2022 JACL NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP ISSUE

PAGE 8 » Denny Yasuhara Middle School Officially Dedicated
JACL Congratulates Its 2022 National Scholarship Winners

By David Lin,
JACL VP for Planning and Development

It is my distinct honor and privilege to share with you that the JACL National Scholarship Program has had another successful year in identifying a number of highly qualified student recipients for this year’s scholarship awards.

In this special issue of the Pacific Citizen, we are delighted to announce that the JACL has awarded 30 scholarships this year totaling $63,500. We are even more proud to support the JACL and our community! We are delighted to announce that the JACL has awarded 30 scholarships this year totaling $63,500. We are even more proud to support the JACL and our community!

On behalf of the National JACL, I would like to thank the two National JACL Scholarship Committees. This year’s two selection committees are:

- The Freshman Scholarship Committee was under the Pacific Northwest District (PNW) and was chaired by Bill Tashima of the Seattle chapter. This year’s committee members are Karen Cunningham, Katie Cunningham (past scholarship awardee), Kristen Cunningham (past scholarship awardee), Kyle Kinoshita, Mike Kurose, Rothman and Sylvie Shiosaki.

From this list, you should have noticed how Bill ingeniously engaged past scholarship recipients to participate on his committee. This year marks the conclusion of PNW’s third-, and final, year run in leading the Freshman Scholarship Committee. We are grateful to the committee members for their hard work and dedication.

- The Upperclassmen Scholarship Committee was under the Intermountain District Council (IDC) and chaired by Karl Endo of the Pocatello-Blackfoot chapter. This is IDC’s inaugural year leading a scholarship committee, and it will continue in this role for two more years. This year’s committee members are Tom Cotto, Tiffany Hilton, Katie Hirai, Maki Jackson, Jason Kunisaki, Jon Ochi, Rebecca Oniki, Reid Tateoka and Cathy Yasuda.

On behalf of the National JACL, we are extremely appreciative of their diligence, hard work and the long hours that went into reviewing all of the scholarship applications to select the best and the most-qualified recipients for these awards.

We also would like to give a special shout out to David Kawamoto, who used to lead the Scholarship Program, for his critical role as the program’s mentor and his valuable guidance, unwavering leadership and continued support of this program year after year.

Lastly, as we all know too well, no JACL program would run successfully without a committed and dedicated staff who works together as an amazing team to deliver results on time.

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to Matthew Weisbich, program manager and JACL education and communications coordinator, for his leadership and JACL Regional Director Patty Wada for her continued support.

Their teamwork in coordinating the two scholarship committees, communicating with the applicants and keeping the program running on track was simply exemplary.

I would also like to thank Pacific Citizen and its entire staff under the leadership of Executive Editor Allison Haramoto for highlighting our young scholars in this special issue every year.

In closing, please join me in congratulating all of our scholarship award recipients of 2022 and wishing them great success in their pursuit of higher education!
DRIVING AND DEMENTIA

By Judd Matsunaga, Esq.

If you live long enough, the time will come when you will have to stop driving. Most senior drivers monitor themselves and gradually limit or stop driving when they feel they are no longer safe. However, others may not. They may have dementia in an early stage of Alzheimer’s disease, which prevents them from recognizing that their driving abilities have diminished.

As we age, even those of us without dementia may experience physical changes that affect driving — including eyeight problems and slower reaction times. In response, most people will modify the way they drive by avoiding driving on certain roads or at night. They usually can assess and regulate their driving without family intervention and can continue to drive safely throughout their lives.

But it’s different for those with Alzheimer’s disease or other dementias — particularly because the condition can be gradual and unpredictable. Drivers with dementia often modify their driving by driving less at night or in unfamiliar areas, but as their abilities diminish, they lose the capacity to determine when they should stop driving. They’re likely to minimize the complexity of driving and overestimate their abilities.

Many times, family members will allow a person with dementia to continue driving even though they believe it’s unsafe. They might not want to hurt that person’s feelings, or they may worry about what others might think. Some want more support from family, friends or professionals before intervening, and others want to avoid turning the person with dementia against them.

JACL has been an amazing supporter of the LGBTQ+ community going back to 1994, when it endorsed LGBTQ+ rights and marriage equality. And JACL’s allyship has continued from then on to support the transgender community.

One family took care of my grandparent’s house, paid the mortgage and collected rent from tenants, when my father’s family was sent to Gila River. They were allies and made it possible for grandpa and grandma to return to the home they owned.

When I was at a Minidoka Pilgrimage, I heard about families in the Pacific Northwest who had allies that stored the equipment of Japanese Americans, so these families had something to come back to and restart their businesses.

JACL has an amazing support of the LGBTQ+ community and is an ally throughout the process. In my opinion, this is an example of how allies should act, and I applaud JACL for the work it has done.

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) 348-2985 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.

LEGAL-EASE: AN ATTORNEY’S PERSPECTIVE

By Marsha Aizumi

Who is an ally? According to Jeanie Gainsburg, “An ally is a person who is not part of a particular marginalized group but who stands up for and advocates for the rights of people in the group.” I believe organizations can also be allies.

Quakers openly supported Japanese Americans during World War II when 120,000 Japanese Americans were incarcerated in camps. And there were individuals supporting Japanese American families who would have lost everything, if not for caring neighbors and friends who stepped in to help.

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I was honored to receive the Bienium Award for education and humanities in 2015 for my LGBTQ+ work. JACL supported Okaeri to do workshops at its national conventions. And at its 2022 National Convention, Okaeri was presented with the Vision Award from the JACL’s NY/SC. JACL has been an important ally.

Allies are so important because their voice is not based on self-interest, but in shared humanity. Allies can show others how to stand up for a marginalized community and become role models for others to follow. And generally, there are more allies outside of the marginalized community, so their voices, combined with the voices of marginalized individuals, can have a greater impact.

But how do you become an ally? First, you need to know who you are outside of the marginalized community and are you not sure how to show your support? In the beginning of my journey, as a mother and ally to the LGBTQ+ community, I was unsure of what was the right thing to do. So, I found places to educate myself.

I also thought that an ally had to be visible in a loud and often aggressive way; that was not my personality, and it was not what I most advocated. But through education and talking with LGBTQ+ individuals and my son, I have found my voice. And so I began to form how I wanted to show up. When I found MY authentic voice, I become more confident in being an ally.

On Sept. 17, Okaeri held a day-long virtual Allyship Symposium in Los Angeles’ Little Tokyo. Topics discussed included family acceptance (in English and Japanese), Christian allyship, Buddhist allyship, allyship at work and allyship at school.

We all need more allies to support the LGBTQ+ community. In a survey that Okaeri did a few years back, only 30 percent of the respondents felt that the Nikkei community was supportive. So many LGBTQ+ individuals are 40 years of age and older have left the Nikkei community because they did not feel welcome. But it is our hope that with Okaeri and more and more allies visibly showing up, our Nikkei LGBTQ+ individuals are coming back to the Nikkei community.

Okaeri means “welcome home” in Japanese. We want all individuals to feel welcome, and it will take allies like you and me to create that kind of community. Whichever way you show up, it is important to our families and LGBTQ+ individuals. We need your voice more than ever today.

‘Our ultimate objective in learning about anything is to try to create and develop a more just society.’

—Yuri Kochiyama

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

COMMENTARY

By Marsha Aizumi

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JAVA AWARDS 2022 SCHOLARSHIPS

In continuing the ‘legacy of World War II Nisei military service and encouraging future military and public service,’ the organization awards a total of $27,500 to 16 students from around the country.

By JAVA

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Japanese American Veterans Assn. announced recently 16 winners of its annual scholarship award program for 2022. Receiving outstanding applications from students hailing across the U.S., the organization awarded a total of $27,500 for 2022.

Following are this year’s recipients:
The $3,000 Daniel K. Inouye Memorial Scholarship, honoring the late U.S. Sen. Daniel K. Inouye’s iconic career of military and civilian public service, was awarded to Kiera Hirayama of Honolulu, Hawaii. The granddaughter of Robert Takashi Hirayama, 442nd Regimental Combat Team, Kiera is pursuing a Doctor of Nursing practice degree at Case Western Reserve University with a focus on nursing educational leadership. She received her Master of Science in nursing clinical management at Columbia University and New York University. She has a Bachelor of Science in nursing from Creighton University in Nebraska. Hirayama is working as an RN in the NICU at New York Presbyterian Medical Center. She is also a clinical instructor at Columbia University School of Nursing.

The $3,000 Ishio Founder’s Scholarship is named for JAVA’s founder, the late Col. Phil Ishio, his wife, Constance, and their son, Douglas. It is awarded to a student who has completed two or more years of college/university. The Ishio Founder’s Scholarship was awarded to Elizabeth Uno of Sacramento, Calif. The granddaughter of Iwao Henry Tamura, 442nd RCT, and Dick Uno, who also served in WWII, is currently pursuing a Master of Public Policy with a focus on educational policy at the Goldman School of Public Policy at the University of California, Berkeley. She also has a Master of Arts in education from the University of California, Davis, and a Bachelor of Arts in history from the University of California, Los Angeles. Uno has been a teacher, consultant and researcher.

The Kiyoko Tsutui Taubkin Legacy Scholarship, a $2,000 award in honor of a longtime patron of JAVA, is awarded to a student who has completed at least one year in college/university. This scholarship was awarded to Nicole Tanaka of San Gabriel, Calif. She is the daughter of JAVA member and Gulf War veteran John Tanaka. She is pursuing a Bachelor of Arts degree in design media arts as a third-year student at the University of California, Los Angeles.

The following JAVA Memorial Scholarships were awarded to 13 graduating high school seniors, each in the amount of $1,500:

Madeline Chun received a JAVA Memorial Scholarship in honor of Sgt. Ben Kuroki, a gunner in the U.S. Army Air Corps, 505th Bombardment Group. Chun, from New York, N.Y., is the great-granddaughter of Samuel Sakamoto, 100th Battalion. She will attend Yale University and plans to study ethnicity, race and migration.

Madeleine Döi received the Staff Sgt. Mum Arii Scholarship, in honor of Mamoru “Mum” Arii, who served in the 442nd RCT. Döi is the granddaughter of Hiroshi Kaminura, 442nd RCT. From Playa del Rey, Calif., Döi will attend the University of California, Los Angeles, and pursue a degree in bioengineering.

Connie Malinger received a JAVA Memorial Scholarship in honor of Col. Virgil R. Miller, Commanding Officer of the 442nd RCT. Malinger, from Honolulu, Hawaii, is the great-grandson of Sadami Katabara, 100th Battalion. He will attend Lehigh University in Pennsylvania and plans to study integrated business and engineering.

Bailey Nelson received a JAVA Memorial Scholarship in honor of Betty Shima, lifelong partner of Terry Shima, 442nd RCT. Nelson, from Campbell, Calif., is the great-granddaughter of Thomas E. Ouye, 442nd RCT. She will attend the University of California, Davis, and plans to study food sciences.

Kai Moriyama received a JAVA Memorial Scholarship in honor of Col. Jimmie Kanaya, a three-war veteran — WWII, Korea and Vietnam. Moriyama is the son of JAVA members LTC Heather Moriyama, USA (Ret), and LTC Richard Moriyama, USA, and is from Kaneohe, Hawaii. He will attend the University of Southern California and plans to study neuroscience.

Claire Nelson received the Carolyn Namie Furumoto JAVA Memorial Scholarship in honor of Carolyn Furumoto, the wife and partner of JAVA member and Vietnam veteran Tak Furumoto. Nelson is the granddaughter of Takashi Torakawa, MIS, and is from Exeter, Calif. She will attend the University of California, Davis, and plans to study nutrition.

Julia Pellei received a JAVA Memorial Scholarship in honor of past JAVA President and Korean War veteran Robert Nakamoto. Pellei is the daughter of JAVA member Steve Pellei and is from Richmond, Va. She will attend the United States Naval Academy and plans to study STEM/engineering.

Jack Radovich received a JAVA Memorial Scholarship in honor of Maj. Orville Shirey, 442nd RCT, and his wife, Maud Shirey. Radovich, from Tacoma, Wash., is the son of JAVA member Col. Kay Watakake, USA (Ret). He will attend the University of Notre Dame and plans to study mechanical engineering.

Taleen Sample received the Izuno Family Scholarship, in honor of JAVA member and Korean War veteran Dr. Takumi Izuno, who served in the U.S. Army 511th Military Intelligence Service. The great granddaughter of Howard Ogawa, MIS, and JAVA member Elaine Sample, she is from Denver, Colo. Sample will attend Brown University and plans to study political science and economics.

Daniel Shintaku received a JAVA Memorial Scholarship in honor of Ranger Grant Jiro Hirabayashi, MIS. Shintaku is the grandson of Takeso Shintaku, MIS, and the son of JAVA member Michael Shintaku. Hailing from Altadena, Calif., Shintaku will attend the University of Southern California and plans to study political science and economics.

Trisha Tanaka received a JAVA Memorial Scholarship in honor of Victor Matsui, MIS, and his wife, Teru Matsui. Tanaka, from San Gabriel, Calif., is the daughter of JAVA member and Gulf War veteran John Tanaka. She will attend the University of California, Los Angeles, and plans to study molecular biology.

Ryson Ujimori received a JAVA Memorial Scholarship in honor of Dr. Americo Bugliani and his liberator, Paul Sakamoto, 442nd RCT. Ujimori is the great-grandnephew of Katsumi Kometani, 100th Battalion. He is from Aiea, Hawaii, and will attend the University of California, San Diego.

JAVA thanks the members of this year’s Scholarship Committee: Chris Doi, chair; Dawn Eilenberger, JD, former deputy director of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence; Maj. Kay Izuimihara, USA; Capt. (Dr.) Cynthia Macri, MC, USN (Ret); and LTC Robert Vokas, USA (Ret).

To learn more about the JAVA Memorial Scholarship program, please visit https://java-us.org/JAVA-Memorial-Scholarship-Program.
This year’s scholarship recipients were asked to respond to the following question:

“The JACL is moving toward its 100th anniversary with a renewed commitment to educating the public about the World War II incarceration of Japanese Americans and combating anti-Asian hate. What steps have you taken to learn about the Japanese American incarceration experience? How can we use education as a tool to not only correct past historical narratives but also move forward toward promoting a greater social consciousness within our society?”

» EDITOR’S NOTE: All student responses reflect those that were submitted to the PC by the respective JACL Scholarship Committees.

2022 | JACL NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

FRESHMEN

Kaylee Chan
JACL Chapter: Eden Township
Recipient of the Takashi and Yuriko Moriuchi Memorial Scholarship
Chapter: Eden Township
University of California, San Diego

Notables
One of Kaylee Chan’s teachers wrote in a letter of recommendation, “…Kaylee has proven herself to be in the top 5 percent of students in wide-ranging subjects I have taught in my 20 years at Cal High. Her overall GPA testifies to her extreme determination, work ethic and high level of achievement. Meanwhile, her résumé shows she is a person of outstanding character who is committed to making the world a better place.”

This recommendation encapsulates Chan. She graduated from California High School in San Ramon, Calif., with a 3.97 unweighted GPA. Chan held various positions, including Yearbook editor, Spanish Club and member of the California Scholarship Federation. Chan is a longtime participant in Eden Township JACL activities, such as the basketball league, basketball tournaments, summer festivals and youth group. She is engaged with her local 4-H club and in wide-ranging activities such as serving as president, being a multiple award winner with the 4-H book club, serving on the Multicultural, Equity and Community Engagement Committee and co-chaired a Project Skills Day for youth. She also volunteers at a local elementary school and in the Thousand Crane Project.

She will attend the University of California, San Diego, and major in international studies/international business.

Personal Statement
Chan wrote that she read about the Japanese American incarceration beginning in elementary school. As she grew older, she learned more facts about EO 9066, but “…it wasn’t until I talked to my own relatives about their experiences that I really began to understand the full scope of the damage caused.” She was moved by the stories from her great-aunt, who recalled the hardships of imprisonment of her grandfather, who was separated from the family in a prison camp in North Dakota, who was of the reunion when the grandfather’s children did not recognize him.

Chan wrote about a class discussion on a hypothetical situation of the incarceration of a Muslim family because the government deemed the family dangerous. Chan, seeing the parallels to Japanese Americans in WWII, argued, “Unjust.” She wrote, “To my surprise, another girl from the opposite side, the ‘just’ side, argued against me, claiming that the government wouldn’t imprison its own citizens if they weren’t actually dangerous.”

She faults the education system and lack of diverse histories in classrooms for its failure to instill critical thinking. Chan wrote: “When it comes to creating history textbooks and curriculums, we must also ensure that there are diverse writers in the room.

If you look at the authors of older history textbooks, many of them are white, and many are men. If you only look at our past through the eyes of a white man, there are sure to be discrepancies. Even if they don’t blatantly lie, or they’re not conscious of their biases, their perspective will distort history in one way or another. On the other hand, when we place people from minority groups, groups that have consistently been oppressed throughout history behind the writing, I think we are more likely to find a better, more accurate ground and a less-biased voice, a voice that is a much more accurate representation of America—with all of its faults and strengths.

“Now, more than ever, when we see anti-Asian hate crimes gracing the news far more since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, we cannot back down from sharing our histories and making our voices heard,” she continued. “The Japanese American community, along with the rest of the APIA community, has been silenced for far too long. With a better-informed America, we can move toward achieving equity and acceptance of one another.”

Hana Fujita
JACL Chapter: Gilroy
Recipient of the Dori and June Uejima Memorial Scholarship
University of California, Berkeley

Notables
Hana Fujita is from Morgan Hill, Calif., and graduated from Dr. TJ Goetchius Gilroy Early College Academy with a 3.9 GPA. She was active with many school activities, including tutoring, volunteering in various library positions, coaching tennis, serving in various class officer positions and participating in many other school clubs. Fujita also volunteered at food banks and other community programs.

In 2021, she attended the virtual 2021 National JACL Convention. She stated, “Since it was my first conference with JACL, I had no idea what to expect but was blown away by the passion and commitment of other JACL members. I was especially inspired by the other youth at the conference and was impressed by the work other Japanese Americans were doing in order to prevent anti-Asian hate. As someone that struggled to ‘fit’ their identity as Japanese American, I felt represented and included at the conference.”

Personal Statement
Fujita wrote about a red gazebo at a Gilroy Park that is a “historical landmark representing the successes and struggles of Japanese American immigrants during World War II.”

She continued, “After the Japanese Americans were released from internment camps, some families were relocated to the Gilroy Yamato Hot Springs, including Laura Dominguez-Yon.

...I have been interviewing Latino and other underprivileged sources that involved the springs since its first written documentation in the 1860s. By gathering this data, I look forward to creating an online database with all of the collected information to the public and the Gilroy residents that are unaware of the history that occurred in their own backyard. With the upcoming reopening of the springs for the first time since 1966, I also spend some weekends repairing and cleaning up the site of the springs for future use.

“Learning about the history of Japanese Americans and translating old Japanese documents with my family has allowed me to become more connected with my hometown, Gilroy, and my home country, Japan. Hearing about the hardships that Japanese Americans have faced in my own research has made me impossibly grateful for the life I was given and motivates me to celebrate and share the accomplishments that Japanese Americans experienced during their time at the red gazebo with the overgrown weeds.

“I believe that listening is also a big part in learning about the incarceration of Japanese Americans. Listening to the elders around me who were closely connected to the incarceration or incarcerated at a young age has helped me become aware of the extreme measures taken during WWII. In addition to listening to conversations at the dinner table or at gatherings, my family and I listen and translate local audio interviews of Japanese Americans with the Gilroy after incarceration. These Japanese farmers in Gilroy shared their struggles learning English [while] maintaining their Japanese heritage, which
to complete this experience, Rei encountered the disappointment of not being able to participate in the AUSKF. The championships were canceled, and Rei had to accept the fact that his hard work and dedication would go unrecognized.

Focus, Rei would always be engaged in each lesson. "We can also engage our neighbors and community members to promote greater awareness and understanding of the Asian American experience," Griffith said. Through history lessons, the consequences that come with a lack of education are highlighted. "We need to understand the experiences of others to prevent it from happening again."

Griffith has worked to instill in many youth the importance of education and understanding. "I have watched him learn and mature in both kendo and life. Rei has worked hard from the very beginning. When many youth get distracted and lose focus, Rei would always be engaged in each lesson."

Griffith added, "Unfortunately, due to Covid, those U.S. championships were canceled, and the AUSKF was unable to reschedule. After two years of solid, hard training with the team, faced with the disappointment of not being able to compete this experience, Rei was very disappointed. He has always been available to help teach beginners and other youth, always being a positive influence in the dojo. I know that his work ethic and enthusiasm for volunteering will make him a great asset to any college and a shining example of the Japanese American community."

Personal Statement

"Through education, we can identify historical facts and highlight both the challenges faced and the obstacles overcome by Asian Americans. This strengthens the accuracy and integrity of historical teachings and dispels false or misleading historical narratives. "We can also engage our neighbors and community members to promote greater awareness and understanding of the Asian American experience," Griffith continued. "In teaching history and sharing cultural experiences, we connect with each other at a shared human level. This can reduce the amount of Asian hate — which has spiked since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic — and shed light on the darker aspects of American history to promote a stronger community consciousness."

Jack Lauer
JACL Chapter: Contra Costa Recipient of the Patricia and Gail Ishimoto Memorial Scholarship San Diego State University

Notables

Lauer is from Oakland, Calif., and graduated from Bishop O’Dowd High School. In school, he was active with the Campus Ministry and Asian Student Alliance. Lauer graduated with a 3.9 GPA and plans to attend San Diego State and major in business.

Lauer was a member and volunteer worker for the Eden JACL basketball team and enjoyed the sense of community and fellowship on the team. He also worked at the Eden JACL establishment in San Leandro, where he assisted in teaching elder’s traditional Japanese activities and contributed to planned meetings and activities for them.

He has developed a unique perspective on mochi: "I have spent many hours volunteering as someone who makes mochi for the community. I have gained a huge appreciation for how amazing it is to see all of the different generations make mochi together. I have always loved mochi, and now that I know how it is made, I have an even deeper appreciation. Mochi is no longer just a traditional Japanese snack that tastes delicious. When I eat mochi now, I think about how much work and love goes into making it, and I am reminded of how important it is to Japan."

Personal Statement

Lauer wrote about a school project on the Japanese American incarceration that resulted in a slideshow presentation and essay. "As I presented all of my findings from this topic, I found that many of the other students listening did not know this happened or knew very little information on it. I felt really happy, as I was providing them with very important information about my culture. But I then realized how saddening it was that the majority of them never knew this occurred during WWII. "Education is so important in not only correcting past historical narratives but also moving forward toward promoting a greater social consciousness within our society because people are being taught the truth of our world. By educating students about the incarceration of Japanese Americans, we can help them understand how the experiences of others can help us learn about those who were mistreated. "Also, I think that the media creates a lot of false narratives about people from the past, and modern educators can help you truly be aware of who these famous people are. Becoming more knowledgeable about our history is crucial because to move forward in a positive and influential way, we need to learn from our past. "A presentation by my grandmother in support of her local Buddhist church, as well as volunteering to support Nikkei seniors. Although her presentation was cut short due to curtailed during the pandemic, she lettered in softball and was a Defensive Player of the Year."

Personal Statement

Lee stated how spurring his interest in the WWII incarceration. "My personal drive to educate myself about WWII incarceration hinges on the fact that my grandpa, great-grandpa, and grand-grandparents were forced to leave their jobs, homes and belongings while being forced to relocate to an internment camp in Minidoka," he said. "All of their family members had to live in those conditions for over a year."

Lee’s presentation of his own findings focused on the Japanese internment camps and read a book about the life of his great-grandfather, all in an effort to become more socially aware and promote the social consciousness of those around him. "As a speaker for the youth of the local JACL chapter, he had deepened my basic knowledge of the internment of Japanese Americans. Not only did the presenters provide much of the oral and written information about life in the camps, the speakers also gave a lot of insight into the uncertainties, anxieties and challenges their families were faced with during this time."

Notables

Lee, from San Diego, graduated from San Diego Catholic High School with a near-perfect 3.99 GPA. A member of the Mt. Olympus JACL, he has volunteered at chapters in Nikkei lunches and Christmas parties. Lee also volunteers at numerous community and church events, such as food drives and support for Afghan refugees.

Lees received a solid recommendation from his guidance counselor of three years, who stated: "He sits at the top 10 percent of his class with a significant amount of rigor and has met the qualifications for AP Capstone, Academy of Sciences and is an AP Scholar With Distinction. Evan is Ambitious — He is looking forward and is focused on his future and career at all times. He is Competitive — Evan works hard at being competitive in sports and academics. Open — He has been open to trying new things to improve himself, whether academics, sports; he challenges himself and attempts to excel at everything he chooses to do. "Evan is a very intellectual, ambitious young adult. He is good-natured and very tempered. He has excellent athletic skills and excels at skill sports. He is knowledgeable, as well as detail- and goal-oriented. Evan will quickly adapt to the next level due to his independent nature and natural ability to find ways to succeed."

Personal Statement

Lee wrote about his grandparents’ experiences. "After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, [my grandfather, Ted Nagata] experienced firsthand the enactment and cessation of Executive Order 9066…Growing up, I always found it appalling that my peers and I never had a lesson about the Japanese American incarceration in school. The exclusion of this from the curriculum only goes to..."
reflect the skewed values of America’s system of education and is detrimental to our society. “Education can help build a practical and sensible framework of the world around us, and most importantly, gives us the ability to think independently and critically,” Nakahara continued. “When trying to interpret historical contexts and the events unfolding today, the use and sharpening of this tool is invaluable. … Education is extremely important, especially now, to navigate the ever-changing complexities of modern life.”

“With fake news, and unreliable sources constantly surrounding us, the knowledge of discerning what is correct and what is false is vital. Without it, people’s perceptions can be easily swayed and distorted. By examining historical documents, present voices and past historical narratives critically and with an open mind, we create the opportunity to gain a rich understanding of how both positive and negative changes in society arise. We can then apply this knowledge to understand past events and initiate change in the world today.”

“Social consciousness isn’t something you can just avoid or ignore — people who turn a blind eye fail to realize they are fighting an unbeatable foe. Social consciousness must be looked at as a responsibility, which involves morals and ethics to bring about change that aids in minimizing biased attitudes that cultivate misunderstanding and hate.”

“Education today is literally at the tips of our fingers. Through it, we have the ability to look at a multitudinous perspectives, people of all backgrounds and their stories with just the tap of a button. By being able to hear and understand other people’s views, and how what we do affects all of us, we gain greater understanding and empathy for people all over the world.”

“Armed with these insights, we are able to support the greater good. Realizing this isn’t just the story of you or me, but millions of stories interwoven together. Each of us affects another, in a pattern that ripples outward and reaches across the world and is the first step to true compassion and change.”

Jared Nakahara
JACL Chapter: Berkeley
Recipient of the CW04 (Ret) Mitsu Murakami Kasai Memorial Scholarship
University of California, Los Angeles

Notables
Jared Nakahara had many accomplishments at Albany High School in Albany, Calif., such as cross-country, student government, class vp, math club, tutor and more. Sometimes, when there wasn’t a club, he organized one, such as founding the Photography Club and the Neuro-Medical Club.

Nakahara became passionate about social justice issues and realized that students needed to be empowered and raise their voices. Thus, he founded his school’s Asian Student Union, which grew to 15 percent of the school’s students as members.

As he related, “Even though I lacked experience, I broadened my comfort zone and started some projects to help my community. I organized community rallies and mentored and led small groups at my school, determined to make a difference. As I continued speaking and hosting rallies, other students gained inspiration to join, voiced their opinions, and continued moving forward creating a safe environment. Gaining confidence from my efforts, I spoke in front of large crowds, where hundreds of individuals were eagerly listening.”

Nakahara also enjoyed learning about martial arts and said about karate, “Although I never became good enough to become a black belt, it has taught me multitudes of lessons about respect, discipline and my culture and heritage. I believe karate is an important component of the art. In karate, you have to learn to respect people of all ages, backgrounds, abilities and belt colors.”

Nakahara will attend the University of California, Davis, and major in neuroscience and business.

Personal Statement
“Understanding what has happened in the past, there is only room for improvement in our communities. I have been greatly involved in educating individuals and those in my community about racism and social awareness. The solution for these problems can be difficult, but there are various ways to ensure that history does not repeat itself.”

“The first way is to get involved in school. I personally have been selected to work on the ethnic student force committee at my school. Utilizing these committees at our schools, we can promote diversity in the curriculum and share narratives from diverse backgrounds. This way through educating the younger generations, we can correct the past and create social awareness for those in our community.”

“Additionally, we can also educate others through hosting events,” he continued. “The Berkeley chapter at JACL and many other Asian American youth organizations host events to spread awareness. Whether it is informational meetings, discussions or rallies, these events will spread awareness to those in our community and help correct the suppression many of us have faced in the past.”

The past has suppressed us and put our community in harsh conditions, but that can be corrected for the future. Similar to how I have educated myself through going to various places or joining and hosting events, we as a community can educate ourselves.

Through this education, we will be able to correct the mistakes of the past and raise social awareness for those in the future.”

Hideki Sakamoto
JACL Chapter: Olympus
Recipient of the Shigeaki “Shake” Usdso Memorial Scholarship
Southern Utah University

Notables
Hideki Sakamoto is from Lehi, Utah, and attended Skyridge High School. His transcript revealed a wide range of interests, deepening courses such as robotics, web design, Japanese and TV broadcasts. His extracurricular activities included being a longtime member of the Gaming Club and Japanese Club. He also was a 10-year member of a local soccer club and received a Golden Globe Award for goalkeeping.

Outside of school, Sakamoto volunteered to do landscape work with his Homeowners Assn. He also volunteered with Deseret Industries and helped at various food drives and the annual Toys for Tots drive. He plans on attending Southern Utah University, but thus far, is undecided about a major.

He has been involved with JACL at the chapter level “since he was a kid,” attending and volunteering at big events like the Summer Party, Spring Scholarship Fundraiser and the Christmas Party. As Sakamoto stated, “All of the events had great food, activities and, most of all, a sense of community.”

Personal Statement
In addressing the personal statement prompt, Sakamoto discussed anti-Japanese American hate and the relationship to anti-Japanese wartime hysteria. He wrote, “In recent times, the Covid-19 pandemic has occurred, and people in America have started to blame Asians for the spread of this deadly disease. This created a lot of Asian hate that has extended to all those included within the Asian race and has led to discrimination.”

“So, how can we stop this? When I started learning more about Japanese American internment camps and Asian hate, I started to change the way I acted. Also, I saw that others started to do the same. Why would others change their behavior when it doesn’t even affect them? The answer is that education teaches people to become more aware and have more knowledge of what they do.”

“I think we can use this to redefine our world by educating ourselves and educating others to promote more awareness in society, stopping Asian hate. Understanding who I am and where I came from has taught me that struggle and hate and discrimination. However, it teaches me that it does not have to be this way moving forward. We can learn from these experiences and become more accepting, more caring and more of a community that comes together regardless of a person’s skin, language or background.”

Reina Schmoock
JACL Chapter: Sacramento
Recipient of the Kenji Kasai Memorial Scholarship
University of California, Los Angeles

Notables
Reina Schmoock distinguished herself as a captain of the Speech and Debate Team at California’s Ponderosa High School, where she recently graduated. She was the recipient of multiple awards and achievements in the two years she was on the team. This was in addition to her stellar academic record that included numerous advanced placement courses.

Schmoock’s volunteer work included multiple events as a volunteer and serving as a Link Crew Leader, assisting incoming high school students. She also participated and instructed in the martial arts, another arena where she displayed her spirit of service. Schmoock also worked as a volunteer assisting the school’s junior students. Her instructor had high praise for Reina, crediting her with hard work, a positive attitude and a disposition toward growth and improvement.

Personal Statement
Schmoock’s essay featured themes of social justice, often a part of her debate topics. She related the Japanese American incarceration during WWII to international human rights issues and the necessity for awareness, education and speaking out.

“One of Abraham Lincoln’s most famous quotes states: ‘Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not themselves.’ While the validity of this statement was prevalent for the time he served as the nation’s president, this quote continues to stand out in today’s society. However, not only through the commonly acknowledged means of literal resistance but also through personal internal struggles…”

“As a speech and debate competitor, I focus much of my speeches on human rights and prejudice around the world. During the 2020-2021 school year, I researched some of these issues with China’s Re-Education camps and drew connections to how humanity isn’t moving forward because of the cycle of incarceration camps similar to those for Japanese Americans during World War II.”

» See FRESHMEN on page 10
WHAT MAKES A TEACHER GREAT?

His former students say Denny Yasuhara was a force of nature. He was also a force of nurture.

By Lynda Lin Grigsby, Contributor

Fate often creates intersecting paths. On the grounds of a newly built school in Spokane, Wash., Stacy Boyd walks in the past and the present. Everything about the campus pulsates with fresh energy — the natural light that pours through the windows, evergreen trees with shallow roots hugged by fresh soil and the vibration and laughter of children who started this school year by crossing the threshold of Denny Yasuhara Middle School.

“Every time I go there, it just brings chills,” said Boyd, a campus safety training manager for Spokane Public Schools. “That was my teacher.”

School is in session at Denny Yasuhara Middle School after years of planning and construction. Last summer, school officials wearing hard hats on the barren site at 2701 N. Perry St. ceremonially thrust shovels into the dirt to break ground.

Now, students are walking the hallways. Boyd, 53, can’t get over the name on the building. On a Zoom call, he wiggles five fingers to signify the number of teachers who positively affected his life.

Mr. Yasuhara, as he still refers to his teacher, is No. 1.

Denny Yasuhara was a teacher at Spokane’s Logan Elementary School and Garry Middle School for 28 years until his retirement in 1989. He taught science and math and coached basketball to generations of students who described him as caring, strict and fair. He was all that — and more. Yasuhara, who died in 2002 at 76, was also a civil rights advocate and a longtime JACL leader whose name and image graced many pages of this publication.

He is now the namesake of Spokane’s first school named after an Asian American. The naming of a school is an honor often relegated to national figures whose first names need no mention. In Spokane Public Schools — the second-largest district in the state — some schools are named after former U.S. presidents such as Roosevelt, Madison and Grant. And now, Yasuhara.

We all knew Denny Yasuhara — the scrappy teacher who weeded through the hundreds of other young students and really saw you.

Maybe it was the social studies teacher in your life who drove you to competitions because your parents were working, or maybe it was the math teacher who stayed late to help you decode the quadratic equation. The teacher you are thinking of may not be Yasuhara, but likely has the same markings of greatness to land on your own Top 5 list. If we were lucky, we had a Denny Yasuhara in our lives.

How do we define an outstanding teacher? In Hollywood, the great teacher trope is often embodied by a white male like Mr. Keating in the 1989 film “Dead Poet’s Society,” who animates Walt Whitman’s words by drawing his all-boy class in close and reciting to their rapt faces that as the powerful play of life goes on, “You may contribute a verse.”

In that scene, viewers can suspend disbelief and feel like a student in Mr. Keating’s elite boarding school classroom. It can feel like Mr. Keating is speaking to you.
In real life, Yasuhara’s former students say he embodied that energy. “Mr. Yasuhara was a force of nature,” wrote David Clemm in an October 2020 letter to support naming the school after his middle school science and math teacher who inspired him to become a research scientist in molecular virology and endocrinology. The way his former students describe him, Yasuhara made kids suspend disbelief in themselves. The image of Yasuhara that lives in his students’ memories may always be the teacher who struck a scornful and contemplative pose in response to problems — one of Clemm’s self-professed favorite memories. It was a pause to collect his thoughts, followed by a calm and thoughtful response.

Yasuhara likely wore the same look when he met Boyd at Garry Middle School in 1983. It was more a collision of fate for the Spokane native, who was excited to play basketball on the school’s basketball team. There on the basketball court, Boyd saw a Japanese American man with a whistle and a steady gaze behind a pair of thick-rimmed glasses. In status, Yasuhara was just over five feet tall, according to his wife, Thelma Yasuhara, but he had a larger-than-life presence. “That’s my basketball coach?” Boyd thought incredulously.

“I’m your coach,” Denny Yasuhara responded, undeterred. Yasuhara did not ease into excellence. He believed in working for it. As JACL national president in 1995, he met with President Bill Clinton at the White House to talk about affirmative action. Afterwards, surrounded by reporters and leant on some of other groups who were in the meeting, Yasuhara was captured on C-SPAN video sporting his signature contemplative frown after a reporter asked why the president had not yet taken a position on affirmative action.

“You can’t divorce your philosophy from what you are going to do,” said Yasuhara, likely drawing from his own experiences as a teacher and basketball coach, both jobs he took seriously. Often, he checked out stacks of books from the library about basketball. He stayed up late drawing diagrams and planning, so when Boyd questioned himself after the first practice, Yasuhara responded with words that Boyd continues to carry with him: “Be stronger than your strongest excuse.”

That day, Boyd walked out of the gym and told anyone who would listen that Mr. Yasuhara was going to be a good coach. In 2020, when the district asked for community input on the naming of the new middle school, more than 80 letters were written in support of naming the school after the Nisei science teacher, according to Pam Tajima Praeger, a former educator who attended the groundbreaking ceremony last June. This was a time post-George Floyd’s murder when the nation was reckoning with how to remember history. Suddenly, what we named a building and the stories we told ourselves about our young nation’s history came under scrutiny. What did Madison really do for Spokane compared to a leader like Yasuhara, who inspired generations of students to contribute their own verse?

On Sept. 6, school officials and Thelma Yasuhara cut a long yellow ribbon to signify the official opening of Denny Yasuhara Middle School.

“It’s a great honor,” said Thelma Yasuhara later when I reached her by phone just a few days shy of her 93rd birthday. “I realize this will be the last thing that Denny will be honored for. I think in his career, it’s the highest honor he’s gotten.”

She took a private tour of the new school and admired its openness. From every window, students can see trees and grass, she said wistfully. I asked what she thinks Denny Yasuhara would have felt about the new school.

The name on the building is a conscious step away from the default to embrace a more inclusive American history. Only a spattering of U.S. elementary schools teach Asian American history, and now one of Spokane’s newest schools bears a Japanese American name. “We get to set the culture and tone of our new school,” said principal Stephanie Lund in a February video update about the school’s construction. “And decide what we want out of a learning community.”

Hopefully, through the school’s name, many more generations of students will wonder about its namesake. Maybe they can ask Boyd, who as campus safety training manager, walks through Spokane schools to help kids feel safe. He will tell anyone who will listen that he is back at Spokane schools because of Denny Yasuhara.

The school mascot is the phoenix, a mythological bird that dies and perpetually gets reborn out of the ashes. It’s a cycle that echoes the inspiration that started with a Nisei math and science teacher and is now in the hands of his former student, Boyd, who also coaches youth basketball. Of course, he makes the kids run in the first practice.

“Some of the things he taught me, I feel like I’m giving back and trying to pass on,” said Boyd. “That’s what he did for me, so that’s what I want to do.”

If you are lucky, you have met a version of a Denny Yasuhara in your life. Think of those teachers and then say thank you. Few will have schools or buildings named in their honor, but their legacy lives in you. Now, pass it on.
Justin Takano
JACL Chapter: Berkeley
Recipient of the Henry and Chiyo Kuwahara Memorial Scholarship
University of California, San Diego

Notables

Justin Takano, a 2022 graduate of El Cerrito High School, is a member of a family of longtime JACL members. A strong student with a near-perfect GPA, he was recognized with an AP award for those who score 3 on three AP exams. He was also on the varsity baseball team and helped coach a youth team, emphasizing the fundamentals as well as sportsmanship.

Takano also has volunteered for various roles as a poll worker and a preschool youth counselor. The volunteer role that has made a lifelong impact on him was when he served an intern at the National Japanese American Historical Society. He deepened his understanding of the Japanese American historical experience and helped complete a video project about San Francisco’s Japantown. The living account of the incarceration greatly moved him and helped him articulate the need for education of the general public about the experience. He made a strong case for the value of such education and its application to today’s society.

Personal Statement

“I had the opportunity to work as an intern at the National Japanese American Historical Society (NJAHS). Through my father, I had a lot of prior exposure to the Japanese American story, but I hadn’t placed much importance on my heritage until I began to study Japanese and think about the intersection of the two cultures. When the possibility of interning at NJAHS was mentioned, my interest was piqued, and it seemed like the perfect opportunity to learn more about my dad’s side of the family and their history. During my internship, I worked closely with the NJAHS executive director and a team of college interns to create a 30-minute-long video of San Francisco’s Japantown. To write the script for the tour, we researched historical locations, visited them in person, dug through photo archives and watched documentary videos. “Through this process, I learned about picture brides, Tanforan Racetrack, the Fillmore District, the 1906 ‘Ham and Eggs’ fire, the connection between African American and Japanese communities, how urban renewal fragmented SF Japantown’s community and much more.”

“I used my commute to read literature on the internment camps such as ‘Displacement’ by Kiku Hughes, and I found myself crying on a BART train. ‘Displacement’ made me feel like I was journeying through time with the main character, experiencing the same disbelief and fear, and coming to terms with my own identity. As a Sansei descended from Japanese immigrants who came to the United States after the war, I felt a disconnect between me and my Japanese ancestry. The amount of time between WWII and the present means that I haven’t experienced the same racial prejudice that my father and grandparents had to go through, and I thus wasn’t expecting to resonate with the story that deeply. . . . “Education is crucial in spreading awareness about social justice because we are destined to repeat history if we never learn it or are taught poorly. Harmful misconceptions and false beliefs need to be cut off at the source and prevented from propagating, even in the younger generations.”

“I believe that we’re making progress, especially in major cities, but each step of the way is riddled with obstacles. Legislation is slow, and there’s a need for collective action. Social consciousness comes from an acceptance of other cultures and empathy, yet the experience of internment camps and being unfairly accused is hard to understand from reading textbooks and explanations alone. “A thorough understanding takes interaction and engagement, dedicated teachers who are willing to go the extra mile and quality resources to delve into. These are becoming more attainable by the day, but it’s up to us as a society to push for change and protect our future.”

Zora Uyeda-Hale
JACL Chapter: Berkeley
Recipient of the Takashi and Yuriko Moriiuchi Memorial Scholarship
University of California, Berkeley

Notables

Zora Uyeda-Hale is one busy activist. Among her activities, she was junior varsity and varsity basketball captain, first clarinet in the SFJACS Band, and student government officer all while attaining a 3.95 unweighted GPA while in high school. In her community, she is also active in local and district Young Buddhist Assn. activities, yet still finds the time to devote to her true passion: social justice activism. After graduating this year from Albany High School in Albany, Calif., Uye-da-Hale will attend the University of California, Berkeley, and major in society and environment.

A new JACL member, she stated, “the JACL’s objectives and emphasis on youth involvement resonated deeply with me.” She is impressed and inspired by activities and programs such as the JACL Chicago chapter’s “Bridging Communities” program.

The School Board president from Uyeda-Hale’s school district wrote in a letter of recommendation, “Zora is simply trying to change the world for the better, beginning with where she lives.” The president concluded by stating, “She has labored to create real change within the Albany community. She will leave our district better than when she entered it through her own efforts. That cannot be said of many and is the highest recommendation I can provide.”

Beyond the Classroom

In her personal statement, Uyeda-Hale described her journey in uncovering and learning about Japanese American incarceration beginning in sixth grade, seeing movies, talking to her grandparents and reading current documentaries such as “Alternative Facts” and “Fred Korenatsu Speaks Up.” As she learned more, Uyeda-Hale saw the need for education but also realized the following: “In almost every history class I’ve been in, there’s been a moment where the teacher has explained why learning history is so important; it’s so we don’t repeat our mistakes. As someone who loves history, I agree with this sentiment; however, looking at the state of our current world, this doesn’t seem to be working.”

“Families are still being separated and kept in detention centers. Black people are still being targeted and disenfranchised through the criminal justice system. Indigenous people are still being stripped of their land and denied basic human resources. The patterns of dehumanization that we can see throughout history are still being perpetuated. In order to not repeat our mistakes, we must learn accurate and representative history and contextualize it around systemic issues, not just isolated incidents.”

Uyeda-Hale continued to write in detail of her decision to make a difference, starting slowly. “…I thought it was just an opportunity to have cool conversations with up-perclassmen and friends, but really, it turned out to be one of my first experiences with student-led activism and anti-racist education, now two of my biggest passions.

“I choose to be involved in this type of advocacy because I regard both education and student voice as extremely undervalued vessels for change. It’s not about just teaching the historical facts; we must also contextualize these experiences in a broader social interpretation.”

“When questioning my grandpa’s mentality around the government, I must also consider assimilation, cultural expectations and self-gas-lighting. When looking at internment as a whole, I must also see the parallels to not only the treatment of API people in the U.S. today but also the many detention centers and their inhume conditions. Education is one of the most powerful tools we have at our disposal, especially when it comes to Japanese internment and its serious repercussions.”

Caroline Van Gundy
JACL Chapter: Stockton
Recipient of the San Francisco/Japantown Kuwahara Memorial Scholarship
Mount Holyoke College

Notables

Caroline Van Gundy is a 2022 graduate of Piedmont High School, in Piedmont, Calif. During high school, she was an honor student who worked for her school’s food service program for four years—three of those as a teaching assistant. Her supervisors praised her sense of humor, work ethic, dependability, quickness to learn new tasks and respectful manner—all qualities that will continue to contribute to her success in future endeavors. She also enjoyed tutoring several students from diverse backgrounds. Van Gundy recently served as an intern with the Contra
“I think we can use our education as a tool to correct past historical narratives by teaching it everywhere and not being afraid to raise the topic in our daily lives with our friends in school. "The incorporation of Americans with Japanese backgrounds to me is a focal point for examining discrimination of all American. It should not be a footnote in the history books, or something mentioned in passing. I think we can correct past historical narratives in this way by looking at this tragic event in the context of how Asians in our society were treated before and after . . . I think the way education can move us forward is by continuing to teach and learn about the incarceration in the greater context of discrimination against Asians in the course of our country’s history. "Each immigrant group’s experience of discrimination may be different. The incarceration did not appear out of a vacuum. If we understand the context in which that arose, perhaps we can all learn how best to deal with present and future issues.”

Notables Erica Harris is the first in her family to attend college. She is a student pursuing a bioengineering degree with a minor in business at the University of California, San Diego. Personal Statement "Many famous people have stated, ‘Those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it,’ which is a quotation I full-heartedly agree with. With hate being based on discrimination that is often fueled by a lack of understanding and the spread of false information, when people can’t identify a reason for why terrible things happen, a group is singled out to become the scapegoat and faces punishment they never deserved in the first place. "Japanese Americans saw this during WWII with the internment of Americans of Japanese heritage. For the whole Asian American community to be made victims of ignorance, misinformation and irrational fear is abhorrent (Covid). In this modern time where a large number of individuals and families are struggling as a community, it is up to every person to share compassion and kindness to one another.”

"By recognizing my own short-comings and identifying how much I do not know, I believe I can come from a mutual place of understanding in using education to share the bad side of history, along with the good. I have never been a blogger, or an activist, but I cannot just listen to the news, see all the hate acts that are occurring and do nothing. "That being said, I want to collect resources for people who are discriminated against and/or are victims of hate crimes so even if the unimaginable happens, hopefully they could receive the support they need. I also want to create a safe place for people who are especially isolated in these socially distant times and a comfortable environment where those who have faced especially rough times in their pasts can share their stories so as from younger generations can understand the perspectives from those hurt most throughout history. "‘I am just one person, but I do my best to reach out to the people I really care about and ask how they and their families are doing. . . . I hope to spread awareness of how important it is to make sure we’re listening to both sides of the story to get the full truth of what goes on in the world and in the past . . . We need to remind each other that we are all working together.”

Andrew Okamoto JACL Chapter: Mt. Olympus Recipient of the Shigeru Nakahira Memorial Scholarship University of Utah

Notables Andrew Okamoto has been a youth member of his chapter for the past two years and helped sell Minidoka Swing Band CDs at the Salt Lake City JACL National Convention in 2019. His grandfather, Henry Matsunaga, startedified during WWII. Okamoto also helps coordinate and volunteer at booths in the Salt Lake area and stated that through a variety of JACL events, he’s learned both leadership and communication skills. He additionally noted that if he continues to put an effort into giving back to the community, his dream of creating a more just society will come true.

Personal Statement "The way I learned about the Japanese American incarceration experience is by learning about my own relatives. I took only a few minutes of reading articles and hearing stories of my relatives, like my great-grandfather Hisashi ‘Harry’ Okamoto, to truly fathom what it means to be an ‘Okamoto’ and what it was like to be Japanese American during that time. I think it was important to remember that it means to be an ‘Okamoto’ and what it was like to be Japanese American during that time. “Hisashi Okamoto was a member of the Oregon Buddhist Temple and is one of countless Japanese Americans who sacrificed so much for the future of their children and the Japanese American community. "As an immigrant and owner of an old-run-down produce market in Portland, Hisashi had very few customers who bought only small quantities of fruits and vegetables at a time. Later, after the start of WWII, Hisashi and his family were forcibly removed to the Minidoka incarceration camp for four years, selling their grocery store at a terrible loss. "When faced with unbearable sacrifice and prejudice, rather than let anger and hate overwhelm him, he responded by using his gift of music to help form the Norakuro Band during his incarceration in WWII in Minidoka. Despite the terrible injustices done to him, he used his talent of music to provide inspiration and comfort to those around him. "Today’s Minidoka Swing Band is a tribute to his legacy to remember the perseverance, accomplishments and dignity of his generation,” Okamoto stated. “Hisashi is a prime example of what it means to be Japanese American. He represented hard work, determination and never settling with the easy path. His example is why I, like him, strive to give back to the community around me.”

Hana O’Looney-Goto JACL Chapter: Washington, D.C. Recipient of the Alice Yurioko Endo Memorial Scholarship Yale University

Notables Hana O’Looney-Goto’s involvement with JACL arrived through a unique path. “In September 2021, I was invited by my local Japanese American Citizens League chapter in Washington, D.C., to speak as a panelist at their upcoming event, ‘Japanese American History and Contemporary Issues’, alongside Professor Phil Tajitsu Nash, who teaches Asian American studies at the University of Maryland and serves as the president of the board of the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund. “As the first Japanese American elected to the Montgomery County, Md., Board of Education — the 14th-largest school system in the United States — the JACL chapter wanted to hear about my perspective and experiences on navigating local politics through my Japanese American identity. I had not been aware of the wonderful work of JACL before speaking at this event but was immediately inspired by the dialogue I had with Professor Nash and other Japanese American youth. We discussed the model minority myth, the infantilization of Japanese culture, the history of East Asia and Japanese internment, and before I knew it, our 90 minutes together had expired, and I had to give parting words to our panel viewers. “The incredible connections I developed with other thoughtful, reflective and passionate youth members of the D.C. Japanese American Citizens League chapter in this short event inspired me to become further involved with JACL, and I immediately began my application as a youth member of the organization.”

Personal Statement “O’Looney-Goto on education: “. . . In my service to my local board of education, I’ve created this motto for myself: The universe is an equal distributor of talent, but history has been an unequal distributor of opportunity. Education’s responsibility is to fill in the gaps. This is especially true for Japanese Americans, as our community has not only been put through the horrifying experience of incarceration camps but also has been victim to historical erasure of that dark point in American history and the racism we continue to experience in the United States. “. . . Education’s responsibility is not only to provide financial and material assistance to correct historical inequities but also to teach a full and accurate portrayal of Japanese internment to ensure our history is not forgotten. I look forward to continuing this work that I did on a small, classroom scale to the rest of the United States with the partnership, passion and resources of the Japanese American Citizens League.”

Alexandra Ridge JACL Chapter: Mt. Olympus Recipient of the Saburo Kido Memorial Scholarship University of Utah

Notables Alexandra Ridge has been a member of JACL since 2015 but has been involved with the Matsumoto Sister City exchange since 2010. She has been involved with the JACL with programs both in her city and through the Kakahashi project and hopes to return to support the program. She stated, . . . The pandemic has inspired me to make a difference in my own community and combat isolation by inviting new members to join the JACL and the Kakahashi project.”

Personal Statement “It is no exaggeration that the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II fundamentally rewrote my personal history as a Rokusei; as time progresses, I find myself clinging desperately to any semblance of a diasporic community, and I am not alone. Entire generations of Nikkeijin are drifting away from their heritage, losing traditions, forgetting Japanese language — already too distant to mourn the loss of things they never even knew existed. "The immeasurable impact of this atrocity was not limited to the unjust imprisonment of JA in the camps but rather caused a ripple effect of cultural erasure and anti-Asian sentiment that permeates present-day communities. As an act
of survival, Japanese American families stopped speaking and teaching Japanese in their homes; stopped practicing cultural traditions; burned family heirlooms; erased any connections with their Japanese roots — in order to reabsimilate into American society for their own safety and survival and acceptance.”

“... I could not begin to comprehend the effects of WWII until I sat down with my grandmother to hear about her childhood on Oahu and the obstacles our family faced prior to and after the bombing of Pearl Harbor.”

“Today, her dementia has progressed so that she cannot identify ancestors in photographs or even recognize her own children. There are countless unanswered questions that I wished to ask her, that my future children will ask of me, and I won’t ever have the answers. I was too young to interview my grandfather before he passed away in 2011, nearly a lifetime of memories lost.”

“Like many young Japanese Americans, the information I have about my culture and past is secondhand at best and subject to time warp but also further clouded following this mass incarceration. We should be spreading awareness about the importance of story-telling before it is too late.”

Ridge continued, “The JACL should reach out to chapters to create a centralized, accessible database that can be continually developed by the community. Volunteers may translate old journal entries from Japanese into English, and JA voices and stories can be circulated in the newsletters each month.”

Victoria Ridge
JACL Chapter: Mt. Olympus
Recipient of the Dr. Thomas T. Yatabe Memorial Scholarship
Pacific University of Oregon

Notables
Victoria Ridge has been awarded the Dr. Thomas T. Yatabe Memorial Scholarship to attend Pacific University of Oregon as an accounting major. Raised in a mixed-race household in a predominantly white neighborhood, she feels that making strong and diverse connections is a critical part of growing, both as an individual and as a society.

As such, she has been deeply involved in many aspects of her college education, from athletics events to serving as the equity and leadership coordinator of the RHA executive board. Besides school involvement, she has volunteered for the Nikho Matsuri festival at the Salt Lake Buddhist Temple. Ridge hopes to learn more about Japanese American history and Japanese culture to share with her community.

Personal Statement
“After a little research [near my college], I found a quaint museum in the center of downtown Portland. It had many artifacts and first-hand stories of the town that had once stood around this hidden museum. It wasn’t until this point in time that I had even realized the amount of Japanese settlers that had once lived here. Even as a Japanese American whose parents encouraged her to research, I felt that by not knowing our past, I had let not only myself down, but also my own ancestors.”

“Until we learn the deep truths of our past rather than remembering rote facts and casualty numbers, I feel that we cannot truly comprehend the weight it has on our future. World War II cannot be forgotten, and if we choose to ignore it, we will be condemning ourselves to repeat history.”

“In order to remind people of the tragic events of WWII, I continuously post on my social media accounts across several different platforms. Education can be a tool when given the proper opportunity — it can change the hearts and constive victims of our people facing the threat of harassment (or even death) from their fellow Americans breaks my heart. If a single one of my posts can inspire one other person to speak up against injustice, my efforts will be worth it.”

Ellen Uchida
JACL Chapter: Mt. Olympus
Recipient of the Kyutaro and Yasuo Abiko Memorial Scholarship
College of William and Mary

Notables
Ellen Uchida is a finance major at the College of William and Mary. Ellen Uchida has a unique perspective on Japanese Americans.

“I initially joined the JACL Japan chapter in December of 2020 and switched to the D.C. chapter in March of 2021. For the JACL D.C. chapter, I authored an article for the spring 2021 newsletter,” she stated. “In the article, I shared my experiences as an overseas Japanese American who was born and raised in Japan her whole life. I produced an authentic narrative of my life detailing my initial lack of understanding of the Japanese American incarceration experience and the disconnection I felt with my American identity.”

“At the end of the article, I articulated my newfound perspective of what it means to be ‘American’ and what it means for me to transfer to an American university from a Japanese university. Overall, I was able to offer another perspective of what a Japanese American could look like and provide invaluable insight into Japanese society that is often inaccessible to people who have never lived in Japan.

“My next step of involvement has been signing up for the JACL Next Gen Speakers Program. For this program, I intend to use my experiences as someone who has mixed Japanese and Chinese heritage and share how growing up in a multicultural family in a largely homogenous country impacted the way I think. I would also like to use my position as a speaker to share my thoughts on Japan’s path toward embracing globalization and what steps I believe the Japanese government could benefit from. Simultaneously, I hope to learn more about the Japanese American incarceration experience from participants who will share their families’ stories.”

Personal Statement
Regarding education, Uchida stated, “...Overall, the steps I took to inform myself of the Japanese American incarceration experience taught me not solely the scale of the injustice and constant stories of my fellow Americans breaks my heart. If a single one of my posts can inspire one other person to speak up against injustice, my efforts will be worth it.”

Matthew Farrells
JACL Chapter: Twin Cities
Recipient of the Minoru Yasui Memorial Scholarship
University of Minnesota

Notables
Matthew Farrells, a member of the Twin Cities JACL chapter in Minneapolis, Minn., is pursuing a master’s degree in business administration at the University of Minnesota’s Carlson School of Management.

He has a long and diverse experience in the JACL. At the chapter level, he has served for 14 years on the Twin Cities board and has held various other offices for the chapter. At the district level, he has served as president-elect and vice chairman for the Midwest District Council.

At the national level, he served as national youth chair. After two years of service there, he became national secretary/treasurer for four years, where he chaired the Budget and Finance Committees and the Budget and Finance Committees.

He then became national vp for planning and development for another four years, during which he served twice as a Kakehashi supervisor/chaperone with students traveling to Japan. In 2020, he again became national secretary/treasurer, where he completed his term at the conclusion of the JACL National Convention.

Personal Statement
While working professionally in wealth management, Farrells still focuses his time on outreach to underserved communities, schools and local organizations.

“Education is vitally important in raising social consciousness of past incidences of racial bigotry and social justice issues and can be used as an impactful tool to help advocate for other communities who are impacted by racism. People don’t know what they don’t know. Education is often a useful tool to raise self-awareness, grow and develop. Learning about historical events and context to one’s own belief system and helps define his/her own understanding of social justice issues.”

“Education also helps frame complex issues into simple and effective ways, which can be useful in often challenging situations. Understanding the JA incarceration experience and how it has impacted our community is an important foundation when advocating on behalf of others.”

“By using our own story of our own community’s legacy, we have tremendous power and responsibility to apply the same principles or equality and justice to modern day social issues — including immigration reform, marriage equality, anti-Asian hate and BLM initiatives. Only until our society understands the past can it choose to consciously change to become more accepting of others.”

Christine Hikido
JACL Chapter: Silicon Valley
Recipient of the Chiyo and Tomo Shimazaki Memorial Scholarship
Will Attend the University of California, Berkeley, the University of California, Los Angeles, or Columbia University

Notables
Christine Hikido is “currently pursuing a master’s in urban planning, which I hope will support my career aspirations in public and social services. I hope to work for non-profit organizations that address homelessness, affordable housing and community development.”


**Personal Statement**

“All of my grandparents were incarcerated during World War II. My maternal grandmother was first interned at the Poston Internment Camp, but after her stepfather answered “no” to questions 27 and 28 on the Loyalty Questionnaire, her entire family was transferred to Tule Lake Segregation Center. “Her family attempted to move back to Japan after the war ended but moved back to California after witnessing Japan’s war-torn conditions. My maternal grandfather did not speak much about the camps, preferring to keep these painful memories to themselves. “My paternal grandmother was born and raised in Juneau, Alaska. The day after Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, the FBI took her father, and she didn’t see him for more than two years. She wasn’t sure if they’d ever be reunited. “During the Day of Remembrance this year, my grandmother spoke about the tragedy of a mother taking her life in Minidoka. Even as a child, my grandma could feel the profound impact of injustice and its devastating burden on families. “My paternal grandfather also served for the 442nd Regimental Combat Unit while his family was locked up in the Gila River Internment Center. In Italy, he was severely injured when hit by a landmine and was hospitalized for more than two years. “He passed away peacefully a few months ago at the age of 97. After his passing, I’ve learned many things about him that he rarely spoke about. I learned that he initially answered “no” to question 27 of the Loyalty Questionnaire, but he changed his mind a few days later and was allowed to change his answer. “I learned that after the war, he wrote op-eds to support the no-boys during times when they were still stigmatized by the Japanese American community. My grandparents’ acts of resistance and face of injustice have inspired me to dedicate my career to promoting justice and equity for all.”

**Erina Horikawa**

**JACL Chapter: Spokane**

**Recipient of the Dr. Newton K. Wesley (Uyesugi) Memorial Scholarship**

**Washington State University**

**Notables**

“Prior to this year, I thought that I couldn’t relate to the Japanese American Citizens League as I moved from Japan in 2009 and I am a Japanese citizen. I did not have a history of Japanese American internment camps until my later years of college, I identified more as Japanese. However, as I majored in race and ethnic studies at Whitman College, I became more and more passionate about racial justice and civil rights. “During a devised theater project about Latinx immigration in Walla Walla, I understood my own immigration experience more and how that allowed me to form solidarity with other immigrant or refugee groups. “With my previous major, and as a current medical student, I identify now as Japanese American. While paired with immense injustice and tragedies, I love the history of political activism in the United States. I cannot imagine moving back to Japan and starting a career there. I’ve learned how sex, power hierarchies and a sense of political apathy are present in Japan. I’m truly thankful that I moved to the United States and was educated in race and ethnic studies so I can continue to advocate for health equity as a medical student and future physician.”

**Personal Statement**

Horikawa brings a fresh perspective to the JACL movement. “...When I grew up in Japan, I reflected on how the Japanese history curriculum did not cover Japanese internment as much. Also, I realized how I had internalized the oppression of internment and atomic bombings — I thought I did not belong in the Japanese American community because I did not share the generational trauma of internment. What a ridiculous thought! I realized. How could I have let an act of racial oppression define me from my sense of belonging within an organization toward civil rights and justice?”

**Kellie Lee**

**JACL Chapter: Sacramento**

**Repeat Recipient of the Dr. Kiyoshi Sonoda Memorial Dental Scholarship**

**UCLA School of Dentistry**

**Notables**

A letter of recommendation submitted on behalf of Kellie Lee stated: “At the UCLA School of Dentistry, Kellie Lee has been very active holding multiple leadership positions in various clubs while maintaining good standing in the classroom and clinic. She has engaged in research on HPV and will soon be an author on a recently accepted publication resulting from her work. “Lee also has a variety of teaching experiences highlighting her broad skill and knowledge base in her young dental career. Additionally, she has also maintained strong ties to her Japanese heritage and has made it a point in her life to be active in the JACL, UCLA’s Nikkei Student Union and the Buddhist church. She is also gifted at Taiko and has performed numerous times. She is a great representative of the Japanese American community and exemplifies the many qualities and ambition sought in the younger generations.”

**Personal Statement**

“I always wonder if anyone else is affected when my friends and I share our families’ [incarceration] history and cultural experiences. Embracing my Japanese American culture by attending and learning at the Manzanar Pilgrimage, I even performing in a drama production to share my colleagues at UCLA, during the 2021 memorial event which I feel I have participated in educating the society about the Japanese incarceration. “It is crucial to share these experiences with friends and the youth of our generation to prevent events like this from ever happening again.”

**Tanner Taguchi**

**JACL Chapter: Mt. Olympus**

**Recipient of the Rev. H. John and Asako Yamashita Memorial Scholarship**

**Brigham Young University**

**Notables**

Tanner Taguchi, a member of the Mt. Olympus chapter, has been awarded the Rev. H. John and Asako Yamashita Memorial Scholarship for a master’s of public administration. He has been deeply involved with both sides of JACL’s work on civil rights advocacy and cultural preservation. Recently, as a legislative intern, he worked on the organization of APIA groups in Utah for APIA day on the Hill, drafting the Day of Remembrance legislation and assisting Sen. Jani Iwamoto on SB 58 in the Utah state legislature commemorating Day of Remembrance. He also works with APIA groups on campus, organizes Nihon Matsuri at the Salt Lake Buddhist Temple, assists in cataloging artifacts donated to the university, teaches about internment at Sunday school and coordinates with university faculty to teach about the Topaz camp, including a field trip to the site.

**Personal Statement**

“When I was in the sixth grade, I had never heard of the Japanese American internment, even as a Japanese American. My grandparents immigrated to the United States and the passage of the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965. “My world changed forever when I read ‘journey to Topaz’ for a reading assignment. As a 11-year-old Japanese American from California, I felt a connection to Yuki, an 11-year-old girl from California and the protagonist of the book. I had the same mix of Japanese and American food at home. I experienced a similar dynamic with Japanese and non-Japanese friends.

“However, as I read the book, our experiences diverged. I was horrified as I read the tragedies that afflicted her and her family as they were forced to leave all they had and live in a desert wasteland. From then on, I’ve taken every opportunity I can to educate others on the events surrounding the internment and point out the impacts it’s had on the Japanese American community and the United States. “Since then, I’ve visited every internment camp I could learn more: Manzanar, Tule Lake, and Minidoka. I hope to go to the Gila River and Poston camps with my family soon. I’ve visited the Japanese American National Museum and have taken others with me to tell them the stories of immigrants who worked tirelessly, only to have the results of their labor stripped away.

“Throughout high school and my undergraduate program, I’ve had the chance to give presentations about topics of my choice. If the assignment allowed, without fail I’ve chosen to tell the story of Japanese Americans, particularly the stories of those who served as part of the 100th/442nd.”

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Katherine Morris
Abe and Esther Hagiwara
Student Aid Scholarship
Eric Tokita
JACL Chapter: Mt. Olympus
Recipient of the Kenji Kajiwara Memorial Scholarship
University of Utah School of Medicine

Notables

Eric Tokita knew when considering what kind of career to pursue that he wanted to work alongside his community. Graduating with a degree in biomedical engineering, he was passionate about making a difference in health care.

Now as a second-year med student, he is pursuing a career as a physician so he can work with patients directly.

He also wants to be a pillar within his community and feels a career in medicine will afford him an opportunity to advocate for change and social justice for underserved populations.

He knows the journey before him is long and rigorous, but he is also excited to be part of a profession that centers around patient care.

Growing up, Tokita was fortunate that members of his JACL chapter came to his school and talked with students about the WWII Japanese American incarceration. This talk inspired him to learn more about his own family’s history in the camp.

He discovered how his great-grandfather came to the United States on a visitation experience through painting. His great-grandfather felt his artwork helped convey the emotional devastation that Japanese Americans faced.

As a youth representative, Tokita participated in the JACL at the national level. He worked with fellow members from across the country who lived in the incarceration camps and shared their stories. Tokita was amazed at how people from such diverse political and socioeconomic backgrounds could all put their differences aside and work together to educate future generations.

Personal Statement

“Beyond academic dissemination, it is crucial to raise a new generation of advocates and leaders that protect the future. The prejudice and bias that led to incarceration are still ever-present, and it takes time to resolve to combat them. We must fight the battles of injustice wherever they manifest, recognizing that any attacks on social equality should be met with the same visit as if it were an attack on us. Doing so ensures the best odds of fundamentally changing our society in a way that promotes understanding and empathy.”

Law

Stephen Leonard
JACL Chapter: Berkeley
Recipient of the Sho Sato Memorial Law Scholarship
New York University School of Law

Notables

A graduate of the University of California, Berkeley, Stephen Leonard attends New York University School of Law, where he has earned a 3.95 GPA. Leonard was an officer in the Nikkei Student Union at Berkeley (historian during spring 2020, fall 2021 and spring 2022; president from fall 2020-spring 2021).

A director of the East Bay San- tuary said the following about Leonard, “He worked primarily on our social media team, helping to develop content for different civil rights and social justice campaigns. For example, he played a lead role in researching and developing a campaign to raise awareness about T42, a xenophobic and racist policy that continues to expel asylum seekers under the pretext of public health.”

Personal Statement

Of his work in the Nikkei community, he stated, “I became president of UC Berkeley’s Nikkei Student Union in 2020, during a time when the American public was beginning to reckon with an unreported history of anti-Black institutional racism and an uptick in anti-Asian hate crimes.

“I felt that, more than ever, Japa- nese Americans had a responsibility to go beyond their own communities and take a pro-active role in addressing these issues head-on. I took a lead role in planning our annual Day of Remembrance ceremony in the uncharted waters of the newly introduced Zoom format.

“But what I am most proud of is how NSU always uses this ceremony as an opportunity not simply to remember the horrors of racialized incarceration but also to educate our audience on the continued threat of xenophobic policy today.

“From a justice system that disproportionately locks up Black Americans to an asylum system with a history of holding asylum seekers for ridiculous lengths of time in horrific conditions, fear of ‘the other’ continues to be used as justification for systems that destroy the lives of the vulnerable and line the pockets of the powerful.”

He concluded: “For the Japanese American, I argue, our history should be a source of empathic outrage with regard to the continued de- tention of minorities today. I have been heartened and inspired by the Japanese Americans around me, from Tsuru to JACL to my NSU teammates, who continue to demonstrate a commitment to using JA history not as a source of bitterness but as a source of comfort. To me, the Japanese American identity means anti-establishment resistance and solidarity with the vulnerable.”

Laurelau Singsang
National Associate
Recipient of the Thomas T. Hayashi Memorial Law Scholarship
University of Virginia Law School

Notables

Laurelau Singsang attends the University of Virginia Law School, having graduated previously from the University of Oregon, magna cum laude, in the top 5 percent of her class. She desires to serve underrepresented immigrants when she graduates.

She explained, “I’ve been doing pro bono work this year as a hotline volunteer for CAIR Coalition, an organization that provides legal representation to immigrants. This work reminds me of the incarcer- ation Japanese Americans faced. It’s easy to think about the internment camps as a historical wrong, one we should never repeat. It’s harder to remember that internment isn’t gone at all. Migrants and asylum seekers are in prisons in enormous numbers to this day. Conditions are bleak, and there’s no clear solution insight. I want to use my legal degree to serve those who can’t help themselves.”

Singsang also worked as the Janet D. Stieger Fellow at the Office of Consumer Protection. Her law school professor glowingly described her: “Lauralei has talked passionately — and astutely — about some of the unique legal challenges that native Hawaiians face with Kuleana land ownership维权. Moreover, her strategies for change focus on both big-picture issues and the not-flashy details needed to make true change.

She’s already dived into the thicket of Hawaiian state agency policies and practices to figure out how to help native Hawaiians claim title to ancestral lands. This type of ‘in the weeds’ focus is unusual among first-year law students. Unlike many of her peers, Lauralei has a strong interest in sweating the details, as well as a talent for doing so.”

Personal Statement

“My professional career and personal interests have revolved, almost exclusively, around promoting public policy and advocacy in support of social justice. I believe developing the pipeline of socially and culturally competent leaders, especially among our ethnically diverse youth, is critical to bring about meaningful change in government, the workplace and our communities. To this end, as advocacy manager for Asian Americans for Civil Rights, I designed and managed a high school youth leadership pro- gram to promote values of advocacy, civic engagement and justice.

“Additionally, in 2021, I helped design and facilitate a Brave By- stander Workshop for youth in response to the rise in anti-Asian violence in the United States. The workshop was free and open to all youth and empowered young people with tools and strategies for combating anti-Asian racism, safe inter- vention and community building.”

Molly Maseba
JACL Chapter: Florin-Sacramento
Recipient of the Aiko Susanna Tashiro Hiratsuka Memorial Arts Scholarship
Cosumnes River College

Notables

Molly Maseba is an ex-emplary scholar-athlete (cross-country, track and field from Laguna Creek High School) who managed to be very active in the Asian community, while creating...
art and design in several media formats and disciplines.

**Personal Statement**

“I believe the strength in my Japanese heritage and culture has allowed me to be an advocate for social justice and help fight for my fellow minorities. So often the words ‘social justice’ get tossed around on social media, void of their true meaning. I believe this stems from the weight of the word ‘justice’ muddled by visions of revenge and compensation, when in actuality, it fights for understanding and growth.”

“I don’t feel justice when I tear down those who wronged me; revenge is short-lived satisfaction. I feel justice when I know that the wrong I felt will never be felt again. When I fight for social justice, I’m not enacting violence or reciprocated hate, I’m calling for change. I believe my rich cultural history and open education has allowed me to truly call for social justice.”

“Justice for All.” The last three words of the ‘Pledge of Allegiance,’ yet still so misconstrued. We as Americans need to not only learn our cultural history but also learn from it. The only way to serve justice, for all people, not just my Japanese family, is to grow and change. Fix the errors of our past, and work toward a better future. That’s why I feel it is so important for my community to step out and work toward sharing the voices of other API and minorities.

“So often are we pitted against each other, comparing tragic histories and struggles, when we should be working to lift one another up. We have all faced injustices in this world, we can all work together to advocate for progress.”

“With the rising amounts of hate crimes, it’s so easy for us to silently watch in the background, help out [individuals] without raising our voices. Ingrained in our culture is the idea of staying out of trouble, keeping our heads down to avoid conflict. That’s what my father’s side did — keep our hardships ‘hush hush’ and sweep it under the rug.

“I understand and recognize the notions of this ideology, but we as a new generation must speak out, spread our stories, listen to one another. This is the only way the silenced voices of our ancestors can finally rest, knowing they have been served justice.”

**Katherine Morris**

**JACL Chapter: Florin-Sacramento Valley**

Recipient of the Abe and Esther Hagiwara Memorial Student Aid Scholarship

Pepperdine University’s Graduate School of Education and Psychology

**Notables**

As a third-generation Japanese American, Katherine Morris has been a steadfast supporter and member of JACL for nearly 25 years. She currently serves as the Florin-Sacramento Valley JACL chapter’s membership coordinator. Additionally, as a board member, she partnered with Asian Resources Incorporated to spread awareness about the importance of getting a Covid-19 vaccination.

Morris is currently pursuing a graduate degree in clinical psychology at Pepperdine University, where she investigates the effects of historical, collective, intergenerational and race-based trauma. Her efforts are motivated by an understanding that the internment of over 110,000 Japanese Americans during World War II led to unduly psychological issues that ensued thereafter.

Through this understanding, she recognizes the critical need to “remember the past to help heal the present.”

To this end, Morris actively fought anti-Asian hate when she “studied the psychological impacts of Covid-19 due to stigmatization of Asians and Asian Americans.” Her analysis highlighting the historic context of xenophobia and Sinophobia underlying anti-Asian hate was shared with JACL, Asian Pacific Islander American Public Affairs and APIE attorneys in the Sacramento area and serves as a valuable resource for people, especially in the mental health field, to gain a greater understanding of historical and collective trauma.

**Personal Statement**

As a graduate clinical psychology student, I have studied the effects of historical, collective, intergeneration-
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