarity,

Vinicius Taguchi

# Save the Dates - Local Events

The Twin Cities JACL invites you to participate in the two events planned for August.

The first event is the JACL Picnic.



# Here is a super fun event coming your way!

- A day jam-packed with taiko drumming, mesmerizing Japanese dance performances.
  - Play exciting games and eat mouthwatering potluck food.
- Dust off your secret family recipes and bring a dish for your family and a bit more for others that will make everyone's hearts (and stomachs) sing with joy.
  - Limited beverages will be provided.
  - The Nakasone family will dish out their famous BBQ!

So gather your friends, family, neighbors, and those long-lost cousins you haven't seen in ages, and let's make unforgettable memories together! This spectacular event is absolutely FREE! We believe in building a strong community, fostering new connections, and simply having a blast under the summer sun. Join us, and let's make this summer a season to remember! PLEASE RSVP using the QR code or go to the link (see flyer on page 2).

## The second event is the **Obon Festival**.

Como Park Conservatory, Sunday, August 20, 2023, 3-9 pm

For many years the TC JACL's biggest fundraisers have been the Festival of Nation and the Fall Festival at Normandale College, now closed down since 2020. The Obon Festival in St. Paul is an annual event where our chapter can raise funds to pay for our different activities and programs. The festival has booths, foods, taiko drumming, martial arts demonstrations, Japanese dancing, and more. As darkness arrives, the Japanese lantern lighting ceremony takes place at the Conservatory Pond.

Volunteers are needed to help at the TC JACL booth.

• Set Up: Noon to 3:00 pm – 3 volunteers

Shift One: 3-6 pm – 3 volunteers
Shift Two: 6-9 p. – 3 volunteers

• Breakdown: 9-10 pm – 2 volunteers



• Also needed for the booth are **used Japanese items!** The donation of used Japanese antiques or items that are in good condition sold well last year and made up a large portion of the sales. Examples of items that sell well are Japanese dishes, kimonos, getas, paintings, and decorations.



Volunteers at the Obon Festival booth, August 2022, are (from the left) Amy Dickerson, Carolyn Nayematsu, Teresa Swartz, and Karen Tanaka Lucas.

Contact Amy Dickerson at <u>adickerson323@gmail.com</u> if you are able to volunteer to help in the sales booth or to donate items.

### **Paper Crane Making**

One of the handmade crafts we sell at the Obon Festival is the peace crane, so 8 volunteers are needed for a peace crane making event on Saturday, July 29, from 10 am to noon. Plans include going out for lunch after. Contact Amy if you are interested in participating.

### **Chrysanthemum Banquet**

And don't forget to save Saturday, October 7, 2023 for the annual banquet, to be held at Historic Fort Snelling. More information will be available in the next issue of the <u>Rice Paper</u> (early September).

### From the Minneapolis Institute of Art

There are currently 3 FREE exhibitions of Japanese arts at the Institute.

The first one ends on August 6 and is called "The Art of Literacy in Early Modern Japan." It looks at works that became popular with the rapidly developing printing industry.

The second one ends on September 1. It features Fukuda Kodojin who is considered Japan's great poet and landscape artist. His work is "characterized by bizarrely shaped mountain forms."

The third exhibition ends on January 21, 2024. Even as a child, the artist, Azechi Umetaro, loved the mountains. He hiked mid-sized mountains alone while he meditated on life. His simplified figures of the bearded mountain men (yama-otoko) often appear in his work.

To view a sample of exhibits 2 and 3, go to the Minneapolis Institute of Arts website and click on "Exhibitions". Then scroll down to samples you are interested in.

# **Recent Events**

# 2023 High School Graduates Honored by Twin Cities JACL

The Twin Cities JACL's Scholarship Awards Banquet was held on Thursday, May 11, 2023 at Normandale Hylands United Methodist Church in Bloomington. This event was particularly memorable as it was the first scholarship banquet since 2019. The following 2023 high school graduates were honored during the program.

Shieru (Suzy) Higuchi (Blake High School) Jordan Kuhlmann (DeLaSalle High School) Kaylen Schmitt (Waconia High School)

Graduates and guests were greeted by Twin Cities JACL Chapter vice president, Ryan Sudo. Fred Tsuchiya acted as the evening's Master of Ceremonies.

Scholarship awards totaled \$6000. The following scholarships were awarded:

Tom and Martha Oye Memorial Scholarship – **Kaylen Schmitt**Earl K. and Ruth Tanbara Memorial Scholarship – **Jordan Kuhlmann**Takekawa Family Memorial Scholarship – **Shieru (Suzy) Higuchi** 

Congratulations and best wishes to the 2023 graduates!

If you know of any 2024 high school graduates, please contact Pam Dagoberg at 763-557-2946 or <a href="mailto:scholarship@tcjacl.org">scholarship@tcjacl.org</a>. Local scholarship applications will be sent in January. JACL membership is required of scholarship applicants. Some of the known 2024 high school graduates are: Hakuto Higuchi (Blake High School), Rowan Klepp (Hudson High School), Simon Kutz (Decorah High School), Sammy Knight (Delano High School), Lauren Restad (Roseville Area High School).

If you are interested in learning more about these scholarships, please contact <a href="mailto:scholarship@tcjacl.org">scholarship@tcjacl.org</a>.

Donations may be sent to TC JACL Scholarship c/o Fred Tsuchiya, 5311 Scenic Heights Drive, Minnetonka, MN, 55345.



Pictured to the left are the three students who were awarded TC JACL scholarships in May 2023, and their presenters.

(top left) Jordan Kuhlmann with Tom Kurihara and George and Judy Murakami (Earl K. and Ruth Tanbara Memorial Scholarship)

(bottom left) Kaylen Schmit with Tom Oye (Tom and Martha Oye Memorial Scholarship)

(bottom right) Suzy Higuchi with Carol Dean (Takekawa Family Memorial Scholarship)

(top right) Congratulations to Suzy, Kaylen, and Jordan!

# The Relevance of JACL Today

(As part of their 2023 scholarship applications, graduating high school seniors were required to submit an essay on the topic "The Relevance of JACL Today." We are sharing some of those essays in this Rice Paper publication.)

#### The Relevance of JACL Today - Essay by Kaylen Schmitt

As a granddaughter to Japanese grandparents and a Japanese mother, I have grown up learning and respecting everything they have gone through as Japanese American citizens. I have learned how important it is to support the rights of Japanese Americans in our country. There have been many events that have occurred over the past few years that have impacted our safety and well being such as Asian Hate after the pandemic had occurred, and these events continue to happen around the world.

I grew up listening to stories from my grandparents on how WWII impacted their lives. My grandfather lived in Tokyo, Japan at the time and lived in fear that Tokyo would be the next target of an atomic bomb as he and his mother fled to the mountains. He was a small child at the time, but this experience would stay with him his entire life. My grandmother lived in California with her family and had a different experience as they were forced to relocate to Tule Lake, the largest internment camp for several years. They had lost everything they left behind. Despite what happened in the past, my grandparents were able to thrive and grow to become successful here in the U.S. specifically, here in Minnesota.

My mother is also involved with representing and fighting for equality and inclusivity. She works at a large pharmaceutical company where she is part of her Company's DEI group and part of the Asian American Field Network. She has taught me that it is important to be a leader and an advocate for positive change that supports equality and justice during challenging times.

I am proud and honored to be part Japanese as I recently joined JACL. As the U.S. becomes more multicultural, preserving Japanese culture becomes more challenging. Through JACL, it is my desire to continue to learn more about my heritage, help promote diversity, equality, and inclusivity as well as preserving Japanese culture, values, and heritage. It is important to protect all that we have fought for and accomplished in the past, but to also protect the rights of Japanese Americans today. I cannot be a silent bystander and allow injustices to occur anymore. This is the relevance of JACL today and into the future.

#### The Relevance of JACL Today - Essay by Suzy Higuchi

I was born in Japan and moved to California as a four year old girl who had barely been able to begin understand the culture of her home country. Despite this daunting task, my parents decided it was just as important for my brothers and I to continue learning our native language so what we would be able to use it in the future. While my peers went to the community pool or attended summer camps after school ended, I was met with stacks of Japanese textbooks. Looking back now, I'm eternally grateful for my parent's and their commitment to keep me in touch with not only Japanese education, but also Japanese values. My mom also developed numerous Japanese friends in our neighborhood, and I was given the opportunity to develop friendships with people who spoke, ate, and lived like me. This all took a drastic shift when I moved to Minnesota at the age of ten. I suddenly had very few Asian people in my community, and this had a much bigger impact on me than I knew at the time as my connection with Japanese culture started to crumble. As someone who transferred to more than five different schools before high school, my biggest priority was to fit in. I stripped parts of myself that represented my ethnicity and replaced them with trending clothes, phrases, and food. I constantly checked myself so that people wouldn't "see" that I was Japanese. The lack of exposure to Japanese culture caused my American identity to dominate my external traits.

The summer before my senior year of high school, I visited Japan for the first time since moving to the States. I was both excited and nervous for the trip. I will never forget the wave of shock that hit me the second I set food in the airport. Everywhere I looked I saw Japanese faces, Japanese hair, Japanese clothes, and Japanese words. As we took the train to take a walk in the city, I continued to stare in awe at everything around me. I'd never seen any of it, but it all felt so familiar at the same time. I was hit with the feeling that I was somewhere that felt like home, and it was something that I'd never felt before. I realized then how impactful it can be for someone to come into contact with people who are similar to them.

I wish for that feeling of home to be something that everyone, regardless of race, gender, sexuality, and any aspect of identity, can experience here in Minnesota. In order for this work to be done, I believe JACL needs to push the representation and knowledge of marginalized groups so that everyone can feel like they have a place in their community. Japanese and non-Japanese people can and should come together to build a inclusive place for all to build a prosperous community in which everyone is immersed in a sense of belonging.

## **Undergraduate / Graduate Scholarship Applications Available in September**

The Twin Cities JACL is pleased to announce the availability of undergraduate/graduate level scholarships to be awarded later this year.

Scholarship applications will be available on September 1, 2023 for students currently enrolled in a post-secondary educational program and students who are currently enrolled in a graduate level program.

Scholarships are available to current JACL – Twin Cities Chapter members only. Membership must be active as of September 1, 2023.

Applications will be available at <a href="https://www.tcjacl.org/scholarships/apply/">https://www.tcjacl.org/scholarships/apply/</a> . Only one scholarship may be received during a degree program.

Applications are due November 1, 2023. For more information, please contact scholarship@tcjacl.org

Submitted by Pam Dagoberg, Scholarship Chair

## Armed with Language

Film Screening and Presentation

On May 2, the Hosmer Library in Minneapolis hosted a film screening of *Armed with Language*, a documentary created by Twin Cities PBS that honors the critical role played by Nisei (second-generation Japanese Americans) who trained in Minnesota at Camp Savage and Fort Snelling during WWII.

Following the film, Karen Tanaka Lucas shared recollections about her father, Walter Tanaka, who was in the first class of soldiers to receive intensive and accelerated Japanese language training at the U.S. Army's Military Intelligence Service Language School (MISLS) after it was relocated from the Presidio of San Francisco to Minnesota in May 1942.

Upon graduation from the MISLS, Tanaka was sent to the Pacific Theater where he interrogated Japanese POWs from 1943 until the end of the war. After the war, Tanaka served in Japan as executive officer of the language detachment under General Robert Eichelberger, commander of the Army of the Occupation, where his duties included assigning linguists to court martials and other areas as well as interpreting for meetings between high-ranking Japanese ministers and visitors to the General's office.

The film screening, held in observance of Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, provided the local community with an opportunity to learn about the unique contributions of Nisei soldiers in the success of the Allied war effort.

Daniel Takata, who attended the program with his parents, Rod and Martha, stated that "it was exciting to hear this important story in the history of World War II for the first time, which for years was kept secret." He added, "I am inspired by the hard work of Nisei like my great-uncle, who learned Japanese in a short amount of time to end up saving lives on the Japanese side as well as the American side."

Nearly 6,000 Nisei received Japanese language training in Minnesota from 1942 to 1946. MISLS graduates participated in every major battle and campaign against Japan, leading Major General Charles Willoughby, Chief of Intelligence for Gen. Douglas MacArthur, to credit the MIS with saving over a million lives and shortening the Pacific war by two years. Although MIS soldiers worked in secrecy during WWII due to the highly classified nature of their missions, their invaluable stories are now being shared.



Karen Tanaka Lucas talking about her father's training at camp Savage and his service in the MIS during and after WWII



Program attendees Martha, Daniel, and Rod Takata



Karen Tanaka Lucas (middle) with organizers (left) Kimmy Tanaka, Community Engagement Manager, Minnesota Historical Society and (right) Micahelle Abraham, Hosmer Library Associate Librarian

Photo credit: Cheryl Hirata-Dulas Submitted by Cheryl Hirata-Dulas

#### **Twin Cities Metro West Asian Fair**

The first annual Twin Cities Metro West Asian Fair was held on Saturday, June 3 at the City of Plymouth Hilde Performance Center. The fair was described as a cultural showcase with costumes, music, dance, martial arts, and fashion. In the huge amphitheater, continuous entertainment by various cultural groups was enjoyed for most of the afternoon and evening. There were also food vendors and organizational promotions, such as realty companies and voter registration ...and JACL actually made a \$750 profit!



The TC JACL booth at the West Asian Fair, staffed by Ryan Sudo, Gloria Kumagai, and Asia O'Neil

### A Flavor-filled Dining Experience at Eat Street Crossing

On Thursday, June 29, a balmy summer evening, thirteen TC JACL members and their families met up at Eat Street Crossing, a Food Hall that serves sushi, ramen, burgers, pizza, boba tea, ice cream, and drinks. Even though there is an outdoor seating area, the group sat inside and enjoyed catching up in person! It was an enjoyable meet and eat event. If you are interested in participating in a future meet and eat events, please contact Amy Dickerson at <a href="mailto:addickerson323@gmail.com">addickerson323@gmail.com</a> or Gloria Kumagai at <a href="mailto:gloriak377@aol.com">gloriak377@aol.com</a>.



Outdoor patio at East Street Crossing (located at 2819 Nicollet Ave south)



Teresa Swartz (left) Steve Savitt and Jon Dickerson



Cheryl Hirata-Dulas Sylvia Farrells



Steve and Jon Amy Dickerson (front)



Goria Kumagai Vince Platt and Carolyn Nayematsu

# TC JACL Plans to Reinstitute the Annual Memorial Day Tribute to Japanese American Veterans

After a 14-year hiatus, the TC JACL plans to bring back the annual tribute to local Japanese Americans who served or are serving in the U.S. military. The program will be scheduled around Memorial Day in May 2024 at Fort Snelling National Cemetery (more details to come).

The Japanese American Veterans of Minnesota (JAVM), led by Bud Nakasone and Sam Honda, previously organized the Memorial Day program, but with a dwindling membership and aging veterans, the group disbanded and the last program was held in May 2010.

Sally Sudo, whose brother Joe Ohno trained at the Military Intelligence Service Language School at Camp Savage and Fort Snelling during WWII, suggested the idea to reinstitute the program. Joe and another brother, Tom, are among the dozens of Japanese American veterans who are buried at Fort Snelling National Cemetery. Around Memorial Day each year, JAVM held a program with speakers and an honor roll call. Following the program, the gravesites of Japanese American veterans were decorated with flowers.

The TC JACL recently formed an organizing committee, which met with the Fort Snelling National Cemetery staff and submitted a Letter of Intent to the Japanese American Community Foundation as a preliminary step for program funding. If accepted, a full grant proposal will be submitted.

The committee is updating the list of Japanese American veterans with ties to Minnesota that was previously maintained by the late JAVM Secretary/Treasurer Kathy Ohama Koch.

Below is a list of the local Japanese Americans on the TCJACL/JAVM Honor Roll Call of Deceased Veterans (\* denotes veterans added to the list after 2010). Veterans listed may be buried at locations outside of Fort Snelling National Cemetery.

Toshio Abe
Sadao Akaki
Yuki Akaki
Saburo (Bill) Doi\*
Edward Evans\*
William Ezaki
Frank Fukumoto\*
Andrew Funari\*
Sam Hara

Richard Jitsuo Hidani\*
Theodore Hirabayashi\*
Patrick Hirasawa\*
Osamu (Sam) Honda\*
Yoshinori Honda\*
George Hoshino
Tom Ichimura
Ike Iijima
Ted Inouye

Jim Katayama Jim Kirihara\* Mikio Kirihara\* Dave Kitagawa Mits Kawaguchi

Kiyoshi Ishibashi

Junie Kawamura Nobuo Kimura Shiro Kosobayashi\* Tom Kosobayashi Harry Kumagai

Hisashi (Butch) Kumagai\* Steve Kumagai Tadaji Kuranishi\* Jim Kurata Jerry Setsuo Kusano\*

Warren Kyono\*

Morris Lundin Brian Haru Matsumoto\*

Masao Matsumoto\*
Yoshio Matsumoto\*
Herb Matsuura
Frank Mukai\*
James Murakami\*
Diane Moriguchi
Tom Moriguchi
Larry Murakami

Nobuo Murakami Tom Nagamitsu Sam Nakanishi Harold Nakayama
Harry Nishimura\*
Robert Nishizuka\*
Mickey Ogata
Robert Ohama
Fred Ohno
Joe Ohno

Tom Ohno
Edward Okada\*
Minoru Onomiya
John Oshima\*
Frank Owata\*

Nobukazu Oyanagi\*

Tom Oye Dean Saiki\* George Saiki Seiji Sakai\* Isamu Saito\* Yoshio Sako Bujiro Sanmonji Shigeo Sato\*

Robert Sawamura\* Yutaka Semba\* Sam Shimada

Isamu Sugimoto Masao Tanamachi Yukiyo Yamaguchi Jim Sugimura George Tani Ryoji Yamakuchi\* Tsuguo Sumada Benjamin Tashiro\* Albert Yamamoto\* Charles Tatsuda Robert Yamashita\* Masahara (George) Suzuki\* Susumu Taguchi Robert Teragawa Edward Yamazaki\* John Akira Takekawa\* Minoru Tsuchimochi\* Frank Yanari Tsuyoshi (Tom) Takekawa\* Takuzo Tsuchiya Mits Yoneii Yutaka Takekawa Harry Umeda\* Tokio Yonekawa\* Donald Tanaka\* Charles Ujifusa George Yoshida\* Tom Urabe\* Min Yoshida Frank Tanaka\* Tom Utsunomiya Ken Tanaka EdwardYoshikawa\* Walter Tanaka\* David Yahanda George Yoshino Nobuo Tanabe Ken Yamaguchi\*

List of veterans who are living and those currently serving in the military:

Akira Fujioka Bud Nakasone Seiji Oshiro
Tom Hara John Nakasone Paul Shimizu
Kaye Matsumoto Paul Nakasone Dean Yanari

George Murakami Dennis Nishida

If we missed any local Japanese American veterans (deceased) or veterans who are still living or who are currently serving in the military, please email chiratadulas @tcjacl.org. Also, anyone who wishes to volunteer to help the committee with the program is welcomed.

We are proud to honor and recognize the Japanese American men and women who served and who are currently serving our country in the Armed Forces. Restoring the Memorial Day tradition will continue our chapter's mission to educate the broader community about the contributions and sacrifices of our Japanese American veterans, particularly the Nisei generation who served at a time when their parents and families were incarcerated.

Submitted aby the TCJACL Veterans Tribute Committee



Screenshot from the Fort Snelling National Cemetery website

### JSJO/JACL Collaboration Event a Success!

The first collaboration between the Twin Cities JACL and the Japanese Social Justice Organization, formed by University of Minnesota students was held in April. Following is a letter that Ryan Sudo, Vice President of the TC chapter, sent to the participants.

Dear friend.

Thank you for joining <u>Twin Cities JACL</u> and <u>Japanese Social Justice Organization</u> at our event last night, April 20, 2023! We had a great time exchanging views and cultural perspectives, hearing from our guest speaker Akiko Kashiwagi, and enjoying delicious food from <u>JK's Table</u>!

<u>Click here</u> to review the presentation slides from the event. Additionally, please follow each of our groups on instagram to hear more about local opportunities to engage and connect!

- Twin Cities JACL
- <u>Japanese Social Justice Organization</u>

Best wishes よろしくおねがいします, Ryan Sudo Twin Cities JACL



## **Condolences**

TOSHIKO NISHIDA - It is with much sympathy that we report that Toshiko Nishida, long time JACL member, passed away on the evening of June 26, 2023. Her obituary will be in the July 23 Sunday paper. Her memorial service will be at Washburn McReavy in Edina on Saturday, July 29 at 11 am. Visitation is at 10 am, and lunch will be served after the service. Her son, Dennis Nishida, and daughter, Emi Sako, are also long time JACL members.

JOSEPH Y. MATSUMOTO – Joseph Matsumoto, son of Yoshio and Alice Matsumoto, passed away on April 21, 2023. Born in 1953, he graduated from the University of Minnesota and Mayo Medical School. He retired from the Mayo Clinic as a Professor of Neurology and then became a member of the University of Minnesota's Department of Neurology. He was preceded in death by his son, Peter. He is survived by his wife, Jane, daughters, Molly and Martha, and son, Andy. Joe's attributes included kindness, humility, and graciousness. He is buried at Oakland Cemetery, Marine of St. Croix. *Information gathered from the Star Tribune, April 27*, 2023