The Orange County Japanese Garden’s tea house was dedicated on Nov. 15, 1970. It is an expression of “Orange County’s Japanese American Community.”

PHOTO: PATTI HIRAHARA

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A LIVING MEMORIAL

The Orange County Japanese Garden undergoes a renovation as it celebrates its 50th anniversary.

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JACSC Holds First Virtual Education Conference.

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I grant over four years from the Ford

The museum also receives a $5.5 million grant over four years from the Ford Foundation.

JANM Named One of ‘AMERICA’S CULTURAL TREASURES’

The museum also receives a $5.5 million grant over four years from the Ford Foundation.

LOS ANGELES — The Japanese American National Museum, founded in 1985, has been selected as one of the 20 Black, Latinx, Asian and Indigenous arts and cultural organizations designated as “America’s Cultural Treasures.” In addition, it is the recipient of a $5.5 million grant over four years from the Ford Foundation, along with other leading foundations and major donors who have pledged to give more than $80 million to this initiative.

“We are deeply grateful for this support that will help JANM meet its most urgent and immediate needs and help to stabilize the museum during this time of great uncertainty,” said Ann Burroughs, president and CEO of JANM. “We are indebted to the generosity of this group of funders, particularly to Darren Walker, the president of the Ford Foundation, whose visionary leadership is effectively changing the inequity in grant making that has historically overlooked organizations that represent America’s rich cultural diversity. This has become starkly apparent as the impact of closures and reduced revenue places the future of so many arts and cultural organizations at risk, especially those that do not have the benefit of generations of wealth backing them.”

Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic that has overwhelmed arts and cultural institutions, especially...
A MOTHER’S TAKE
OKAERI CONNECTS!

By Marsha Azumi

W

hen Aiden came out, I wish I had other Japanese parents to talk to and ask questions. I don’t think I would have been so scared, sad and alone. So, when the opportunity to start a community gathering for support and connection for Nikkei LGBTQ+, their parents and allies came up, I was thrilled to be involved.

The idea for this group actually started to develop when I spoke at a LGBTQ+ workshop at the JACL National Convention in Salt Lake City in 2019. During the Q & A session, one participant asked, “Where can a person who lives in a place that has very little Japanese American LGBTQ+ support find a community?”

We could only direct this person to resources online and Okaeri events that happened every other year. But what was the individual and their family to do in between? Having contact with others that were Nikkei LGBTQ+ parents and allies could be so comforting.

Then, the COVID-19 pandemic entered our lives. At Okaeri, we began to pivot to monthly virtual programming to keep our community connected. Because of requests from our Nikkei LGBTQ+ community and that participant at the JACL conference, Okaeri Connects! was born. On Sept. 6, we held our first meeting.

The 90-minute gathering drew more than 40 Nikkei LGBTQ+ individuals, parents and allies from all over the U.S. and two individuals from Japan. We were surprised to hear people found out about the meeting and came from Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Texas, Washington, D.C., and Washington State, as well as a large number from Northern and Southern California.

About 75 percent were LGBTQ+, and the rest were parents and allies. One person said to me that he found other older Nikkei gay men who were his age. And that same person connected with a younger gay man and thought perhaps he will become a mentor.

Young LGBTQ+ individuals met people who were Nikkei LGBTQ+ that were living as their true selves heading university programs, happily married, successful professionals and educators. They also met parents and allies that were embracing their children and the Nikkei LGBTQ+ community with love and acceptance.

Our next meeting is Nov. 1 from 4-5:30 p.m. PDT. Please register if you are interested in attending at okaericonnects1.eventbrite.com.

Okaeri Connects! is here for you and our Nikkei LGBTQ+ community. Also, check out our other Okaeri programs at www.okaeri-losangeles.org/upcoming-events. Questions? Please email okaeri125@gmail.com.

P.S. We are starting a similar program for Japanese-speaking LGTBQ+ on Nov. 15 from 1-2 p.m. PDT. More details will be posted on our website soon, or you may contact me at maizumi8888@gmail.com.

Marsha Azumi is an advocate in the LGBT community and author of the book “Two Spirits, One Heart: A Mother, Her Transgender Son and Their Journey to Love and Acceptance.”

LEGAL-EASE: AN ATTORNEY’S PERSPECTIVE

HOW TO LIVE 10 YEARS LONGER

BY JUDD MATSUNAGA, ESQ.

I

love sports. When I was in grammar school, my grandfather took me to my first Dodger game. I dreamed of one day growing up to be a professional baseball player. When I was in junior high school, I played basketball in the Junior Olympics and dreamed of playing basketball for the Lakers like my hero, Jerry West, aka “Mr. Clutch,” aka “Zeke from Cabin Creek.”

When I got to high school, however, I stopped growing. So, I gave up basketball and took up golf, where I was team captain for the Beverly Hills High School golf team in 1976. However, when I got to college, I succumbed to the notion that I was never going to be big enough to be a professional athlete, so I focused on finding a career in business.

Back in the 1970s, nobody told me that one day Colin Morikawa, at 5’9”, would win a major golf championship, i.e., the 2020 PGA Championship. Back in the 1970s, I prayed and dreamed of growing bigger. I should have been more specific. Instead of growing vertically, I grew horizontally.

I continued to grow horizontally. At age 59, still wearing size 38-waist pants, I had a heart attack. My cardiologist told me to lose weight. So, I did. I stopped eating fast food and junk food and got down to 180 pounds. I looked better and felt better. Until recently, when I read a study about life expectancy by Harvard that was published by the American Heart Assn.

According to the study, you can extend your life by 15 years or more if you can follow these five healthy habits: (1) don’t smoke; (2) maintain a healthy body mass index; (3) keep up moderate to vigorous exercise; (4) don’t drink too much alcohol; and (5) eat a healthy diet (source: www.cancer.org, May 10, 2018).

Here is how these healthy habits were defined and measured:

1. Smoking, well, there is no healthy amount of smoking. “Healthy” here meant never having smoked
2. Healthy body weight, defined as normal body mass index, which is between 18.5 and 24.9
3. Healthy physical activity level, which was measured as at least 30 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous activity.
4. Moderate alcohol intake, which was measured as 5-15 grams per day for women and 5-30 grams per day for men. Generally, that is 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine or 1.5 ounces of distilled spirits.
5. Healthy diet, which was calculated based on the reported intake of healthy foods like vegetables, fruits, nuts, whole grains, healthy fats and omega-3 fatty acids, and unhealthy foods like red and processed meats, sugar-sweetened drinks, trans fat and sodium.

The study highlighted how the combination of all five healthy habits could help prolong your life expectancy. Sticking to all five healthy habits at age 50 was associated with 14 additional years of life expectancy among women and 12 2 additional years among men (compared with not adhering to any of them).

“The findings should encourage and motivate people to adopt a healthier lifestyle,” said Dr. Douglas Vaughan, chairman of the department of medicine at Northwestern University’s Feinberg School of Medicine.

According to Vaughan, “Maintaining a reasonable body-mass index is a great way to protect oneself against the development of diabetes. So, in aggregate, we see the effect on longevity, but you can imagine it’s largely through effects on cardiovascular risk and metabolic risk.”

To calculate your BMI, go online to find a free Body Mass Index calculator. Hit the one that has “www.NHLBI” on it (National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute). It’s quite simple:

Enter your height and weight, then hit “Compute BMI.” Hopefully, your BMI is normal between 18.5 and 24.9. Mine is currently 26.9. I still have to lose 12-15 pounds.

Living a healthy life increases our longevity. By adopting better health habits, we can.

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@elderlawcalifornia.com.

The opinions expressed in this article are the author’s own and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Pacific Citizen or constitute legal or tax advice and should not be treated as such.

CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK
COVID-19: U.S. AT A GLANCE*

- Total Cases: 8,312,067 *
- Total Deaths: 221,438 (as of Oct. 22)
- Jurisdictions Reporting Cases: 55 (50 states, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands and the U.S. Virgin Islands)
- Data includes both confirmed and presumptive positive cases of COVID-19 reported to the CDC or tested at the CDC since Jan. 21, with the exception of testing results for persons repatriated to the U.S. from Wuhan, China, and Japan. State and local public health departments are now testing and publicly reporting their cases. In the event of a discrepancy between CDC cases and cases reported by state and local public health officials, data reported by states should be considered the most up to date.

Source: CDC
Membe rs of the Japanese American Confne ment Sites Consortium are gathering support for a permanent exten sion of the federal program that has helped pay for the re vivalization of multiple sites where 120,000 people were imprisoned during World War II.

The support was announced during the JACSC virtual meeting and educational forum, which was held Oct. 17-18. The bill by Rep. Doris Matsui, a California Democrat who was born while incarcerated at the Poston, Ariz., camp, will per manently reauthorize the National Park Service’s Japanese American Confnement Sites program and add another $38 million in funding (see story on page 5).

Matsui’s bill, which was introduced Oct. 21, will also include about $10 million to pay for educational programs to teach about the racism and human rights abuses in the incarceration and the issue’s relevance today. It’s modeled after the Never Again Education Act for Holocaust education that will fund programs through the national Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C.

“The JACS program is really the centerpiece of the consortium’s work,” said Ann Burroughs, chair of the consortium and president and CEO of the Japanese American National Museum.

David Inoue, executive director of the JACL and Floyd Mori, a former JACL president who helped develop the first JACS bill, are working with Matsui’s office on the new bill.

Sen. Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii) will offer a companion bill in the Senate, Inoue said.

The bill has bipartisan support, as Republican Reps. Ken Buck of Colorado, Liz Cheney of Wyoming, Rob Bishop of Utah and Don Young of Alaska are original co-sponsors. Young also voted for the 1988 Civil Liberties Act.

More than 200 participants in the weekend sessions included members of the groups that make up the consortium, as well as several pro spective members. They heard experts in developing new approaches to oral histories, preserving and conserving heritage and developing successful museums in COVID times; they also were able to draw inspiration from upcoming leaders.

ADAPTING TO NEW CHALLENGES

All of the JACSC members have been forced to adapt to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, Bur roughs said, and Russell added that most JACSC members increased their online educational programs once the pandemic started.

JANM has adapted many of its exhibits to online presentations that can now reach thousands of people who are now limited in their ability to travel to the museum in the Little Tokyo neighborhood of Los Angeles.

“We had to determine how to pivot on a dime with the pandemic,” said JANM curator Clement Hanami.

“Tadaima! A Community Virtual Pilgrimage,” led by Executive Director Dakota Russell, has also expanded its online offerings, which include a series of presentations featuring aspects of a new book by Shirley Ann Higuchi, chair of the HMF.

Heart Mountain has also received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to provide more online programming, including a series of podcasts.

New JACSC member Denso is offering a new podcast series called “Campus” by Hana and Noah Maruyama, the grandchildren of incarcerees.

MULTIGENERATIONAL TRAUMA

The weekend was kicked off by a session involving Higuchi and Dr. Satsuki Ina, a psychotherapist, former incarceree at the Tule Lake, Calif., camp and a founder of the group Tsuru for Solidarity.

They were joined by former Minidoka incarceree Mary Abo; Lisa Doi, president of the Chicago chapter of the JACL whose grandparents were imprisoned at Rohwer; Erin Aoyama, a Brown University doctoral student and granddaughter of Heart Mountain incarceree; and Prentiss Uchida, a former Heart Mountain incarceree.

Higuchi said she has learned more about the multigenerational trauma suffered by her parents, herself and brothers from her parents’ incarceration at Heart Mountain. That experience makes up the core of her recently released book “Setsuko’s Secret: Heart Mountain and the Legacy of the Japanese American Incarceration.”

Being separated from their fathers during the war influenced much of their behavior, Abo and Uchida said.

Abo’s father was arrested by the FBI shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor and put in a Justice Department camp while the rest of the family was sent from its home in Juneau, Alaska, to Minidoka. Abo said her mother spoke little English and feared being shot by the police.

Russell.}

Amelia Lin (top right), founder of Saga, an app that helps families save the life stories of loved ones on audio. Here, she shows the audience the impact of capturing these precious stories in the voices of the storyteller. This is a recording of her father who describes how he felt when she was born.

(Clockwise from top left) Kurt Ikeda, Rylan Sekiguchi, Amy Watanabe, Grace Morizawa, Stan Pesick and Genesis Ranel discuss new resources in education.

(Clockwise from top left) Vinicius Taguchi, JACL Twin Cities; Mike Ishii, co-chair Tsuru for Solidarity; Emily Akpan, Tsuru for Solidarity and NYC DOR; Susan Hayase, founder San Jose Nikkei Resisters; and traci love, Vigilant Love.

A special JACSC commendation was given to Kimiko Marr and Hanako Wakatsuki for their outstanding leadership contributions.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF JACSC

Amelia Lin, 67, father

“You’re so careful to touch, so careful to hold, so careful. It’s just a small life that you helped to create, that’s in your hand.”

“I’m proud to join my friend, @ DorisMatsui, as we introduce the Japanese American Confne ment Education Act,” Young said. “This bill takes crucial steps to educate younger generations about the horrors of Japanese internment, so that it will never happen again.”

The weekend session and the support for Matsui’s bill showed the maturation of the consortium in the four years since it was created fol lowing the successful fight to stop a national auction of art created by incarcerees living in the 10 camps run by the War Relocation Authority.

“This is really only our fifth meet ing, and it is really quite extraordi nary,” said JACSC Manager Mia Russell.

JACSC HOLDS FIRST VIRTUAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Among the weekend’s highlights, the consortium also builds membership and momentum for JACS reauthorization.
MATSUI INTRODUCES THE JAPANESE AMERICAN CONFINEMENT EDUCATION ACT

The bipartisan legislation seeks to permanently reauthorize the JACS program.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Congresswoman Doris Matsui (D-Calif.) introduced on Oct. 21 the Japanese American Confinement Education Act, a bipartisan legislation that would permanently reauthorize the Japanese American Confinement Site (JACS) program to preserve and educate Americans on the imprisonment of Japanese Americans during World War II.

The Japanese American Confinement Education Act would permanently reauthorize the JACS program within the National Park Service, which is currently set to expire in 2022. This program has been one of the primary resources in the preservation and interpretation of the U.S. Confinement Sites where Japanese Americans were detained during WWII.

Additionally, the legislation establishes a separate, new five-year, $2 million-per-year competitive grant to create educational materials about the Japanese American confinement. This grant would require the recipient museum to develop and nationally disseminate accurate, relevant and accessible resources to improve awareness and understanding of Japanese American Confinement in WWII.

Just over 75 years ago, the U.S. Federal Government, through Executive Order 9066, rounded up and imprisoned 120,000 Japanese Americans. Based solely on race, Japanese Americans were stripped of their homes, possessions and civil liberties and forced to live in remote military barracks. Yet, as time passes, the memory of mass, wrongful government roundup of innocent American citizens has grown increasingly distant.

“The imprisonment of Japanese Americans during World War II will forever be one of the most atrocious violations of American civil rights in the 20th century. Those of us in the Japanese American community know too well what discrimination feels like, what kind of mark it leaves and, most importantly, what we can do to stop it,” said Matsui. “The Japanese American story is one that is not told nearly enough. It is one of pain, one of redemption and one of enrichment.”

“This bill will ensure that these lessons live into the future — that we continue bending the moral arc of this country by sharing these stories, lifting our voices and fighting so that we do not repeat the mistakes of the past,” Matsui continued. “The essence of the American experience isn’t that we’re perfect, it is that we heal from seeing where we’ve been and teach our younger generations to build a more inclusive, equitable future.”

Other lawmakers joined in with their support of Matsui’s bill as well.

“My parents and grandparents were imprisoned in Japanese internment camps during World War II while my Great Uncle Monso was fighting the war in defense of this country,” said Rep. Mark Takano (D-Calif). “This was a dark time in our nation’s history but in order to move forward, we must not forget the lessons of the past. For that reason, I am proud to support the Japanese American Confinement Education Act to preserve the Japanese Confinement Sites and create an educational competitive grant to help educate younger generations about the unjust incarceration of Japanese Americans.”

» See MATSUI on page 9
The Orange County Japanese Garden went through a major renovation this year in commemoration of its 50th anniversary. A new white stone Japanese lantern sits at the entrance of the tea house, which was a gift from the Orange County Nikkei Coordinating Council.

PHOTO: PATHI HIRAHARA

REMEMBERING A HOME AND THE LEGACY OF ITS JAPANESE PIONEERS

The Orange County Japanese Garden undergoes a renovation as it celebrates its 50th anniversary.

By Patti Hirahara, Contributor

Orange County has had many wonderful things happen in its Japanese community over the years, but none as special as a gift that was given from its Japanese American community to the County of Orange 50 years ago in 1970.

The groundwork was set 29 years before when officers from the Orange County JACL chapter went to the Santa Ana Register newspaper office due to their dismay of the bombing of Pearl Harbor by Japan on Dec. 7, 1941.

With a photo and story published in the Register on Dec. 11, 1944, four days after the attack, the JACL chapter members declared “their wish of tolerance and understanding on the part of all Americans toward American-born Japanese and other Japanese who obey the laws of this country and expect to call this country theirs for the rest of their life.” The photo cutline also said, “All are native sons of Orange County; all attended school here.”

When asked about their parent’s attitudes, the group said “their parents were born in Japan, but they have been in the United States longer than they were in Japan, and this is home to them and they expect to make it their home until they die.”

For one member of the group, Santa Ana native Hitoshi Nitta, who was 24 years old and treasurer of the OC JACL chapter at the time, this meeting would set the stage for greater things to come.

Even with local JACL members’ valiant effort to prove their allegiance to the country of their birth and the place they called home, 120,000 men, women and children from the western United States were forcibly sent to Japanese American incarceration camps during World War II.

The people from Orange County were primarily sent to the camp in Poston, Ariz., from 1942-45. When discussions of resettlement were brought up in Poston upon the conclusion of WWII, the Nitta family made history for their resettlement back to Orange County.

As noted in a United Press wire story, which was published in the Pasadena Star News on Jan. 8, 1945, “Shosuke Nitta, patriarch of the first Japanese American family to return to Southern California, today shuffled about his 100-acre ranch here after a two-and-a-half-year exile, happy over a heart-warming welcome home by worshippers at the Methodist Church in which he was active for years.” The day before “after services, churchgoers crowded around to shake their hands.”

The article continued, “It was a happy moment for the three generations of Japanese Americans, who had so feared prejudice against them, that they stopped for food only once on the car trip from Poston to Santa Ana and that at the home of a Methodist minister in Indio, Calif. “We didn’t want to cause trouble,” Nitta said.

For his efforts nine years later, Nitta was honored in 1966 by Emperor Hirohito for helping to improve relations between Japan and the U.S. I became interested in the history of the Orange County Japanese Garden when I found a donation receipt, an architectural drawing, a location map and a donation thank you letter signed by Japanese American Community Services Board Chairman Hitoshi Nitta and Fundraising Chairman Mas Uyesugi in my family’s records at my parent’s home last year.

I started asking people if anyone knew about the Japanese Garden, yet no one seemed to know of its existence except Ron Inatomi, who had taken pictures at the garden several years before.

He sent me a photo of a plaque that was set on a rock in the garden and its brief inscription. The plaque reads: “Dedicated and presented for the pleasure of all people in Orange County by the Japanese American Community. A grateful Arigato in honor of our pioneer fathers and for the blessings of freedom. May 27, 1970.”

Three of the principals who were part of the Orange County Japanese Garden’s dedication on Nov. 15, 1970, were (from left) Min Inadomi, project legal co-counsel and dedication master of ceremonies; Christine Galanis, County of Orange information services coordinator; and Mas Uyesugi, fundraising chairman at the Orange County Civic Center.

The event marked the culmination of three years of planning, hard work and fundraising between Civic Center officials and the Orange County Japanese community.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF HITOSHI AND DIANE NITTA

In seeing this, that meant 2020 would be the garden’s 50th anniversary, but there seemed to be a deeper meaning to the words that were inscribed on that bronze plaque that had become green over time.

This short but meaningful statement was left for us as a reminder of how one community persevered to leave its Japanese American legacy here. But even though I knew a brief history of the establishment of the garden, I wanted to know more on how it all began.

In 1968, the Orange County Board of Supervisors paved the way for a special project to be constructed in the area of the Orange County Courthouse in the City of Santa Ana, Calif., by passing a resolution on Jan. 16, 1968.

This project, to be totally funded by donations, was to be a symbol of friendship and gratitude from the Orange County Japanese American community in the form of a 75-foot-by-102-foot Japanese garden and tea house that would replace a dusty parking lot along the east wall of the new Orange County Courthouse, which was opened in 1969.

According to recent research conducted by Chris Jepsen, a noted Orange County historian, “Plans for the garden were unveiled in June of 1969 by Japanese American Community Services, a nonprofit group chaired by Hitoshi Nitta along with Mas Uyesugi and Paul Nagamatsu, first and second vps; Richard Kasuya, treasurer; and Sumi Akiyama, secretary.

In 1968, Japanese American Community Services had an architectural drawing made for a proposed Japanese garden and tea house in the Orange County Civic Center at 700 W. Civic Center Drive in Santa Ana, Calif.

HISTORIAN CHRISS JEPSEN found this photo in the Orange County Archives and when discovered, the event was not identified as to what was taking place. Now, the photo has been identified as the Orange County Japanese Garden Dedication on Nov. 15, 1970, where Justice Stephen Tamura, a native of Santa Ana and a jurist with the Fourth District Court of Appeals, was the main speaker.

PHOTO: COURTESY THE ORANGE COUNTY ARCHIVES
“The plans featured a cedar pavilion or tea house with Japanese roofing tile, a dry stream bed, sculpted earth and traditional plantings,” Jepsen continued. “It was also to feature stone lanterns and other artifacts from Japan.”

The goal of the Orange County Japanese Garden Project was to raise an estimated $50,000 for the cost of creating the garden and tea house, which was quite a sum of money in those days. Therefore, the committee sent out 2,200 letters to Orange County’s Japanese American families in June of 1969 to raise the funds. A fundraising letter sent by Uyesugi appealed to the community by stating the following points, “We ask you to please search your generous hearts and consider . . .

“Many opportunities accorded us by our Orange County communities. They have provided us a chance to earn a good living, to live in comfortable homes and enjoy the freedoms.”

The letter continued to say, “We have set our goal high, so we will be able to build not just an average garden, but one to which we can point to with pride. A unique garden which will be a fitting tribute to our Issei pioneers, Nisei’s, Sansei’s and all future generations.”

The plans for the Japanese garden gift were then offered to the Orange County Board of Supervisors on July 1, 1969, and approved.

Fortunately, Jepsen was able to unearth documents that were thought to have been lost. The documents give a glimpse on how these Japanese American pioneers felt about this garden.

In one of the documents, Nitta said, “The Japanese Garden Project is truly a challenge to all Japanese Americans here in this community. This is to be installed in the Orange County Civic Center. Those of us who have become involved in the project have been inspired by the challenge. In the days and weeks ahead, we hope that through a broad cooperative spirit and effort within the entire community, we will be able to put this garden project over the top.”

James Okazaki, who was Orange County JACL president and legal counsel to the project, said, “To borrow an old adage, we submit that there is a time and place for everything, including monuments and memorials. The Japanese Garden proposed for the Orange County Civic Center is such a monument; a living memorial, as it were, to Japanese of all generations who have struggled and strived and have become so much a part of this proud county of ours.”

Okazaki also said, “From all indications, this project must indeed have been meant to be, for this is the commemorative year for the celebration of the centennial of the coming of the first of our parents to our Pacific shores, as well as the 100th birthday of the City of Santa Ana where the garden is to be located. There must be a time within our patterned lives to pause, to reflect, to give thanks, and what better time than this historic year for this community to collectively take stock of our manifold blessings and to dramatically show our beloved county that we are proud to have been part of her heritage.”

Although written 50 years ago, these statements hold so true today. The year 1970 would have commemorated 25 years since the closing of the Japanese American incarceration camps during WWII and the continued resettlement of Japanese Americans to Orange County.

In talking with one of the survivors and members of the old Japanese American Community Services Board, Keiko Sadakane, she said, “The group met at the same church the Nitta family returned to in 1945 for their meetings, the First United Methodist Church in Santa Ana, and the Orange County and SELA-NOCO JACL chapters were part of the project.”

Sadakane was also invaluable in providing background information about the campaign.

Unfortunately, no other records noting who donated to the garden could be found except my family’s copy of an August 1970 issue of the Sanitana Wind newspaper, which was published by the Orange County JACL.

This gave me a partial list of donors who had donated $38,300 toward the garden’s $50,000 goal. Residents from the City of Anaheim lead the list with 101 donors, followed by Garden Grove with 89 and Santa Ana with 77 rounding out the top three communities who donated toward the garden fund.

In combining the names from the Sanitana Wind and the Japanese American Community Services’ own promotional solicitation pamphlet, the partial list of donors totaled more than 641 organizations and families throughout Orange County and beyond.

Each Orange County Japanese American family was visited by a member of the volunteer canvassing team to explain the project and why it was such an important endeavor.

The Japanese Garden and tea house broke ground on May 27, 1970, and was dedicated almost six months later on Nov. 15, 1970. The committee said, “You’ll find nothing like this in Japan because this is an expression of Orange County’s Japanese American community.”

“The Japanese in Orange County wanted to present this gift to the county as a permanent landmark for all to view,” Nitta said at the dedication ceremony. “It would also serve as a remembrance for the love of beauty emphasized by our parents and to be carried on by their succeeding generations.”

Nitta died in 1978 at the age of 61. Therefore, I asked his oldest son, Hitoshi A. Nitta, on how his grandfather and father would feel about this garden 50 years later.

“Having family roots connected to Santa Ana for more than 100 years makes the Japanese Garden location there especially meaningful,” Hitoshi A. Nitta said. “Knowing that my grandfather and father were among the community leaders who envisioned this project and brought it to fruition reminds me of what my parents always taught us . . . to love and respect our Japanese heritage but to never forget that we are Americans.”

Many dignitaries and pioneers of the Orange County Japanese community were present at the dedication ceremony, but now, the majority of those notable pioneers has passed away.

According to Jepsen, “The Los Angeles Times editorialized, ‘Today, when so many think only of what they can get from their government, it is heartening to see one segment of our society stop to count their blessings and then dedicate themselves to a task of unselfish giving.’ To our Japanese American neighbors, we say, ‘Arigato — thank you.’”

It was the committee’s hope that the Japanese Garden would be utilized by the many people who worked in and visited the Civic Center area.

People have said through the years that county workers enjoyed eating their lunches in the tea house where they could view the Japanese landscaped surroundings, but as of three years ago, the garden had to be fenced off to the public due to the number of homeless individuals that would frequent the area.

However, once Orange County was made aware of the garden’s upcoming 50th anniversary in 2020, Orange County Vice Chairman/Supervisor Andrew Do’s office began preparations to commemorate this milestone anniversary with the Orange County Nikkei Coordinating Council since the original Japanese American Community Services organization was no longer in existence.

“The Japanese Garden in Orange County’s Civic Center is a symbol of unity and patriotism on behalf of the Japanese community,” said Do.

“It is an honor and privilege to be part of the Japanese Garden’s 50th anniversary this year. The garden is an expression of the resilience and vibrancy of the Orange County Japanese American community.”

**See LEGACY on page 12**

**The Orange County Japanese Garden’s tea house is a very tranquil setting within the Orange County Civic Center and a place that should be remembered since it was a gift from Orange County’s Japanese American community to the people of Orange County.**
HARADA HOUSE TO BE FOCUS OF CIVIL RIGHTS WEBINAR

The story of the historic home in Riverside, Calif., serves as the foundation for the upcoming virtual event.

RIVERSIDE, CALIF. — The civil rights message central to the history of the Harada House, a National Historic Landmark, serves as the foundation for a virtual webinar that will be held on Nov. 12.

Three Riverside-based organizations are collaborating to present a panel discussion and conversation about civil liberties and racial justice in the present moment, framed within the context of the Harada House as a symbol of dignity, perseverance and social justice. The Museum of Riverside, which is the steward for the Harada House, is supported by the Harada House Foundation and Inlandia Institute in presenting this free program.

In 1916 in Riverside, Japanese immigrant Jukichi Harada was criminally prosecuted in a racially motivated attempt to deny the Harada family their own home.

Panelists for this webinar will consider what today would parallel this lawsuit and its effort to deprive people in the U.S. of their rights based on race.

Questions at the heart of the discussion include “What is democracy? How does it work? Is the concept fixed or fluid? Are we getting better at it? How are our laws enforced? What must happen next?”

Against the backdrop of civil rights victories in Riverside — notably the Harada family’s judicial triumph in 1918 — a group of leaders will discuss peaceful paths to effect positive change, share indicators that the system can be improved and highlight stories of persistence and choosing the greater good.

One desired outcome is further recognition that the Harada House serves as a symbol and beacon of hope in the continuing struggle for social justice.

Confirmed panelists include Jack Clarke, Best, Best & Krieger; Larry Gonzalez, City of Riverside’s chief of police, Kristen Hayashi, JANM director of collections management and access/curator; and Michelle Magalón, University of Maryland and president of the Asian and Pacific Islander Americans in Historic Preservation. The panel will be moderated by Museum of Riverside Director Robyn G. Peterson.

The webinar will start at 6 p.m. on Nov. 12. To sign up to view the webinar, please visit https://tinyurl.com/HaradaDiscussion.

JANM » continued from page 2

in communities of color, the funders, led by an initial investment of $50 million from the Ford Foundation, with leadership support from Bloomberg Philanthropies and Barbara and Auros Hostetter, as well as additional support from the Abrams Foundation, Alice L. Walton Foundation and Tom and Lisa Blumenthal, organized the national component of the initiative to provide $81 million in operational and general support funds to an initial cohort of 20 organizations that are significant national anchors for artistic and cultural diversity in America.

The “America’s Cultural Treasures” initiative seeks to highlight those 20 organizations for their “vital contributions” to the diversity of expression and excellence in America, as well as bring greater recognition to the group of organizations that have been impactful, despite historically limited resources and funding streams.

They, along with others, represent the cultural heritage and creativity of communities that have been historically marginalized, underfunded and underrepresented in the narrative of American culture, the Ford Foundation stated.

“This recognition as one of ‘America’s Cultural Treasures’ validates the role that JANM has played over the years to preserve Japanese American history and culture and be part of the nation’s conscience to ensure that no other groups are similarly targeted,” Burroughs continued.

“We are honored to be part of this distinguished company of arts and cultural organizations and extend our heartfelt congratulations to each. We are delighted that our Little Tokyo Historic District sister organization, East West Players Theater, has also been included. We look forward to deepening relationships with our partners across the country.”

Other groups named included the Alaska Native Heritage Center, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Apollo Theater, Dance Theater of Harlem, Museum of Chinese in America, National Museum of Mexican Art and Urban Bush Women, among others.

“These organizations represent the very highest ideals of artistic excellence and are truly America’s Cultural Treasures,” said Darren Walker, president of the Ford Foundation.

“We hope that other arts philanthropists and corporations will join in increasing support to the many cultural organizations that reflect our nation’s rich and diverse history.”

The national grants, which range from $1 million-$6 million, are meant to bolster each organization’s general operating budgets to help them navigate the current health crisis. Grantees could also receive as much as $100,000 for organizational capacity building.

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Uchida’s father left Heart Mountain to work on the Great Northern Railroad. Uchida said he resented his father’s presence after his work on the railroad ended and he returned to join them in camp.

ANTI-RACIST ALLIES IN ACTION

Amidst the rise of anti-Asian sentiment during the pandemic and the call for Black Lives Matter, a resurgence and new activism is taking hold in the Japanese American community, and many people are looking for ways to be supportive.

Another panel held during the education conference featured several community leaders, who all gathered to talk about positive steps forward in expressing social justice for all.

Susan Hayase, a community leader who has been active for decades, recently founded San Jose Nikkei Resisters, who are working on a collaborative community effort. Nikkei for Black Lives, and supporting HR 40.

Emily Akpan, a Black Nikkei who is building a coalition of Black Nikkei, expressed gratitude for longtime activists and spoke out for recognition, acceptance and space within the Japanese American community for Black Nikkei.

Vigilant Love Founder traci love advocates for communities impacted by Islamophobia and violence in the greater Los Angeles Area.

Tadahiro Takayama of Twin Cities JACL was propelled into action by the local killing of George Floyd and has been organizing community conversations around police accountability in the local and government levels ever since.

Moderator Mike Ishii, co-chair of Tsuru for Solidarity, lead this impactful multigenerational panel of movers and shakers and concluded that finding partners is key, and that their work is also a means for healing the community and individuals.

Anyone is welcome to join these leaders and their organizations.

PRAISE FOR ‘TADAIMA’

The consortium also recognized Kimiko Marr of the Japanese American Memorial Pilgrimages and Hanako Wakatsuki of the National Park Service for their public history leadership, creativity and hard work in creating this summer’s “Tadaima! A Community Virtual Pilgrimage,” which “provided a much-needed sense of community during the COVID-19 pandemic.”

“Tadaima!” spanned nine weeks from June-August and presented dozens of films, prerecorded and live presentations, seminars, performances and interactive demonstrations about various aspects of the Japanese American incarceration and its relevance to current issues.

MEMORIAL FOR LANE RYO HIRABAYASHI

Participants also offered a memorial to longtime University of California, Los Angeles, professor and researcher Lane Ryo Hirabayashi, who died at age 67 in August.

John Tobe, the new chair of the National Japanese American Memorial Foundation, introduced a moving short film, produced by Marr, featuring members of the Japanese American community paying tribute to Hirabayashi.

His academic work inspired hundreds to follow his lead, said the NPS’ Watsukats. Hirabayashi helped guide her graduate studies, and she is now chief of interpretation and education at the Minidoka National Historic Site and currently acting as chief of interpretation at the Pearl Harbor National Memorial.

Denesh’s Brian Niya said he was grateful for Hirabayashi’s work to expand the field of Asian American studies and Japanese American history. Hirabayashi, Niya said, also restored the landmark film “The Issei” and used many other films in his teaching.

CLOSING REMARKS

Many leaders commended Russell for leading JACSC’s first education conference.

They also welcomed Judy Lee of the Museum of Riverside, who is helping to restore the iconic Harada House in Riverside, Calif.

For more information on the JACSC, please contact Mia Russell at mia@jacsc.org.
MATSUI » continued from page 5

“The forced internment of our fellow citizens through Executive Order 9066 is one of the darkest chapters in American history. The fact that it occurred during my lifetime highlights just how fresh of a wound this is for Japanese Americans across our country,” said Rep. Don Young (R-Alaska). “…Tragically, many of our young people no longer study this terrible moment in history, which puts our ability to learn lessons from this era at risk. …If we do not acknowledge, reconcile and learn from our history, we are doomed to repeat it. …It is my great hope that we take these lessons to heart and honor the families who were devastated in the very country they called home.”

“I’m honored to support Congresswoman Matsui’s Japanese American Confinement Education Act, which would help ensure that generations of Americans know about the dark legacy of U.S. Confinement Sites,” said Rep. Grace Meng (D-N.Y.). “…While we have taken steps to memorialize and atone for this wrong, we must make sure that future generations also know of this painful history.”

“While the government apology and redress payments were essential elements of that bill, we all knew that educating the American people on the Japanese American WWII experience was of vital importance to ensure that no other group is similarly targeted. The original Japanese American Confinement Sites program was a continuation of the educational process to preserve our history and share this story with future generations. Rep. Doris Matsui’s bill, the Japanese American Confinement Education Act, enables the National Parks Service to maintain its successful outreach program about a story that all Americans should learn to ensure that this shameful chapter in our history is never forgotten and never repeated.”

In addition, JACS Consortium stakeholders also voiced their support of Matsui’s bill. “The Japanese American Confinement Education Act will both continue and expand the promise of the Japanese American Confinement Sites grant program to further the interpretation and telling of the Japanese American wartime experience,” said David Inoue, executive director of the JACL. “What makes our country great is our capacity to recognize, remember and learn from our past mistakes to ensure that we do not repeat them. This legislation affirms that greatness as a nation.”

“The Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation strongly supports the Japanese American Confinement Education Act, which will enable us to preserve sites where more than 120,000 people were unfairly incarcerated during WWII,” said Shirley Ann Higuchi, chair of the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation. “It will educate the country and the world about the need to prevent something like this from happening again.”

Original co-sponsors of the bill are Reps. Rob Bishop (R-Utah), Mark Takano (D-Calif.), Liz Cheney (R-Wyo.), Tom Suozzi (D-N.Y.), Don Young (R-Alaska), Ed Case (D-Hawaii), Ken Buck (R-Colo.), Adam Smith (D-Wash.), Judy Chu (D-Calif.), Ro Khanna (D-Calif.), Grace Meng (D-N.Y.), Barbara Lee (D-Calif.) and Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-D.C.).

The Japanese American Confinement Education Act is also supported by Asian and Pacific Islander Americans in Historic Preservation, Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation, JACL, JACS Consortium, JANM and the National Council of Asian Pacific Americans.

Notice of Upcoming Renovation Project in Los Angeles, CA.

Little Tokyo Tower

455 East 3rd Street. Los Angeles, CA. 90013

Little Tokyo Tower renovation will begin in the Second Quarter of 2021. The renovation of this 16 story tower will encompass the complete renovation of interiors, (living units), and exteriors, (common spaces), as well as the waste line replacements, seismic upgrades, community rooms, dining hall, Library and the construction of an additional elevator. Project will be completed in phases with tenant relocation. All units will receive new finishes, all corridors and common areas will receive new finishes, new roofing, and limited divisional work (please see list of divisions below) will be completed during this renovation.

Divisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>02-000 SITE WORK</th>
<th>03-000 CONCRETE</th>
<th>05-000 METALS</th>
<th>06-000 WOOD &amp; PLASTIC</th>
<th>07-000 WATERPROOF/INSULATE/ROOFING</th>
<th>08-000 DOORS/HARDWARE/GLASS/GLAZE</th>
<th>09-000 DRYWALL/FLOOR/CEILING/PAINT</th>
<th>10-000 SPECIALTIES</th>
<th>11-000 EQUIPMENT</th>
<th>14-000 ELEVATORS &amp; HANDLING SYSTEMS</th>
<th>15-000 FIRE PROTECTION/PLUMBING/HVAC</th>
<th>16-000 ELECTRICAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Subcontractors interested in the Little Tokyo Tower project need to reply no later than November 30th, 2020, via email to LT@mfrg-icon.com. If you would like additional information or have questions, please reach out to our team members listed below:

Dan Kern, Senior Project Manager (310) 903-8839
Kevin Schellbrack, Director or Pre-Construction (310) 701-4968
DUE TO HEALTH AND SAFETY CONCERNS IN THE U.S.
BECAUSE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, PLEASE CHECK
REGARDING THE STATUS OF EVENTS LISTED IN THIS
ISSUE’S CALENDAR SECTION.

NCWNP

Picnic at the Plaza
San Francisco, CA
Saturday and Sundays Thu Nov 1; 11:30 a.m.-8 p.m.
Japanese’s Peace Plaza
Price: Free
Bring your take-out food and enjoy it at the Peace Plaza’s free outdoor dining space, complete with canopies, lighting, heaters, hand-washing stations, restrooms and socially distanced sanitized tables and chairs. Enjoy a meal while supporting Japantown businesses. This program is brought to you by the Center in cooperation with the S.F. Recreation and Parks Department and the Japantown Merchants Assn. Funded by the Henri and Tomoye Takahashi Charitable Foundation.
Info: Visit jccnc.org.

PSW

36th Annual Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival
Los Angeles, CA
Thru Oct 31
Online film festival
Price: Ticket packages are available for purchase
Established in 1983 by Visual Communications, LAAPFF is the largest film festival in Southern California dedicated to showcasing films by Asians and Pacific Islanders around the world. The festival presents approximately 200 films, as well as the C3:Conference, LT&Home series and much more! Info: Visit festival.vcmedia.org for more information.

PNW

Wing Luke Museum Online Digital Content
Seattle, WA
Wing Luke Museum
Although the museum’s doors are temporarily closed, there is still a plethora of curated stories, digital content and neighborhood resources available to access and view. Viewers can check out Education, YouthCAN, Collections and Community Art all online!
Info: www.digitalwingluke.org.

Shinoda in this exhibit that incorporates abstract interpretations of natural phenomena.

EDC

Easy Japanese Home Cooking for Nonchefs
Boston, MA
Nov 14; 5-6 p.m.
Price: $15 for General Admission; $10 Japan Society Members
The Japan Society of Boston is offering a class on cooking sukiyaki via Zoom. Participants will be sent a list of ingredients a few days before the class and will make the dish with Japan Society intern Emily Knick, who will be sharing her favorite recipes. Registration is required.

Kimono Couture: The Beauty of Chiso
Worcester, MA
Opens Nov 28
Virtual Exhibition
Price: Free
The Worcester Art Museum is partnering with Chiso, the distinguished Kyoto-based kimono house, to present the first exhibition of historic and contemporary kimonos from Chiso’s collection. The exhibit highlights the history and artistry of the prestigious 465-year-old garment maker with kimonos from the mid-1600s to 2000s. In addition, a selection of related works — paintings, kimono fragments and woodblock-printed books — from the Chiso art collection will also be featured, reflecting the creative collaborations between the kimono maker and several celebrated Japanese artists since the late-19th century.
Info: Visit https://www.worcesterart.org/exhibitions/kimono-couture/.

Japan Society of Boston Free Online Resources
Boston, MA
Virtual classes and information
Price: Free
The Japan Society of Boston is offering free online resources featuring Japanese language learning tools, Japanese cooking, origami, arts and lectures and much more, all in a virtual online capacity.

CALENDAR A NATIONAL GUIDE TO NOTABLE COMMUNITY EVENTS

ACCOUNTABILITY

PACIFIC CITIZEN
Horita, Shizuko, 88, Los Angeles, CA, April 6; she was predeceased by her daughter, Marilyn Horita-Hill; she is survived by her husband, Ted Horita; son, Neil (Claire) Horita; son-in-law, Cameron Hill; gc: 2.

Horuchi, Katsuhito, 91, Pasadena, CA, April 10; an Army veteran (Korean War) and Heart Mountain Reunion Committee volunteer, he is survived by his wife, Barbara (Hirata); children, Kris (Daniel Solien); family friend, (Pauline) Kikuchi and Elsie Akemi; siblings, Eddie Hazama, Harriet.

Kikuyama, Ichiro, 87, Lahaina, HI, May 6; he is survived by his wife, Hideko; sons, Ben (Sylvia) Kikuyama, Dan (Susan) Kikuyama, John (Dahna) Kikuyama and Dean (Mary) Kikuyama; siblings, Anthony “Masa” (Florence) Kikuyama, Hideo “Harry” (Tsuneko) Kikuyama, Michael Kikuyama and Edna Goya; brother-in-law, Yoshisharu “Sammy” Nakamura; gc: 4; ggc: 2.

Kimura, Sadami, 104, Torrance, CA, April 9.

Kina, Elaine Y., 92, Kaului, HI, Jan. 31; she was predeceased by her husband, Richard Kina, and son, Patrick Kina; she is survived by her children, Karen (John) Yoshiida, Nelson Kina and Kathy (Henley) Fong; sister-in-law, Maria Arakaki; gc: 8; ggc: 7.

Mayemura, Terumi, 77, Gardena, CA, March 27; predeceased by brothers, Shinobu, Nobuo, John and George, and lifelong companion, Faye Nakamura; survived by sisters, Susumu (Ana) Mayemura and Mary (Richard) Eubanks; nieces and nephews, and other relatives.

Mayo, Herbert Jiro, 83, Honolulu, HI, April 2.

Meguro, Masato, 94, Hilo, HI, March 26; an Army veteran, he is survived by his wife, Fumi Meguro; children, Howard (Kari), Kurt and Elaine (Jeff) Hara; sister, Kimiko Apc; daughter-in-law, Helene Meguro; gc: 7.

Nakano, Francis T., 89, Hilo, HI, March 7; she is survived by her son, Daryl Nakano; daughter-in-law, Joan Nakano; sons, Fred Fujiwara and Sheldon Yokomizu; sister, Jeri Nakano; she is also survived by many grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

Nakano, Norman Taro, 92, San Jose, CA, March 31; during WWll, he was incarcerated at the Tule Lake WRA Center; a Navy veteran, he is survived by his wife, Hisako Irene Nakano; children, Patti (Young), Vickie (Larry) Yamaoka, Karen (Jeff) Whitworth, Carl (Elise) Nakano; sister, Maria Tsukamoto (Davo); gc: 7; ggc: 4.

Nishimoto, Yoshiko, 96, Seal Beach, CA, March 26; she was predeceased by her husband, Bunso Nishimoto; she is survived by her daughters, Akiko (John) Kobayashi, Chihiro (Harushi) Honbo and Rieko (Ronald) Kuruda; sister, Misako Ueno; gc: 6; ggc: 9.

Ota, Roy Atsumi, 75, Los Angeles, CA, March 8; survived by wife, Yoshiko; children Kristie and Kevin; and many nieces, nephews and other relatives.

Oye, Yukie Hinomoto Oye, 83, Kamuela, HI, April 14; survived by children, Alton (Brandie) Oye, Georlgiene (Jon) Lawson and Marvin (Lane) Yanagisawa; siblings, Toshiki (Hiromi) Hinomoto, Haruo (Sanae) Hinomoto, Fusae Yamamoto, Mitsue Fushida and Masae Hinomoto; gc: 6.

Suda, Michael, 89, Haiku, HI, Feb. 20; he was predeceased by his son, Mark; he is survived by his wife, Miyoko; daughter, Mavis.


Takenaka, June Sayeko, 80, Los Angeles, CA, April 14; during Wwll, her family and she were incarcerated at the Heart Mountain WRA Center in WY; she was predeceased by her husband, Tommy Tatsuo Takenaka and eldest son, Mark; she is survived by her sons, Paul, Ryan and Eric; siblings, George Kazuo Igi and Nancy Teruko Obiero; gc: 9.

Tsurtumoe, Masako, 101, Gardena, CA, Jan. 15; she is survived by her daughter, Miyoko Ono; sister, Harue Tsurumoe; she is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives.

Yamasaki, Etsu Kazuyuki, 83, Los Angeles, CA, May 1.

Yoshinaga, Toshio ‘Bull,’ 94, Los Angeles, CA, March 30; an Army veteran (WWI), he was predeceased by his brothers, Nadao, Hisao and Fumio; he is survived by his sons, Steven (Brenda), Jay (Vera) and Jerry (Wendy); gc: 9; ggc: 7.

Yoshinaga, Teruko, 93, Gardena, CA, April 9; an Army veteran, he was predeceased by his wife, Masumi Isago; she is survived by her daughter, Karen Inoue; son-in-law, George Kawachi; sisters, Kayo (Hiroshi) Kawai, Mie Inoue; son-in-law, George Kawachi; gc: 5; ggc: 5.

Yoshino, Teruko ‘Terrie’ Hazama, 93, Gardena, CA, May 12; she was predeceased by her son, Stan; siblings, Eddie Hazama, Harriet Kawaguchi and Frances Enomoto; she is survived by her husband, Ben; daughters, daughters, Karen Inoue; son-in-law, George Kawachi; siblings, Kayo (Hiroshi) Kawai, Mie (Edwin) Kuramoto; gc: 4; ggc: 2.

Inouye, Teruko, 100, Hilo, HI, April 28; she is survived by her daughter, Karen Inoue; son-in-law, George Kawachi of Hilo; sisters, Kayo (Hiroshi) Kawai, Mie Inoue; son-in-law, George Kawachi; gc: 4; ggc: 2.

Nakano; is survived by her husband, Bunso Isago; she is survived by her daughter, Marilyn Horita-Hill; gc: 2.

Inouye, Teru, 93, Gardena, CA, April 14; during Wwll, her family and she were incarcerated at the Heart Mountain WRA Center in WY; she was predeceased by her husband, Tommy Tatsuo Takenaka and eldest son, Mark; she is survived by her sons, Paul, Ryan and Eric; siblings, George Kazuo Igi and Nancy Teruko Obiero; gc: 9.
REIMAGINE EVERYTHING

TWO-THIRDS OF ADULTS ARE SUFFERING FROM SOCIAL ISOLATION

By Ron Mori

A new study has found that two-thirds of adults report experiencing social isolation and high levels of anxiety since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to “The Pandemic Effect: A Social Isolation Report,” a just-released study conducted by the AARP Foundation in collaboration with the United Health Foundation. The report notes that many of those affected have not turned to anyone for help, perhaps because many don’t have reliable social support networks.

Social isolation is a public health crisis. Social isolation is defined as an “absence of meaningful social relationships.” Studies have found the health risks of social isolation can be more harmful than obesity, and prolonged isolation is equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

In a united effort to help those affected, the foundations recently expanded the website Connect2Affect.org, which was originally launched by the AARP Foundation in 2016. The site offers resources to address social isolation, including an assessment that individuals can take to find out if they or a loved one are at risk for social isolation and get guidance on how to strengthen their social bonds.

Negative Emotions

“The Pandemic Effect: A Social Isolation Report” found that for adults 50 and older who have experienced social isolation during the pandemic, half report feeling less motivated, more than four in 10 (41 percent) report feeling more anxious than usual and more than a third (37 percent) have felt depressed.

A third of women over age 50 reported going 1-3 months without interacting with people outside of their household or workplace, and adults with low and middle incomes who reported experiencing social isolation also said they feel more depressed than adults with higher incomes.

Furthermore, only 11 percent of adults, regardless of age, turned to a medical professional when feeling down or sad, and almost a third reported that they did not look to anyone for support.

Responding to the Crisis

Commander Scott Kelly, a renowned astronaut who spent 340 days isolated in space, has teamed up with the AARP Foundation and the United Health Foundation to spread the message about the seriousness of social isolation and provide tips on how to successfully emerge from it.

“Living on the International Space Station for nearly a year with literally no way to leave wasn’t easy, so I took precautions for my mental and physical health seriously,” said Kelly. “I’m advocating for individuals, particularly vulnerable older adults, to use available tools like Connect2Affect.org to strengthen their social connections.”

To get help, the Connect2Affect.org provides resources to help individuals assess their risk for social isolation, as well as find support services in their area. Helpful resources include:

• Social Isolation Risk Assessment — A questionnaire to help individuals determine how connected they are, and which resources would benefit them most.

“Connect2Affect Chatbot — Designed to provide friendly conversation with the goal of helping re-build social connections. Chatbot conversations are secure, private and accessible 24/7.”

“Social isolation is taking a toll on individuals and communities nationwide, and it’s especially pernicious for those who are 50 or older. This survey shows that older adults who have lower incomes and who are women are at greatest risk,” said Lisa Marsh Ryerson, president of the AARP Foundation. “The tools and resources at Connect2Affect.org are designed to help older adults build and maintain the social connections they need to thrive.”

Dr. Rhonda Randall, executive vp and chief medical officer at United-Healthcare, added, “Many people don’t know that social isolation can have lasting effects on not only mental health — but also physical health. We’re focused on finding practical solutions to the lack of connections, companionship and the sense of belonging that we all need as humans.”

Please continue to stay safe, and ask for help if you feel isolated and need assistance.

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

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“This year, we also commemorate 75 years since the closing of the Japanese American incarceration camps,” Do continued. “As we remember those who were stripped of their civil liberties, let’s never forget the tenacity and resilience of the Japanese American community. In solidarity, Orange County stands with you.”

In addition, Ron Ono, administrative services manager of the City of Santa Ana Parks, Recreation and Community Services Agency/Landscape Architect City of Santa Ana, worked with the Orange County Civic Center Authority (City of Santa Ana and the County of Orange) to receive funding for the Japanese Garden project renovation on Dec. 11, 2019, and have the work implemented in January of this year.

The majority of the renovation was finished in September; finishing touches are being completed now.

At the suggestion of Ono, the Orange County Nikkei Coordinating Council provided a new Japanese stone lantern and a time capsule to preserve significant documents about Orange County’s Japanese Community from the early years to the commemoration of this 50th anniversary.

To be able to have this garden be a symbol of what the Orange County Japanese pioneers had envisioned 50 years ago is an amazing tribute to this community and its $50,000 gift that keeps on giving.