A personal look into the lasting footprints Japanese Americans have made in South L.A.
JACL NATIONAL AND S.F. CHAPTER SUPPORT RENAMING STREET AFTER JEFF ADACHI
JACL supports a resolution made to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors to honor the city’s public defender, who passed away unexpectedly in February.

JACL. National and the organization’s San Francisco chapter are supporting a resolution sponsored by District 6 Supervisor Matt Haney to rename Gilbert Street to Jeff Adachi Way.

After the Board of Supervisors’ Land Use and Transportation Committee unanimously passed a resolution to begin the process of renaming the street, the next step is to gain approval to begin the process of officially changing its name.

Supervisor Haney chose Gilbert Street, which runs parallel to Sixth and Seventh streets between Bryant and Brannan, because it is the street that the late public defender used to walk between his office and the courthouse, located at 850 Bryant St.

Adachi, 59, passed away suddenly on Feb. 22. Born in Sacramento, he was “the most highly visible Japanese American elected official in San Francisco and the only elected public defender in the State of California,” according to a statement by the JACL. Adachi was re-elected four times.

“In his memory, JACL today joins the Asian American and Pacific Islander community, in recognizing the first-Asian American and Pacific Islander elected official in San Francisco and the Sacramento, he was “the most highly visible Japanese American elected official in San Francisco and the only elected public defender in the State of California,” according to a statement by the JACL. Adachi was re-elected four times.

Jeff Adachi PHOTO COURTESY OF PUBLIC DEFENDER’S OFFICE, SAN FRANCISCO

JACL RECOGNIZES AAPI DAY AGAINST BULLYING AND HATE
By David Inoue and Sarah Baker
WASHINGTON, D.C. — May 18, 2019, would have been Vincent Chin’s 64th birthday. Vincent Chin, a Chinese American, was killed because two unemployed autoworkers believed him to be Japanese and blamed him for their loss of work.

In his memory, JACL today joins Act to Change, a national nonprofit dedicated to ending bullying in the Asian American and Pacific Islander community, in recognizing the first-ever AAPI Day Against Bullying and Hate.

JACL President Jeffrey Moy highlights the importance of recognizing this day: “The murder of Vincent Chin brought the Asian American community together in solidarity in a way it had not experienced previously. It forced us to recognize the shared experience we have as Asian Americans, and that includes the bullying and racial animosity that many of us experienced as children and into adulthood.”

Most studies show that students of Asian heritage report the lowest incidences of bullying. Rather than these numbers reflecting a positive outlook for AAPI students, it is the untold story that is concerning. Why is it that Asian students are unwilling to come forward to make these reports? It makes today even more important for us to recognize the shared experience we have as Asian Americans, and that includes the bullying and racial animosity that many of us experienced as children and into adulthood.

Most studies show that students of Asian heritage report the lowest incidences of bullying. Rather than these numbers reflecting a positive outlook for AAPI students, it is the untold story that is concerning. Why is it that Asian students are unwilling to come forward to make these reports? It makes today even more important for us to recognize the shared experience we have as Asian Americans, and that includes the bullying and racial animosity that many of us experienced as children and into adulthood.

Jeff Adachi PHOTO COURTESY OF PUBLIC DEFENDER’S OFFICE, SAN FRANCISCO

However, today, on this AAPI Day Against Bullying and Hate, we want to emphasize that no one should feel they need to gaman through any form of bullying.

For more information about what you can do to stop bullying in your community, visit the Act to Change website at https://acttochange.org/

A MOTHER’S TAKE

25 YEARS LATER

By Marsha Aizumi

This year, the JACL National Convention will be hosted in Salt Lake City—the same city that 25 years ago JACL made the decision to support same-sex marriage. JACL was the second national organization after the ACLU to declare its support. In 1994, this historic moment was not even on my radar. Aiden was 6 years old and in elementary school. He was a little, happy tomboy who had many friends.

Twenty-five years ago, my ties to the Japanese American community were not that strong. Many of Aiden’s friends were not Asian, and since my parents did not talk about the internment camps, I did not have a connection to that piece of our JA history.

Today with the camp pilgrimages, DORs and my work with Okaeri: A Nikkei LGBTQ+ Gathering, I have circled back to my JA roots in a way that has helped me to understand more of my history and more of my connection to the work that has been done on my behalf for so many years, even though I had little knowledge of it.

Today, I know that JACL also approved a transgender resolution in 2015. This directly affects me because of Aiden, but I also have another son who is adopted from Japan, and so the visibility that the JACL brings to injustices, discrimination and hatred are making the world safer for both of my sons.

It was also a heartwarming connection when I realized that the redress money that my parents received and gave me part of helped to pay for the adoption of both of my sons.

And so today, the work that JACL has done and is doing has become more and more important to me and my family because it is fighting to secure and safeguard the civil and human rights of not only the API community, but also all communities that are affected by injustice and bigotry.

JACL is sending a message of acceptance to those individuals like my sons and the LGBTQ+ community. The work of the JACL continues to be a blessing to me and my family.

In August, I will be attending the JACL National Convention from Aug. 1-4 and participating in a workshop with Stan Yogi and Sarah Baker, where we will share our journeys as Nikkei LGBTQ individuals or, for me, as a parent of a transgender son. Moderating our panel will be Michael Iwasaki, co-president of the Salt Lake City JACL chapter.

By Judd Matsunaga, Esq.

When a loved one dies, you might be the one faced with the overwhelming responsibility of closing out the person’s life. There are many things to attend to—from planning the funeral and/or memorial service to closing bank accounts to notifying the post office, all of which require attention to detail—adding stress to what is already a pretty emotional time.

In this article, I am going to assume the duty to use reasonable efforts to locate all trust assets, keep them secure and distribute or administer them according to the terms of the trust. Hopefully, the Settlor spent arranging the funeral, getting the house ready for sale and meeting with CPA’s and attorneys. Unless expressly stated in the trust instrument, trustees are entitled to “reasonable compensation.” There is no harm in keeping track of your time, and should you decide to take fees in the future, it will come in handy.

Finally, contact an estate planning attorney to help you administer the trust. The trustee has numerous “statutory duties” owed to the beneficiaries, most of which the nonprofessional trustee has no idea. The trustee should choose the attorney. You do not need to contact the attorney who drafted the trust (that attorney may be retired or even dead). Getting recommendations from family or friends might be the best approach.

Remember, as trustee, you have the power to use trust assets to hire CPA’s and attorneys to help guide you through the trust administration process. The attorney will help you provide beneficiaries with proper notice requirements, an accounting and perhaps most importantly, a “release of liability” from the trust beneficiaries.

Judd Matsunaga is the founding attorney of Elder Law Services of California, a law firm that specializes in Medi-Cal Planning, Estate Planning and Probate. He can be contacted at (310) 348-2995 or judd@eldeer-lawcalifornia.com. The opinions expressed in this article are the author’s own and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Pacific Citizen or JACL. The information presented does not constitute legal or tax advice and should not be treated as such.

LEGAL-EASE: AN ATTORNEY’S PERSPECTIVE

WHEN A LOVED ONE DIES

You can order them (that attorney may be retired or even dead). It’s the responsibility of the trustee (i.e., you) to marshal the trust’s assets, keep them secure and distribute or administer them according to the terms of the trust. Hopefully, the Settlor spent arranging the funeral, getting the house ready for sale and meeting with CPA’s and attorneys. Unless expressly stated in the trust instrument, trustees are entitled to “reasonable compensation.” There is no harm in keeping track of your time, and should you decide to take fees in the future, it will come in handy.

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Begining Sunday, June 9, through Friday, June 14, a cinematic one- two punch of Japanese American military service will land in Los Angeles. Taking place at the Downtown Independent theater will be a double-feature showing consisting of 2017’s 55-minute-long documentary “Proof of Loyalty: Kazuo Yamane and the Nisei Soldiers of Hawaii” and the new dramatic short “American,” starring George Takei and newcomer Rachel Michiko Whitney.

The former, which aired nationwide on Veterans Day 2018 on PBS after a fruitful film festival run, was produced and directed by Bainbridge Island, Wash.-based filmmakers Lucy Ostrander and Don Sellers. “Proof of Loyalty” focuses on Hawaii-born Kazuo Yamane, who, during World War II, served in the Army’s Military Intelligence Service as one of just a handful of Japanese American linguists to serve in the European Theater, in this case under Gen. Dwight Eisenhower. (The movie’s title actually refers to vital Japanese military documents translated by Yamane while serving in Europe.)

“American,” meantime, is a new dramatic story about a 100th Battalion/442nd Regimental Combat Team veteran named Clinton Nakamoto (played by Takei), who volunteers as a docent at L.A.’s Japanese American National Museum. One day, he encounters the descendants of a fallen comrade named David Seki during their visit to JANN, and as a result, he has an unexpectedly emotional flashback to a traumatic time from when he was a young man.

The screenings (see Info Box for dates, times and venue) aim to meet the eligibility requirements of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in order to be considered for an Oscar in the live-action short film category for “American,” an 18-minute-long movie written and directed by Louisiana-based filmmaker Richie Adams and executive produced by Liz Reiko Kubota Whitney and Ken Whitney.

WHAT: SCREENINGS OF ‘PROOF OF LOYALTY:
KAZUO YAMANE AND THE NISEI SOLDIERS OF HAWAII AND ‘AMERICAN’
WHERE: Downtown Independent Theater, 251 S. Main St, Los Angeles, CA 90012.
Phone: (213) 617-1033
WHEN: SUNDAY, JUNE 9–FRIDAY, JUNE 14
TIMES: June 9: 6 p.m.; June 10-14: 4 p.m.
Tickets: $12
VISIT: https://american.bpt.me and www.prooffloyalty.com for more information.

Bainbridge Island Connection

For documentarians Ostrander and Sellers, living on Bainbridge Island, Wash., had “everything to do with the fact that we did this,” said Sellers, referring not only to “Proof of Loyalty” but also several other works that have had Japanese American subject matter: “My Friends Behind Barbed Wire,” “Honor & Sacrifice: The Roy Matsumoto Story” and “Fumiko Hayashida: The Woman Behind the Symbol,” as well as other Asian American-themed documentaries “Island Roots: Portrait of a Filipino-American Community” and “Home From the Eastern Sea.”

“Bainbridge Island had a very unusual history in terms of different types of people who came from different places all over the world who lived here. There was a real rich texture of ethnicity on this island,” Sellers said, referring to the Japanese, Scandinavians, Native Americans and later, Filipinos, who worked at the lumber mill at Port Blakely.

“In the late 1800s, it was the largest lumber mill in the world, and it was better known than Seattle,” said Ostrander, who noted that they had been commissioned to produce a documentary about the mill.

The island’s history of ethnic diversity and harmony was underscored during WWII, when journalists Mildred and Walter Woodward Jr., famously editorialized in their Bainbridge Review for constitutional protections to apply to all Americans and against the mass incarceration of Japanese Americans.

“During WWII, Bainbridge Island was Exclusion Order No. 1, the first community in the country where Japanese Americans were taken away,” Ostrander said.

Enter Yamane

As for the genesis of “Proof of Loyalty,” Joyce Yamane — the Hawaii-born Sansei daughter of Kazuo Yamane who resides in Washington State — says it was she who approached Ostrander and Sellers after a buying a copy of “Honor & Sacrifice” during a visit to the headquarters of the National Japanese American Historical Society in San Francisco.

For several years, she had struggled over what to do with the photo albums, documents and memorabilia inherited from her late father for the benefit of his descendants.

From feedback she had received from others, she knew some of it was quite valuable — but her main goal was to pass along the story.

“Then, she met me,” said Ostrander.

“I thought, ‘This is what I want to do with the family archives and my father’s numerous photo albums from WWII,” Yamane told the Pacific Citizen. “I called [Sellers and Ostrander], and we connected.”

While the filmmaking couple had done much already on mainland Japanese American subject matter, they knew little of the particulars of the Hawaii Japanese American experience.

“It was a true learning curve for them,” Yamane said.

Ostrander and Sellers concurred, noting that it took two and a half years to complete “Proof of Loyalty,” with one year spent just doing research. As they delved through the materials provided by Yamane, they realized that their original idea to produce a 30-minute-long documentary wouldn’t do justice to the depth of the story — and it went to 55 minutes.

“It took us a long time to piece everything together,” Sellers said, because they needed to learn about the history of Japanese Americans in Hawaii. “Without understanding the context of Hawaii and the Japanese Americans in Hawaii, it wouldn’t have the impact of what we were able to finally achieve.”

“The arc of the story is the arc of Kazuo Yamane’s life before the military and in the military,” he continued. “But it’s also the overall experience of the Nisei from Hawaii during WWII. So, those two arcs are going on simultaneously.”

For Yamane, the documentary achieved what she wanted: “They did an excellent job of generational sweep, which was what I was intending. so the Yamane descendants could all understand the sacrifices and challenges the Issei went through,” Yamane said. “That was the whole point because oftentimes the younger generation now has no idea what the Issei and the Nisei went through. What started out as a family heritage movie has ended up to be a really rich educational resource for history — for all ethnic groups.”

Festival Friends

Once completed, Ostrander and Sellers took “Proof of Loyalty” on the festival circuit, where it screened at such locations as the Hawaii International Film Festival on Veterans Day 2017, New York’s 2017 Asian American International Film Festival (where it was selected for the Audience Choice in the documentary division), the Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival, the Northwest Filmmakers’ Festival and the Sedona International Film Festival.

During that run, “Proof of Loyalty” was often paired with “American,” according to writer-director Adams. The pairings were how he met Ostrander and Sellers.

For Adams, completing “American” had its challenges — but also some unusually fortuitous circumstances that put wind in its sails. A writer and director who also runs a Louisiana-based company that creates title sequences for movies, Adams directed 2014’s “Of Mind and Music,” a feature film about the power of music for dementia patients.

Ken Whitney, meantime, had been an executive producer on a 2016 movie titled “Tommy’s Honour,” about father-son golfers Old Tom Morris and Young Tom Morris, and their relationship serving as the heart of that story. (It won a BAFTA Scotland in the best feature film category in 2016.)

By George Toshio Johnston, Senior Editor, Digital & Social Media

IN-DEPTH REVIEW

By George Toshio Johnston, Senior Editor, Digital & Social Media

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF THE YAMANE FAMILY

Kazuo Yamane worked as a MIS linguist at Camp Savage.

Kazuo Yamane

The Yamane family store
Both Ken and Liz Whitney had also been passive investors in some Broadway shows and were direct investors in “Fun Home,” which won a Tony award in 2015 for best musical.

“After you make a movie, and people know that, you start to get some phone calls,” Ken Whitney said, relaying how a friend who was a colleague of Adams’ father suggested that he meet Adams, which happened after the Whitneys viewed “Of Mind and Music.”

Leaving a Legacy

“We really liked Richie,” said Ken, noting that he and Liz were looking into doing some projects with him. There were discussions of working on a feature project, according to Adams, but they decided to put that project on hold.

“I recall the conversation that we had at the very beginning when we met, and I kind of told him, ‘What I’d like for you to know about me as a filmmaker is that I want to be a part of projects that will ultimately leave a legacy of some kind,’” Adams said.

Adams said Ken Whitney responded by telling him he was very interested in somehow telling him he was very interested in somehow telling a story “that honors the experience that my wife’s family had endured during WWII, through Japanese American internment camps.”

Adams admitted that at the time his knowledge regarding the experience of mainland Japanese Americans during WWII was limited. The Louisiana-native noted that “being in the South, it’s just not something that’s covered.”

Still, a seed of an idea was planted.

“Actually, I came to learn that many folks, regardless of if you’re from the North, South — wherever in the U.S. — if you weren’t directly affected, many folks hadn’t heard about it,” Adams said.

Adams eventually approached Ken and said to him, “Would you have an interest in a short film about it,” Adams recalled telling the Whitneys — it was one of the many fortuitous incidents that helped to get “American” made.

According to Liz, her parents, Florence and Tsugio Kubota, met while they were incarcerated at the Rohwer War Relocation Authority Center in Arkansas. (Many years later, according to Liz, Tsugio Kubota served as president of the Stockton JACL chapter.) Rohwer was also the same camp where George Takei's family was incarcerated.

“My mom’s family was in the same block. George’s family lived in the barracks right across where my mom’s family’s barracks were, on the end,” Liz said. “My mom was one of seven kids, and they had more than one barrack.”

Her mother, Florence Shimazaki at the time, was forcibly removed from the West Coast when she was 17 and didn’t graduate from her original high school. Later in camp, she got a job as the block secretary, and she worked for George Takei’s father, who was the block manager. Florence still remembered the 5-year-old George Takei running around the office.

Via Liz’s brother, Glenn, who is also an actor, Liz and George connected. “When I spoke with George, and I told him about my mom, he said, ‘I remember being in my dad’s office, seeing this young woman and her fingers just flying over this typewriter!’ So, he had that memory.”

As it turned out, Florence Kubota would later reconnect with George Takei in person when she flew from her home in Lodi, Calif., to see “Allegiance” when it was running on Broadway.

With Takei now connected to the Whitneys, they were able to get Adams’ script to the “Star Trek” alum, via actress Marilyn Tokuda (who appears in “American”), whom Liz knew from when she too was pursuing an acting career.

“What I’ve learned in the entertainment business is nobody gets back to you very quickly. George got back to us right away,” said Ken. “He read it, he liked it. I think within two weeks he told us he would do it.”

Adams said that Takei sent him a note that said, “Richie, your story is haunting me. I can’t get it out of my mind. You have a very important project that I would like to be a part of. What’s the next step?”

“It was like two months later that we found the dates to film in L.A.,” said Ken, with the shooting taking place in July 2017. There was also a major part for Rachel Whitney, one of the Whitneys’ three daughters. She plays the granddaughter of Takei’s character’s KIA buddy.

More Good Fortune

In the present day, Takei’s character, Nakamoto, wears a red, white and blue garrison cap used by veterans who served in the 100th/442nd. It was not, however, something from an L.A. prop house. With production about to get under way, Adams said the one important part of Takei’s wardrobe that was missing was that garrison cap.

“I just thought, ‘It’s Los Angeles, there’s umpteen prop houses, someone has to have this cap,’” he said. But the production designer said they had looked everywhere and one could not be found.

Desperate, Adams called Mitch Maki, the CEO of the Go for Broke National Education Center, and he put out the word out. Adams said that in a matter of 30 minutes, he got an email from Tracey Matsuyama, the daughter of 442nd vet Don Seki.

Matsuyama not only lent Adams her father’s garrison cap to be used as a prop, but also his real medals also appear in the movie.

“They are an incredible, just wonderful patriotic family,” Adams said.

Seki and Matsuyama even make a cameo appearance in the movie. And, the character David Seki share a last name and first initial. Later, that cap provides a touching payoff at the movie’s conclusion.

With a busy schedule running his title company, however, it would take until January 2018 to complete, with “American” going on the film-festival circuit route in March 2018 at the Newport Beach Film Festival.

It nevertheless went through several different cuts or versions — including one that they considered submitting to the Festival de Cannes, but due to a 15-minute time limit, discarded because it left out too much.

With both “Proof of Loyalty: Kazuo Yamane and the Nisei Soldiers of Hawaii” and “American” sharing a double-bill, Ostrander thinks the respective films tell an important story that is relevant to today’s status quo.

“We think they are incredibly timely, especially with what’s going on with our country today,” said Ostrander.
Living in South L.A. Today as a Japanese American

The writer reflects on the area’s influence on who she is today — and the lasting footprints JAs have made as a vital part of that history.

By Athena Mari Askliadiis, Contributor

In the last few months, it has been nearly impossible to miss the mentions of rapper Nipsey Hussle and filmmaker John Singleton in the news. Both celebrities, whose deaths dominated headlines in the spring, each hailed from South Los Angeles.

The pride they had for their African-American roots and their neighborhood is something that they not only referenced in their work, but also made a focal point — voicing ‘hood stories from a raw first-hand point of view.

In addition to their enormous creative talents, they may be arguably best remembered for their advocacy work for the people in their community. “Crenshaw” is now becoming synonymous with the late rapper, his loss community. “Crenshaw” is now becoming something that they not only referenced in our existence and the Japanese American history here in this place.

Even during the 1990s and 2000s, dominant Asian American depictions in the news or films located in the area mostly highlighted Korean American characters rather than JAs. In the 2000 comedy film “Next Friday,” the only Asian role was that of a comical neighbor, Mrs. Ho-Kim (played by Japanese-Finnish American actress Amy Hill). In Singleton’s Oscar-nominated 1991 film “Boyz n the Hood,” its original torii-esque design. Torii or 鳥居, literally means “bird abode,” and according to Wikipedia, is a “traditional Japanese gate most commonly found at the entrance of or within a Shinto shrine, where it symbolically marks the transition from the mundane to the sacred.”

Where are our stories? As I walked from home to attend Nipsey Hussle’s funeral procession on April 11 (Hussle was gunned down in the parking lot of his clothing store in South L.A. on March 31), I rapidly noticed that I was definitely the only Asian-looking face in a sea of everything but. I found a good viewing spot just outside of Angelus Funeral Home on South Crenshaw Boulevard, in direct view of the Crenshaw Square sign, and for the first time in a while, I thought about how truly Japanese its style is. The sign, which has changed in font and color over the last few decades, still maintains its original torii-esque design.

As a longtime South L.A. resident, my pride for my neighborhood has been a rocky journey over the years. When people ask where I am from, insinuating I’m not likely local, I eagerly reply, “Here, I’m from down the street, I grew up in this area.” This answer is usually met with surprised reactions.

Even while donning a “Crenshaw” hoodie from Hussle’s clothing line, I still knew I would appear, to the mostly young crowd, as a newbie, a bandwagon fan or the most recent assumptions in the area — a gentrifier, a house flipper or a transplant who took the Metro line from the Westside.

Most never guess that for my whole life, my family has lived and worked in South L.A. My grandparents first moved to the area in the 1920s (minus the time surrounding their internment), helping to establish Los Angeles Holiness Church on South Gramercy Avenue and 36th Place.

Wearing Hussle’s apparel makes me feel a renewed sense of the pride I have always wanted to display for my hometown, but never could gather the courage for. He made the name “Crenshaw” popular and cool by branding it through his line, the Marathon Clothing (TMC).

I also wear the brand because I am a fan of his music and his commitment to our community. Role models who remember where they come from and give back are always heroes of mine. Before his passing, my hoodies mostly served as conversation pieces about both the boulevard and neighborhood area more than the rapper himself. When asked about it, I would explain who Nipsey Hussle was, since he wasn’t as widely known then, and that I was reppin’ my home.

It often became an unplanned opportunity to explain how the community was in the past and how my family and I came to be there. It was a way for me to feel like I could belong, even though I did not always feel or look the typical part.

As a longtime South L.A. resident, my pride for my neighborhood has been a rocky journey to say the least.
As a ‘90s kid on the heels of the L.A. Riots, growing up as a hapa Japanese American in a primarily black neighborhood was not easy on my identity formation. My mere existence is a far cry from the once very Japanese-American community that existed in the 1960s and ’70s. None of the kids playing on my block looked like me. I never knew the same Crenshaw or Leimert Park my family knew — the dozens of Japanese neighbors, the peak of the vibrant (and tasty) Holiday Bowl, the plethora of JA businesses, the famous tea cakes at Grace Professionals, or the fun of the Crenshaw Square Festival.

I grew up as an anomaly in a graffitied, rundown part of L.A. that has faced many rebuilding challenges. Who would want to invest in and bring business to a place the media continually sensationalizes and ghettoizes? Much of Crenshaw Boulevard was still boarded up and charred following the riot fires for most of my childhood, so things were not the prettiest driving to and from home. Most black families on my street had bused their kids out to schools in Beverly Hills or the Pacific Palisades; my parents decided on a private school since the busing program was non-existent for me.

But even with the schools not being the greatest and living in close proximity to gang violence and crime, there are still positive people and experiences intermingled into my memories.

My next-door neighbors were a mix of black professionals with children, retired couples who knew my family for decades and senior Niseis, all of whom were never represented when people would see South L.A. on TV.

The Wadsworth’s, an elderly black couple who lived across the street, often showered the neighborhood children with gifts during the holidays. This act of generosity is something I still remember fondly.

My summer days were spent with two neighborhood girlfriends, playing from dusk till dawn for years — riding bikes, playing Barbies and even making a lemonade stand.

But even with the good times there, I still found myself often ashamed of my home. I was called things like “Ghetto Superstar” by neighborhood boys who thought I was an Asian American who lived across the street, often showered the neighborhood children with gifts during the holidays. This act of generosity is something I still remember fondly.

I was called things like “Ghetto Superstar” by neighborhood boys who thought I was an Asian American who grew up in and still currently resides in Crenshaw with his family. The 31-year-old amateur rapper laughingly admits that he raps about love and heartbreak mostly.

“I don’t have any street cred,” Ito bluntly admitted. “Rappin’ about you, it have to really be part of that, and I’m not,” he said. “I felt like, yo, those [subjects] are cool, but . . . I’m always like kinda in the middle. I’m like, ‘Am I part hip hop’? . . . Or rick like an alien to it? . . . Or am I both at the same time? . . . ‘Like, what am I? I’m always like, ‘What’s the f*ck am I?’” Ito asked himself during our sitdown chat. “Because I am Japanese, but I don’t speak Japanese, and then I was in this community that’s somewhat Japanese, but kind of wasn’t.” Ito’s confusion and the fogginess of his identity was something I could totally relate to.

But I also knew there were still a decent number of JA’s left in the area, and what about them? Why did they stay, and why did some even chose to continue to invest in businesses here when most folks had left? These questions swirled in my head as I thought about what still remains in South L.A.

Surprisingly, businesses like Tak’s Hardware (formerly home to Kay’s at the same location), the Japanese American Community Credit Union, All Capital Property Management, Kinji Kajukenbo, the Asian American Drug Abuse Program (AADAP) and Tak’s Coffee Shop were started by Japanese Americans and still serve South L.A. residents today.

Today as a 30-something professional still living in Leimert Park, I feel like I am filled with more curiosity and respect than ever before about our beginnings here. My once critical opinions have shifted as I have gotten older and morphed into an unparalleled pride for thehood in true Nipsey fashion.

The motivation and dedication by South L.A.’s remaining Japanese Americans and their ability to thrive is truly inspiring, so I hope you all stay tuned to the next installment.

“Dedication, hard work plus patience The sum of all my sacrifice, I’m done waitin’ I’m done waitin’, told you that I wasn’t playin’ Now you hear what I been sayin’, dedication It’s a whole occasion.” — Nipsey Hussle’s “Dedication” featuring Kendrick Lamar

Athena Mari Asklipiadis, a hapa Japanese L.A. native, is the founder of Mixed Marrow, a filmmaker and a diversity advocate.

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But even with the schools not being the greatest and living in close proximity to gang violence and crime, there are still positive people and experiences intermingled into my memories.

My next-door neighbors were a mix of black professionals with children, retired couples who knew my family for decades and senior Niseis, all of whom were never represented when people would see South L.A. on TV. The Wadsworth’s, an elderly black couple who lived across the street, often showered the neighborhood children with gifts during the holidays. This act of generosity is something I still remember fondly.

My summer days were spent with two neighborhood girlfriends, playing from dusk till dawn for years — riding bikes, playing Barbies and even making a lemonade stand.

But even with the good times there, I still found myself often ashamed of my home because of the scrutiny I got from my private school classmates and even my own extended family.

I was called things like “Ghetto Superstar” (the title of a 1998 song by singer Mya) by kids, but was also simultaneously labeled “white girl” by neighborhood boys who thought I spoke too proper.

Sometimes, my cousins would joke about making sure to lock their car doors when they exited the 10 freeway at Crenshaw Boulevard so they wouldn’t get carjacked on the way to our house. Through the good, the bad and the ugly, it was home, the only home I have ever known, a place both comfortable and loved,
**SHARING THE INCARCERATION STORY THROUGH DANCE**

The Seattle JACL serves 500 students through ‘Farewell Shikata ga nai.’

Seattle JACL recently completed a successful school tour of “Farewell Shikata ga nai,” a performance created by Seattle-based dance artist Gabrielle Nomura Gainor that combined dance and Asian American theater to explore the mass incarceration of Japanese Americans and show how the trauma and injustice of that dark chapter has impacted the generations that have followed.

Performances were held at North Seattle College, Licton Springs K-8, Franklin High School and Lake Washington Girls’ Middle School over a two-week period. In addition to the dance performance, each visit included a Q & A with the dancers to further explore topics such as social justice, xenophobia, the immigrant experience and Asian American representation in the arts.

Joining Gainor in the performances were Hailey Burt, Siena Dumas and Sarah Eden Wallace. Serving as technical director was Tess Wendel.

In addition, Seattle JACL Board Member Stan Shikuma joined the cast for two of these performances to share more with the students about his family’s experience of being forcibly removed and incarcerated during World War II.

Shikuma recounted that his brother was 4 years old when their family was taken from their home to a detention center at the Salinas Rodeo Grounds and then to the concentration camp at Poston, Ariz. He also recalled seeing a photo of his brother with his kindergarten class on a barren playground with barracks lined up behind them.

“I think hearing stories about kids the same age as themselves and their siblings makes it more real for [the students],” said Shikuma. “What would it be like to start school in a prison camp? How would it feel to leave all your friends behind and miss graduation? What if you had to leave your pet and all your favorite belongings behind? What if you couldn’t travel to see relatives or go shopping? At some level, young people grasped the injustice when presented in ways that strike a chord with their own experiences.

“Presenting the story in a theatrical dance piece presents more facts and history lessons,” Shikuma continued. “It opens up feelings and emotions, which so often are more powerful than words. Open hearts lead to open minds — Farewell, shikata ga nai.”

Special recognition was given to Seattle JACL Chapter President Sarah Baker for facilitating the dialogue, as well as board members Renee Infelise and Josh Tashima-Boyd for their part in organizing two of the performances. The tour was made possible in part with grants from JACL National, as well as the Washington State Arts Commission.

“This May, we got to perform for students from kindergarden to college-age,” said Gainor. “As a performer, nothing can compare with getting to dance for young people and to hear and engage with them. One of my favorite comments came from a young woman at Lake Washington Girls’ Middle School, who shared how much it meant to her to see Asian American women like herself dancing onstage. And at Licton Springs, a young man shared, ‘I don’t know why they called them ‘camps’ because it seems like [Japanese Americans] were simply put in jail.’

“My dancers and I were amazed by these young people,” Gainor concluded. “As storytellers, we must connect them with their history and support them as best we can, so that they, too, can continue the fight for justice in America.”

**CAMOUFLAGE NET PROJECT ON DISPLAY IN WASHINGTON**

Seattle artist Tara Tamaribuchi’s art installations, inspired by the history of Japanese Americans who made camouflage nets for the U.S. Army during World War II, are on display in Seattle and Tacoma, respectively.

Two art installations from the series “Camouflage Net Project” by Seattle artist Tara Tamaribuchi are currently on display at the Northwest African American Museum in Seattle and the Pantages Theater in Tacoma, Wash.

The installation at the Pantages Theater, which is on display until July 15, is in the storefront windows on Ninth and Commerce streets and is presented by Spaceworks Tacoma and funded in part by Denso and the ArtsFund. The installation at the NAAWM, which is on view until Aug. 28, is part of the group exhibition “Edwin T. Pratt: A Living Legacy,” which features several Pratt Fine Arts Center scholarship recipients honoring the work, life and spirit of the fallen Seattle-area civil rights leader.

The “Camouflage Net Project” features camouflage netting made with kimono fabric. The project was inspired by the history of the Japanese Americans who made camouflage nets for the U.S. Army, as prison labor, during World War II.

Tamaribuchi was interested in connecting her handiwork to those who were wrongly incarcerated during the war, transcending time and place to show pride of heritage through the use of kimono fabric.

“I hope that when people experience these pieces, they learn about the Japanese American incarceration and see the connections with human rights issues of today,” said Tamaribuchi.

“Doing this work has made me realize how interconnected our experience is with people outside of our community.”

The series began at the Seattle Center Sculpture Walk in 2017, in response to the Muslim Ban and the 75th anniversary of Executive Order 9066, which wrongly imprisoned Japanese Americans and those of Japanese descent living along the West Coast in American concentration camps during WWII.

“I was moved by Dorothea Lange’s photos of Niseis weaving the camouflage nets in Manzanar. I had been unaware of this kind of labor. As an artist who references the body and the working hand, I wanted to connect my hands to those who were working in the factory,” recalled Tamaribuchi. “I have gotten the sense over my life that my Obaachan held shame and trauma from living in Tule Lake for four years. When I wove the kimono fabric, I thought of her, wishing to weave away her shame and trauma. I believe we can harness powers in the magnificence of our ancestral culture.”

Tamaribuchi made a camouflage net that tented the underside of a glass walkway to act as a visual filter through which all people are protected and seen as interconnected.

The installation in Tacoma features a piece that blends photos of once-incarcerated Japanese Americans with photos of asylum seekers at the U.S. southern border and Japanese Americans making camouflage nets with imagery of contemporary prison labor.

Tamaribuchi chose to include fabric from one of her childhood kimonomo into the net to underline the issue of child incarceration in American concentration camps during WWII and today.

The installation in the Edwin T. Pratt exhibit features the original camouflage net from the Seattle Center, draped over a tensile structure. Inside the tent, a sound installation features the oral histories of Japanese American internment camp survivors who made the nets, as well as Dennis Baumberger, who is half-Japanese and half-white. He was taken from an orphanage in Los Angeles and imprisoned at the Manzanar Relocation Center for being half-Japanese.

The sound installation exhibits also feature the oral histories of Fumi Hayashi, Yoshimi Matsuura, Sam H. Ono and Kaz Yamamoto. All of the oral histories were downloaded from the Denso website. In addition, historical documentation presented in the slide show is also from Denso.

TWIN CITIES CHAPTER AWARDS
SCHOLARSHIPS TO 12 HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

Twelve local high school seniors were honored at the 56th annual Twin Cities JACL Scholarship Awards Banquet on May 9. In addition to academic records, community service and extracurricular activities, applicants were evaluated on essays expressing their perspectives on “The Relevance of JACL Today.”

Scholarships totaling $18,800 were awarded to Gigi Bocek (PIM Arts High School), Jack Dagoberg (Wayzata High School), Marissa Dulas (Edina High School), Eric Ewoldt (School of Environmental Studies), Danielle Honda (Mounds Park Academy), Caleb and Micah Maeda (Rosemount High School), Miki Rierison (The Blake School), Alyssa Rompporti (Buffalo High School), Sam Sikkink (Chaska High School), Mary Thompson (Auburndale High School), Earl K. and Reiko H. Ohno, Tom Ohno, Tom Yanase, Alexandra Tomita, Cinclair Mathies, Mili Nakamura, Erica Pasquanto-nio, Leonard Tanne, Michael Hasegawa and (back row, from left) Rina Yamamoto, Micah Maeda, Matthew Thompson, Marena Dulas and Gigi Bocek. Not pictured are Caleb Maeda and Eric Ewoldt.

The 2019 Twin Cities JACL Scholarship Award winners are (front row, from left) Alyssa Rompporti, Jack Dagoberg, Sam Sikkink, Danielle Honda and Miki Rierison and (back row, from left) Rina Yamamoto, Micah Maeda, Matthew Thompson, Marena Dulas and Gigi Bocek. Not pictured are Caleb Maeda and Eric Ewoldt.

CCDC Holds JACL Scholarship Luncheon

On May 19, 2019, CCDC JACL held its scholarship luncheon honoring Clovis, Fresno and CCDC JACL scholarship recipients. Pictured are this year’s recipients (front row, from left) Jenna Aoki, Nathan Nakaguchi, Taylor Mori, Avery Fong, Julie Morimoto, Patricia Navarro and (back row, from left) Tomi Toshiye Eijima, Sierra May, Leah Moment, Drew Nishikawa, Christopher Tom, Christopher Liu and Carson Evans.


The annual CCDC JACL Scholarship Luncheon, honoring an outstanding senior from each of the five Clovis high schools, was held at Pardini’s restaurant in Fresno, Calif., on May 19.

The Fresno chapter awarded six recipients, and the CCDC district recognized three honorees from Fresno, Merced and San Francisco.

The CCDC District honored Tomi Toshiye Eijima, who is a senior at Lowell High School in San Francisco, plans on attending Occidental College in the fall; Julie Morimoto is a senior at Merced High School in Merced; and Taylor Mori is a senior at Central High School in Fresno who plans on attending the University of California, Santa Barbara, in the fall.

Jody Hironaka-Juteau and Joy Goto were on the scholarship committee for CCDC and Fresno JACL.

“I’m always amazed by the high caliber of scholarship recipients,” said past CCDC Governor and current P.C. Editorial Board Member Marcie Chung. “One graduate wants to work on stem cell research. I think the lowest GPA was 4.2. Wow, it’s just amazing what these young people have accomplished in their young lives. We wish them the very best in their futures!”

72nd Japanese American Graduation Banquet Held in Oregon

P ortland and the Gresham-Troutdale chapters of the JACL, along with nine other Japanese American organizations and churches, held the 72nd annual Japanese American Graduation Banquet on May 5 at the Monarch Hotel in Clackamas, Ore.

Seventeen high school seniors from the greater Portland area were honored with awards and/or scholarships totaling more than $19,000.

The event’s emcee was Chip Larouche, PNWDC governor of JACL. Also in attendance was Consul General of Japan in Portland Takashi Teraoka, who congratulated the seniors and wished them well in his remarks.

Dr. Wynn Kiyama, executive director of Portland Taiko, was the keynote speaker. In his speech, Kiyama compared his journey from college to where he is today and related that to some of the ideas he had heard from the graduates as he chatted with them before the luncheon.

In all, more than 185 guests were in attendance to congratulate the students as they begin their collegiate career in the fall.

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CALENDAR

The 2019 JACL National Convention Salt Lake City, UT July 1-7, 2019 Little America Hotel 500 Main St. Save the date. Join JACL at its annual National Convention in Salt Lake City! Registration is now open! Don’t miss this opportunity to connect with JACLers from across the country as the organization continues its civil rights advocacy mission. Info: Visit www.jacl.org.

NCWNP

Eden Japanese Community Center Annual Bazaar San Lorenzo, CA June 1, 7-1 p.m.; June 9, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Eden Japanese Community Center 710 Elgin St. Price: Free Don’t miss this annual bazaar fund raiser that features Japanese food, a raffle, bingo and carnival-type games for kids. It’s an event for the whole family to enjoy! Popular food includes BBQ teriyaki chicken and rib dinner, sushi, udon, chicken curry and shave ice.

Japanese Cultural Fair
Santa Cruz, CA June 6; 11 a.m.-11 p.m. Mission Plaza 103 Emmett St. Price: Free Come out and experience a day of Japanese arts and culture in the heart of Santa Cruz. The day’s events will feature various cultural exhibits, martial arts demonstrations, a taiko performance by Watsonville Taiko Group, Japanese dance, musical performances in addition to delicious food and much more! Info: Visit https://www.jcsf.santa cruz.org.

Chiura Obata: An American Modern
110 N. Central Ave. Price: Free This documentary from filmmakers Lucy Ostrander and Don Sellers tells the true story of Kazuo Yamane and the loyalty of the Nisei soldiers from Hawaii in World War II, despite facing discrimination and incarceration, and how they continued all adversity to serve with the greatest distinction in the U.S. military. Yamane returned to Japan just before the attack on Pearl Harbor and went on to serve on the Pentagon, under Eisenhower in Europe and helped identify a secret document that would significantly help America’s war in the Pacific. “Proof of Loyalty” will also screen with a special showing of the award-winning film “American,” featuring George Takei. Info: Visit proofofloyalty.com for additional details.

Retuming to California: Post-Camp Stories
Los Angeles, CA June 25; 2-4 p.m. JANM 100 N. Central Ave. Price: Free Please include with museum admission Regarded as “worse than camp” by many, this exhibition and the period of incarceration is often overlooked in Japanese American history. Join JANM’s Collection Manager Kristen Hayashi and Densoh Content Director Brian Niyia as they discuss aspects of this time period. Hayashi will talk about the unique situation of Japanese Americans in Los Angeles during the post-war years, and Niyia will provide an overview of the stories throughout California based on Densoh interviews with those who returned.

Allie Takahashi: ‘Uranai’
Portland, OR Thu July 4 Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center 121 N.W. Second Ave. Price: $5 Adults/$3 Students and seniors; Friends of Oregon Nikkei Endowment are free. Allie Takahashi, an artist and tattooer based in Oakland, Calif., uses the visual language of ukiyo-e (Edo-period Japanese woodblock prints) to evoke dynamics of intergenerational trauma and healing, specifically in the context of the Japanese American experience. Urana refers to the process of looking behind the curtain of the world visible for divine guidance. Her use of fabric, limbs and cord express the fluidity of the ancestral connection between past and present. Info: Visit http://www.oregonnikkei.org/exhibits.htm.

Minnesota’s Secret Language School Photo Display
St. Paul, MN June 15; 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Opening Event; Exhibit Runs Thru Sept. 2 Fort Snelling Visitor Center 200 Tower Ave. Price: Free (admission to photo exhibit, additional donation is suggested) Free admission to historic sites for JACL members; discounted admission of $6 for non-JACL members. Regular hours are Tues.-Fri. (10 a.m.-4 p.m.); Sat./Sun. (10 a.m.-5 p.m.); closed on Mondays except Labor Day (10 a.m.-5 p.m.) View photographs and narratives telling the remarkable story of the Japanese American men and women who trained as linguists at the Military Intelligence Service Language School at Camp Savage and Fort Snelling during World War II. At the Opening Event on 7/1, Fort Snelling Site Supervisor Kimmy Tanaka will give a special presentation in the auditorium. This event is co-sponsored by the Twin Cities JACL and Historic Fort Snelling/Minnesota Historical Society. Info: Please preregister by June 12 to Sally Suzuki at (952) 484-5193 or email ssuzu@comcast.net. For other information, visit mnhs.org/fortsnelling/activities/calendar/7024.

Shinto: Discovery of the Divine in Japanese Art
Cleveland, OH Thu June 20 The Cleveland Museum of Art The Kelvin and Eleanor Smith Foundation Exhibition Hall 11150 East Boulevard Price: Members are free; Nonmembers $10; $5 Seniors and Students; $5 Children 6-17.

ADVERTISE HER Events in the calendar section are listed based on space availability. Please submit ad with photos of your event for maximum exposure.

FOR MORE INFO: pc@pacificcitizen.org (213) 620-1767.
Asano, Hideko, 93, Torrance, CA, Feb. 19; she is survived by her son, Gary (Vickie Wakinaka) Asano; sister-in-law, Setsuko Asano; she is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives; gc: 1.

Blackwood, Tsuyuko, 91, Springfield, OH, Dec. 18, 2018; she was predeceased by her husband, John; she is survived by her children, Linda (Gary Bodey and John at her side) Blackwood; brother, Kio (MIki); sisters-in-law, Betty (Kazu) and Emi (Fumi); gc: 3; ggc: 3.

Bosque, Yuko ‘Sybil,’ 94, San Jose, CA, April 2; she was predeceased by her husband, Charles ‘Bud’ Bosque; she is survived by her son, Steven “Butchie” Furukawa; she is also survived by her son, Steven (Gary) Bodey and John (Anna) Blackwood; she is also survived by her brother, Robert (Tori) Bosque, Yuko ‘Sybil,’ 94, Los Angeles, CA, April 2; she was predeceased by her husband, Charles ‘Bud’ Bosque; she is also survived by her son, Steven “Butchie” Furukawa; she is also survived by her son, Steven (Gary) Bodey and John (Anna) Blackwood; she is also survived by her brother, Robert (Tori) Bosque.

Fukui, David, 79, Seattle, WA, March 31; during WWII, his family and he were incarcerated at the Minidoka WRA Center in Idaho; he is survived by his uncle, Henry; aunts, Rose Fukano and Michi Fukano; he is also survived by several cousins.

Hasegawa, Shigemi, 105, Lynnwood, WA, March 27; during WWII, her family and she were incarcerated at the Heart Mountain WRA Center in WY; in 1943, she was allowed to move to Chicago, IL, where she lived until 2005; she was predeceased by her husband, Ken Hasegawa; she is survived by her sister-in-law, Fudge (Joe) Umemoto; she is also survived by many nieces and nephews; and 2 godsons.

Ido, Yukichi Harry, 87, Los Angeles, CA, Jan. 16; he is survived by his wife, Umeka; 5 children and their spouses; siblings, Katsuji and Kimiko; gc: 11; ggc: 17.

Ishiki, Tomoichi, 85, Torrance, CA, Feb. 22; he is survived by his wife, Doris; siblings, Eileen Arakaki and Dennis (Karen) Ishiki; he is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives.

Ishiki, Ichiko, 83, Bellevue, WA, March 12; she was predeceased by her husband, Takashi “Tak” Ishiki; she is survived by her children, Chris (Donna), Cindy and Clyde (Cindy Kamimae); siblings, Masaru (Kathy), Katashi (Julie), Satoshi (Pearl), Setsuko Hamamoto, Fusako Kamihara and Yasuko Yamamoto; sister-in-law, Tsuneko; gc: 4.

Matsuda, Martin, 81, Seattle, WA, March 24; during WWII, his family and he were incarcerated at the Minidoka WRA Center in ID; he is survived by his wife, Karin; children, Fred and Nancy; and siblings, Masako Iijima and Keizo (Takae) Matadeo; he is also survived by many nieces, nephews, a grand-nephew and other relatives.

Ogi, Fumiko Kazuyo, 82, Los Angeles, CA, Feb. 25; she is survived by her husband, Noboru; children, Jeffrey (Alice), Mitchell (Tammy) and Julie (Moves) Ogi; siblings, Yoji Iyama and Wakako Matsunaga; gc: 4.

Okamoto, Noriyuki, 63, Los Angeles, CA, April 12.

TRIBUTE

EDWARD YOSHICAWA

Age 94, died April 7, at home in Apple Valley, Minn. Survived by Pearl, his wife of 71 years; 5 sisters, Sue Kashwagi, Edith Oshita, Judy Taniguchi, Tule Yomogida, and Laura Katayama; 3 children, Joy Yoshicawa, Candee Ploog and Lance Yoshicawa; 7 grandchildren; and 12 great-grandchildren. Born in Sacramento, Calif., he proudly served in the Japanese American 442 Regiment in WWII while his family was interned at Tule Lake. He worked for Munsingwear USA until his retirement in 1997 and with Munsingwear in Japan in 2005. Throughout his life, he joyfully served the Lord in many ways. He was interred at Fort Snelling National Cemetery with all military honors due to him.

Kikkawa, Alice Kiyoko, 87, Pasadena, CA, April 2; during WWII, her family was forced to moved to the Santa Anita Assembly Center before being incarcerated at Gila River WRA’s Camp 2 in AZ; she was predeceased by her son, Alan; she is survived by her husband, Robert “Lefty” Kikkawa; children, Debbie (Alan) Kubota, Sharon (Allen) Lee, and Jenny; he is also survived by grandchildren, nieces, nephews and other relatives.

Nakamura, June, 85, San Jose, CA, April 2; she was predeceased by her husband, Hideo; and son, Ty; she is survived by her daughter-in-law, Stephanie; she is also survived by siblings, nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends; gc: 2.

TRIBUTE

MIDORI SAKAMOTO

SAKAMOTO, MIDORI (92) passed away on May 21, 2019, in Gardena, Calif. She is survived by her husband, Roy Y. Sakamoto; children, Jeane Sakamoto/Ikeada and David (Lois) Sakamoto; grandchildren, Grayce and Dean Sakamoto; she is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives.

A private funeral service was held on Friday, May 31, 2019, at the Chapel of Green Hills Memorial Park. Visit www.kubota_mortuary.com (213) 749-1449.
AARP endorses the bipartisan Credit for Caring Act introduced in the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives this month, and it com- mends the sponsors. This bill would give a federal tax credit of up to $3,000 annually to eligible family caregivers.

The Credit for Caring Act was introduced in the Senate (S. 1443) by Senators Joni Ernst (R-IA), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Angus King (I-ME), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Jon Tester (D-MT) and Chris Coons (D-DE), and in the House (H.R. 2730) by Representatives Linda Sánchez (D-CA) and Tom Reed (R-NY).

Caregiving is costly both in terms of direct expenses and potential income and retire- ment savings foregone. Family caregivers spent nearly 20 percent of their income, on average, in 2016 providing care for an adult relative or friend. This equates to $6,954 paid out-of-pocket on caregiving expenses such as home modifications, care at home and transpor- tation. Long-distance caregivers averaged $11,923 in annual expenses.

Pay for caring for caregivers can mean using savings, cutting back on the caregiver’s own health care or reducing or stopping saving for retirement. Employed family caregivers can also lose income if they leave the workforce or cut back their hours. Leaving the workforce can mean lost job security and career mobility, employment benefits and retirement savings.

Estimates of lifetime income-related losses sustained by family caregivers age 50 and over who leave the workforce to care for a parent range from a total of $283,716 for men to $324,044 for women, or $303,880 on average, in lost income and benefits over a caregiver’s lifetime.

“Many family caregivers are using their own life savings, cutting back on personal spending, setting aside less for retirement or taking out loans to help loved ones live independently,” said AARP Chief Advocacy and Engagement Officer Nancy LeaMond. “The Credit for Caring Act would help with the fi- nancial struggles experienced by millions of caregivers, and we urge Congress to pass it.”

The Credit for Caring Act provides some financial relief by helping with the cost of in-home care, adult tiny care, respite care and other services. The bill would enable eligible family caregivers the opportunity to receive an annual tax credit for 30 percent of qualified expenses above $2,000 paid to help a loved one, up to a maxi- mum credit of $3,000.

About 40 million family care- givers across the U.S. provide 37 billion hours of unpaid family care, val- ued at an estimated $470 billion annually. By helping older adults and people with disabilities live independently in their homes and communi- ties, caregivers help save taxpayer dollars by preventing more costly nursing home care and avoiding unnecessary hospital stays.

More than three quarters (78 percent) of family caregivers pay out-of-pocket to pro- vide care for their loved ones, spending an average of nearly 20 percent of their annual income in 2016, according to an AARP Re- search report. This equals roughly $7,000 each year in out-of-pocket costs related to caregiving expenses. Long-distance family caregivers spent an average of nearly $12,000.

A strong majority (87 percent) of likely voters age 50 and older support a tax credit for working family caregivers, according to an AARP poll.

Let’s all contact our lawmakers to ask them to support this bill. It’s a common-sense, bipartisan law that would help a lot of Americans who face the challenges of caregiving for loved ones!

Ron Mori is a member of the Washing- ton, D.C., JACL chapter and manager of community, states and national affairs — multicultural leadership for AARP.

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