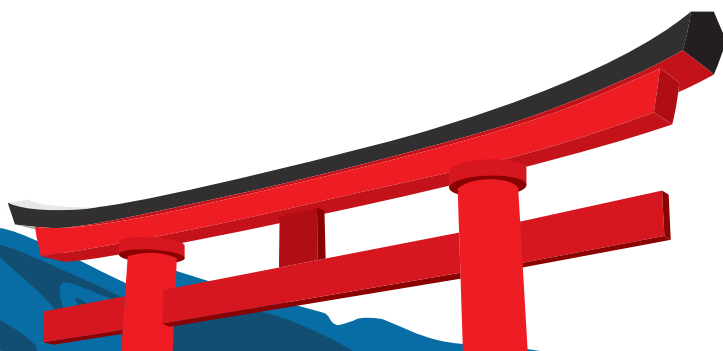




PORTLAND JACL NEWSLETTER

Portland JACL - Supporting Civil Rights Since 1928



• MAY 2022 | VOLUME 28 ISSUE 05 •

Board Member MESSAGE

A Perspective on Resilience

By Spencer Uemura

Hello and Happy May!

The month of May has quickly become one of my favorite times of the year. It's around now that the weather has usually started to get warmer, especially after the surprise snow that we got in mid-April. But aside from the climate, each May brings two important celebrations: Asian Pacific Islander Desi American (APIA) Heritage Month and Mental Health Awareness Month. Through Asian American and mental health related events, it is a time when Asian Americans of various backgrounds and experiences can be seen, uplifted, and celebrated.

Since January, you may have noticed a request for feedback in our newsletters, with a link to a survey about your experiences with wellness and mental health as members of the Japanese American community. Your responses have been invaluable and I extend my continued gratitude to those who have replied. One theme that arose is the strength of our ancestors that brought them through immigration, incarceration, and/or other pressures, but also the continued need for healing spaces in our community in the present. If you'd still like to share your experiences in the survey, I would love to hear from you! Please fill out the survey linked later in this newsletter, or reach out to me to arrange a time to talk.

As a Japanese American mental health therapist, I know that there are significant barriers for us to receive care, whether from the Western mental...

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

May 1
May Day

May 1
Graduation Banquet
Monarch Hotel - 1pm

May 5
Cinco de Mayo

May 8
Mother's Day

May 17
Election Day

May 20 / 21 & June 4th
Japanese American Cemetery Clean Up
9 - 11am

May 21
**Strengthening Japanese and Black Solidarity
Through Action (Zoom Event)**
12 pm

May 25
George Floyd was murdered in 2020

May 30
Memorial Day

May 30
Memoria Day Service
Japanese American Cemetery at Rose City
1pm

...health system or different approaches. There can be an intense feeling of stigma against seeking help or acknowledging where we feel hurt or vulnerable. These feelings can run deep, passed down generationally from those who did what they needed to do to get by.

Inspired by those who have shared their stories about mental health, struggle, and resilience in the survey, I thought it was appropriate for me to share my own. I was a young boy when I started to have nightmares about what would happen to me after I passed away. Oddly enough, what kept coming to mind was a scene in Star Wars: A New Hope in which the protagonists get caught in a trash compactor and the walls begin to close in, threatening to crush them. In my mind's eye, the walls would close until they finally met in the middle, and all that was left was darkness. This sense of doom led to more feelings of depression and anxiety, and I didn't know how to talk about what I was feeling, or who I could talk to. My parents were as supportive and loving as they knew how to be - I was fortunate to have their support to access mental health therapy - but they hadn't learned how to talk about big emotions from their parents and their

surrounding community. My parents did the best they could, and because this kind of intergenerational healing is incremental, they put me in a position where I can continue this work for myself.

The isolation I felt in those days led me to the field of mental health therapy. I wanted the tools to understand myself, the ability to support others who might be feeling as alone as I did, and I wanted to be able to help my people heal. I am still prone to depression and anxiety. Even as a therapist myself, it often takes me an embarrassingly long time to acknowledge I need extra support when life gets more challenging. Our feelings of stigma are deeply ingrained. But ultimately, there are many more ways to engage and invest in our own growth than just working with a therapist. Among many things, healing could mean attending cultural events, eating Japanese foods, speaking or learning the language, or spending time with friends and family.

May we continue the healing that our ancestors began for us.



Annual Portland JACL Spring Clean-up



**Saturday, May 7
8am - 1pm**

**Meet at the
Japanese
American
Museum of
Oregon**

411 NW Flanders St

**Questions Contact:
jeff@pdxjacl.org**

Some things for your consideration during this APIDA Heritage and Mental Health Awareness Month:

- We carry the pain of our ancestors, as well as the resilience that brought them through incredible difficulty.
- Who are the people, past or present, who taught you strength and resilience?
- What is something that you can do to foster that strength and resilience in yourself?
- Our areas of vulnerability create opportunities for supportive connection.
- Who are the people, past or present, who taught you the value of softness and openness?
- What is something that you can do to foster that softness and openness in yourself?

Help guide our work!

Your very own PDX JACL Advocacy Committee has a goal to address Asian American Safety and Visibility as one of its priorities for the new year. Under

this topic are the important mental health needs of the Japanese American community. We know that we cannot do this work for our community without receiving feedback from the community, so we would love to hear from you!

Sample questions:

- How have your JA family/friends engaged with topics like wellbeing and mental health?
- What are some phrases you have heard in the JA community response to hardship? (i.e. "Shikata ga nai", "It can't be helped", "It'll be fine")
- What has your overall wellness and mental health been like during the COVID pandemic?
- What are the needs that you see around you, related to mental health?

You may complete this anonymous Google Form (link here: <https://bit.ly/PDXJACLMH>, or use the QR code below) or contact Spencer@pdxjacl.org to arrange a one-to-one conversation. Thank you in advance for your collaboration!

❖ Photo Corner ❖



Mary and John Crull and Rick March play their instruments on Tuesdays Sing Along at Ikoi No Kai. On March 29th, INK celebrated their monthly birthday lunches.



Mark Takiguchi is briefing Ambassador Koji Tomita at the JA Historical Plaza on March 24, 2022.



L to R: Consul General Shiga of Portland, Mark Takiguchi, Interim ED of JAMO, Chip Larouche, Treasurer Oregon Nisei Vets, Ambassador Koji Tomita, Setsy Larouche, President of Hiroshima Club, Linda Tamura, author and former professor at Willamette University.

❖ A Prayer ❖

Sunday, Mar. 27, 2022, 2:00 PM

Prayer: In Memory of the Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center and in Praise of the Founders of the Japanese American Historical Plaza

南無佛、南無法、南無僧。南無輪円具足未曾有大曼荼羅御本尊、南無久遠実成大恩教主本師釈迦牟尼佛、南無末法有縁の大導師日蓮大薩埵の御宝前に於いて回向し奉る。

On this very solemn day, do we gather to sincerely observe the closing of the Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center at 121 NW 2nd Avenue. This Legacy Center was a natural development, borne of the spirit and unity which arose in the minds and hearts of the principal founders of the Japanese American Historical Plaza in the north end of Portland's Waterfront Park-- landscape architect, Robert Murase, and businessman, Bill Naito. The Japanese community came together to help crystallize Murase and Naito's vision, resulting in a dedication ceremony at Gov. Tom McCall Waterfront Park on Aug. 3, 1990. Adorned by one hundred Akebono sakura, the natural stone sculptures stand proudly to remind admirers and detractors alike that Japanese Americans have indeed persevered, to rise above the fray of bigotry and proclaim equality for all people.

The completion of the Japanese American Historical Plaza was an important stepping stone to the realization of the Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center in 1995. The visionary leaders who built the Plaza foresaw the need for a venue where the younger generations can relive the history of their ancestors. True to its founders' resolve, the Legacy Center stands as a reflection of the Japanese American experience here in the Pacific Northwest. The Japanese nationals who first stepped on the fertile soil of the Pacific Northwest, the first-generation issei were exemplary in displaying one of the Buddha's greatest teachings, that of shojin, or "sincere endeavor." This endeavor involved enormous gisei or sacrifice and immense gaman or perseverance. While it is difficult enough just to leave one's home in Japan, the issei generation

chose to cross the vast Pacific and venture into the unknown, exposing themselves to whatever tribulations that would await them in a far-off land. Though disadvantaged by their lack of language skills and knowledge of American culture, these issei gallantly met the challenge to accept whatever fate befell them. As disadvantaged as the early issei may have been as individuals, they worked together to foster a safe haven in creating a strong Japanese community bound by a spirit of cooperation and goodwill. The Legacy Center hails and tells the narrative of the bravery, resilience, and innovation of the issei who laid the foundation for the coming generations.

As challenged as the early issei may have been, they knew what was important. They invested and sacrificed everything for their children, the nisei, and left nothing for themselves. Intimately aware of the sacrifices endured by their parents, the nisei excelled in their studies and sought to return their favors to their families. As ambitious as these young nisei were, they were abruptly upended by a war not of their choosing. While still stunned by an attack by their brethren, Japanese families in Oregon and across the United States were ordered to be deported to internment camps. No one could foresee this sudden turn in fortune. When Executive Order 9066 was promulgated on Feb. 19, 1942, exactly 80 years ago, Japanese families were given as little as ten days to report to the detention center. Allowed to take only what they could carry, many lost any and all of their property. Whatever they had gained through hard work would need to be earned all over again. It is difficult to fathom how much pain they must have suffered especially when two-thirds of those incarcerated were U.S. citizens, born and raised in the United States. Despite this injustice, thousands of young Japanese-American men enlisted in the Armed Forces of the United States to serve in the European Theater.

Many did not return from battle. This narrative of the nisei's agony encapsulates the history of

the Japanese-American experience in America. Identifying as Japanese American during the Second World War brought with it guilt and humiliation as though this minority deserved it. The weight of being branded as an enemy race did not exempt the young Japanese Americans from shedding their blood on the battlefield for their country. As reprehensible as the paradox was, Japanese Americans wholeheartedly accepted this adversity, never to let the circumstance of their hardship to own or disgrace them. It was *kurō in mata kurō* or "pain and hardship stacked upon pain and hardship." Once again, the Japanese and its community were called upon to practice *shojin*, to make a great endeavor, to make sacrifices and to endure their misfortunes to rebuild again from nothing. As unforgiving as this hardship was, it bonded the Japanese American community. In essence, this is what the Legacy Center was about, that the collective injustice suffered by the Japanese should never occur again, neither to the Japanese nor to any other ethnic minority in this country and abroad.

We would like to hereby acknowledge and express our most sincere gratitude to a number of key persons for their contributions and achievements in the monumental establishment and development of this museum, the Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center. They are (in alphabetical order):

- **George Azumano**
- **George Katagiri**
- **Dr. Matt Masuoka**
- **Jean Matsumoto**
- **Judy Murase and Robert Murase**
- **Sam Naito**
- **Bill Naito**
- **Chiyo Oga**
- **Hisako Saito**
- **Henry Sakamoto**
- **Lury Sato**
- **Dr James Tsujimura**
- **Joseph Mine Wahl**
- **Miyuki and Homer Yasui**

We solemnly honor these people today for they founded this Legacy Center and advanced its mission with every ounce of their soul and fiber of their body.

Thank you very much.

We gather today to witness the closing of the Legacy Center. Indeed, this is a sad moment because of the years of history that this location has endured. At the same time, we are assured that the spirit of the Legacy Center will live on intact at its new location, renamed as the Japanese American Museum of Oregon at Naito Center as was dedicated in May of 2021. The new Center is a testament to the selfless contributions by our present Japanese American community, of which its original founders would be proud.

Along with its relocation, the Japanese American Museum of Oregon at Naito Center has broadened its horizons and expanded its goals. Prior to WWII, the Japanese lived and operated businesses in downtown Portland, and called it *nihon-machi*, or Japan Town. *Nihon Machi* spread from the Willamette River to the West up to NW 6th Avenue. Along the river, it spanned from the Hawthorne Bridge all the way up to the Steel Bridge and next to the railroad. What was once a bustling community was thoroughly extinguished by Executive Order 9066. People were forced to abandon and leave their beloved homes and businesses with no hope of retaining them. Dr. Connie Masuoka, the Director of the Japanese American Museum of Oregon at Naito Center, is committed to reinvigorating and resurrecting *Nihon Machi* to its former glory. With this, let us all put our hands together and pray that this new aspiration can be realized. Let us learn from the *issei* in invoking *shojin* or "sincere endeavor" within ourselves, so that we may embark on a new mission to someday realize a rebirth of *Nihon Machi* once again, and continue to embrace our heritage, so that we may live and thrive again in peace.

国に謗法の声なくんば万民数を減ぜず、家に讃教の勤めあれば七難必ず退散せしめん。法華の妙理は釈尊の金言なり。当に信心を生ずべし。虚妄ある事なけん。感應道交哀愍御守護。

南無妙法蓮華經

(Rev. Eisei Ikenaga)



A collaborative project between the Architectural Heritage Center and the Japanese American Museum of Oregon



Receives \$25,000 from National Trust for Historic Preservation to help tell the full american story. Part of \$2.5 million program from the National Endowment for the Humanities and funded through the American Rescue Plan.

Portland, Oregon – At a news conference today, the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Telling the Full History Preservation Fund announced its award of \$25,000 to the Architectural Heritage Center in collaboration with the Japanese American Museum of Oregon. The grant is one of 80 given to select organizations nationwide with projects that helped preserve, interpret, and activate historic places to tell the stories of underrepresented groups in our nation.

Through the lens of architecture, this project tells the full history of Japanese Americans in Portland during the 20th century using an interactive digital storytelling map and walking tour programs. The new project is intended for adults and older youth and will explore underrecognized commercial, civic, and cultural sites associated with the Japanese community. The project considers the historic built environment as it reflects the racism, discrimination, inequity, and injustice experienced by Japanese Americans.

"We're undertaking this project with our partners at JAMO to share understanding of the past and present Japanese American community in Portland and reveal the layers of heritage and history in just one building," said Stephanie Whitlock, Executive Director of the Architectural Heritage Center. "These digital and in person tours will show how experiences and concepts like emigration, citizenship, and discrimination impacted the built landscape of a community and give shape to what we see—or don't see—today."

"We are thrilled to partner with the Architectural Heritage Center on this project," said Mark Takiguchi, Interim Deputy Director of the

Japanese American Museum of Oregon. "This resource will be an integral part of our Remembering and Reimagining Nihonmachi (Japantown) Program, which highlights the rich history and stories of an erased Portland community alongside current efforts to revitalize the neighborhood."

The grant was made possible through a one-time \$2.5 million grant program funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) under the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021.

"The Telling the Full History Preservation Fund represents the largest number of grants given through a single program at the National Trust," said Katherine Malone-France, Chief Preservation Officer. "These 80 projects are driven by many dedicated volunteers, staff, and experts, all seeking to expand how we compose the American narrative. We are grateful for the work that they do on the ground and in their communities to reveal, remember, celebrate, and illuminate these stories through these extraordinary places," she continued.

For more information about this grant go to:

<https://visitahc.org/touring-mapping-and-rediscovering-the-historic-places-of-portlands-japanese-american-community>

To see the full list of grantees, go to:

savingplaces.org/neh-telling-full-history

For Immediate Release Contact

Jean Zondervan, jeanz@visitahc.org
Erin Schmith, erin@jamo.org



Iko no Kai - MAY 2022

1333 SE 28th Ave / 503-238-0775

MON	TUES		THURS	FRI
2 Shumai <i>12:30pm Mahjong</i>	3 Beef Chap Chae Korean Glass Noodles <i>12:30pm Sing a Long</i>	X	5 Ground Beef Stew	6 Pork Kushikatsu
9 Ebi Fry <i>11:15am Chair Yoga</i> <i>12:30pm Mahjong</i>	10 Chicken Tikka Masala <i>12:30pm Sing a Long</i>	X	12 Mapo Tofu <i>11:15am Aikido Stress Reduction</i>	13 Teriyaki Chicken
16 Chicken & Tofu Tsukune Japanese Meatballs <i>12:30pm Mahjong</i>	17 Shrimp w/ Singapore Noodles <i>12:30pm Sing a Long</i>	X	19 Gyoza	20 Dry Curry <i>Ohana Lunch Bunch</i>
23 Croquettes <i>12:30pm Mahjong</i>	24 Sesame Chicken <i>12:30pm Sing a Long</i>	X	26 Birthday Sushi <i>11:15am Aikido Stress Reduction</i>	27 Beef Yaki Niku
30 CLOSED Memorial Day	31 Pork Rolls w/ vegetables <i>12:30pm Sing a Long</i>			

Cooks: Naomi Molstrom-M Kyoko Adcock-Tu Rieko Shimada-Th/F

New Lunch Prices: \$8 for seniors 65+ / \$9 for under 65 / \$ 5 kids

Reservations preferred / Indoor Dining Limited

*** For reservations please call and leave a message or email:**

(ph) 503-238-0775 (email) ikoinokai7@gmail.com

Seating at 11:30 am with lunch served promptly at noon

**** vaccination card and signed COVID waiver will be required in order to dine indoors**



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PORTLAND, OR 97286

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Strengthening Japanese and Black Solidarity Through Action

May 21, 2022
Portland, Oregon

Many Japanese Americans who fought for JA Reparations were inspired by the Civil Rights and Black Liberation Movements. Our community appreciated the support for JA reparations. We honor our victory by supporting Black reparations.

The program will close with a Call to Action and opportunities to participate in mobilizations.

Register:
<https://bit.ly/3vBu6P6> OR check Portland JACL website to register.

Oregon Rises Above Hate

May 14, 2022
Portland, Oregon

Join together to celebrate Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month and the AANHPI (Asian, Asian American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander) community, its resilience, and commit to combat the continued rise anti-Asian hate.

In-person and Livestream on:
<https://oregonrisesabovehate.com>

Event Location: Block 25 Parking Lot
(Flanders Festival Street in Old Town, between 3rd & 4th Avenue and Flanders & Glisan Streets in Portland, Oregon)

Activities throughout the day 10am to 9pm. See <https://oregonrisesabovehate.com> for schedule of events.