DANCE QUEEN
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National JACL scholarship winners.
2011 NATIONAL JACL SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

In this special issue, the national JACL is pleased to announce this year’s scholarship winners, a group that includes outstanding freshman, graduate, undergraduate, law, creative & performing arts and financial aid students. This year the JACL awarded 34 scholarships totaling $78,000.

In a process that has spanned much of the calendar year, students began submitting applications prior to March and selection committees diligently worked through the summer identifying the most appropriate candidates.

This year’s award winners answered the question: “The Japanese American community is becoming increasingly privileged yet also how will you dedicate yourself to educating and engaging our community in relevant issues?”

On behalf of national JACL, I would like to thank the Portland and Salt Lake City chapters for serving as this year’s selection committees. A tremendous number of volunteer hours are. A heartfei~ thank you to the volunteers from the Portland chapter Setsu Sadamoto Laroche (chair), Sandy Tashima and Chip Laroche as well as Salt Lake City volunteers, Paul Fisk (chair), Rene John-Fisk, Dr. Jeanette Misaka, Dr. Cassandra Van Buren, Jen Uryu-vichian, Det Richeda and PI Nakamura.

We thank each of you for your time and effort screening hundreds of applications. There were so many well-qualified applicants, selecting only 34 was tremendously difficult. I want to extend a very personal thank you to Party Wada, NCWNP regional director, for her dedication and work on the scholarship program.

GREGORY K. HORI, winner of the Paul & Katherine Ohtaki Memorial Scholarship.

JASON CHANG
NATIONAL VICE PRESIDENT
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT
SEE PAGES 6-15 FOR 2011 WINNERS

JACL’s Eastern District Council
Congratulates and Welcomes
Our National Scholarship Winners
Coming East to Study

Lisa Okamoto (New York)  Brooklyn Law School
Sarah Matsumoto (New England)  Lesley University
Jonathan P. Lee  Stevens Institute of Technology
Kristin Y. Sakaguchi  Syracuse University
Naomi D. Schurr  MIT
Kelly M. McCormick  Columbia University

“The apple on the top of the tree is never too high to achieve”
Cleo Porter
Judge Carrie Ann Inaba Gears Up For ‘Dancing with the Stars’ Premiere

Twelve couples will hit the dance floor Sept. 20 to perform either the Viennese Waltz or the Cha-Cha cha on the premiere of “Dancing with the Stars.”

By Nalae J. Ko Reporter

Finding a celebrity in Hollywood who wants the truth — the good and the bad — may be an anomaly. But prolific dancer and choreographer Carrie Ann Inaba says don’t stroke her ego because brutal honesty is the best policy with her.

Inaba — who is Japanese, Chinese and Irish — uses that same philosophy when dishing constructive criticism to contestants on ABC’s “Dancing with the Stars,” which is set to premiere Sept. 20.

And after 13 seasons of “Dancing with the Stars,” if Inaba does not call out a contestant for a technical error on the dance floor, a fan at home likely will.

“It’s not like the first or second season where maybe nobody notices,” Inaba said with a laugh about a contestant’s dancing foibles. “In fact now I get people saying, ‘That foot came off the ground and you didn’t call it.’”

The “In Living Color” Fly Girl turned TV show judge has earned her spot on the show. In the 1990s she danced front stage with stars like Jennifer Lopez and Madonna. Inaba has also done choreography for “American Idol,” “The TV Land Awards,” “The Swan” and “Dance Fever,” among others.

This season of “Dancing with the Stars,” Inaba will judge a new crop of celebrity dancers.

Season 13 contestants — including Ron Artest, David Arquette, Chaz Bono, Elisabeth Canalis, Kristin Cavallari, Nancy Grace, Robert Kardashian, Carson Kressley, Ricki Lake, J.R. Martinez, Chynna Phillips and Hope Solo — will debut their dancing skills performing either the Viennese Waltz or the Cha-Cha cha on the show’s premiere.

The Internet is already buzzing with controversy about Chaz Bono, a transgender contestant who will dance with female partner Lacey Schwimmer.

There has been a lot of controversy surrounding contestant Chaz Bono. Have you been following the online news?

Actually you know what, before the season I sort of unplug myself because as a judge, I have to remain neutral. And it’s better for me not to know what’s going on in the media about certain contestants, especially somebody like Chaz Bono who I know there’s a lot of controversy surrounding. But I [laughs] know that Cher apparently went after a few people. As a good mom should [laughs].

Do you get to watch any rehearsal videos before the premiere?

[laughs] No. Not at all. We don’t get to see anything until, well, show time really. We get to see those video packages that everybody sees during the show. We get to see that the day before, if it’s done.

And that’s about all we get to see. We’re completely sequestered away from the contestants during the season. It’s funny because people always want inside scoops and I’m like, ‘Well, I’m the wrong [laughs] person to ask.’

Which contestants do you think have the best chance at winning?

You know this is a really interesting group. Athletes have a tendency to do well on our show, mostly because they’re able to take constructive criticism. Actors get a little bit more sensitive (these are generalizations). People that are willing to put it all on the dance floor and willing to risk, do well on our show.

We’ve interviewed past Asian American contestants like Apolo Ohno, Kristi Yamaguchi and Hines Ward, who have all won mirrorball trophies. The AA contestants seem to do well, too.

There’s a work ethic involved there [laughs]. [That] could possible be part of that. I think there’s an AA work ethic that we all have that can take you very far. And I think that has helped some of our AA contestants in the past.

Did being AA ever prevent you from getting jobs in Hollywood?

Never. And you know it’s funny because I have tended to think that it helped me because they’re always looking for sort of a multi-ethnic cast. If they’re even considering me, they’re probably going for one Asian, one African American, one Latina and a Caucasian person. That has worked to my advantage I feel because there was always going to be a spot for somebody like me.

How has growing up in Hawaii shaped you? Do you think you would’ve been different had you been raised on the mainland?

It’s funny, I was just at my workout talking to another AA who is quite successful in this business as well and she’s from here. But she was saying, ‘When you look at all the successful AAs most of them are from Hawaii.’

She goes, ‘Do you think that’s it?’ I said, ‘Oh, that’s easy.’ [laughs] I think it’s because where we’re from we’re the majority.

Growing up as a majority I think has given me a lot of confidence and it made my cultural background not an issue. So it’s like one less thing to worry about in life. It was just something I was very proud of and happy with.

You always seem so upbeat. Is there anything that ever upsets you?

Yes [laughs]. I’m just like everybody else [laughs]. I don’t like it when people lie. It’s interesting because I have a really hard time when people lie, even if they’re telling me a lie to be nice to me, something about it feels wrong. So much would rather have people tell me the truth.

And in this town it’s actually hard because in Hollywood there are a lot of people that want their egos stroked. And I’m not one of them. I’m always telling my team, ‘Just tell me the truth.’ Brutal honesty, that works better for me.

Do you use that same philosophy when judging ‘Dancing with the Stars’ contestants?

I try to be honest with them because I know they joined the show to win and I know that they joined the show to grow. So when they’re out there I feel that it’s my duty — and it is because I am a judge — to give them my honest critique.

How do you spend your free time when you’re not filming?

I love working out. That’s my favorite thing to do. I love to workout and I love to sit outside in my garden. Working out, it’s like my coffee. It helps me get energized. It’s great for stress relief.

Is there anything else you’d like to add about other projects you are working on?

I’ve always wanted to produce television. That’s been my lifelong goal. I produced a pilot for ABC last season called ‘Grace’ that featured dance. And I’m in the process of developing another show this year, and I’ve got some great new partners that I’m working with. It’s an exciting time. So hopefully this season we’ll get a show on the air.

Congratulations, Karisa Yamamoto!

Good Luck to the New UCLA Bruin!

Love, Mom, Dad, Allison, Grandma and Grandpa Fujii

Ventura County JACL congratulates

KELLY M. MCCORMICK

for receiving the 2011 National JACL Scholarship Award.
Pulitzer Prize winning journalist Jose Vargas is one of the most visible DREAMers fighting for undocumented students in this country.

Congressional efforts to pass the DREAM Act have been continuously rejected by the United States Congress. If passed, the bill will allow undocumented students who meet the requirements to apply for state- and federal financial aid such as Cal Grants.

While advocates for undocumented students are optimistic about the California DREAM Act, they say without federal legislation these students' futures after college are in limbo.

"California has passed historic and important laws that have allowed undocumented students to attend college," said Karin Wang, vice-president of programs and communications at the Asian Pacific American Legal Center. "But as a state, California cannot legalize the status of these young people so they can continue to struggle in the shadows of society once they finish college."

Wang said that the federal DREAM Act would "truly help fulfill the all-American dreams of these undocumented youth." About 2.5 million students under 18 were estimated by the United States Census Bureau to be undocumented in 2000. The federal DREAM Act would essentially give undocumented students, or DREAMers, a path to citizenship post-college and allow them to work legally.

To spark a "real conversation about immigration," Pulitzer Prize winning journalist Jose Antonio Vargas founded the organization Define America. Vargas says the immigration system in America is broken and new voices need to join the discussion.

It was the stories of undocumented students like Kim that inspired Vargas to tell his own story. "I remember when I was writing the story all I kept thinking about is that undocumented student sitting in a middle school somewhere or sitting in a high school somewhere," Vargas said.

"Because I was in their shoes just a few years ago. And that has to stop. I think we have so politicized this thing, that we have lost all trace of common sense."

Vargas went public about being an undocumented immigrant from the Philippines in a New York Times Magazine article published June 22.

"As a storyteller myself I've been living with this since I was 16," Vargas said about telling the truth about being undocumented.

"This couldn't keep going. There was going to be a time when I just had to stop." Similarly inspired, other undocumented immigrants are possibly risking deportation to tell their stories. They say their career plans will be deferred indefinitely if the federal DREAM Act is not passed.

"Ultimately, my future will be on hold. I have so many skills that I want to put forth for this country. This is my home and I can't imagine my life anywhere else,'" said Jamie Kim, a 20-year-old undocumented Korean American living in California.

The California DREAM Act, AB 131, passed the state Assembly and awaits Gov. Jerry Brown's signature. If signed into law, the bill will allow undocumented students who meet the requirements to apply for state- and federal financial aid such as Cal Grants.

Some 65,000 undocumented students graduate every year from high school, according to the University of California, Los Angeles for Labor Research and Education. The second part of the California DREAM Act, AB 131, passed the state Assembly and awaits Gov. Jerry Brown's signature. If signed into law, the bill will allow undocumented students who meet the requirements to apply for state- and federal financial aid such as Cal Grants.

Editor's Note: The following students graduate every year from high school, according to the University of California, Los Angeles for Labor Research and Education.

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Asian American Youth Find Unconventional Jobs, Doing Good

Hungry to make a difference and impact their communities, some young Asian Americans opt out of conventional careers and instead volunteer or seek philanthropic jobs after college.

By Nalea J. Ko
Reporter

When Shin Fujiyama, 27, started a nonprofit in his dorm room he likely never imagined it would one day raise over $1 million.

Today volunteers and staffers with the nonprofit Students Helping Honduras, which Fujiyama co-founded with his sister Cosmo, have built seven schools and an entire village for 300 people in Honduras. He was also named a CNN hero and caught the attention of Larry King.

But dedicating his life to ending extreme poverty in Honduras meant Shin Fujiyama would have to indefinitely defer his medical school plans. The Japanese American philanthropist says he has never looked back on his decision.

“I have absolutely no regrets for taking the decision to work in Honduras,” Shin Fujiyama said from Honduras. “Life is too short to be doing something that is boring or not fulfilling.”

As an undergraduate at the University of Washington, Shin Fujiyama traveled to Honduras in 2005 with a campus group. The people he met there inspired him to start Students Helping Honduras, or SHH.

Hondurans like 10-year-old Juli Rodas, who struggled to care for her siblings while doing her homework by candlelight, left a lasting impression. Shin Fujiyama later returned to his college campus to foundraise for Honduras.

But his first shot at fund raising only brought in $26. In 2006 Shin Fujiyama and a friend set a lofty fundraiser goal. The undergrads visited Warren Buffett’s older sister, Doris, asking for $100,000. She met with Shin Fujiyama and gave him a homework assignment: raise $33,000 in 60 days. If Shin Fujiyama succeeded, Buffett would sign a check for $66,000.

The Fujiyamas’ faith in their idea and their ability to start the organization was a testament to the Fujiyamas’ faith in their generation.

“People like me and I believe so much in the power of youth,” said Consino Fujiyama, 26. “I think that’s the message that we really share. Everybody can make a difference.”

Careers or volunteer opportunities in philanthropy have appealed to other Asian American youth.

From September 2009 to September 2010 some 62.8 million people volunteered at a student. “And the Jubilee Project is really his instrument, sort of the vehicle that we use to spread that awareness and also channel that core that we have.”

The Jubilee Project is in the process of becoming an official nonprofit, says Lu. “All three of us have a heart for social justice and also filmmaking. It is something that really keeps us grounded I think,” said Lu, 24, a Harvard University medical student. “And the Jubilee Project is really this instrument, sort of the vehicle that we use to spread that awareness and also channel that core that we have.”

The Jubilee Project has created highlights the organization Project Red Balloon, founded by Jennifer Allison Tran, 23, who is also in medical school.

Every view of the YouTube video “A Letter of Hope” raises funds for Project Red Balloons, which supports musical therapy programs.

“Jubilee Project isn’t over until mid-September I believe,” Tran said, adding that Project Red Balloons will receive two pennies per view. “They’re at 61,000 views right now, so it’s going to be at least $1,200 so far.”

Tran started Project Red Balloon after spending a summer volunteering in South East Asia. She returned to the U.S. wanting to give back to the community just like some of her peers.

“I feel like people, young adults, are realizing that their voice is just as strong as somebody who is in their 30s, 40s or 50s,” Tran said.

For Shin Fujiyama his desire to do humanitarian work in Honduras has become a lifestyle change. He lives and works year-round in Honduras where he also plays for a village soccer team.

When he is not working in the community, Shin Fujiyama enjoys grabbing a pizza or a smoothie with his girlfriend, Cindy, who he met at a local coffee shop.

Doing philanthropy is challenging but fun, Shin Fujiyama says. But there are bigger benefits to a career in philanthropy that he has discovered.

“Paying nothing more fulfilling than dedicating our short lives to helping children who need it most.” He added. “I also get to go to work in flip-flops and nothing but a laptop and soccer shoes.”

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“I feel like people, young adults, are realizing that their voice is just as strong as somebody who is in their 30s, 40s or 50s,” Tran said.
The JA community is becoming increasingly privileged, yet also complacent to the ills and needs of the greater community. As a student who cares about the future, how will you dedicate yourself to educating and engaging our community in relevant issues?

Christopher R.R. Hyde

"Quality healthcare is not just a moral obligation but is also fiscally sound. Investments in preventative medicine make good financial sense in a period of federal, state, and local budget crisis. But programs must be designed to reach their targeted audience. What works for one group may not work for others. And despite the perception that all Asian groups are the same, this is simply not the case. Currently, communities of color have limited access to culturally responsive treatment and education. Hepatitis B and TB rates are higher for Asians. Bone marrow and liver donor registries for Asians are insufficient. South Asians, in particular, face many obstacles to seeking preventative treatment. They must also be advocates and teachers."

Gregory K. Hori

"As a young person who cares about the future, I believe to be an environmental lawyer. By practicing law, I hope to assist the younger generation with the tools necessary to carry on the practices and culture promoted through involvement within the JACL."

Melissa K. Gjerde

"By establishing a strong foundation in the youth today, we can ensure a flourishing and prosperous tomorrow. The theme of leadership development among the youth is one of the most important among the Silicon Valley JACL. To ensure that a compliant Japanese American community is educated and engaged in issues relevant to our culture, I plan on developing the youth. Just recently, I attended the San Jose Day of Remembrance. This day honored the JA citizens who were interned during WWII. During this time, there was great prejudice and racial profiling against JAs. However, through their strength and vitality, the Japanese community endured their ordeals, showing true meaning to the Japanese word gaman. The Day of Remembrance has also been extended to include other groups including Muslims after 9/11 who were victims of the same hatred JAs suffered from during WWII. These are prime examples of relevant issues to our culture that the youth must be educated about. I want to equip the younger generation with the tools necessary to carry on the practices and culture promoted through involvement within the JACL."
“Our greatest problem today is understanding other cultures. As the last superpower in the world, America suffers from a severe case of ethnocentrism. Like the great Roman Empire, we have conquered other nations of interest with our military might. We use violence, intimidation, and deception to fight for liberty and peace. We believe the ends justify the means. Yet at present, this strategy doesn’t seem to be working too well in our international relations. I believe the key to waging peace rather than war is learning about other cultures. When an idea, belief, or practice is foreign to us, we tend to look down upon it and place ourselves on a higher pedestal. To cure our ethnocentrism, we must study the languages and customs of other countries. Students in most developed nations are required to learn English. Yet, why is it that many of us Americans do not choose to become fluent in Chinese, Spanish or Arabic? Through education we can fight for peace. If we spread this idea of understanding other cultures, we can learn to respect one another and avoid conflict... As an aspiring doctor and medical researcher, I want to extend my reach across borders and take part in a global effort to improve health.”

Nicole A. Sakioka

Kenji Kasai Memorial Scholarship
SLASOCO JACL
San Francisco State University

“As a JACL member, it is my mission to ensure that the Japanese American history is preserved and shared with future generations. I believe that through sharing our stories and experiences, we can create a better understanding of our past and present. As a JACL member, it is my responsibility to ensure that the Japanese American history is preserved and shared with future generations.”

Bryan Namba

Whittier College

Hanayagi Rokumie Memorial Cultural Scholarship
Arizona JACL
University of Arizona

“My work at the Japanese American National Museum is largely aimed at education and outreach. Through the docent-training program, I hope to work with the youth who are our future. I feel it is especially important to educate them in the subjects of social justice, racial equality and cultural diversity. Teaching the history and past experiences of JAs during WWII is extremely important, so that we can learn from our mistakes and not repeat them. Unfortunately, we see these same patterns recurring in today’s world. By keeping JA history alive through pilgrimages, educational programs and activities, exhibits, etc. we are reminded that freedom cannot be taken for granted...”

Noelle Fa-Kaji

Whittier College

Shigeki “Shake” Usio
Memorial Scholarship
Berkeley JACL
Scripps College

“My paternal grandparents were both interned during WWII: my grandmother at Poston and my grandfather at Manzanar... If I ask about what they lost in being interned, they respond ‘shikata ga nai’ It cannot be helped. It is true that dwelling on the past is never productive. Knowledge of past mistakes, however, is necessary and I plan to continue studying history in college to develop my understanding in this area... Even in Berkeley, there is a great amount of inequality. I started a math tutoring program at my alma mater... I work one-on-one with students who otherwise would be left behind... I encourage my pupils, check for understanding, and try to make math fun. It is very fulfilling to see my pupil progress and start to understand on their own. I would like to continue teaching throughout college and for a career... Whether at home in Berkeley or elsewhere in the world, I try to make a difference. I remember my JA heritage and connection to discrimination, and I see that these issues of social injustice are similar to those my grandparents faced. I know I cannot single-handedly transform the world, but that’s no excuse to not try.”

Aliya M. Kochiyama

Mas & Majiu Uyesugi

Sacramento JACL Chapter
Congratulates Its 2011 Scholarship Recipients!

Karisa Yamamoto
Kristi Chow
Garett Kurahara
Lindsay Valdivino
Kristen Ito
Breanne Matsuura
Kara Hamamoto

WE’RE PROUD OF YOU, ALLIE!
With love,
Dad, Mom, Michael, Jon

This summer, Noelle Fa-Kaji volunteered at the Little Flock Children’s Homes in Chennai, India teaching English to children living in the orphanage.
Memorial Scholarship
South Bay JACL
University of Cal., Irvine

"Presently, JACL are more privileged, and our community doesn’t face the same issues it did 50 years ago... The new generations are unaware of how our community arose and the struggles we faced. Knowing the history and issues is really important to preserve our community... The JA community wouldn’t have activities like martial arts, sports, Boy Scouts, and others without the original founders who started it. Along with educating the new generations, I think it would make more of an impact if the youth experienced for a short time not having these activities. Many kids in this JA community take these activities for granted... The JA community has been through a lot throughout the years, so I believe that we should give back to other communities. We can’t want other communities to go through what we went through during WWII... It is a problem if our community begins to care less about the greater community.”

Danielle Kihara

"I want to thank you and all of your family for your support and encouragement... This is also helpful because it will encourage the youth to become more involved with what is going on around them in their communities... I can also try to look for events that I can participate in with Eden Youth Group. By doing this, I do not only mean more community service events, but also collaborating with different youth groups from other cities to come together and talk about problems that we think our community is having. It is a good idea to talk with other youth about things that are going on in today’s world because it ensures that we are always trying to help solve problems in our communities and that we know everything that is going on around us.”

UNDERGRAD WINNERS

Mariko J. Newton

Henry & Cherry Kunahara Memorial Scholarship
Elon Township JACL
University of Cal., Irvine

"I think that the JA community is becoming more and more privileged, but at the same time, we are starting to not care about the life and needs of the greater community... I think that teaching the youth is important because it teaches them about their history, culture and background... This is also helpful because it will encourage the youth to become more involved with what is going on around them in their communities... I can also try to look for events that I can participate in with Eden Youth Group. By doing this, I do not only mean more community service events, but also collaborating with different youth groups from other cities to come together and talk about problems that we think our community is having. It is a good idea to talk with other youth about things that are going on in today’s world because it ensures that we are always trying to help solve problems in our communities and that we know everything that is going on around us.”

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all possessions and were only allowed to take what they could carry with them. The hysteria of WWII unfairly portrayed our families as a threat and a dangerous enemy. Today, our circumstances have drastically changed. The youth are privileged, so they don’t have to worry about the harsh and unjust conditions our grandparents faced. Executive Order 9066 can serve the JA CL and their youth as a reminder for social justice and civil rights in our community and country regardless of race, creed or color. In being vigilant with these values, we keep America true to its creation and destiny. We can now help our communities by educating and engaging people in a variety of issues. I chose to attend Seattle University because of its Jesuit mission: “Jesuit education means more than acquiring knowledge. The Jesuits believe what you do with that knowledge is just as important. At Seattle University, students are encouraged to grow personally and spiritually, testing their values, developing a sense of responsibility for themselves and their community, and learning about making ethical choices in their lives.” Seattle University has the values and goals similar to the JA CL!

Molly M. Serizawa
Henry & Chiyo Kuwahara Memorial Scholarship
San Fernando Valley JACL
Santa Clara University

“With my experiences in JA CL PAX’s summer program, Project Community 2009, I realized what it meant to have a voice in response to JA issues, and how important and effective that is as a youth. Our predecessors— including the local and national leaders who continue to head our organizations—have done their part in creating and establishing our ethnic community. Now, it is my generation’s turn to take responsibility to not only continue our predecessor’s legacy, but also offer a hand to those who need it most. Back when our community was first being established, there were no other groups that reached out to us. However, I truly believe that our community is full of compassion and a desire to help others in much the same way we are willing to help each other, and we need to seek more ways to manifest that to the world. As a student who genuinely cares about the future, I will dedicate myself to making relevant issues known to the youth of our community and promote their participation. As a student member of several JA organizations that rely upon volunteers, including the Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Southern California, I have already begun outreach to the youth to become more involved. I have proposed the creation of an alumni group that will make it their personal responsibility to give back to the community that enabled them to achieve greater success in college through generous scholarship funding.”

John William Kanemoto
Shigeru Nakahira Memorial Scholarship

Florin JACL
California State University, Sacramento

“My aspiration to go into teaching was ignited during my prior year in high school as I embarked on a career research project. Energizing the opportunity to hear my calculus teacher confess that moment he realized teaching was his internal spark and driving force, allowed me to contrast my passion for social change with a lifelong career. However, my path to becoming a math teacher has not always been a smooth one. As the level of rigor and adversity increases with each step upward in the mathematics major requirements staircase, more and more am I enticed to look elsewhere for a major. Nonetheless, it seems as I continue progressing in my various careers as a first-year experience...

Briana Hamamoto’s greatest love is her horse Grasshopper, whom she rescued at the age of 11, trained and showed in jumping, dressage, trail riding and chasing cows.

Glenda,

Congratulations on your scholarship! We are extremely proud of you for this great accomplishment, but we are equally impressed by your constant passion for learning since your early childhood. After graduating from your local high school, you enrolled in the Foreign Study League in different major cities in Europe.

You also attended Waseda University in Tokyo, Japan for two years. Last but not least, you completed your college education in Los Angeles. You are now raising three adult children and completing your doctoral studies. You not only demonstrate your determination and ambition but also serve as an incredible inspiration for your family.

Much Love and Affection,
Your proud mom and dad
Grace and George
SPECIAL YOUTH ISSUE

Gilroy JACL is proud of our National JACL scholarship recipient
Melissa Gjerde

SPECIAL YOUTH ISSUE PACIFIC CITIZEN

Melissa Gjerde
Gilroy JACL

SEPT. 16-OCT. 6, 2011

We are so proud of you.
Have a great year at UC Davis.

Love
Mom, Dad & Elizabeth

WATSONVILLE-SANTA CRUZ JACL
Proudly Congratulates

Jamie Kuratomi
Recipient of the
DR. KIYOSHI SONODA MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP
WWW.WATSONVILLESANTACRUZJACL.ORG

MONICA M. MATSUMOTO

Monica M. Matsumoto, pictured here at “The Art of Gaman” exhibit, spent a year in Egypt studying Arabic and volunteering at a center for mentally disabled children.

 Alice Yuriko Endo Memorial Scholarship Houston JACL Rice University

Advanced technology and transportation have transformed the world into a truly ‘global’ environment and as a result, the importance of international understanding and cooperation has grown exponentially. I have had multiple opportunities to serve as a youth ambassador, promote cross-cultural awareness, and encourage dialogue. I spent the 2009-10 academic year in Egypt, living with an Egyptian family, studying Arabic, and volunteering at a center for mentally disabled children. While in Egypt, I strived to represent the youth of the United States in a positive manner and resolve any misconceptions. Upon my return, my role has only increased. I am passionate about spreading awareness of the Arab world, its people, and its religions, so when people ask me about life in Egypt, I give them my honest opinion and analyses based on personal experiences, as well as published studies. In this way, I hope they will feel much more compelled to take time to educate themselves and others, and even possibly take action on the issue where it is necessary.

Saburo Kido

Memorial Scholarship

GLAS JACL Syracuse University

“There is a definite need for more community involvement to assist other communities especially other minority groups with issues they are facing. The first step is to inform the community about the issues at hand. Since one of the biggest challenges and goals of JACL is for more youth involvement, targeting goals toward the youth is very important. The solution to this is to utilize technology such as e-mail and social networking and media sites such as Facebook, Twitter or even YouTube, since a vast majority of today’s youth uses such sites. Obtaining youth’s attention through this avenue, as well as the larger JA community in this manner, will prove to have positive results. For example, last year I was informed that there was a possibility that Los Angeles’ Little Tokyo’s future could be compromised due to a major purchase by a developer. I discovered this news through an e-mail. It was through this avenue that I was able to inform my friends about this issue and encourage them to sign a petition electronically demanding a dialogue between representatives of the JA community and the owners to voice the concerns of Little Tokyo, the JA community and its future. Communicating through e-mails and social networking and media sites not only puts the necessary information out there, but...
does so in a way that will quickly attract the attention of the youth and hopefully engage their interest in the topic.

Naomi D. Schurr

Dr. Thomas T. Yababe Memorial Scholarship
South Bay JACL
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

"Growing up in Southern California, I learned the Japanese language at a Japanese language school, but I learned about being Japanese from my grandparents. Every week at dinner time, my grandmother would tell us stories of the immigrant experience, coming to America to work as a schoolboy, struggling to learn English, then working and attending night school until she finally earned a college degree. And every time we drove to Northern California, we would pass Mountain, a dusty, barren expanse next to the road. My grandmother reminded us of how she and her family were interned there when she was a child. As I progressed in school, learning about the Constitution and the rights of citizenship, it became clearer than ever to me that the internment was wrong. In high school, my American history textbook contained only a scant handful of lines about the internment. To increase awareness of the internment experience, my friend and I jointly researched and created exhibits for History Day in California on Sadako Muneurori and conflicts within Japanese families in America due to the internment during WWII. When presenting our exhibits to viewers, we made the same points that I make today: we must not forget the past if we intend to protect our present and our future."

Briana D. Hamamoto
Henry & Chiyo Kuwahara Memorial Scholarship

Naomi D. Schurr, pictured here playing tennis, learned Japanese at Japanese language school.

Livingston-Merced JACL
University of California, Davis

"My life has been filled with inspiring events. My family, my animals and my environment growing up have all greatly influenced my future aspirations and have helped mold me into the person I am today. They have had the most profound impact on my future and helped me to discover what I want to study. A very important part of what I want to study is how to communicate to the community my discoveries in order to make our medical world a better place. My life was changed dramatically my freshman year when my mother was diagnosed with stage 6 colon cancer. I remember walking into the chemotherapy center with her for the first time feeling both terrified and fascinated at the same time. Over the course of my mom's illness I accompanied her to doctor's appointments, watched her progress, and cheered with her when she finally overcame this ugly, horrifying disease. I matured greatly throughout that year and discovered the true importance of life. Through her illness, my mom taught me to enjoy life while it's good and to appreciate all of life's little surprises. She has also taught me that persistence, dedication, and commitment will open many doors throughout your life and ultimately get you to where you want to go in life."

Alexandra Wong

Henry & Chiyo Kuwahara Memorial Scholarship
Northwestern University

"While I am not a JA, I still belong to the Asian American community as a Chinese American. Our identity is one shaped by both Asian and American culture, and we relate to one another through our minority experience. Although the United States is made up of numerous immigrants and their descendants,

Kristin Sakaguchi
National JACL Scholarship &
Tenaya Senzaki
GLAS Chapter Scholarship
You are following in the footsteps of your grandparents (Charles Cameron Iwasa, Alison Emiko Lewis, Corey Nakata, and Kimmee Staley).

Also, hats off to Florin chapter graduating seniors scholarship awardees: Garrett Abe, Teryn Hara, Cameron Iwasa, Alison Emiko Lewis, Corey Nakata, and Kimmee Staley.

Congratulations, Noelle.
The Berkeley Chapter is so proud of you.
Best of luck on your studies at Scripps College!

San Jose JACL
Congratulations CHRISTOPHER HYDE, recipient of the Kenji & Shizu Sakauye Scholarship ($10,000) and the Henry & Chiyoko Kuwahara Memorial Scholarship ($5,000).

American JACL salutes JOHN KANEMOTO, national JACL scholarship recipient.

Florin JACL salutes JOHN KANEMOTO, national JACL scholarship recipient.

Graduate Awards
Allison M. Fujii
Henry & Chiyoko Kuwahara Memorial Scholarship
South Bay JACL

I am passionate about social justice in my academic career and personal life. I see myself as an advocate for social change and am committed to empowering the marginalized of society. My family’s history has shaped my value of education and influenced my desire to effect change through working in the higher education field. For my grandparents who were incarcerated as teenagers in the WWII JA internment camps, higher education was the way to a better life in the US. They passed down the legacy to me that education is not only a vehicle for upward mobility but also a part of you that no one can take away. I am privileged with the opportunities I have today because my grandparents went to college. I know that when you help someone succeed in higher education, you are not only empowering them, but also impacting their family’s opportunities for generations to come. It is with this perspective that I have chosen to pursue a master’s degree in counseling with an emphasis in student development in higher education. Within this field, my passion is for supporting students who enter college with significant barriers.

Dr. Kiyoshi Sonoda
Memorial Scholarship
Watsonville-Santa Cruz JACL
University of Calif., San Diego

"As a Buddhist, I remind myself of the importance of community service by remembering the Golden Chain, which says to be kind and gentle to everything and protect all who are weaker than myself. Participating in community service has always been a part of my life. Since I was in elementary school, I have done projects through the Watsonville Buddhist Temple and organizations such as Second Harvest Food Bank. Volunteering at UCSD’s free dental clinics has also reinforced the importance of community service and compassion. Seeing both the gratefulness of the patients and the kindness of the volunteer dentists have taught me the importance of caring for others in need. The volunteer dentists donate their time to provide dental care to people that otherwise would not be able to afford it. All the dentists that..."
volunteer have regular paid jobs during the week, but they still come to the clinic for up to five hours a day. Their service and commitment to helping others in need has inspired me to strive to do the same. Hopefully, my involvement in the community will one day inspire someone else as well.

Dana Y. Nakano

Magochi & Shizuko Kato Memorial Scholarship
SELACNO JACL
University of California, Irvine

"Within my discipline of sociology, the story of JAs is already well told. Having achieved socioeconomic successes, high levels of education and movement out of ethnically concentrated neighborhoods, JAs are the quintessential story of perseverance through adversity and ultimate achievement of the American dream. We cannot deny these facts and, certainly, much can be said for thinking through my research that JAs are a large part of the minority community and that what affects other AA communities also affects JAs, such as racial profiling. Only after can we work on how to get JAs involved in issues that other groups find important. There are several ways we can try to get the JA community involved. National JACL and local chapters have to work hand in hand. National already does a good job of informing JAs that complicates, clarifies and makes much richer the story of everyone."

Hena John-Fisk

Rev. H. John Yamashita Memorial Scholarship
Salt Lake City JACL
University of Utah

"As a student I think it is very important first to break down the wall which the JA community has around itself. It is important to make JAs understand and feel that they are a large part of the minority community, and that what affects other AA and minority communities also affects JAs, such as racial profiling. Only after can we work on how to get JAs involved in issues that other groups find important. There are several ways we can try to get the JA community involved. National JACL and local chapters have to work hand in hand. National already does a good job of informing JAs that complicates, clarifies and makes much richer the story of everyone."

Kelly M. McCormick

Minoru Yasui Memorial Scholarship
Riverside JACL

Ventura County JACL
Columbia University

"I am currently in my first year of the East Asian Languages and Cultures M.A. Program at Columbia University. In this program I focus on postwar Japanese history and political activism. Often, the history of a group of people is a history that is defined by the borders of the nation where they reside. The way JA history is written, it usually determines Japan as an origin and the United States as an end. However, I am looking at JA history as it exists on a continuum: not starting in Japan and ending in the United States, but in a constant process of reflection back and forth. Thus, when I research political activism in the 1960s in Japan, I look for activists who had connections in the United States and were inspired by AA activism during the civil rights movement. Similarly, I am looking at Japanese history from American perspectives: how were AA activists who still had connections like family members in Japan looking to events in Japan to inform their identities? In this way, I am creating a trans-Pacific conversation between Japanese and JAs that complicates, clarifies and makes much richer the story of AA activism in the 1960s. It is my hope that this unique perspective will provoke discussion about the role of JAs in the civil rights movement."

Glenda Izumi

Henry & Chiyoko Kuwahara Memorial Scholarship

STAY FABULOUS, KELSEY!!

Love,
Dad, Mom, Derek, Tiffany, Jillian, and Grandma

The Pacific Citizen’s Editorial Board
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South Pacific Wonderland with Collette Vacations - 15 days/12 nights visiting Cairns (Great Barrier Reef) & Sydney, Australia, Christchurch, Mt. Cook & Faris, Queenstown, & Milford Sound, New Zealand.

November 3-19 Use Danube Discovery with AMA Waterways - nine cruise aboard MS Amely, including 2 nights in Budapest, 7-night cruise to Bratislava, Vienna, Durnstein, Melk, Linz, Passau, Regensburg, Nuremberg, Nuremberg and 2-night in Prague.

December 3-14 Yamato Christmas Markets of Europe Tour - 15 days/12 nights visiting Prague, Rostock, Copenhagen to Stralsund, Kiel, Hamburg, Hamborg, Kiel, Hamburg and Kiel.

PROPOSED TOURS FOR 2012
Feb. 22- Mar. 1 Discover Panama, Bocas del Toro and the San Blas Islands of the Carribean with Collette Vacations - 6 days/5 nights visiting Panama City, Bocas del Toro, Panama Canal, Blutet, Colombia, San Blas Islands, and Bocas del Toro.

April 10-23 Yamato Deluxe Spring Tour to Japan - 15 days/12 nights visiting Tokyo, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Kyoto, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Kyushu and Tokyo. Ask about partial tour participation.


June 17-28 Yamato Hokkaido Tour - 12 days/6 nights visiting Sapporo, Kussharo, Lake Toya, Shiretoko, Obihiro, Lake Toya and Hokkaido.

October 10-29 Yamato Deluxe Autumn Tour to Japan - 15 days/12 nights visiting Fukuoka, Nagasaki, Kyushu, Kagoshima, Hiroshima, Miyazaki, Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka.

March 24-29 Yamato Deluxe Autumn Tour to Japan - 15 days/12 nights visiting Fukuoka, Nagasaki, Kyushu, Kagoshima, Hiroshima, Miyazaki, Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka.

April 10-15 Yamato South Pacific Wonderland with Collette Vacations - 15 days/12 nights visiting Cairns (Great Barrier Reef) & Sydney, Australia, Christchurch, Mt. Cook & Faris, Queenstown, & Milford Sound, New Zealand.

Outside of the immediate disaster areas, please be assured Japan is safe for travel! Our Yamato Summer Tour to Japan in June was very successful and the welcome mat was out wherever we traveled. By joining one of our Japan tours, you will be helping to support the hotels and travel suppliers who are suffering from the low numbers of incoming guests. We’ll also have a great time!
Lisa K. Okamoto

Sho Sato Memorial Scholarship
New York JACL
Brooklyn Law School

"I started my first full-time job after college with the Little Tokyo Service Center as a case manager. The LTSC is a community development organization located in the heart of L.A. Within the first week at my new job, I met and spoke to immigrant families who did not have enough money to purchase food or pay rent. I worked with older and disabled adults who needed assistance maintaining their quality of life. Loved ones of my clients discussed long-term care issues with me, which often was about the large financial burden families faced to provide adequate care. While many of these stories were not experiences that I had, each one touched me and made me think of how my family could be or are affected by similar plight. I imagined how hard it must have been for my parents to raise children in an area where not many spoke their language. When helping older clients, I realized that my parents are part of the Baby Boomer generation and their long-term care could be a complex situation to tackle. I often saw people in my life through the clients I worked with. It became imperative for me to commit my career to live."

Creative Arts Award
Sarah Matsumoto

Henry & Chiyko Kuwahara
Memorial Creative Arts Scholarship
New England JACL
Lesley University

"As an educator, I encourage my students to make work that engages with the world. Their work can draw upon the past but should also be concerned with the present and the future. During my student teaching at Somerville High School, I had my students complete a project about the immigrant experience. The town of Somerville, Mass., has an extremely high immigrant population and many of my students were first- or second-generation immigrants and the project allowed these students to articulate and share their experiences. The students in the class who did not personally have these experiences had a chance to see things from another point of view and consider how life is different for their peers. As the JA community becomes more privileged, we must not become complacent to theills and needs of the greater community. Our collective memories and experiences should make us more sympathetic and empathetic to issues of oppression and hatred. Our community must be concerned with basic human rights for all people, as we have clearly seen what tragedies can occur when we treat people as less than human. We must adopt viewpoints and practices that protect and encourage equality for everyone regardless of gender, culture, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, gender and disability."

Performing Arts Award
Dara Oda

Aiko Susanna Hiratsuka
Memorial Performing Arts Scholarship
Chicago JACL
Belhaven University

"The JA community has been becoming more fortunate and should be applying their resources to become more involved with the greater community. They have become negligent to the needs of the surrounding society and I look forward to involving my fellow JAs in current significant problems in the world. In light of the recent events occurring in Japan, I believe the JA community should be moved to respond and support their land of heritage. If provided with the opportunity to do so, I hope to see JAs unite with each other and involve the community in supporting Japan during their times of trouble. There are many ways to provide assistance for the Japanese. One of these approaches might be organizing fundraisers specifically aimed towards donating all the proceeds to Japan. Various events such as artistic performances, auctions, bake sales, and others would be methods that can have more than one purpose. Including entire schools, churches, sports teams and, additional organizations will engage both the greater community and the JA community in this pertinent and current matter. Other than simply helping the earthquake and tsunami relief, the entire masses of people will be able to get involved in serving others and connect to each other at the same time."

Financial Aid Award
Kimiko Ichikawa

Abe and Esther Hayakawa
West Los Angeles JACL Scholarship
University of Calif., Los Angeles

"Japanese citizens for centuries have inherently been hard workers. As the JA community continues to grow, this union strengthens. It allows for a more privileged social structure. I am happy to be a part of this prospering group; however, with privileges, comes responsibilities. It is an opportunity for us to act as a group, and not isolate ourselves and flourish especially in these trying times. The devastating catastrophe, which erupted in Northern Japan in March, is an example of uniting ourselves during a harrowing experience. I observed the hidden unity in Japan through the JA community. Many of us began volunteering at charity events throughout L.A., realizing the fact we were able to help those in need on the other side of the world. This gave me comfort knowing that our Japanese spirit is still there. Personally, the JA community has been there for me since I immigrated to the U.S. in 2006. My desire has always been to contribute my language skills to the educational field. A precious experience of mine is the bilingual-bicultural citizen. Through communication, I hope to fulfill the needs of fellowship and instilling aid to each other, because language is the most fundamental essence inside a cross-cultural community."

TRIBUTE
Aiko Hamashima Nakawatase
May 22, 1917 - August 8, 2011

She was preceded in death by her daughter Reiko Miyamoto Nakawatase, Gaspar (Guad) of Philadelphia, PA and her sisters, Asako Yamamoto, Sanger, CA; Nagako Miya, Salt Lake City, UT; Tenko Hamashima, Bridgeton, NJ; and Masano Kamya, San Francisco, CA. She is survived by her son Masaru Edmund Nakawatase (Jean Hunt) of Philadelphia, PA; her daughter, Hikose Lenore Wurtzel (Ken) of Bridgeton, NJ; her brothers, Taisaku Hamashima, Federal Way, WA; and George Hamashima, Raleigh, NC; and her grandchildren, Ilona Gaspar (Angelo), Michiko Hunt, and Karin Nakawatase, all of Philadelphia, PA; and Jeremy Wurtzel (Morgan), Bridgeton, NJ.

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‘In Memoriam’ is a free listing that appears on a limited, space-available basis. Tributes, which honor the memory of your loved ones with original copy and photos, appear in a timely manner at the rate of $25/column inch.

NATIONAL JACL SCHOLARSHIPS

All scholarship information, including some photos and essay excerpts, were provided by the Nat’l JACL Scholarship Committee.

For more information, contact JACL headquarters: 415/391-5225.

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Congratulations to the JACL 2011 Scholarship Winners.