The 2018 National JACL Scholarship Winners

The JACL Scholarship Program has had another fantastic year! In this special issue of the Pacific Citizen, the JACL is delighted to announce the award of $94,000 to 43 deserving applicants in their respective categories. With so many well-qualified students, the future of JACL is bright!

This year, the student applicants were asked, “What are the advantages and limitations of rallying around a single ethnic identity?” As you read their responses on the following pages, I hope you are as inspired and proud of these aspiring community leaders as I am. Their vision for the future is critical to JACL’s long-term viability.

On behalf of National JACL, I would like to express my deepest appreciation for the team of dedicated individuals who ensures the scholarship program continues to be a major success. First, Patty Wada, who as program manager of the Scholarship Program ensures the successful implementation of this program and has a direct and positively impactful effect on many of our most hopeful young leaders. Ms. Wada works tirelessly to coordinate the two scholarship committees and efficiently handles the applications for more than 100 applicants each year.

I’d also like to thank the two National JACL Scholarship Committees. These committees, each from a distinct district, work diligently to review the hundreds of applications and include Northern California-Western Nevada-Pacific District Council (NCWNPDC), General JACL Scholarship Committee (GCDC), and Central California District Council (CCDC), respectively.

These dedicated individuals serving as selection committee members reviewing the freshman applications and as a part of the NCWNPDC council include Sharon Uyeda (chair), Darlene Sakata-Bagshaw and Nick Hori. Those who served on the undergraduate, graduate, law, arts, and student-aid selection committee from the GCDC include Roberta Barton (chair), Larry Ishimoto and Ralph Kamano.

On behalf of the entire National JACL, we thank these committed individuals for their diligent work and great care that goes into reviewing all of the scholarship applications and the ongoing JACL tradition of acknowledging our young leaders and scholars with financial support for their higher education.

I am thrilled that the JACL Scholarship Program continues to be so successful. We will soon begin the 2019 application process to recognize the next group of outstanding student leaders. As we wrap up the 2018 scholarship season, please join me in congratulating all of our award recipients.

Respectfully,
Matthew Farrells, JACL National VP Planning & Development

The Pacific Citizen’s mission is to “educate on the past Japanese American experience and to preserve, promote and help the current and future AAPI communities.”

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2018 SPRING CAMPAIGN

JACL MEMBERS
Change of Address
If you’ve moved, please send your new information to: National JACL, 1765 Sutter St., San Francisco, CA 94115
(415) 921-9225 ext. 25
Allow 6 weeks for address changes.

To avoid interruptions in delivery, please notify your postmaster to include periodicity in your change of address (USPS Form 3575)
SCHOLARSHIP SPOTLIGHT:

AL MURATSUCHI

Albert Muratsuchi has had a long association with JACL. The California Assemblyman, who represents the state’s 65th district, which includes Torrance, Calif., and other parts of Los Angeles County’s South Bay area served as the regional director of the Pacific Southwest District of the JACL from 1996-98. Prior to that, Muratsuchi, who attended the University of California, Berkeley, as an undergrad, was the recipient of the JACL’s Thomas Hayashi Memorial Law Scholarship in 1991, which he used to attend UCLA School of Law.

The Pacific Citizen met with Assemblyman Muratsuchi during the summer at his district office to talk about how his JACL scholarship helped his career and how his connection with JACL shaped the trajectory of his political career.

PACIFIC CITIZEN: How has receiving the JACL scholarship impacted your life, all these years later?

AL MURATSUCHI: JACL’s greatest gift to me was not just the Thomas Hayashi scholarship I received almost 30 years ago, but the community that JACL has always provided, starting with my undergraduate days at Berkeley when I became involved in the Japanese American redress movement, getting involved with the JACL San Francisco chapter at that time to fight for redress and then after graduating from college, I went out to Washington, D.C., where I once again found my community this time through the JACL D.C. chapter. I first met people like Pat and Lily Kumagai and then returned to California to attend UCLA for law school.

And then, of course, I was able to give back to the JACL community. One of my first jobs out of law school was working as the JACL Pacific Southwest regional director in its Little Tokyo office. I was there for about two years.

While I fully appreciate the scholarship that allowed me to attend UCLA to get my law degree, I am always most thankful to JACL for the sense of community that it’s always given to me.

P.C.: What did you know about JACL as an organization before you won the scholarship?

MURATSUCHI: I started to learn about JACL when I was an undergrad at Berkeley. As you know, I was born and raised in a military base overseas, and so I was not as aware of JACL. I started reading Asian American Studies classes at Berkeley — this was during the 1980s and the height of the redress years — and that’s when I started learning about JACL’s grassroots as well as national leadership in the fight for redress.

P.C.: What is your greatest personal/professional achievement?

MURATSUCHI: Well, like we all know, there are a lot of different ways to define achievement, whether personally or professionally. I’m most proud of my family — my beautiful wife (Dr. Hiroko Higuchi) and beautiful daughter. I am very proud of her for being a good role model for our daughter (Sophia Kisco) by getting her Ph.D. from the University of Tokyo, and my daughter is participating in great Japanese American traditions like playing in FCR basketball.

Professionally, as you know, I won in 2012 the year that I first was elected to the California state legislature, then lost my re-election by less than a percentage point in 2014 and made my comeback in 2016. I am up for re-election again this year. I did well in the June primary, and we’re moving along to the November general election.

Also on the professional side, I was able to author and get signed into law AB 491 last year, which was a bill that I called the Civil Liberties Public Education Program 2.0. My inspiration to go into politics and public service was the redress movement. I was inspired by civil rights attorneys like Dale Minami and Tom Tanakichi. I was an intern at the Asian Law Caucus in 1997, more than 30 years ago. That was at the height of the redress movement.

I was inspired by the civil rights leaders who petitioned our government and won the right for the official apology and redress for the incarceration for over 120,000 Japanese Americans.

I’ve always held the redress movement as the greatest personal/professional achievement.

MURATSUCHI: I strongly urge all JACL scholarship recipients to show their appreciation for their scholarship by giving back and also by gaining what I’ve gained from JACL over the years — that strong sense of community.

P.C.: Any words of wisdom for this year’s JACL scholarship recipients?

MURATSUCHI: I would urge all JACL scholarship recipients to get involved in JACL and give back to the well from which you’re drawing.

I indicated earlier that one of the greatest gifts JACL has given to me is the sense of community and the recognition that I am building on the work, all the hard work of the past and the future generations who have preceded me in the fight for redress and for social justice, not only on the political front but also in my local community.

I had the privilege of serving as the president of the South Bay JACL chapter, and whether it’s through great JACL traditions like the JACL scholarship program or whether it’s through political leadership, JACL has provided since 1929 what I consider to be the greatest gift I’ve ever received from JACL — the sense of community.

I strongly urge all JACL scholarship recipients to show their appreciation for their scholarship by giving back and also by gaining what I’ve gained from JACL over the years — that strong sense of community.

SAN JOSE JACL AWARDS 2018 SCHOLARSHIPS

This year, the San Jose JACL scholarship committee selected eight high school seniors to receive chapter scholarships. Following are the recipients:

- Melanie Chou from University Preparatory Academy received the $1,000 San Jose JACL Chapter Award.
- Cristina Diaz from Leland High School was awarded the $500 Kaye Sakuye Memorial Scholarship.
- Matthew Kao from Bellarmine College Preparatory was awarded a $1,000 Nippon Youth Foundation Scholarship.
- Elizabeth Namba of Presentation High School was awarded the $1,000 Nippon Family Foundation Scholarship ($2,500 for four years).
- Ashley Yamamoto from Ann Sobrato High School was selected for the $1,000 Misuwa E. Nakamura Scholarship.
- Noah Soo-Hoo of Monte Vista High School was selected for the Ray and Lucy Matsunaka Business Scholarship.
- Jillian Takeuchi from Leland High School received the $500 George Matsunaga Endowment Scholarship.
- Kaitlyn Wong from Camelot High School was awarded the $1,000 Oyama Family Foundation Scholarship ($2,500 for four years).

Members of this year’s selection committee were Gary Jio, chairperson; Dr. Mitsu Kimihara, JoAnn Okabe-Kuoo, Joyce Oyama and Sharon Uyeda.

Photos by SHIHO YABE

Pictured (from left) are Gary Jio (chairperson), Sharon Uyeda (chapter co-president), Keilin Wong, Cristina Diaz, Ashley Yamamoto, Noah Soo-Hoo, Jillian Takeuchi and Tom Oshidari (chapter co-president). Not pictured are Melanie Chou, Matthew Kao and Elizabeth Namba.
**FRESHMAN**

**ALLIE CHOW**

JACL Chapter: SACRAMENTO
Recipient of the Sam & Florence Kowabara Memorial Scholarship
Chapman University Notables

Allie Chow’s wide variety of volunteer work reflects the passion she holds for her community, whether it is helping out with her library’s fundraising programs, distributing food to the homeless or dedicating time to her local parks and recreation services. As a summer camp volunteer counselor, she shares her leadership skills, compassion and musical talent to ensure participants enjoy a rich and wholesome experience.

**Personal Statement**

“Growing up with a strong Asian identity has allowed me to build a bond between people with similar histories and experiences and ultimately select the best ideas that fits the goal.

Cultural diversity would allow me to choose the best aspects of various cultural beliefs instead of limiting myself to my own cultural beliefs. To truly make change in the world, no one can completely isolate themselves from those who vary from their beliefs and ethnic identity. We must all be open to cultural, spiritual and ethnic differences and work toward improving our society.”

looks forward to engaging in the chapter’s activities.

**JACL Chapter: WASATCH FRONT NORTH**

Recipient of the Hanayagi Rokumie Memorial Cultural Scholarship
University of Utah Notables

Kyra Hirasuna played the clarinet in the Syracuse High School Symphonic Band and was section leader. She was also a member of the Northern Davis Honor Band and the University of Utah Honor Band. In addition, Hirasuna was assistant volleyball coach at the Park Center in Murray and volleyball coach at West Point City.

For about five years, she taught and performed traditional Japanese dances for Ogden and Salt Lake’s Hana Matsuri. She also performed dances for the Salt Lake Buddhist Temple’s Nihon Matsuri and has participated in taiko at the Ogden Buddhist Temple.

Although a new student member of the Wasatch Front North Chapter, she has participated in the chapter’s annual volleyball tournament for more than 10 years and has attended and volunteered at multiple dinners and fundraisers. This past year, she organized the dessert table at the scholarship dinner, where she plated and sold desserts and drinks to attendees.

**Personal Statement**

“While rallying around one ethnicity brings together that group, it separates them from the rest of the world. This idea of separation may disable the community’s ability to share their ideas and hear others. The human race would be improved if we were able to understand one another better. It is important that we accept each other and look past uncontrollable, inevitable differences.”

**GILLIAN DAVIDSON**

JACL Chapter: HOUSTON
Recipient of the Patricia & Gail Ishimoto Memorial Scholarship
University of Texas at Austin Notables

Gillian Davidson was a member of her school’s Honors Varsity Choir for four years and advanced to the All-District Regional Choir for two years. For two summers, she participated in the University of Houston STEM Summer Camp. She also has tutored five Japanese students by introducing American culture and English language.

In addition, Davidson volunteered at a local animal shelter by walking dogs and helping them get adopted. From the age of four, she attended the Japanese Language Supplementary School of Houston, a Japanese education school, where she developed fluency in Japanese. She is a recent member of the Houston JACL, but

**Haley Hom**

JACL Chapter: SAN DIEGO
Recipient of the Shigeki ‘Shake’ Ushio Memorial Scholarship
University of Richmond Notables

Since her start as the first class of freshmen at a brand new high school, Haley Hom has dedicated significant time and effort into shaping a healthy school culture. She always seeks to ensure that other students feel at home while at school and has proven to be a positive influence.
TAYLOR ISHIDA

Friends to my favorite childhood

for the diligence to study hard and

Inspirational values like intelligence,

Team and Girls Varsity Basketball

influence on students and staff alike.

the bane of my existence.

And they wouldn’t necessarily be

monly portrayed as horrible drivers,

A whole host of casual assump­

tions come with being labeled as an

Asian among a predominantly white

society — the expectation of highly

competitive academic performance,

knowledge of exotic cuisine and,

hunting. I’m proud of my Asian

brance my community, which laudes

American stereotype.

A person may feel more secure and

a bad driver as well, though I’m

people automatically label me as

Asian ‘is a general demographic.

In contrast, I am proud to be a

Japanese customs within our

Japanese Americans have become so

ever been trying hard to study and

achieve good grades on difficult

assignments.

I enjoy introducing friends to my favorite childhood

food, teaching them how to hold chopsticks and laughing at their

reactions to certain traditional dishes. At the dinner table, I often

accompanies a strategic bout of bargain hunting. I’m proud of my Asian

background and wholeheartedly embrace my community, which laudes

intrinsic values like intelligence,

and ambition.

Oh course, there are two sides to
every coin. Although many of the characteristics typically associated

with Asians are positive, several often carry negative connotations.

People come to me for math help and assume that my reading and writing skills are

poor, when I actually have a passion for literature, and AP calculus was

the bane of my existence.

Since Asian females are com-

monly portrayed as horrid drivers,

people automatically label me as

a bad driver as well, though I’m

more careful than many of my white

counterparts. But even with these

false assumptions, I would never
deny my Asian heritage ... it is a

personal source of strength.

“Asian” is a general demographic.

By recognizing me as Asian, one may

presume that I am studious, love rice

and have a hard time parking a car.

And they wouldn’t necessarily be

wrong. But my identity extends far

beyond that basic categorization.

JACL Chapter, SACRAMENTO

Recipient of the Sam & Florence

Kuwahara Memorial Scholarship

University of California, Los

Angeles

Notables

Taylor Ishida balances a heavy

academic workload with involve­

ment in her school’s California Scholarship

Federation, National Honor Society

and Varsity Tennis Team. Over the

past years, she has committed time

and effort as a tutor with Homework

Zone and Donating Coordinator

with the Sacramento Food Bank and

Family Services. In addition, Ishida

also devotes time to the Thumbs Up!

Thumbs Down! Tobacco research

project to aid in the elimination of

tobacco in films. Her motivation for

joining the Sacramento JACL is to

support the Japanese and Asian

community by continuing to honor

and embrace with the foundation of its roots.

Personal Statement

“During my elementary school

years, I had never heard of the Asian

American stereotype. It was during

my middle and high school years that

I realized the awareness of racism

swarming through social media

and everyday life experiences. Being

a part of a society that categorizes a

person by the way she looks or where

she’s from has downsides. Not only are

these groups pigeonholed, but rallying

around a single ethnic identity does not

allow an individual to broaden one’s

horizon.

Can you spread your wings when you’re

shielded by an invisible wall

of misconceptions? Can you grow

if knowledge is gained from only

a single perspective? Individuals

must open themselves up to multiple

viewpoints and take a stand based on

what they believe in their hearts, lest

they be influenced by social media

or stereotyping.

In contrast, I am proud to be a

Japanese American exposed to both

the Japanese and American cultures.

I’ve been fortunate as my grandparents

and parents continue to carry out

old Japanese customs within our

household.

But there has been a recent decline

in the messages and teachings as

Japanese Americans have become so

assimilated in American culture that

these traditions are becoming a lost art.

What I hope can be transcended

through the generations are the core

Japanese values of perseverance,

always trying your best and being

respectful.

I have also come to the conclusion

that sometimes congregating amongst people of the same ethnicity

can actually have a relaxing effect.

A person may feel more secure

and comfortable when around people

with similar backgrounds. In addition,

in initiating change, support from a

diverse group of friends sometimes

has bigger impact than a disparate one.

REBECCA JACKSON

JACL Chapter, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Recipient of the Kenji Atari Memorial

Scholarship

Biola University

Notables

In 2017, Rebecca Jackson was

appointed to the Smithsonian Institution

in its Digital Media & Technology

Department. She worked closely with

a mentor as an editor and content

producer for a number of DMT projects. Also in 2017, Jackson

was one of five U.S. high school students

selected to research, write and produce

a short film highlighting one of

the 10 internment camps.

Her film, “Mini doka: A Portrait

of America,” focused on her grandmother and artist Roger Shimomura.

She completed a 12-week class and

certified as a studio technician. Jackson also learned to assist in

various roles and volunteered to help

on a number of shows.

During the summer before her

junior year, she traveled to Tokyo

and taught art and music at an

English camp.

Jackson became a student member of the Washington, D.C., chapter at the beginning of her freshman

year. As a member, she has experienced some of the most meaningful

events in her life. Through JACL, she learned about the Day of Remem-

brance and the Digital Storytelling Project, as well as participated in the

Freedom Walk in downtown D.C.

Personal Statement

“Embracing one’s ethnicity is one of the most amazing things an individual can do. On a recent recent

visit to Southern California, my mom and I met a Japanese American family and made an instant

connection. Within a minute of meeting one another, we were talking about our grandparents, our family history, the

internment and our race.

“My Japanese culture has shaped me into the person that I am today. As an artist, about 80 percent of the art

I do is inspired by my race. My race is the fuel behind my passion for my pieces.

“There are, however, a few problems that come with rallying around

one single ethnic group. Focusing too much on one’s own race can lead to the exclusion of other races. When

you close yourself off from others, it can add to the negative stereotype

your race may already have.

While it is wonderful to have pride and a sense of community within

your race, it is also very important to understand other people’s cultures. I believe that embracing, celebrating

and having that sense of community with your own ethnic group is very

important, but it is also important to then go out and meet others from different backgrounds.”

LOGAN MANO

JACL Chapter, MT. OLYMPUS

Recipient of the Shigeki ‘Shake’

Usbido Memorial Scholarship

Utah State University

Notables

With the belief that he can suc­

ceed through hard work, Logan

Mano involves himself in many

different competitions, programs

and extracurricular activities. His

efforts have resulted in awards as a

wrestler, podium finishes in a regional history fair and a Best Film

award, to name a few. However,

Mano is most proud of his graduate

letter from Boy’s State 2017, where

his hero, 442nd member Kasey.

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San Diego JACL CONGRATULATES the

2018 Scholarship Winners

Brandon Matsumoto

Dominic Martino

Hailey Sasaki

Trevor Muraoka

*Haley Hom*

*Lauren Matsumoto*

The * indicates national award winners.

JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE

Congratulations to

Sacramento JACL’s Scholarship Award Winners!!
Kuminara, spoke.
Mano is a relatively new member of the Mt. Olympus JACL, but he has attended many chapter fundraisers and Christmas parties, as well as assisted with various tasks such as taking tickets or running booths.

**Personal Statement**

“I plan to attend Utah State University. I plan to major in biochemistry and take the premedical examination and continue my education into dental school. I chose Utah State because of the traditions of which have been a part of my life since I was born and the academic profile of this university.

“My career goal would include owning my own [dental] practice as well as devoting about three to six weeks out of the year to administering humanitarian dental hygiene care to people living in poverty in either this country or Third World countries. I want to devote my life to helping people all that I can.

“To me, dentistry is a way I can help the health of my community. I believe that taking my skills across seas to places that really need it could be beneficial to the people I assist, but I would hope I could also inspire people to have a desire to make a difference through devoting one’s self-service. I want to help people, but more importantly, I want other people to want to help other people — and hopefully that spreads like a chain reaction.

“Success isn’t measured by how far from the start you have come, it is measured by the distance you’ve traveled. The path to success is never a straight one. Sometimes, even a little step forward is a light, but in the end, you could of only gone halfway and still endured and grown more than the kid who made it to the finish line.”

Mathletes, she lifted her team to first place in competition. In addition to math, her skills in French and biology allowed her to tutor fellow students. She also is active at the Sacramento Betsuin. Here, she feels the Obon festival is not just a cultural program but also allows for the Japanese community to come together and renew old ties.

**Personal Statement**

“Rallying around a single ethnic identity allows a broader group of people to connect through common cultural and ancestral ties. In the U.S., all Asians are usually lumped into one ethnic group. On the positive side, though this group does not necessarily share common cultural and ethnic backgrounds, as a larger group, their presence and voice in social and political discourse are much louder.

“In general terms, ethnicity is a strong bond that ties people together, providing a sense of belonging and community. In countries such as Japan, a strong sense of nationalism is created because the majority of the population shares a common cultural and ethnic background.

“Historically, the strength of one’s ethnic identity and the power it holds over people could be seen in the colonization of Africa. In Europe, African colonization created nations and borders solely based on agreements made between different European countries. No thought was given when different cultures and ethnic groups were split due to these new state borders. Although ethnic groups may have been separated by those arbitrary borders, they still maintained a common identity.

“I appreciate the JACL because it not only speaks on behalf of the Japanese American community but also speaks for all minorities in this country. Although the JACL was created to promote and represent the Japanese American community, as the community has established itself in this country, the organization has also evolved to represent not only Japanese American causes but also involve itself in broader social matters important to our society.

“In order to have a successful society, we must recognize and accept all people and truly embrace our ethnic and cultural diversity.”

**Stephanie A. Matsumoto**

JACL Chapter: STOCKTON
Recipient of the Paul & Katherine Ohaki Memorial Scholarship
University of California, Davis

**Personal Statement**

“Live life without regret” is Stephanie Matsumoto’s motto. This is evident through her long and varied list of honors that includes varsity tennis and badminton, Girls State delegate and Stockton School Board Student Representative. Matsumoto’s care for her community has also benefited many groups, including the Emergency Food Bank and Run Against Hunger.

“With ethnic groups also comes a long line of traditions and values from that culture. To me, traditions seem like one of the most important things a person can carry. These traditions are important to many individuals, and it’s up to each generation after to pass it on to their children. By rallying around a single ethnic identity, you get to be a part of keeping one tradition alive for many others.

“Neither having one ethnic identity or multiple identities can be better than the other. They both have their advantages and limitations that can be commented on. What is most important is how a person views and uses their ethnic identity to be an advantage. While it varies from person to person, I feel like it is a good thing to appreciate what you have and how it can get you farther in life.”

**Kai Henthorn-Iwane**

JACL Chapter: BERKELEY
Recipient of the Patricia & Gail Ishimoto Memorial Scholarship
Boise State University

**Personal Statement**

“Throughout my 18 years, I have grown to appreciate being a Japanese American. During my middle school years, I did several reports that surrounded my own ethnicity, such as the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the internment of Japanese Americans. When deciding to do my history projects on these topics, I felt a sense of pride because I made these projects personal to me and my own family history.

**The Berkeley Chapter Congratulates Our 2018 National and Chapter Scholarship Recipients!**

**National Recipients**

**Freshman:**
Kailee Nabet
Luka Uchiyama

**Graduate Students:**
Mali McGuire

**Special Awards:**
Kai Henthorn-Iwane

**Chapter Recipients**

Jared Akiyama
Alyssa Cho
Kailee Nabet
Alexander Tsetsikak
Luka Uchiyama
Sydney Wong
Recipient of the CWO
Murakami Kasai (Ret.)
Memorial Scholarship

U.S. Alumni Leader
JACL Chapter:
Training expose and a Japanese
Notables

Megan Pelli is an accomplished

University

Megan Pelli is an accomplished

At Judge Memorial Catholic

Megan Pelli is an accomplished

Megan Pelli is an accomplished

National Honor Society, Latin

Megan Pelli is an accomplished

of the Salt Lake City JACL since
2016 but has attended many events
prior to officially joining the chapter.
He has also been involved with the
Mt. Olympus Chapter and has
participated with the youth group
at numerous events.

When I was young, my last name
used to embarrass me. This was
because it was different from the
other kids at my elementary school.
It was super long, and I always had
to explain how ‘Nagata’ was not my
middle name, but actually just part
of my last name. Over the years,
I became less self-conscious
about my last name and started to
accept it. You see, my last name is more
than just a name given to me at birth,
it represents who I am.

“Nagata-Brown’ is my heritage
from two cultures; it represents a
rich family legacy that I am proud
of and welcome. Both sides of my
family have so much history behind
them. I am extremely proud of their
accomplishments and contributions.
That is why I am proud to be
‘Nagata-Brown’.

‘Rallying around a single ethnic
identity can give you a sense of
comfort and belonging because of
similarities of color, dialect and
even experiences. But at the same
time, it could preclude you from
opportunities for growth you would
gain by moving outside of your comfort
zone.

I believe people are much more
alike than they are different. We all
share the same human spirit. My
wish is for all ethnic backgrounds
to be treated equally, not
differentiated by the color of their
skin, the hyphen between two last names
or their cultural differences. I think
we should celebrate and embrace
every individual for [his/her]
uniqueness and always remember —
every person has [his/her] own story to
tell.”

“Every culture is like a differently
colored tile, making the mosaic of
our nation more beautiful as a whole.
Exploiting one’s ethnic identity and
cultural heritage will significantly
enhance personal identity and help
to develop a greater sense of
belonging and self-worth. Celebrating
your culture allows the opportunity
to share the rich story of who you are
and where you are from to others.

Progress happens in baby steps.
In my own lifetime, I have seen the
steady shift from the idea that in
order to be equal, we must mini-
imize our differences, to blatantly
celebrating those same differences
and encouraging diversity. Our soci-
ety is currently in the midst of a
social revolution where people are
realizing they no longer have to stay
silent to minimize their differences,
but now is the time to express them
and appreciate them, making our
mosaic richer in color today.

‘Diversity makes America a beauti-
fully multifaceted country; however,
it also can have a dangerous dark
side. In its negative form, diversity
highlights our differences in a way
that promotes suspicion, prejudice
and resentment. Diversity without
love leads to discrimination, rabid
factualism and survival of the
fittest.

‘Rallying around a single ethnic
flag can help us appreciate our own
value and contribution to society,
increasing respect and appreciation
of others and national harmony.”
the way we perceive ourselves. Rallying around a single ethnic identity enables us to maintain our individuality in an increasingly homogenous world while preserving traditions that would have otherwise become obsolete. However, doing so has the potential to cloud our perspectives, resulting in intolerance for those who are different.

“Nothing matters if we have traveled, ethnic identity helps us feel connected to our origins and strengthens our sense of self. It is a source of pride, particularly for minorities, who are often overshadowed or overlooked by the majority. Oftentimes, this pride is instilled through participation in traditions through familial or religious communities. There is something extremely empowering in being a part of traditions unique to your community, but on a more profound level, the continuation of traditions ensures we do not forget our past, and we leave a lasting legacy.

“At the same time, adhering to an ethnic identity has its limitations. It can contribute to a divide between cultures, or, at its worst, serve as a basis of discrimination. If we become consumed by our own ethnic identity, we may come to believe we are inherently better than others and disregard unfamiliar traditions and beliefs.

“In conclusion, identifying with an ethnicitydifferentiates and empowers groups of people while upholding meaningful traditions, as long as these groups can exist harmoniously with mutual respect.”

LINDSEY M. SANO
JACL Chapter: MERCEDES-LIVINGSTON
Recipient of the Takashi & Turuko Moriuchi Memorial Scholarship
California State University, Fresno

Recipient of the Takashi & Turuko Moriuchi Memorial Scholarship
Stanford University

Recipient of the Takashi & Turuko Moriuchi Memorial Scholarship

SPECIAL ISSUES COMING SOON

HOLIDAY SPECIAL ISSUE.....

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LUKA UCHIYAMA  
JACL Chapter: BERKELEY  
Recipient of the Deni & June Uejima Memorial Scholarship  
California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo  
Notables  
Luka Uchiyama’s passion for education and learning shows through her relentless approach to scholastic excellence and myriad of volunteer activities. Her leadership in the classroom and strong work ethic have left strong impressions on her peers and teachers alike. While putting in the time and effort to reach high academic heights, Uchiyama also organized volunteer events, such as a blood drive and a canned-food drive, participated as the president of her school’s cheer program and has held many positions in the leadership program.  
Personal Statement  
“Family on me, family on three — one, two, three  
“For the Japanese school middle school class of 2016, it is the last bunkasai — a culture festival where each homeroom class puts on a small performance — and we all come together for our last cheer. A wash of nostalgia flows over me as we wait the last few minutes before the show begins. I feel like I’m stepping off the field with pride, recognizing the culture we created within ourselves after all of these years.  
“My mind, then, remembered something else: these last few weeks of Japanese school — including our bunkasai — were the last times that we were going to be a part of that culture. In those few moments before our play, I felt frightened. The community that we established was invaluable, something that we wouldn’t be able to see with any other group of people — how was our culture to be maintained after we all go our own separate ways?  
“Single ethnic communities have been one of the most vibrant communities, as they are often built upon shared experiences of challenges they’ve faced in their journey for a better opportunity. Raising around each challenge creates strong bonds, and as a result, establishes a group of people who are the most kind and compassionate, especially to members of their own community.  
“However in recent times, these same struggles have become apart of the past, and the new generation of single ethnic individuals have no longer relate to the experiences that have defined the community from the beginning. In particular, people may define themselves as Japanese American, but hold different values than their relatives before them.  
“Ultimately, as more and more single ethnicity communities dwindle in membership, the challenge continues to maintain the vibrancy of the community while holding the same value in history and culture.”

JADE VIEIRA  
JACL Chapter: FRENCH CAMP  
Recipient of the Takashi & Yuiko Moriuchi Memorial Scholarship  
University of California, Los Angeles  
Notables  
Jade Vieira selected UCLA as her choice to pursue her ultimate career goal as a physician specializing in emergency care. Perhaps stemming from her childhood experience with heart surgery, she learned the importance of the life she has been blessed with and the need to take risks at times as life can be so short. This has been inspirational in Vieira’s study of the biological sciences leading to training in life-saving efforts as an emergency care physician.  
In addition to her numerous school achievements, Vieira helped establish a Debate Club at Aspire Benjamin Holt College Preparatory Academy and presided over the Interact Club. Not only an active member of the French Camp JACL and assisting the Stockton JACL, she also studied Baye Bando. Learning Japanese classical dance was an important way of preserving Japanese cultural history in an ever-changing and modernizing world.  
Personal Statement  
“Many things have changed throughout history, including events that did not happen too long ago, such as the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. Some of these changes include civil rights, gender equality and diversity in certain industries (like television and media). One concept that is somewhat new to our society is intercultural marriage and the concept of multiple ethnicities in one person.  
“In the 1900s, it was considered blasphemous to marry outside your race or culture in America. Because of this standard, many biracial and multiracial individuals felt ashamed of their complete heritage and their roots because society has made it so hard to be able to fit into more than one label or category.  
“The advantages of marrying around a single ethnic identity are the freedom of expressing one’s self and only having to follow one culture. The downfall of identifying as one ethnic group is that some people do not have the same opportunity to experience cultural traditions around the world without feeling like an outsider.  
“I think that today it is hard to embrace one identity or even multiple identities. Acts of close-mindedness and fearing the unknown can lead to discrimination, stereotypes and a constant division between groups. Currently, the JACL is like a tapestry, weaving many different cultures, ideas and beliefs that make up one image, with the image of equality and justice for all.”

SHUN WETLESEN  
JACL Chapter: PORTLAND  
Recipient of the Deni & June Uejima Memorial Scholarship  
Pacific University  
Notables  
Shun Wetlesen is a relatively new member of the Portland JACL, but he also has experience working with the Japanese community in other ways.  
Personal Statement  
“The United States as a nation has existed on the basic principle of a nation that accepts all cultures. Throughout history, this has led to the labeling of the United States as a ‘melting pot’ of cultures. This identity can indeed be seen throughout various aspects of American lifestyle.  
“Despite these cultures come together to form American culture, there are still many cases of groups of people rallying around their culture or ethnic identity in order to become part of a smaller community. Although there are benefits to rallying under a single ethnic identity, the limited nature of the action also prevents everyone to a certain group of people based on their past experiences. We also prevent the sharing of culture between two people.  
“Shun’s understanding of culture also makes it easier to identify with those of other ethnic identities. For instance, the current discrimination that Muslims face in the United States is a result of most Americans not fully understanding what a Muslim is and what constitutes (his/her) religious beliefs.  
“It is by sharing our culture with others and moving past the limited mind-set of a single ethnic identity that this understanding is possible.”

JENNA AOKI  
JACL Chapter: CLOVIS  
Recipient of the Railroad & Mine Workers Memorial Scholarship  
California State University, Fresno  
Notables  
Jenna Aoki is planning a career as a middle school or high school physical education teacher. She also aspires to obtain a master’s or doctorate degree to become a high school academic, guidance counselor or college professor. Aoki is a high-achieving student in the CSU Fresno Smittcamp Family Honors College and works as a research assistant in the Department of Kinesiology and student campus photographer. She also is on the Fresno State Spirit Squad.  
Aoki credits the JACL for helping her develop a greater sense of identity and purpose and has a strong sense of pride for her Japanese culture. She’s active in the JACL at the local and national levels, including serving as a CCDC youth delegate at National Convention, participating in a Kakehashi alumni, attending NYSC retreats and appearing in a film re-enactment for a public TV documentary about San Joaquin Valley detainees, where she also helped raise funds for the film.  
In addition, Aoki is the development coordinator for the Fresno chapter of Camp Kesem, a national nonprofit organization that supports children affected by the effects of a parent who has cancer. In her first year in that role, Aoki helped the chapter raise more than $28,000 to support summer camp tuitions and other initiatives. Aoki’s additional community involvement includes the Girl Scouts, Junior Young.”

Clovis JACL Chapter  
Jenna Aoki  
National Scholarship Recipient: Jenna Aoki  
Congratulations to the 2018 scholarship recipients.  
Ross and Grace Masaki
He is currently a member of the university’s Mock Trial Team and the Asian American Interarsity. His community involvement includes membership in United Against Inequities in Disease, which identifies and develops programs to address health inequities in local underserved communities.

**Personal Statement**

“In its best sense, when the word ‘rally’ is used to call people together for protecting endangered members of a community or for the good of a cause, the cry to rally motivates us to act together for a common good that is also good for people in other communities.

“However, when uttered for purposes of causing members of a particular ethnic community to put their own narrow interests above those of other communities in a jingoistic fashion, such as the rally ‘round the flag’ or ‘loving it and leaving it mentally,’ as a means to ignore or deflect legitimate criticism, then we see clearly the limitations of rallying to a particular ethnic identity.

“The formation and mission of the JACL reflects the best sense of rallying for a cause — utilizing the experience of Japanese Americans’ internment to remind all Americans of the consequences of ethnic and racial prejudice and the necessity of granting civil rights of all Americans, regardless of their ethnicity and religious and political beliefs.”

**JOHN MIYATAKE CONKLIN**

**JACL Chapter: SONOMA COUNTY**

**Recipient of the Henry & Chiyo Kuwahara Memorial Scholarship**

University of Chicago Notables

John Conklin plans to major in Japanese and East Asian languages and civilizations. He recently completed a summer scholarship program to live and study in Hokkaido, Japan, through the Hokkaido International Foundation. He is thoroughly committed to the study of civil rights in the United States and would like to attend law school in the future with the goal of becoming a public interest constitutional lawyer and scholar. Conklin’s dream is to argue an important civil rights case before the U.S. Supreme Court.

For Conklin’s JACL chapter, he served as VP for civil rights and public affairs for four years and organized voter registration events as well as assistance programs to get senior citizens to polling places. He also was selected to represent the chapter at the JACL OCA Leadership Summit in Washington D.C. this past spring.

In addition, Conklin served as an intern for the Marin County Public Defender’s Office, where he studied rehabilitation programs for prisoners with mental health issues and authored a policy paper for the County Board of Supervisors that addressed countywide issues related to child-parent prison visitation and mental health.

The University of Southern California Notables

He currently serves as a member of the university’s Mock Trial Team and the Asian American Interarsity. His community involvement includes membership in United Against Inequities in Disease, which identifies and develops programs to address health inequities in local underserved communities.

**Personal Statement**

“I feel as though the JACL and organizations similar to the JACL are particularly interesting when you think about it. When I think about rallying behind a single ethnic identity, my mind jumps to groupings such as Asian, Caucasian, African, and so on. In reference to a single ethnic identity, my mind does not instantly think of ‘Japanese American’ because I have always considered that to be two different ethnic groups.

“However, upon reflection, I have come to see the beauty in recognizing Japanese American as a single ethnic group. Growing up, I felt like I would have to choose between which ethnicity I would want to identify with. I could fit in with one or the other, but I couldn’t belong to both. Because of this, I would normally group myself with the ethnic group that I would best fit into at that moment. I would switch back and forth between seeing myself as Caucasian and seeing myself as Asian. This gave me somewhat of an advantage, but only on a surface level.

“On an underlying level, I never felt like I was truly connected with anyone in either group. I had nowhere that I truly belonged. Once I started identifying as Japanese American, that feeling started to disappear. I no longer switched between the two different ways that I could see myself and instead found a combination of both. This shift has helped me grow more confident and comfortable with who I am. Every day, I am thankful that I am able to identify as both Japanese and Caucasian.”

**KRISTEN CUNNINGHAM**

**JACL Chapter: SEATTLE**

**Recipient of the Shigeru Nakahira Memorial Scholarship**

Whitworth University Notables

Kristen Cunningham became a JACL member as a high school sophomore after years of accompanying her mother and sister to chapter board meetings. She volunteered for many events, including the annual chapter banquet, annual health fair, Bunka No Hi and Day of Remembrance trip to the State Capitol.

Her school activities are extensive, including Whitworth Phi Eta Sigma national freshman honor society, National Honor Society, Whitworth Association for Computing Machinery and Kamiak Show Band, Orchestra, Spanish Club, Academic Coaches, Technical Crew and Winterguard.

In the community, Cunningham volunteered for Drops4Life to organize a fundraiser for victims of Typhoon Haiyan, served on the Mukilteo Library Teen Advisory Board and led outreach activities teaching computer science skills to students at local schools.

**Personal Statement**

“I must believe that history has the tendency to repeat itself. I strongly believe that without JACL’s advocacy for other ethnic groups’ rights, we would not be where we are today and could be living in an even darker world. In closing, I know it is imperative to keep pushing and advocating for not only Japanese Americans’ rights, but also all rights, no matter how the individuals identify themselves.”

**ZACHARY ISHIMOTO**

**JACL Chapter: SOUTH BAY**

**Recipient of the Dr. Thomas T. Yatabe Memorial Scholarship**

The University of Southern California Notables

Zachary Ishimoto is a Kakehashi alumnus who created a website to document his trip by blogging his thoughts about Japanese food, lifelong impacts of a visit to Hiroshima and a very memorable homestay. He also participated in writing an action plan for members of Japan’s Min-
Congratulations Paige

on receiving the Alice Yuuriko Endo Memorial Scholarship.

We are so proud of you!

Love Mom and Dad
**SCHOLARSHIP ISSUE**

**ALEXANDRA RIDGE**

**JACL Chapter: MOUNT OLYMPUS**

Recipient of the Alice Yuriko Endo Memorial Scholarship

The University of Utah Notables

Ridge has been involved in community work as a volunteer for braille resources to Visually Impaired Children, a nonprofit organization that adds braille to children's books and also donates those books to children who could otherwise not afford them. She is also active in the local Sister Cities program, where she has hosted visiting students from Matsuyama, Japan.

**KARLIE TERUYA**

**JACL Chapter: DIABLO VALLEY**

Recipient of the Saburo Kido Memorial Scholarship

University of Southern California

Teruya's community involvement in her living room. She was inspired by watching Japanese Americans in positions of power have a positive impact on their community.

**TREVOR FUJINAKA**

**JACL Chapter: SAN FRANCISCO**

Recipient of the Kenji Kajiwara Memorial Scholarship

Boston University, Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine Notables

Fujinaka has been a JACL member for more than a decade, starting as an active student member. He is a leader in his community through dance. He has been a staff writer for the film industry. He hopes to bring awareness to the film industry. He has been a staff writer for the film industry. He hopes to bring awareness to the film industry.

**TREVOR SANNO**

**JACL Chapter: FRESNO**

Recipient of the Dr. Thomas T. Takabe Memorial Scholarship

University of the Pacific Notables

Sano is enrolled in the Accelerated Predentistry 3+4 Program in preparation to become an oral surgeon. He exemplifies JACL youth involvement in his community by spreading the message of diversity, inclusion and leadership. Among his many service activities are the Junior Young Buddhist Assn. and Junior Asian Basketball Team, as well as volunteer work at a convalescent home, food bank and JACL events.

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**Personal Statement**

American, I feel that I am only seen as Asian. I believe that while I have made many friends with Caucasian individuals, I am still not thought of as an equal. I came from a majority white Christian high school. I made plenty of friends, but being Asian and Buddhist, I still sometimes felt like I didn’t completely belong.

“One of my friends is Muslim and felt scared to tell anyone, thinking he would be treated differently. We both confided in one another about this feeling of being isolated. I think that connection of being different is what brought us closer as friends and individuals.”

**GRADUATES**

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**CONGRATULATIONS**

**TREVOR FUJINAKA!**

The Fresno JACL Congratulates Trey Sano!

We are all very proud of you and what you have accomplished!

Love from all the Fujinakas

**San Francisco JACL**

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**Congratulations Trevor!**

**California Polytechnic State University**

**University of the Pacific**

**UCSC**

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**PACIFIC CITIZEN**

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**Recipient of the Kenji Kajiwara Memorial Scholarship!**

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Love from all the Fujinakas

**San Francisco JACL**

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**The Fresno JACL Congratulations Trey Sano!**

We are all very proud of your academic achievements and bright future!
Recipient of the Minoru Yasui Memorial Scholarship

**Personal Statement**

"In my recent studies in a racially diverse and multifacultural dental field, I have noticed the clustering of ethnic identities through the residents that come overseas from various regions. Although from different countries, the Middle Eastern residents aggregate due to their shared values, traditions, language and religion. Bonding as a group, they can feel more comfortable in a foreign and unfamiliar city with friends that share the same experiences. They are bonded by shared customs but not exclusive in their cultural judgments.

"Although there may be different ethnic groups, we celebrate our different cultures and share similar values as health care professionals. Collaboration with different ethnic groups is essential to understanding the differences in such cultures and to avoid problems from misunderstandings.

"Assembling around a single ethnic identity can be experienced only in the presence of collaboration and tolerance of other cultures."

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**KRISTEN HAYASHI**  
JACL Chapter: PASADENA  
Recipient of the Minoru Yasui Memorial Scholarship  
The University of California, Riverside

Kristen Hayashi became acquainted with JACL through a historical, scholarly perspective from her dissertation research into the return and resettlement of Japanese Americans in post-WWII Los Angeles. She wants to pursue a career that makes advancements in public education via informal education such as museum exhibitions or historical writing. It is her hope that her work helps to advance social justice for historically marginalized groups through the documentation, research, preservation and sharing of these lesser-known stories.

Hayashi has made scholarly presentations at conferences of the Association for Asian American Studies, American Historical Asn., California Preservation Foundation, Historical Society of Southern California, Asian Pacific Islander Americans in Historic Preservation, National Council of Public History and many others. She has also been the recipient of numerous honors, awards and fellowships in her field of study.

She currently is a graduate research assistant in the history department of UC Riverside and the collections manager for the Japanese American National Museum. Hayashi is a board member of the Little Tokyo Historical Society and is on its Historical Preservation Advocacy Committee, and she is a board member and the secretary of Yakato Talko.

**Personal Statement**

"Although Japanese Americans have had success in advocating for past injustices targeted specifically toward their ethnic group, the work of groups like the JACL is not complete.

"Limiting the scope of the JACL's work to solely focus on issues related to the Japanese American community would exclude many communities that need someone to advocate for them.

"Today, our Japanese American community looks different from that of our Nisei grandparents' generation. Those who identify as Japanese Americans are increasingly identifying with other ethnic groups, as well.

"Additionally, in this political moment, comments from a few elected officials suggesting that Japanese internment is a historical precedent for what we can do with refugees in our country today, underscores the importance of Japanese Americans to reach out and unite with communities under attack to ensure civil liberties for all."

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**MARISA KANEMITSU**  
JACL Chapter: SOUTH BAY  
Recipient of the Dr. Newton K. Wesley (Uyesugi) Memorial Scholarship  
Emory University, Rollins School of Public Health

Marisa Kanemitsu is a graduate of the University of California, Berkeley, with a degree in public health; she is focusing her current studies on global health. Eventually, she hopes to work in the government or nonprofit sector or pursue a medical degree in primary care. Kanemitsu's ultimate goal is to improve the health of children, particularly to address the prevalence of chronic diseases such as childhood diabetes and obesity.

Kanemitsu is a Kakehashi alumn, and her scholastic honors include the American Association of Japanese Women Scholarship, JACL National Scholarship, Golden Key International Honors Society and UC Berkeley University Dean's Honors. She is currently an Americorps health fellow for the Children's Clinic and previously served as an Americorps FoodCorps member.

"We put a single label on a group of people does not capture the nuances and complexities of what it means to be human.

"There are numerous examples throughout history of ethnic groups being targeted and discriminated against. The Jewish community, during the Holocaust, Japanese Americans during World War II, Muslims in a post-9/11 society, among many others. In all of these cases, there was a strong ethnic majority using their collective voices to denounce and persecute another ethnic group, confining individuals of that group to stereotypes.

"Unfortunately, it becomes all too easy to become insulated in a bubble, surrounded by people who look, think or act alike. When one collective voice becomes louder and stronger, it becomes easy for dangerous rhetoric to spread and cause harm."

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**ERIC LANGOWSKI**  
JACL Chapter: HOOSIER  
Recipient of the Henry & Chiyoko Kawahara Memorial Scholarship  
University of Chicago

Eric Langowski is pursuing a master's degree in computational analysis and public policy. His JACL involvement began at the chapter level participating in various social events. In 2014, he attended the National Convention as his chapter's NY/SC representative and soon knew that he wanted to become more involved in JACL.

He is a Kakehashi alumn and joined the MDC board as its NY/SC representative just a few years ago.

Last year, Langowski developed a highly successful mentorship program for the National Convention that continued this year with support from another Legacy Fund grant. He is most proud about writing two resolutions passed at this year's convention related to MDC teaching-training workshops and maintaining the MDC Regional Director position in the national budget. He was also appointed as the Nominations Committee Chairperson and serves as the NY/SC Treasurer.

Langowski is currently working on a project with many others across the country that explores the issue of single ethnic identity as reflected in the JACL creed.

"We say 'never again,' but it happens every day. If we truly stand against injustice, inequality, racism, hate and suffering of wartime incarceration, shouldn't we truly embrace solidarity, resistance, love, justice and peace? If we stand with solidarity and resistance, how can we be 'deeply disappointed' with the DACA repeal? If we stand with love, how can we not stand alongside our fellow people of color who fight police brutality and racist institutions designed to take humanity and break it down into bodies? If we do not continue the resistance against oppression, as it has perhaps moved on beyond our single ethnic identity to others, can we truly say, 'never again?'"

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**CONOR MAWHINNEY**  
JACL Chapter: MILE HIGH  
Recipient of the Minoru Yasui Memorial Scholarship  
University of William and Mary

Connor Mawhinney has volunteered for events in the Japanese American community since 2012. Among his favorites are the Cherry Blossom Festival, Mochitsuki, Aiki Matsuri, Kohaku Uta Gassen and Day of Remembrance. He was awarded the Raymond A. Mason School of Business Master of Accounting Merit Scholarship. Other honors include the William and Mary Dean's List, second place in the Navigant Consulting Case Competition and Sakura Foundation Scholarship. He is a president's aide at William and Mary and a member of the Finance Academy and the Gibb's Accounting Society.

**Congratulations Connor on receiving the Minoru Yasui Memorial Scholarship.**

*We are so proud of you!*

*Loving Mom and Dad*

Mile High JACL Chapter
Proudly Congratulates the 2018 National Scholarship Winners:
Connor Mawhinney
Recipient of the Minoru Yasui Memorial Scholarship &
Paige Mawhinney
Recipient of the Alice Yuriyo Endo Memorial Scholarship
Mawhinney’s community involvement is extensive and includes service to Camp Kesem as a counselor for children whose families have been affected by cancer, Union Special Needs Sports as a peer and coach, Local Highlands Ranch Race Series, Denver Zoo, Greenwood Community Church and Highlands Reading Buddy.

Personal Statement
“Defining ethnic identities promotes a sense of unity, belonging and community; forces that promote and act toward social change. Humans are, by nature, social beings who live, act and thrive in groups and communities. By emphasizing your commonalities, these social groups can form that you identify with to promote, share and continue these commonalities around people who accept and encourage them as well.

“Connecting with people of similar ethnicities creates bonds between people simply outside of friendships or relationships. And as these ethnic groups grow and get bigger, the force and support from the members in them allow these groups to carry a powerful voice. This voice is used to promote ethnic identity, encourage those around the world who can relate that they have a community that will accept them, and it protects the members from discrimination against individuals.

“It is hard for an individual to lead a social change on their own, but the voice of millions of people speaking out can drive the world toward change. They may not be perfect nor entirely accurate, but ethnic identities can develop the support and demand the change that so many across the globe wish to see.”

Mali McGuire
JACL Chapter: BERKELEY
Recipient of the Dr. Kyoshi Sonoda Memorial Scholarship
University of the Pacific Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry
Notables
Mali McGuire is passionate in her dedication to dentistry and has a strong desire to improve the system through increased accessibility and affordability, so that she can provide direct care to more patients in need. She hopes to connect with other passionate dental students, mentors and professors and through their combined thoughts, efforts and skills take proactive strides to positively transform the system.

McGuire graduated from Loyola Marymount University as a healthcare systems engineering major with a 4.0 GPA. She earned Magna Cum Laude, Student Service and Leadership Award, Columbia Scholastic Press Association Gold Crown Award and Associated Collegiate Press Pacemaker Award and was inducted in the Sigma Xi Scientific Research Honor Society. In addition, she earned many scholarships from LMU, the Buddhist Temple and JACL.

While at LMU, she was also a research assistant for several scientific projects. She currently is a graduate student for Kaiser Permanente, where she collaborated with consultants of their Strategy, Decision Support and Transformation and designed a two-dimensional educational animation. Her community involvement includes service for the LMU Hawaiian American and Filipino Cultural Clubs and Nicki Student Union. She also was active in the Junior Young Buddhist and Young Buddhist Asans.

Personal Statement
“But it is also because of them that I can be genetically Chinese, culturally fourth-generation Japanese-American and have an Irish last name. Like for many, there will never be an accurate box to check to describe ourselves. Everyone has their own story and self-chosen identity.

“The same limitation of single ethnic identity continues to prove itself today: close-mindedness. Historically, we looked to race, ethnicity and religion to gain meaning, understand and clarify, but categorizing and labeling people is becoming obsolete.

“We now live in an increasingly complex world where surface level descriptions and stereotypes are inadequate at explaining it. In other words, no single ethnic identity sums anyone up.

“Our world, interconnected by dynamic systems of communication and transportation, requires better systems and understandings for each other, our interactions and our relationships.

“Through my experiences, I have collaborated with, learned from and provided help to people of a variety of combinations of beliefs, languages and identities.

“Since birth, I have relied on a diverse community to raise and prepare me for any challenges I face. Now, I strive to contribute acceptance, understanding and open-mindedness to others in hopes that my current efforts now will have a positive impact — big or small — on the world around me.”

Megan Ono
JACL Chapter: SELANOCO
Recipient of the Rev. H. John & Asako Yamashita Memorial Scholarship
University of Southern California Notables
Megan Ono is pursuing a master’s degree in nonprofit leadership and management. Ono’s goal is to leverage her background in marketing and communications to bring visibility and support to underserved communities while maintaining deep involvement in the Japanese American community.

Ono also has a deep interest in Japanese-U.S. relations. Her involvement in JACL started with participation in the “Bringing Communities Together” program. After receiving the chapter’s Clarence Nishizu Memorial Scholarship, she became a student JACL member.

She received many academic awards from California State University, Long Beach, including graduating Cum Laude, President’s Honor List and Associated Students Incorporated Striking Student Leader. At USC, Ono is a Price Student Ambassador and serves on the Graduate Policy Administration Community. She also was active in the Nikkei Student Union and the Asian American Pacific Islander Journey to Success Initiative.

Her community involvement includes Kizuna Board Member, Kizuna High School Leadership Program, New Generation Nikkei Fund, Japan America Society of Southern California, Asian American Journalists Association, Manzanar at Dusk and Rising Stars Youth Leadership Program.

Personal Statement
“Certainly, there are advantages of rallying behind a single ethnic community. In fact, much of the volunteer service I engage with is focused on the Japanese American community, preserving our unique traditions, ensuring vital programs and institutions remain intact. However, through my graduate studies and service outside of the Japanese American community, I’ve discovered the importance of “lifting as you climb.”

“While there are persisting issues within our community, we must not forget to look at how far we’ve come and share the lessons learned with others. I have the honor and privilege of sharing the Japanese American story to inspire youth within and outside our community, shaping a more understanding and socially just world.

“My decision to further my education and pursue a career in the nonprofit sector is a direct result of my commitment to this goal. I hope to bring the knowledge and resources I attain in the nonprofit field to rally behind organizations in the Japanese American community already doing incredible work and strengthen nonprofits in other communities who lack many of the resources we take for granted.”

Rebecca Ozaki
JACL Chapter: CHICAGO
Recipient of the Henry & Chiyo Kowashira Memorial Scholarship
University of Illinois at Chicago, Jane Adams College of Social Work

Selanoco JACL
Proudly congratulates

Megan Ono

2018 Recipient of the Reverend H. John & Asako Yamashita Memorial Scholarship

Congratulations Megan on receiving the Rev H. John & Asako Yamashita scholarship

Your future is bright ~

with love,

Ando & Ono family
Rebecca Ozaki is an alum of the 2014 Kakehashi program and served as the National JACL program coordinator last year. She currently serves on the Chicago chapter board as the Youth co-chair.

Ozaki also participated in the Kansha Project Alumni Board, the chapter Scholarship Committee, the JACL-OCAs Leadership Summit and as a National Convention delegate for several years.

As a studying social worker, civil rights advocate, board member and former JACL staff, her education and career have held intentional focus on racial equity work and uplifting marginalized communities.

Ozaki is an intern working this year in the child-welfare system to ensure the safety of children and permanency, stability and creation of families.

Next year, Ozaki plans to work in a grassroots organization to protect the rights of senior citizens with safe and stable housing.

Her extracurricular activities also reflect this focus, including UIC Asian American Resource and Cultural Center, Asian Americans Advancing Justice, UIUC Division of Disability Resources and Educational Services and UIUC Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations. With such a full plate, Ozaki still manages to carry a 4.0 GPA.

Personal Statement

“I believe that part of the Japanese American legacy should be intertwined with recognizing how we can uplift other marginalized communities that are still experiencing deep and unjust forms of oppression in their everyday lives.

As I mentioned that unity amongst community, and particularly the youth that have grown into leadership, has emerged through the strength of the JACL. And in rallying around a single identity, the youth have also begun to expand to connect the Japanese American community to other communities through coalition building on different levels.

When assisting in organizing the JACL Youth Legacy Program, conversations amongst participants of various ethnic identities were formed through the legacy of the Japanese American concentration.

I was able to witness Asian American youth develop strong bonds and cultivate solutions for their own communities.

“Limiting the Japanese American community to focus only on our history and issues affecting only the Japanese may limit our potential to work toward racial equity for all communities, including black communities or Southeast Asian communities.”

Courtney Choy

JACL Chapter: HONOLULU
Recipient of the Sho Saito Memorial Law Scholarship
University of Hawaii at Manoa, William S. Richardson School of Law

Notables

Courtney Choy is triple majoring in marketing, management and international business, with a 3.97 GPA. She is a recent Kakehashi alum and because of that experience hopes to establish a program or organization dedicated to furthering Japan-U.S. relations.

She also completed a summer internship in Ehime, Japan, through the university’s Center for Japanese Studies. Choy was one of only two interns selected to engage in cross-cultural relations between Hawaii and Japan, which included preparing and conducting presentations on Hawaiian culture to students at elementary schools, high schools and universities, as well as municipalities in Sajjo and Matsuyama, Japan.

Choy is a recipient of several scholarships and a member of the Beta Gamma Sigma International Honor Society for placing in the top 10 percent of her class. She founded a local chapter of “I Am That Girl” (IATG), a service and leadership organization, and serves as the chapter leader for the university. She also volunteers for the Manoa Scholars Club and Circle K International “Key to College” Committee and performs with Hula Kula Lehua Tahine.

Personal Statement

“The advantages of rallying around a single ethnic identity include being able to confide in and connect with others who understand your position or situation. The support felt with those of a similar ethnic identity can be realized not only culturally, but politically and economically as well. Ethnicity also gives way for conversation to be vulnerable and share our deepest selves. However, with this power comes great responsibility in knowing the challenges ethnicity holds over us.

“The limitations of rallying around a single ethnic identity include neglecting diversity and the inclusion of all races regardless of their cultural and traditional beliefs. Our views can be narrowed significantly if we focus on those with whom we most identify rather than getting to know those who are unlike us. It presents a boundary for those unfamiliar with a certain ethnicity where feelings of being on the ‘outside’ can manifest. “Within an ethnic identity, there can also be a lack of understanding of the implications around a particular time in the history of that ethnicity and its people. Throughout generations of an ethnic identity, there is possibility of cultural loss and misunderstanding of the traditional meaning in various customs.

“Growing up in Hawaii, the most important lesson I’ve learned is that ethnic identity provides a community the foundation for understanding, for everyone to learn, listen and advocate for equality and justice.”

Garrett Kitamura

JACL Chapter: SNAKE RIVER
Recipient of the Thomas T. Hayashi Memorial Law Scholarship
University of Virginia School of Law

Notables

Garrett Kitamura has been involved in JACL and with other Japanese American youth through Future Farmers of America and the Buddhist temple. As an FFA state officer, he conducted a leadership tour, large-scale convention presentations and workshops at high schools across Oregon. He currently serves FFA and the university as a public speaking coach, staging manager and award presentation coordinator for the officers that have preceded him. It was this level of commitment that earned Kitamura the American FFA Degree in 2014.

Kitamura also worked in the Oregon Legislature as an intern and assistant for Rep. Cliff Bentz (R-Ore.), where he helped draft legislative bills, research constituent issues and prepare multimedia presentations. In addition, he holds membership in numerous prestigious societies such as Phi Beta Kappa, Sigma Tau Delta, International English Honor, Order of Omega Honor, Mortar Board Honor, Golden Key Honor, University Honor and Phi Kappa Phi Honor. He also has earned 10 times Dean’s List recognition and four times perfect GPA recognition.

Personal Statement

“Our world is obsessed with race. At its best, classifying races creates identifiable communities; it allows statisticians and social scientists to determine who can say what, which groups are being underserved and eases the process of tracing the origins of linguistic and cultural trends.

“At its worst, racial classification brings to mind images of segregation, ethnic cleansing and prejudice. Given that this process of labeling and grouping people based on their lineage carries such varying implications around a particular time in the history of that ethnicity and its people. Throughout generations of an ethnic identity, there is possibility of cultural loss and misunderstanding of the traditional meaning in various customs.

“Growing up in Hawaii, the most important lesson I’ve learned is that ethnic identity provides a community the foundation for understanding, for everyone to learn, listen and advocate for equality and justice.”

Citations

Congratulations Becky!

We are so grateful for your work and ongoing support for the Japanese American community in Chicago.
outcomes, how should this tool of classification be utilized?

“The solution seems simple enough. Keep the good and avoid the bad. Racial classification and identification should solely be used to assist underprivileged communities and create clear, identifiable means by which people can bond and create communities. However, for people of mixed-ethnicity like me, my very existence brings to the surface the inherent negative outcomes of even the best-intended use of racial classification.”

MICHAEL TAYAG
JACL Chapter: SAN JOSE
Recipient of the Grace Andow Memorial Law Scholarship
Yale Law School Notables

Michael Tayag is a graduate of Stanford University with a degree in comparative studies in race and ethnicity. He has worked to advance civil and human rights, especially for the Asian Pacific American community, since entering college nine years ago and is looking forward to continuing that advocacy work through more involvement in JACL. Tayag is now pursuing a law degree to equip himself to occupy the nexus of legal means by which people can bond and create communities. However, for people of mixed-ethnicity like me, my very existence brings to the surface the inherent negative outcomes of even the best-intended use of racial classification.

SOPHIA KAWACHI
JACL Chapter: WASHINGTON, D.C.
Recipient of the Dr. George Goro & Nettie Muramoto Memorial Scholarship
James Madison University Notables

As a new JACL member, Sophie Kawachi is looking forward to becoming more active in her chapter. Kawachi has lived in Senegal, West Africa, and Quebec City, Canada. She is bilingual in French and beginning Japanese. As the daughter of missionaries in West Africa, she met many passionate American medical professionals who came to serve at clinics organized by her parents’ missionary team. The more she learned about how the professionals served those who had limited access to medical care in isolated villages, the more she was inspired to serve medically in challenging contexts.

Toward her career goal of becoming a medical doctor, Kawachi participated in a premed internship at the Instituto Chirurgo Gaslini in Genoa, Italy, one of the best pediatric hospitals in Europe. She is one of only a handful of JMU students asked to work as a teaching assistant in the Biology Lab this semester, which provides an opportunity to serve others in a scholarly context while developing leadership skills essential to a future career in medicine.

KAI HENTHORN-IWANE
JACL Chapter: BERKELEY
Recipient of the Henry & Chiyko Kawashima Memorial Creative Arts Scholarship
Loyola Marymount University Notables

Kai Henthorn-Iwane graduated from Berkeley High School with a 4.0 GPA. He earned the highest possible ACT score, which is a distinction achieved by less than one-tenth of one percent of all students taking the college aptitude test. He is the recipient of the Loyola Marymount Presidential Scholarship, Chapman Presidential Scholarship, UC Davis Regents Scholarship and USC Director’s Scholarship, as well as earning the College Board AP Scholar with Distinction Award and the National Merit Letter of Commendation.

He volunteers for Saint Mary Magdalen Parish, where he participated in projects supporting a Catholic parish in Mexico and the “Church Without Walls” youth group. Henthorn-Iwane also is a math tutor at Rosa Parks Middle School. In addition, he is an illustrator for the school newspaper and placed first in the KQED/Legsfold California High School Political Cartoon Contest. He also takes art classes at the Academy of Art in San Francisco, where his work was selected for the Pre-College Experience Art Exhibition for Drawing and Composition, Figure Drawing and Still Life Painting classes. His artwork was published in ELICK Celebrating Art and exhibited in YOUTH 2 POWER Oakland Art Mural.

“Why when artists rally behind an ethnic identity while conceptualizing, developing and releasing their work, the way they rally behind that ethnic identity determines what their art is and how it is received. While focusing artistic endeavors on an ethnic identity opens opportunities for powerful stories, historical material, cultural reference points and aesthetics, it also presents real challenges of potentially lowered accessibility and the danger of being too derivative.”

Congratulations to our scholarship winner Aine Nakamura from the JACL, New York Chapter!

JACL congratulates

MICHAEL TAYAG
recipient of the Grace Andow Memorial Law Scholarship
Nakamura trained as a disciple in the Okinawan traditional music community Noborikawa School of the Tokyo and Kawasaki branches. Among her honors, she was selected to the National Society of Leadership and Success for her school and was a recipient of the Jazz Award. She also was sponsored for “Shima no Uta: SONGS OF ISLANDS — Okinawa and Yaeyama” for a self-curated event based on her independent study project.

**Personal Statement**

“Born as a Japanese American, I have experienced cultural conflicts in the U.S. as Japanese and in Japan as someone from America. At the same time, the experiences and observing the experiences have made me become a citizen of this earth and build my own artistic aesthetics and sensitivity.

“I came back to my birth country, America, in 2016 for my education, and I have been meeting people in the Okinawan circle where I play Okinawan music. I feel blessed to be in the community as I now have people whom I can consult with on everyday lives, kurashi, and whom I care especially in a constantly changing city like New York.

“To be kind to people, ask for help when in need and work with people on a same objective will bring one mental and physical stabilities. If these are with people with similar racial backgrounds, it would also bring mutual understanding in the context of your own ethnic backgrounds.

“At the same time, I believe it is important for one to find and build one’s own identity and life, taking responsibilities to make one’s own choices regardless of which group of people you are socializing with. Because, then, one’s experiences, hardships and gratitude become her/his own depth, and she/he can find a way to contribute to the community and a wider society in an honest way.”
NCWPN

AAPA Fall Seminar: The Asian Parent Playbook for Talking to Teens
Cupertino, CA
Oct. 17; 6:30-9 p.m.
Price: Free
The Asian American Parents Assn. is pleased to invite Stanford CHIPOA to present the Asian Parent Playbook for Talking to Teens. This program will feature skills and a Q & A session illustrating common problems and strategies for having more productive conversations with your teenager about tough topics, including school, relationships and goals.

Health, Sports & Culture Day at JAMS
San Jose, CA
Oct. 21; 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
Japanese American Museum of San Jose
535 N. Fifth St.
Price: Free with admission to the museum
Please join the JAMS for an afternoon of cultural demonstrations that bring health, sports and culture together. There will be various performances by local talent in addition to race walks and various games for kids. Don’t miss this family-friendly activity that celebrates health and culture.

PSW

Screening of ‘Yonsei Eyes’
Oct. 13; 2 p.m.
Paradise City Art Center
San Fernando Valley Japanese American Community Center
12653 Brandford St.
Price: Donation $10; Under 18 $5; Preorder $12 (deadline to order is Oct. 8)
Join BCAW for a screening of “Yonsei Eyes,” a film that follows two Yonsei young adults as they travel with their grandparents to the 2016 Tule Lake Pilgrimage. Producer/director Jon Osaki will also be present for a Q & A following the screening. In addition, there will also be a screening of the short film “My Dog Tiffany,” based on the book written and directed by Yoshihito Wayne Osaki.
Info: Contact Nancy Takayama (nt.highburn@gmail.com), Nancy Oda (nancyoda64@gmail.com) or Nancy Gehata (nancygehata@gmail.com).

Tanaka Farms Pumpkin Patch
Irvine, CA
Oct. 3; 9 a.m.-6 p.m. daily
5380 3/4 University Dr.
Price: Admission $4 (children 2 and under are free); Entry Package $12 (includes admission, wagon ride, petting zoo; Game/Activity Tickets $4; Parking Passes (required on weekends) $5; Wagon Ride $5; Petting Zoo $4
Tanaka Farms invites you to its annual Pumpkin Patch featuring acres of pumpkins, a corn maze, wagon rides, petting zoo and much more! Every weekend also features games, ATV rides, crafts, Tanaka Farms Food Shack, Scarecrow contest voting, famous pumpkin cannon, face painting and much more for the entire family.

KAJU

Kaju vs. Heroes: Mark Nagata’s Journey Through the World of Japanese Toys
Los Angeles, CA
Thru March 24, 2019
Japanese American National Museum
100 N. Central Ave.
Immerse yourself in the world of Mark Nagata, a toy designer and fervent toy collector, who brings to the museum his amazing collection of dazzling vintage and contemporary Japanese toy monkeys and heroes. Nagata’s pursuit of these toys took him on an unexpected journey that brought new realities about his cultural identity as an American of Japanese ancestry.

PNW

Tech Intern Blueprint
Seattle, WA
Oct. 6; 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Kce Northhwest
1601 E. Yesler Way
Price: Free
Registration is required.
Seattle JACL presents this event featuring Pay Parker, author of Tech Intern Blueprint, who will explain the best ways of landing tech internships and jobs through discussion of résumé building, interview tips and other materials related to searching for that perfect job. Register for this free event: bit.ly/2T4rBM

MDC

A-Squared Asian American Performing Arts Festival 2018
Chicago, IL
Nov. 6; 7-10 p.m.
Links Hall
3111 N. Western Ave.
Price: $20-$40
Co-presented by A-Squared Theatre, Asian Improv Arts Midwest and Links Hall, this event features the Asian American performing arts community in the Midwest and the original EO 9066 and Exclusion Order. It also is the site of the birthplace of the Japanese American National Museum.

EDC

From Manga to Musical: The Journey of the Four Immigrants’ Camp
Seattle, WA
Oct. 10; 6:30-7:30 p.m.
Houghton Library, Harvard Yard
Parks Hall, Room 206
12-10 Holyoke St.
Price: Free
In this lecture, Min Kahng, playwright and composer, will discuss the origins and development of his musical “The Four Immigrants: An American Musical Manga,” which is based on a 1931 graphic memoir by Henry Yoshitaka Iwaya. The play offers a glimpse of the Issei experience in the Bay Area from 1904-24. In addition, Kahng will also give a vocal workshop on musical theater later that afternoon from 4-5:15 that will allow participants to achieve their best performance of a song and receive a Q & A session.

Yayoi Kusama: ‘Where the Lights in My Heart Go’
Lincoln, MA
Dec. 22; 1-5 p.m.
DeCordova Sculpture Park and Museum
51 Sandy Pond Road
Thru Jan. 6, 2019
This free reception sponsored by the Center for Asian Pacific American Women will feature a reception with Yayoi Kusama. The work is the site of the birthplace of the Japanese American National Museum.

Japanese American Art Goes Global
Salt Lake City, UT
Nov. 30
Peabody Essex Museum
161 Essex St.
This exhibit covers the beauty and complex stories behind the museum’s celebrated Japanese export art collection from the period of Portuguese merchants in the 1500s through Japan’s emergence on the world stage in the late 19th century and beyond.

Righting a Wrong: Japanese Americans and World War II
Washington, D.C.
Nov. 18; 6-8:30 p.m.
The Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of American History
Documents Gallery, 2nd Floor
14th Street and Constitution Avenue N.W.
This free discussion explores the origins and development of the Issei diaspora, including dance, music, performance art, theater and more. The event will also feature a fusion of cuisines from the Asian continent.

ADVERTISE HERE
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For more info: pc@pacificcitizen.org (213) 620-1679
In Memoriam

Abe, Yasuo, 92, July 28; he is survived by his sister, Arlene Namba; he is also survived by other relatives.

Arita, Gordon John, 67, Las Vegas, CA, July 25; he was predeceased by his wife, Linda Arita; and brother, Edwin, he is survived by his children, Kristen (Sean) Kim and Matthew Arita; sisters, Luann (Robert) Aimi and Neddie (Robert) Courtney; sister-in-law, Karen Arita; nieces; 2.

Eguchi, George Kazunori, 92, Walnut, CA, Aug. 16; he is survived by his daughters, Amy Eguchi, Pamela (Michael)合理 and Elaine Eguchi; step-children, Louis Nishiyama, Teresa (Greg) Baker, and Gina (David) Bonn; he is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives; gc: 2; ggc: 2.

Inouye, Shinji, 90, Los Angeles, CA, Aug. 17; he is a Korean War veteran, he is survived by his wife, Yoshimi Inouye, his children; Deborah (James) Rathbun, Teruya, Dorothy Kistiko, and Michael (Debra); he is also survived by nephews and other relatives; gc: 4.

Kawamoto, Hatsuko, 95, Buena Park, CA, July 17; she is survived by her daughters, Charlie and John (Sandra); gc: 5; ggc: 1.

Kawata, Grace Sachiko, 92, Chino Hills, CA, May 30; she is survived by her children, Else and Wesley Kawato; siblings, May Hashimoto, Shigemura (Michio) Hira and Kohei Tanabe; she is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives.

Kawato, Kayano, 95, Los Angeles, CA, July 15; he is predeceased by his wife, Yoshimi Kayano; children, Alan Hitoshi (Dawn) Koga, Tatsumi, Yoshiro, and Bobby Kang; siblings, Kiyo Kinjo, Ellen Kim; gc: 5.

Kawata, Tom, 95, Bellevue, WA, Aug. 17; he was predeceased by his wife, Japan; he is survived by his children, Vernon (Rumi), Noreen (Dave) Fisher, Sheldon (Naomi), and John (Sandie); siblings, Taro Inouye and Takeshi Inouye; gc: 5; ggc: 10.

Yamada, Frances L., 68, CA, July 30; she is survived by her husband, Bob; children, Mike, Brian (Marion) and Ali; mother, Bo Ying Yin; sister, Ellen Yamada; she is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives; gc: 1.

Yada, Sonny Imsa, 53, Tustin, CA, June 24; he is survived by his wife, Jane; son, Grayson; mother, Isuko Yada; siblings, Michael, James, Frank and Penny Hady; he is also survived by many relatives.

Yamada, Ross, 94, Los Angeles, CA, July 8; he is predeceased by his wife, Shuichi; he is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives; gc: 1.

Yamada, Tomiko, 94, Torrance, CA, May 8; she is survived by her husband, Diane Yamada; gc: 2.

Yamashita, Grace Sachiko, 92, Chino Hills, CA, May 30; she is survived by her children, Else and Wesley Kawato; siblings, May Hashimoto, Shigemura (Michio) Hira and Kohei Tanabe; she is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives.

Yamashita, Hiroshi, 92, Gardena, CA, June 8; a Korean War veteran, he is survived by his sister, Sadako Suzuki; he is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives.

Yamashita, Kenji, 92, Gardena, CA, July 29; an Army Veteran, he is survived by his children, Vernon (Rumi), Noreen (Dave) Fisher, Sheldon (Naomi), and John (Sandie); siblings, Taro Inouye and Takeshi Inouye; gc: 5; ggc: 10.

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STUDY FINDS STUDENT LOAN DEBT PREVENTS SAVING, BUYING A HOME


tution at public colleges and universities (60 percent).

These survey results don’t necessarily reflect the policy positions of AYA or AARP. (Methodology: This poll was conducted via NORC’s AmeriSpeak nationally representative online panel for AARP from July 10-Aug. 7, 2018, with 4,862 adults between the ages of 18-74 encompassing Millennial, Generation X and Baby Boomer adults. The margin of error is ± 2.01% at the 95% confidence level.)

Ron Mori is a member of the Washington, D.C. JACL chapter and manager of community, state and national affairs—multicultural leadership for AARP.

By Ron Mori

A lot of us remember the responsibility of paying off student loans and how happy we were when that debt was cleared. We were raised with the expectation that education is the key to our futures. But along with that key comes the loans—loans that have ballooned in the years since I was in school.

New research from the Association of Young Americans and AARP shows that student loan debt is preventing Americans across three generations from saving for retirement or buying a home.

As many students begin their academic year, nearly half of those with student loan debt say they owe more than $30,000. According to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, borrowers have more than $1.4 trillion in student loan debt. The new research specifically shows that of those who have student debt, 45 percent of Millennials, 48 percent of Generation Xers and 50 percent of Baby Boomers owe more than $30,000 or more.

The survey highlights how three generations view major issues facing the nation. “AYA and AARP are working together because issues of financial security that include growing student loan debt are important to AARP’s members, their families and many Americans of all ages,” said AARP Senior VP Jean Setzfand. “Millennials, Gen Xers and Boomers share far more similarities than differences. This research highlights the long-term negative toll student loan debt has on multiple generations. The choice to fund you or your loved one’s education can boost your family’s future opportunities. However, due to the high cost of education, our joint research shows that the education decision should be considered in the context of other major financial decisions such as retirement savings, home ownership and paying for other necessities such as health care.”

Student loan debt has prevented or delayed:

- Saving for Retirement — 4 in 10 (40 percent) say student loan debts have stopped him/her from saving for retirement, including 41 percent of Millennials, 38 percent of Gen Xers and 31 percent of Boomers.
- Buying a Home — 1 in 3 (32 percent) say student loan debt has prevented or delayed him/her from buying a home, including 36 percent of Millennials, 26 percent of Gen Xers and 32 percent of Boomers.
- Helping a Family Member — 1 in 4 (25 percent) say student loan debt prevented or delayed him/her from financially helping a family member, including 23 percent of Millennials, 29 percent of Gen Xers and 26 percent of Boomers.
- Getting Health Care — Nearly 1 in 5 (16 percent) say student loan debt prevented or delayed him/her from getting needed health care, including 17 percent of Millennials, 16 percent of Gen Xers and 9 percent of Boomers.
- Home & Hospital Appointments Available!

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62 percent of Gen Xers and 55 percent of Boomers sharing the same view.

Americans believe major institutions can play a role in the cost of college and loan repayment:

- Colleges — 3 in 4 (74 percent) agree strongly or somewhat that colleges and universities should share the financial responsibility with students who default on their loans.
- Government — 6 in 10 (66 percent) agree strongly or somewhat that the federal government should forgive some student loan debt (58 percent) and/or provide tax stock market transactions to subsidize tuition at public colleges and universities (60 percent).

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