n 2023, JACL National awarded 15 scholarships totaling $67,500 in the following categories: Freshman, Undergraduate, Graduate, Law, Creative & Performing Arts and Student Aid. The JACL would normally award about 22 additional scholarships totaling an additional $30,000. However, earnings from the scholarship endowment fund during the last year weren’t sufficient for the organization to make the additional awards.

In 2023, a committee from the JACL’s Eastern District evaluated the Freshman applications chaired by Linda Adams of the Washington, D.C., chapter. The committee members and their respective chapters are Julie Abo (Washington, D.C.), Bers and acquaintances of these applicants.

Please join us in thanking these volunteers for their excellent work on behalf of the JACL’s National Scholarship Program.

We also would like to express the JACL’s gratitude and appreciation for the fine work of our staff members, Education/Communications Coordinator Matthew Weisthly, Regional Director Patty Wada and Membership Database Administrator Tomiko Ismael.

And, we thank the JACL chapters for their excellent job of screening and forwarding Freshman scholarship applications for the national competition. However, please be reminded that the other JACL National scholarships are submitted directly to the organization by the applicants.

Chapters, please inform your members and acquaintances of these other scholarships available to JACL members. The updated information for the 2024 program will be posted on the JACL’s website (jacl.org) next month.

The 2023 information is still available on the website to provide background and requirements of the program.

This year’s application included the essay question: “How do you think the JACL should continue to honor its diverse legacy that is strongly connected to the Japanese American internment experience while continuing to expand its reach to emerging Japanese American communities (i.e., individuals who may not have JA incarceration history, post-WWII immigrants, mixed-Japanese members, adoptees, those with a strong connection to Japan, etc.)?”

An excerpt from each scholarship recipient’s response is found in this publication.

Congratulations to all of this year’s scholarship recipients. Their significant achievements are very deserving of recognition and reward! And, we thank them for all that they do. Their actions and accomplishments reflect well of themselves, their families and our entire community!
I:

older age is going down, this is still encouraging recent research suggests especially when it comes to loss of about future aging problems — It’s hard and unpleasant to think address. We intuitively know why: very hard for most older adults to

Yet, advance planning for aging is

LEGAL-EASE: AN ATTORNEY’S PERSPECTIVE

ADVANCE PLANNING FOR AGING

By Judd Matsunaga, Esq.

just how long has it been since you’ve “lost your mind”? The possibility of developing dementia is perhaps the most important challenge that older adults will face. Yet, advance planning for aging is very hard for most older adults to address. We intuitively know why: It’s hard and unpleasant to think about future aging problems — especially when it comes to loss of independence.

Experts estimate that about 30 percent of people aged 85 or older have dementia, with the risk of dementia increasing rapidly as people reach age 90 or older. Although encouraging recent research suggests that the risk of dementia at a given older age is going down, this is still going to be a common problem for the foreseeable future.

Older adults have an expectation that their adult children would help them out but had not discussed this in-depth with their kids, nor had they completed the advance planning documents that would be needed for their children to step in and assist. What’s more, adult children often avoid the discussion because the last time they brought it up, mom (or dad) got upset.

In fact, it’s quite common for older adults to become very anxious and/ or defensive about their abilities. Some become quite paranoid about others trying to control them. This is a problem because not only does the older person become distressed when a family tries to talk about the future, but in dementia, “thinking” and “reasoning” also usually gets worse when a person is anxious or stressed.

So, once mild dementia has developed, conversations about whether and delegating authority to others becomes much more difficult than they would have been before. (And these conversations are not easy even with older adults who have good cognition.) Yet, for the well-being of older adults, these difficult and uncomfortable conversations are required.

That’s because it has profound repercussions for financial safety, impact on family caregivers, safety at home and, of course, the ability for the affected person to make decisions. Planning ahead can enable an aging parent’s adult children or other trusted individuals to assist with medical, financial and legal matters, should the aging parent lose mental capacities.

Home safety can be an issue if an older adult with dementia wanders or leaves the stove on. Many older adults are also vulnerable to falls, which can especially be problematic for older adults who live alone and may be unable to get up or get help after a fall, especially if an injury is involved. You need to plan for it.

According to board-certified Dr. I. Lerner, M.D., M.P.H., when you are planning ahead for medical, financial or legal issues (often inter-related), there are three Key Steps for All Advance Planning for Aging (www.betterhealthwhilingaging.net):

- Anticipating common aging-related life challenges, either because they are very likely to happen (e.g., eventual advanced dementia in someone recently diagnosed with mild dementia) or are common and significant (e.g., a serious fall while at home alone)
- Planning ahead in order to minimize the stress, financial problems, family strife and health harms that people often experience when these challenges come along and no planning ahead has been done. All planning should involve consultation with family members and others likely to be involved in a person’s age-related life challenges.
- Completing necessary legal documents and documenting one’s plans, preferences and values.

Legal documentation is required for certain things, such as enabling a family member or other trusted individual to act on one’s behalf if one is incapacitated by either illness or injury. Additional documentation of preferences and values isn’t legally required but can provide valuable guidance to surrogate decision-makers, clinicians, family members and others who might be later involved in an older person’s care.

As an Elder Law Attorney, I can address the third step listed above: Completing necessary legal documents. I’m going to briefly cover the Big 3 necessary legal documents:

(1) Living Trust, (2) Durable Power of Attorney for Assets (DPOA) and (3) Health Care Power of Attorney. Every adult should execute all three.

Reversible Living Trusts: Living Trusts are an estate planning tool to avoid probate court upon death. Probate is a waste of time and a waste of money. The law allows you to avoid probate by putting your assets into a revocable living trust.

» See AGING on page 10
COMMENTARY

A MOTHER’S TAKE

AIZUMI FAMILY OUTINGS
By Marsha Aizumi

T

his month, we had our third Family Outing Day. This tradition, which we started this year, was to find meaningful ways to be together. Of course, I love the random and casual time when the kids drop by individually or together as well, but I thought intentionally finding times to be together and learn more about each other would be wonderful.

These family outings were inspired by Linda Aratani, whose family meets once a week for dinner. A weekly dinner didn’t fit the schedule of our family, however, so our quarterly Family Outing Days were born as a result. You never know when you share some of the things that are meaningful to you if it will resonate with others.

For the FIRST Aizumi Family Outing, we spent the day at Top Golf because Aiden, Stefan and Cat like the sport, and it would be fun for Mary to join in since she had never picked up a club previously. Our next Family Outing was to the Japanese American National Museum, where we stumped in the Inreicho book our family members who were interned during World War II. It was a day to talk about the Gila River and Manzanar camps where our parents and grandparents were imprisoned.

This month, our Family Outing was to visit the USS Iowa, a battleship docked in San Pedro. Tad, my husband, was in the Navy and assigned to a different ship, the USS Canberra, which is called a heavy cruiser, but my husband said it was like a small battleship. Tad became our tour guide as we walked and climbed to the different levels of this huge vessel. Along the way, Papa pointed out places on the ship where memorable things happened to him. He made them funny, even though they were actually very painful!!

Tad used to rush up to the ladder to his shift through the hatches, which were usually left open; but that day they were closed, so he hit his head on the hatch door twice, which made us laugh. I am sure he saw stars, but he made it sound funny!! Or counting the regular three gun shots before stepping out on the ship deck, only this day the ship fired its guns four times. Without headphones to muffle the deafening sound, he retreated back inside the ship to recover as his ears were ringing from the blast. These were all stories we heard around the dinner table at one time or another, but now we were actually seeing the settings of these stories... the hatch, the large guns, the mess hall where he didn’t like the canned pear or fruit cocktail pie or the sleeping quarters, where you could not even turn around in your bed because the space was too tight.

At my age, it was a challenge to climb up and down these ship stairs with narrow steps. But there was always one of my sons waiting at the top to pull me up. And climbing down backwards, my husband was always watchful having his hand on my back. Those moments did not go unnoticed by me as I felt the love of my family to protect me. Even the smallest moments can be filled with sweet memories.

I loved watching Stefan walk with his father, intently listening as Tad pointed out what everything was on the ship. I loved watching Aid-en, Mary and Stefan’s partner, Cat, taking pictures to capture moments and hearing Aid-en at the end of the outing saying, “Today was cool!” And I loved Papa talking about how the smells and the memories came flooding back as he stroked the deck. This was a part of his life that he was sharing with his sons and their partners. It was history being passed on.

We are already looking forward to our next Family Outing Day. Aid-en’s wife, Mary, will get to share something that she would like to do. I can’t wait to see what she will choose. She loves nature, Disney, and recently, she and Aiden went ax throwing for their date night. If she chooses ax throwing, which makes me a bit nervous, I will smile and do my best to learn to throw the ax. I want to always keep my heart and mind open. The older I get, the more precious these family times are to me. They also remind me that no matter my age, adventure and new learnings still await me... as long as I welcome them in.

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.”

JACL’S NCI INTERNS ON THEIR WORK EXPERIENCES
By Christa Cheng and Brandon Takahashi

T

his summer, JACL hosted two interns as part of Kizuna’s Nikkei Community Internship program, Christa Cheng and Brandon Takahashi. Cheng is a four-year political science major at the University of California, San Diego, who is aiming to apply to law schools following graduation. Takahashi is a second-year student at Northwestern University, where he is studying environmental sciences and is considering a career in the renewable energy field. The NCI program places college students with various Japanese American community organizations and gives interns the opportunity to network, build professional skills and directly impact their communities with the intention of empowering the next generation of leaders.

Christa Cheng

Interning with the JACL national team this summer was an unforgettable experience that taught me invaluable lessons about the expansiveness and strength of the Nikkei community nationwide. I’m incredibly grateful for the opportunities I had to directly experience the inner workings of a nonprofit, connect with civil rights leaders and professionals from around the country and develop a greater understanding of the rich heritage we share as Japanese Americans.

As the JACL National Convention intern, I assisted national staff with managing the event itself. In the weeks leading up to convention, I created the theme for the photo contest, mapped out meeting space for our next Family Outing Day. Aid-en’s wife, Mary, will get to share something that she would like to do. I can’t wait to see what she will choose. She loves nature, Disney, and recently, she and Aiden went ax throwing for their date night. If she chooses ax throwing, which makes me a bit nervous, I will smile and do my best to learn to throw the ax. I want to always keep my heart and mind open. The older I get, the more precious these family times are to me. They also remind me that no matter my age, adventure and new learnings still await me... as long as I welcome them in.

Brandon Takahashi

During my time at the JACL, I had the opportunity to meet so many changemakers within the Japanese American community who have fought and continue to fight for civil rights across the country. Being able to listen to the experiences of these inspiring individuals, in addition to the lessons and guidance provided by JACL staff throughout my internship, helped me better understand my role in the Japanese American and Asian American communities going forward.

This summer, I served as JACL’s intern in the membership department with Phillip Ozaki, director of development and membership, who served as my supervisor. My main assignment during my internship was to work on a youth marketing project to help JACL understand how to better recruit the next generation of members. During my internship, I created several marketing pieces for JACL’s NCI internship program, including a new marketing project to help JACL understand how to better recruit the next generation of members.

See YOUTH on page 12
2023 JACL NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

FRESHMEN

LEO JANERT
JACL CHAPTER: NEW MEXICO
RECIPIENT OF THE HENRY & CHIYO KUWAHARA MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP
PURDUE UNIVERSITY

Notables

Leo Janert has performed Meibukan Goju-Ryu kata multiple times at the annual JACL Aki-Matsuri in Albuquerque, N.M. He has also been a prominent member of the Japanese Playgroup, a separate community that participated in regional JACL events through children’s dances. Among his other interests, Janert is a dedicated teacher, and he currently is an instructor of a weekly Japanese GENKI I course. Among his other accomplishments, Janert was a National Merit Finalist in high school. As a high-achieving student, he has already earned 30 college credit hours from Central New Mexico Community College and the University of New Mexico. He has a keen interest and talent for chemistry and scientific inquiry. In addition, Janert was selected for a prestigious paid internship at the University of New Mexico. He will be attending Purdue, where he will be studying mechanical engineering.

Personal Statement

“The JACL community is the oldest Asian American civil rights organization, which has a diversity of those who have experienced the hardships of the Japanese American internment camps and those who joined due to their interests in Japanese culture. Due to time and the growth of the post-war Japanese American community, fewer people are tied to the hardships that many faced during that time.

“To memorialize those who faced these hardships and ensure that such a past does not repeat itself, it is important for those who never experienced these hardships to be educated about history, especially the history of their community.

“The JACL should honor their past fights and victories for the rights of Asian Americans, and the current and new members can only do so after being informed of how terrible it was to be an unwelcome immigrant from that time period. It is important to understand this past to better appreciate the JACL’s purpose and continue to make necessary changes to protect our rights.

“The JACL should help each local chapter to carry out WWII Japanese American memorial services, which allow us to formally appreciate our unsung heroes. If these events are broadcasted, more of the global populace would have access to these services to watch and learn what it was like to be a Japanese American during WWII and how difficult it was to make political steps after the war to acquire our rights, regardless of our race.

“By spreading the word and awareness of our past, we are able to better strengthen our purpose and goals with a stronger community linked toward the same cause.”

KAI VU
JACL CHAPTER: PUYALLUP VALLEY
RECIPIENT OF THE HENRY & CHIYO KUWAHARA MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON, SEATTLE

Notables

Kai Vu became involved with his JACL chapter in Puyallup starting in early elementary school. He has volunteered for numerous events such as the Puyallup Valley Fair, the 75th Remembrance of Executive Order 9066, Obon festivals, setup a Japanese American exhibit for the Greater Kent Historical Society and Kent Museum and participated in Tsuru for Solidarity.

Vu will be attending the University of Washington (Seattle) as a public health major with a concentration in biostatistics and computational epidemiology. He is currently a research intern in the biostatistics division at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center and will be extending his involvement in cancer research throughout the autumn quarter.

He is also working at UW Medicine as an outpatient phlebotomist and is hoping to apply to medical school in two years to fulfill his dream of becoming a physician and providing care to underserved populations. Vu has received two other JACL scholarships from the Seattle and Puyallup chapters.

Personal Statement

“My experiences with the JACL have contributed to my leadership skills and furthered my passions and interests in social justice and advocacy. I plan to continue my involvement throughout college.

“As a Gosei, I have faced the generational effects of the incarceration of my great-grandparents, Kazuko and George. To honor the diverse legacy of JACL and continue the organization’s outreach is to recognize the mistreatment of Japanese Americans and the Americanization of Japanese culture. We must continue teaching everyone, regardless of their ties to the Japanese American concentration camps, about the social injustice surrounding this tragic event and how it has detrimentally affected families and their communities. Educating youth on the Japanese American imprisonment experience will inspire more future leaders of my generation.”

MAX VU
JACL CHAPTER: PUYALLUP VALLEY
RECIPIENT OF THE CW04 MITSUGI MURAKAMI KASAI MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON, SEATTLE

Notables

Max Vu has become the 2023 JACL National Scholarship Recipient.

Congratulations to our 2023 JACL National Scholarship Recipients!

We are proud of all the work you have done and are excited that all three of our chapter scholarship recipients also received national scholarships. You are truly outstanding scholars and community members.

From the Puyallup Valley JACL Chapter

Kai Vu
Henry & Chiyoh Kuwahara Memorial Scholarship
Max Vu
CW04 Mitsugi Murakami Kasai (Ret) Memorial Scholarship
Jet Yotsuyue
Henry & Chiyoh Kuwahara Memorial Scholarship
multiculturalism continues to be complexity when the existence of people of Japanese descent. Vu has developed a deep understanding of the challenges they have faced and provides them with support. He also remains committed to making a difference in the lives of others.

Vu intends to major in linguistics at the University of Washington (Seattle), while having a strong foundation in computer science. He is hoping to use his time at the university to learn more about artificial intelligence and machine learning. Vu is also interested in phonology and second-language acquisition, and he hopes to get involved in undergraduate research in these areas of study.

**Personal Statement**

"Growing up, I rarely indulged in this side of my identity for reasons beyond that of the typical American minority because being only one-quarter Japanese meant I’m entitled to only one-quarter of my culture. America cannot be prepared for its rapidly evolving racial complexity when the existence of multiculturalism continues to be condemned to this day.

"Let this example denote the current state of race in America. One that subjects children whose families were incarcerated to ‘Are you even Japanese if you can’t speak it?’ and ‘I love sushi!’ — such, being synonymous with Hello Kitty, anime, ramen or anything else mainstream. But, bring up anything of significance to the Japanese American experience — and you’ll be met with blank stares.

"My younger self had no concept of JACL as an organization, but rather a community I could turn to embrace my culture. I soon became an activist in my classroom during high school, using every opportunity given to me in my Teacher Academy class to educate peers on Japanese and Asian American history with topics ranging from WWII to the model minority myth.

"I believe that JACL’s mission statement will continue to grow as long as there are racial barriers to confront. Just as JACL was once an organization dedicated to protecting the rights of Japanese Americans, then the rights of Asian American and Pacific Islanders and currently all minority communities affected by injustice, I believe the future of JACL is to help unite people of color in the ongoing fight for equality in America."

**Notables**

Rebecca Yonemura has studied Nihon Buyo and performed at the Thousand Oaks High Performing Arts Center, Oxnard Obon Festival, Kiezo Retirement Home, Cherry Blossom Festival and the Nisei Week Japanese Festival. She has also been both a participant and a staff member at the Kizuna Summer Camp, held at the JACL San Fernando location.

In addition, Yonemura has been involved with Girl Scouts, UNICEF and the Giving Spirit, where she has packed food and survival kits, made blankets for mothers in need and offered free tutoring.

**Personal Statement**

"At the time, I was around 8, and it was 3, and getting to share my culture through dance has been one of the most rewarding experiences.

"While it’s not always easy to engage people in talks about unjust equality during World War II, it’s important to spread the message. Even things as small as publicizing or sharing survivors’ stories will help make people more aware of the atrocities and will help share the sorrow and inspiring stories of those deeply affected by the war. While the past cannot be changed, the memories of those before us can live on forever."

**Notables**

Lana Kobayashi, a member of the JACL San Fernando Valley chapter, has been awarded the Henry & Chiyoko Kuwahara Memorial Scholarship to attend the University of California, Los Angeles, with a major in public affairs and a minor in social data science. Raised as a Shin-Nisei, she feels strongly about including newer Japanese transplants into the umbrella of “Japanese American” and uses her bilingual skills to help bridge gaps and assist those in need. She has been involved with the JACL at many levels, including as a leader in her school, within student government and athletic clubs.

**Personal Statement**

"I grew up in the Shin-Nikkei community and know many individuals who have aligned interests and passions with JACL. They would make outstanding contributions to our organization, shedding a new perspective on debated issues. On an individual level, I went back to my old Japanese school to promote JACL membership so more Shin-Nikei will be educated on the JA community — a community that they are also a part of. I succeeded in getting 10 new members to sign up on the spot. Slowly but surely, I am making a difference in our community.

"Promoting open-mindedness and providing active opportunities for newer, ‘nontraditional’ Japanese Americans to join JACL will expand our outreach. A greater outreach means more members educated on the significance and impact of Japanese American history; members who will put forth more effort to preserve historic JA towns.

“As (Abraham) Lincoln
Once said, “United we stand, divided we fall.” We must open our arms to the emerging Japanese American population and embrace them. Together, we are stronger.”

**GRACE MATAYOSHI**

JACL Chapter: FLORENCE-SACRAMENTO VALLEY
Recipient of the Henry & Chiyo Kuwahara Memorial Scholarship
California State University, Sacramento

**Notables**

Grace Matayoshi is currently a student at California State University, Sacramento, where she is pursuing a double major in social work and Asian Studies with a concentration in Japanese. She excels in her studies and has been on the Dean’s List every semester.

**Personal Statement**

“I do believe that, nationally, Japanese American youth need some mentoring, funding and avenues to pursue in terms of connecting Japanese Americans in a way that helps them research their roots without having to field politics because we want to find and appreciate a connection to one another over shared history and culture.”

**EMILY YOSHI**

JACL Chapter: SAN FRANCISCO
Recipient of the Henry & Chiyo Kuwahara Memorial Scholarship
University of California, Davis

**Notables**

Emily Yoshi has a strong volunteer/advocacy stance and academic drive that has expanded into her college career. While maintaining a strong 3.5 GPA in high school, she was on the Principal’s Honor Roll and earned Life Member status of the California Scholarship Federation. Now a student at the University of California, Davis, she earned a place on the Dean’s Honor Roll for the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences for having a 4.0 GPA as a food science major.

Yoshi joined the First Looks Books Club in 2016, reading prepublished novels that potential book stores and local libraries could recommend to visiting readers. She also volunteers at the Davis Farmers Market and serves as a zero-waste volunteer with the USD Sustainability Office. In addition, she has been working with the USD Food Tech Club and Japanese American Student Society, which often collaborates with the Sacramento JACL chapter.

In fact, Yoshi’s involvement with the Sacramento JACL has led to her participation with the first Northern California/Western Nevada Pacific District Youth Board, where she focuses on and encourages more civic learning and aims to form strong connections in communities and strengthen advocacy efforts for the youth. She has also initiated a monthly newsletter and serves as editor. Her purpose is to address civil rights and social justice issues both in and outside of the NCWNP district.

As a third-generation Japanese/Vietnamese, she has struggled with a dual identity and has attempted to learn more about her Japanese and Vietnamese heritage, bringing both perspectives to the JACL.

**Personal Statement**

She sees the value in bringing communities together in advocacy and civil rights — not limiting to AAPI communities and working with other cultural social justice organizations. “Comparing and contrasting the work that has been done, and stand in solidarity with them. We need diversity in our programs — our members and our ideas truly encompass the Japanese American experience today, and we must all work together to change or keep being left in the past.”

**SAYA ZELEZNİK**

JACL Chapter: SACRAMENTO
Recipient of the Shigeru Nakahira Memorial Scholarship
University of California, Davis

**Notables**

Saya Zeleznik is currently a senior at the University of Utah majoring in biology with a minor in classical violin. She intends to work toward her PhD in biology and do genetic counseling as a way to pursue research and maintain connections with people in need.

At the university, she is the past director of service for the Asian American Student Assn., and she also founded and is the president of the Japanese American Students Assn. In addition, she is a violinist for the University of Utah Chamber Music and the University Philharmonia. Last year, Zeleznik organized a book club with AASA, JASA and the MUSE Project and was selected by MUSE to moderate a Q & A session with actor-activist George Takei during his visit to the campus to discuss his novel “They Called Us the Enemy.”

**Personal Statement**

“I took an interest in trying to find meaning within my past.”

Congratulations Grace on the
Henry & Chiyo Kuwahara Memorial Scholarship

- Thank you JACL for the opportunities, encouragement, and support of the next generation.

~Matayoshi Family

San Fernando Valley JACL Proudly
Congratulations
Our 2023 Scholarship Recipients

**San Fernando Valley JACL Proudly**

**Congratulations**

**Our 2023 Scholarship Recipients**

**Grace Matayoshi**

Henry & Chiyo Kuwahara Memorial Scholarship

**Lana Kobayashi**

2023 JACL National Scholarship
Henry & Chiyo Kuwahara Memorial Scholarship

**San Fernando Valley JACL Proudly**

**Congratulations**

**Our 2023 Scholarship Recipients**

**Troy Kadonaga**

2023 JACL Freshman Scholarship
Daniel Nagasawa Scholar Athlete Award

**Rebecca Yonemura**

2023 JACL National Scholarship
Hanayagi Rokumie Memorial Cultural Scholarship

**San Fernando Valley JACL Proudly**

**Congratulations**

**Our 2023 Scholarship Recipients**

**Lana Kobayashi**

2023 JACL National Scholarship
Henry & Chiyo Kuwahara Memorial Scholarship

**San Fernando Valley JACL Proudly**

**Congratulations**

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**Troy Kadonaga**

2023 JACL Freshman Scholarship
Daniel Nagasawa Scholar Athlete Award

**Rebecca Yonemura**

2023 JACL National Scholarship
Hanayagi Rokumie Memorial Cultural Scholarship
mixed identity. I grew up feeling ‘white’ but being treated like an ‘other’ because of my mixed heritage. Many of my friends from mixed backgrounds have faced the same struggle and talk about having to eventually ‘pick a side’ when it comes to the duality of their heritage.

“When I arrived at the University of Utah, I felt free to explore the Japanese side of my heritage. I joined the Asian American Student Assn., and I even declared a minor in Japanese, met a diverse array of people, even other half-Japanese students through the organization. “Finding others like me who could empathize with my experience growing up in Utah validated my existence. I didn’t have to be American, and I didn’t have to be Japanese. I was inspired to provide this kind of tailor-made community to other Japanese American students at the university by creating the Japanese American Student Assn.

“Taking responsibility for my community helped heal the part of me obligated to choose one-half of my identity. I worked to create a sense of pride in the mixed community and strengthen the connections between students. Transfer, exchange, mixed heritage, mixed culture and even adoptee students could find community and belonging through JASA.

“My knowledge of the Japanese American wartime experience, and acceptance of my own experience, started and ended with public education. Spreading awareness through literature and lesson plans in the public school system helps include students from all backgrounds in the collective Japanese American experience.

“By spreading awareness from a young age, we can create a strong diverse community of Japanese Americans and allies that can carry momentum to the national level. JACL has the unique ability to provide opportunities for people to find their community and validate experiences through outreach and increased awareness.

“Through my organization and my own personal actions, I strive for these same goals and work to connect the Japanese American community in what ways I can. I hope to continue this positive cycle of healing, learning and finding community.”

**Graduate**

**Ryan Chiou**

**JACL Chapter: Chicago**

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

**Albany Medical College**

**Notables**

Ryan Chiou completed his undergraduate education at Washington University in St. Louis, where he was active in volleyball, hip-hop and the Dance Marathon. After graduation, he matriculated at Albany Medical College, where he is pursuing his M.D. with an emphasis on clinical oncology.

At Albany Medical College, Chiou is active in working with youth as a snowboard instructor for children with disabilities, hosting hip-hop dance workshops at a local homeless shelter and creating opportunities for children and teenagers to enjoy a safe space for recreation. Somehow, he also finds time to pursue his studies in medicine as well.

**Personal Statement**

Chiou’s interest in pediatric oncology arose from watching his younger brother suffer from, and eventually die, from acute lymphoblastic leukemia. As he so eloquently stated in his application: “In the 15 years that followed (the death of his brother), my passion and relentless determination to become a pediatric oncologist, specializing in neuroblastoma, continued to grow. Craving knowledge about medicine, I eagerly read articles about neuroblastoma, long before I even knew what half the words meant, and I intently shadowed physicians in high school.

“Research taught me to be both patient and persistent in my work, especially when dealing with something as complex as cancer. Although I found research fascinating and loved building my knowledge on cancer, I yearned for the patient care aspect of treatment that I found more meaningful and rewarding.”

**Personal Statement**

“In the nation, there are so many unique stories, experiences and cultures that truly shape who the Japanese American people are. I’ve seen it first-hand through my experiences living on both the West and East Coast. Despite all the differences, community among Japanese Americans is a constant. We welcome others despite differences, support each other through challenging times and celebrate culture vehemently.

“While my motivations and passion for health care remain strong, my interests in supporting STEM education and my Japanese American community are not lost. An MBA will also give me the tools and experiences needed to contribute and advise nonprofits, better understand international diplomacy and relationships and finally enact change on a national level.”

**Highlighted Achievements:**

- **Research:** Dr. Chiou has conducted research on pediatric oncology, specifically neuroblastoma.
- **Leadership:** He has been involved in various organizations, including the Asian American Student Association, and has held leadership roles such as JACL chapter president.
- **Community Engagement:** He has worked on community-based projects to help underserved communities.

**Future Goals:**

- **Graduate School:** Dr. Chiou plans to pursue a degree in public health to further his research and community engagement.
- **Career:** He aims to work in pediatric oncology, specifically neuroblastoma, and continue his passion for education and community involvement.

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**Congratulations on receiving the Henry & Chiyo Kuwahara Memorial Scholarship!**

**We’re so proud of you!**

Love,

Cox Family

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**JACL Chicago congratulates Ryan Chiou on receiving the Henry & Chiyo Kuwahara Memorial Scholarship and all of our chapter scholarship recipients:**

- Katie Hill (Tomihiro Scholarship)
- Kimiko Darcy (Tomiyama Scholarship)
- Keshav Ghandi (Iwaoaka Scholarship)
- Ella Ng (Iwaoaka Scholarship)
- Elijah Nishimura (Japanese Mutual Aid Society - Miyasakai Scholarship)
- Anisa Bin-Walid (Yoshino Scholarship)

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**Matthew Farrells**

**JACL Chapter: Twin Cities**

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

**University of Minnesota, Carlson School of Management**

**Notables**

Matthew Farrells has been a member of JACL since 2007 and served the JACL in a myriad of ways throughout that time. He is a long-standing member of the JACL and currently belongs to the Twin Cities chapter. Through his experience with JACL, he has served as a local chapter board member, Midwest District youth chair, National youth chair, National secretary/treasurer (twice), National vp of planning and development and Kakehashi Program supervisor/chaperone; he currently serves on the Investment Policy Committee.

Professionally, he has successfully obtained his Chartered Financial Analyst, a number of securities licenses and has a goal to become a certified financial planner.

**Personal Statement**

“The JACL should continue to honor its diverse legacy, which is strongly connected to the JA incarceration experience, while continuing to expand its reach to emerging JA communities in several ways. The organization largely conducts human and civil rights advocacy work that not only protects members within the JA community, but all those who face social injustice.

“To ensure the organization continues to prosper and grow, it should focus on outreach to emerging JA communities and focus on these three areas:

- The first area includes conducting community building activities at the local, regional and national levels. Key examples of these activities include chapter cultural and social activities, district events and promoting the Kakehashi Program. The second area includes education and training with the goal of converting members from being passive participants of the community to being more active in social justice work. The third area includes leveraging the JACL’s legacy of the incarceration experience to conduct civil rights advocacy activities locally and nationally.

These three areas of focus help fill the JACL’s pipeline of actively engaged JA members, regardless of their individual family history related to incarceration during WWII.
“The first area of outreach to emerging JA community members is to focus on community building. Community building works to build a sense of community for like-minded people or those with similar interests.

“Local chapter social events and programs that outreach to community members, build those families and create opportunities toward JA students regardless of their family’s involvement in the community for like-minded people or those with similar interests bring in new JAs and foster a regional sense of community for its chapter members.

“The Kakehashi Program is also another way to create a sense of community for JA students nationally. The Kakehashi Program caters toward JA students regardless of their family’s involvement in the incarceration and is expanding and those programs draw in new JAs and introduce them to the important legacy of the JACL and the JA incarceration experience.

“The second area is to offer education and training opportunities to members. . . . It also involves more sophisticated civil rights advocacy education and training.

“These education and training opportunities should appeal to all members of the JA community while also highlighting the importance of the JACL, its legacy and the advocacy work it conducts.”

“One could argue that this opportunity is one of the most important to bridge the connection between members’ journey from passive engagement through social/cultur al involvement to the important advocacy work of the organization, which supports all communities and its members who face racial and social injustice.

“The third area moving toward engaging all JA community members is to focus on the civil rights advocacy work of JACL and involve and engage all members in these activities. The advocacy work of JACL supports all those who face racial and social injustice, including JAs, pan-Asians and other communities of color.

“This important work is the core of JACL’s purpose. One example of how advocacy work cuts across various groups within the JA community regardless of family legacies is during the Covid-19 pandemic, there was a surge of anti-Asian hate within the United States.

“The ability of the JACL to advocate on behalf of the members of the community and leverage the historical legacy and benefit to those regardless of their own family legacies, should foster further engagement by emerging JA community members.”

The Kakehashi Program is also another way to create a sense of community for JA students nationally. The Kakehashi Program caters toward JA students regardless of their family’s involvement in the incarceration and is expanding and those programs draw in new JAs and introduce them to the important legacy of the JACL and the JA incarceration experience.

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JAVA AWARDS COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS

The organization awards $21,500 in support of continuing the legacy of World War II Nisei military service and encouraging future military and public service.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Japanese American Veterans Assn. announced recently 12 winners of its annual scholarship and awards program for 2023. Outstanding students from around the country applied for the scholarships, which continue the legacy of the Nisei service to country.

The $3,000 Daniel K. Inouye Memorial Scholarship honoring the late U.S. Sen. Daniel K. Inouye’s iconic career of military and public service was awarded to Elaine Oyama of San Antonio, Texas.

The granddaughter of George Oyama, 442nd RCT, Elaine Oyama is pursuing a master of science in clinical mental health counseling at the University of Texas, San Antonio. As evidence of her commitment to her personal goals, she has served as a peer mentor as well as a victim advocate at the Alamo Area Rape Crisis Center.

The $3,000 Ishio Founder’s Scholarship, named for JA VA’s founder, the late Col. Phil Ishio, his wife, Constance, and their son, Douglas Ishio, is awarded to a student who has completed two or more years of college/university. The Ishio Founder’s Scholarship was awarded to Justin Abe of Honolulu, Hawaii, the great-grandnephew of Seichi Tsuruwa, 442nd RCT. Currently, Abe is attending medical school at the John A. Burns School of Medicine at the University of Hawaii.

The Kiyoko Tsuboi 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 year’s scholarship was awarded to Tori Ann Abe of Honolulu, Hawaii. She is the granddaughter of Frank Tokio Inouye, 100th Battalion, Company C. Abe is pursuing a bachelor of arts degree in communications at the University of Southern California and hopes to work in occupational therapy.

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

- **Cody Gima** received a JAVA Memorial Scholarship in honor of Dr. Americo Bugliani and his liberator, Paul Sakamoto, 442nd RCT. Gima is the granddaughter of Shinye Gima, 308th Intelligence Service Dept./MIS. He is from Kula, Hawaii, and will attend the University of Portland, Ore., where he will be studying computer science.

- **Emi Goto** received a JAVA Memorial Scholarship in honor of Sgt. Ben Kuroki, a gunner in the U.S. Army Air Corps, 505th Bombardment Group. Goto is the daughter of JAVA member Capt. (Dr.) Mark Goto, MC, USN (Ret). From Gulf Breeze, Fla., Goto will attend the University of Texas at Permian Basin (Odessa), where she will study business.

- **Jameson Johnston** received a JAVA Memorial Scholarship in honor of Ranger Grant Jiro Hirabayashi, MIS, Johnston is the son of JAVA member George Johnston. From Culver City, Calif., he will attend Santa Monica College in California and plans to study environmental science.

- **Brian Kamemoto** received a JAVA Memorial Scholarship in honor of U.S. Army Col. Jimmie Kanaya, a three-war veteran of WWII, Korea and Vietnam. Brian is the grandson of Harry Ishibashi, 442nd RCT, and is from Seattle, Wash. He will attend California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, and plans to study business administration.

- **Bry aden Lawrence** received a JAVA Memorial Scholarship in honor of Victor Matsu, MIS, and his wife, Teru Matsu. Brayden is the great-grandson of Tadashi Frank Mouri Inouye, 442nd. From McKinney, Texas, he will attend the California Institute of the Arts in Santa Clarita and pursue a bachelor of fine arts in theatre.

- **Mischa Mikami** received a JAVA Memorial Scholarship in honor of past JAVA President and Korean War veteran Robert Nakamoto. Mikami is the granddaughter of Joe Mikami, 442nd RCT, and is from Sacramento, Calif. She will attend the University of California, Berkeley, and plans to study data science.

- **Carlos Shimabukuro** received the Tak Furumoto Scholarship, sponsored by JAVA member and Vietnam veteran Tak Furumoto. Shimabukuro is the son of JAVA member LCDR Carlos A. Shimabukuro, USNR, and is from Stafford, Va. He will attend the College of William and Mary and plans to study business.

- **Kyle Yamazaki** received a JAVA Memorial Scholarship in honor of Maj. Orville Shiroy, 442nd RCT, and his wife, Maud Shiroy. Yamazaki is the great-grandson of Dave Kawagoye, 442nd RCT. From Torrance, Calif., he will attend Chapman University in Orange, Calif., where he plans to study business and finance.

- **Ian Yogi** received the Izuno Family Scholarship in honor of JAVA member and Korean War veteran Dr. Takumi Izuno, who served in the U.S. Army 514th M1S. The grandson of Matsuichi Yogi, 442nd RCT, he is from Milliani, Hawaii, and will attend the University of Portland in the fall. Yogi plans to study biology and eventually attend medical school.

JAVA thanks its Scholarship Committee led by Chair Chris DeRosa and members Dawn Eilenberger, JD, and former deputy director of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence; Maj. Kay Izumihara, USA; Capt. (Dr.) Cynthia Macri, MC, USN (Ret); Kaison Tanabe, Friend of JAVA; and LTC Robert Vokac, USA (Ret).

To learn more about JAVA scholarships, please visit https://java-us.org/JAVA-Memorial-Scholarship-Program.
**Memoriam**

**Minoru Tonai Dies at 94**

Nisei was a longtime leader in L.A.’s Japanese American community.

By P.C. Staff

Minoru Tonai of Woodland Hills, Calif., died on Sept. 4. He was 94.

An active member of Los Angeles’ Japanese American community, Tonai was involved in such organizations as the Japanese American National Museum as a board member, the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center as its president, the Japanese American Korean War Veterans as its president and treasurer, the UCLA Foundation, UCLA’s Business Economic Council, the Asахе Historical Society and Terminal Islanders.

In a news release, the Manzanar Committee mourned Tonai’s death. “I’ve known Min since 1991, when I met him at UCLA when I was the coordinator of UC-LA’s year of events commemorating the ‘50th Anniversary of Japanese American Internment,’” said Gann Matsuda of the Manzanar Committee. “Min was a key player in helping organize our opening ceremony in Royce Hall, especially in identifying and locating many of the approximately 200 former UCLA students who were forced to leave the university before completing their studies because of the forced removal.”

A son of Issei immigrants Toyone and Gengoro Tonai, Min Tonai was born in San Pedro, Calif., and with older siblings Ichiro, Mizuyo and Rumi, and younger brother Yutaka, grew up on Los Angeles County’s Terminal Island. He was profiled in the Nov. 6, 2020, issue of Pacific Citizen.

After Japan’s military attacked the U.S. Navy at Pearl Harbor in the territory of Hawaii on Dec. 7, 1941, the Tonai family would be uprooted and incarcerated — along with thousands of other U.S. citizens of Japanese ancestry and legal permanent resident Japanese nationals ineligible at the time to become naturalized U.S. citizens — first at an assembly center, then at one of the 10 concentration camps operated by the federal government’s War Relocation Authority. In the case of the Tonais, it was Amache WRA Center in Colorado.

According to Min Tonai’s recollection that appeared in the P.C., his father was arrested on the evening of Dec. 7, 1941. “At 8:30 that evening, the doorbell rings, and there’s two guys in black suits. They said they wanted to talk with Gengoro — my father,” Tonai said. “I called, ‘Just a moment please.’”

“I knock on his bedroom door, and I said, ‘There’s two hakujin that want to talk to you.’”

“My father comes out of his room wearing his three-piece suit, put on his overcoat, put on his hat and went out the door with them. ‘They told me, ‘We just want to talk with him at the Los Angeles County Jail for one hour. But we never saw him until 1944,’” until he was reunited with his family in Colorado, the Tonai patriarch had been shunted to several different federal incarceration sites: Terminal Island Penitentiary, Ft. Missoula, Mont., Livingston, La., and Santa Fe, N.M.

After WWII and returning to Los Angeles, Tonai graduated from high school and enrolled at the University of California, Los Angeles. His eventual marriage to Mary Mitsuko Endo was delayed by America’s entry into the Korean War. Tonai was drafted into the Army and was stationed for a time in Japan, where he was able to visit relatives. But it was only a matter of time until he was sent to Korea, where he served as a combat medic.

After his stint in the Army, Tonai returned to Los Angeles, completed his business administration degree at UCLA in 1955, got married in 1956 and started a family. Min and Mary Tonai were married for 60 years, and they raised three children. One of the challenges he remembered was finding a job after graduating.

Tonai told the Pacific Citizen that despite earning grades of B+ or better in his major, his job interviews were stymied by the racial attitudes of the time. “I was more than qualified. But the companies would say, ‘Don’t call us, we’ll call you.’ That was a kiss off. I knew that.” He recalled how one company that liked his grades, extracurricular activities and personality — but the rep told him, “We can’t hire Orientals.” Delayed but undeterred, Tonai told the Pacific Citizen that he took a bookkeeping job, which led to a job as a cost accountant, which would then pave the way to earning titles like VP of finance. At Symbolics Inc., he would serve as its chief financial officer.

Acclaudes would follow in the years to come. In 1999, Tonai was Nisei Week Japanese Festival’s grand marshal; in 2008, he received the Nisei Week’s Nikkei Pioneer Award; in 1998, he received the UCLA Asian American Studies Center’s Lifetime Achievement Award; and in 2005, he received the JACC’s Chairman’s Award.

The Japanese government awarded him its Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette honor in 2015 for promoting the status of Nikkei community in the U.S. and aiding in the mutual understanding between the nations.

Tonai was predeceased by his wife, Mary, in 2017, and his siblings. He is survived by his two daughters, Min Tonai Drews and Teresa Tonai, and son, John Tonai, as well as sisters-in-law, Yae Nagai, Elinor Sakado and Carole Endo; brother-in-law, George Endo; and many nieces, nephews and their families.

A celebration of life for Min Tonai is scheduled for 2 p.m. on Oct. 14 at the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center, in Little Tokyo in downtown Los Angeles.
generation of leaders in the Japanese American community. With the help of Phillip, Membership Coordinator Ashley Bucher and Education and Communications Coordinator Matthew Weisbly, I conducted an online youth marketing survey for JACL youth members and JACL-affiliated youth.

After collecting over 100 responses from JACL youth, I analyzed the survey data and reinforced the data with testimonies from post-survey focus groups hosted on Zoom. I found these focus groups to be the most interesting part of the project, as not only did I receive more detailed feedback on how to increase youth membership, but I also was able to create personal connections with my attendees over our shared identities.

At the end of my internship, I synthesized my findings into a presentation and shared my findings with the JACL national staff at their weekly meeting. Throughout this project, I was able to see the need for intergenerational cohesiveness within JACL, but by talking to so many passionate youth within the Japanese American community, I also became more hopeful that this community will continue to thrive.

As someone involved with marketing in student organizations, this project also provided me with skills to carry with me as I continue my academic and professional careers, such as how to write an effective marketing email through the Salsa Engage software, how to facilitate a proper small group dialogue and how use Microsoft Excel to analyze data more effectively.

In addition to my work with the membership team, my internship also provided me with skills to connect with many of the JACL national staff members to connect with them and learn about their role in the organization. Early in our internships, we met virtually Michael Tanaka and Bridget Keaveney, JACL’s national fellows, and we learned about the work they do to represent JACL in the nation’s capital.

It was interesting to see how many organizations JACL works with on a national level, and as an environmental science student, I appreciated hearing about JACL’s collaboration with environmental organizations in Washington, D.C.

Thanks to Michael and Bridget, I was able to connect with some of these groups such as the Climate Initiative, where I learned about the intersectional ties between sustainability and social justice in Asian and Asian American communities.

The most memorable experience I had while interning at JACL was attending and staffing the National Convention in Little Tokyo. Throughout the week, Christa Cheng and I were assigned to help set up events, work the registration table and guide attendees through Little Tokyo.

During the convention, we finally met many of the national staff members to connect in person and spent time forming close bonds with staff members during meetings and meals. We also spent a lot of time getting to know the youth attendees at the convention, and it was great to converse with peers with a shared passion for the Japanese American community and civil rights.

I greatly appreciated having experienced attendees, such as Pacific Southwest District Gov. Ryan Yoshikawa, to introduce us to so many members of the JACL community while also walking us through programming such as the National Council meeting.

In addition to helping facilitate the convention, Christa and I were lucky enough to attend a lot of the special programming throughout the convention. In particular, watching the production of “Question 27, Question 28,” hosted by Tamlyn Tomita, as well as David Ono’s “Defining Courage” were truly unforgettable performances. Each show covered a different perspective of the Japanese American incarcerated during World War II. Both productions captured the harsh reality and depressing sentiments surrounding the incarceration and its injustices, and watching both made me even more grateful for the resilience of those in the Japanese American community who paved the way for me to be here today.

The biggest lesson I learned from my internship in JACL was how much capacity our community has to make change when we are united. Every individual I met during my internship, regardless of age or profession, showed so much pride in their Japanese American heritage, and I think this overarching sense of cultural unity is what makes JACL so special.

While I have always been committed to exploring and working in the Little Tokyo community, my time in JACL has inspired me to use my voice as an Asian American as I continue with my academic and professional career. I am planning to become a member of the JACL Chicago chapter, where I hope to learn more about Asian American social justice in the Midwest. I will be forever grateful to the JACL for providing me with this incredible opportunity this summer, and I cannot think of a better organization to have my first professional experience with.

Christa Cheng and Brandon Takahashi will continue their studies at the University of California, San Diego, and Northwestern University, respectively. JACL wishes them all the best in their studies and future careers.