Profile of a Board Member: Heidi Tolentino
By Jenny Yamada

Heidi Tolentino has been on the Portland JACL board since 2010 and is the current secretary of the chapter. She works as a high school counselor at Cleveland High School.

How long have you been a board member and what made you decide to become a member of the JACL board?
My grandparents, Joe and Nellie Saito, were involved in JACL for most of their lives. My grandfather was President of the Three Rivers Chapter in Ontario in the 1960’s. After college, I spent a lot of time traveling with my grandparents to events in the Japanese American community and many of them were JACL related. As we traveled together, my grandparents would open up about their experiences in camp, in the 442nd and how connected they were to Japanese Americans across the country and how it shaped their lives. I promised my grandfather that I would stay involved in the community and give back in any way that I could. With that in mind, I joined the board in 2010.

What has your experience been like as a board member? How has it shaped you personally?
When I started on the board, I had absolutely no idea what I was doing. So, I spent a lot of time listening and learning from the Sansei on the board. I was the youngest member at that time and there was so

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

April 5
Taiko Benefit Banquet
Excellent Cuisine (formerly Wong’s Seafood) | 6:30

April 6
Min Yasui Day

April 21
Japanese American Graduation Banquet
Monarch Hotel | 1pm

March 29-April 21
Yohen
Brunish Theater

April 28
Japantown Clean-up
8am

May 11
Minidoka Swing Band Band
“I Am an American Live”
Patricia Reser Center for the Arts | 7pm
much to learn about the work of the JACL, but also about our local JA community in Portland. I grew up in mostly white communities and, as a bi-racial person, I missed the community connection that my mom had grown up with and what I experienced when I was with my grandparents. For me, being on the board has connected me to the amazingly diverse JA community in Portland and to people whose stories inspire and motivate me to keep the stories of our community alive. The social justice work that we do is challenging, but worthwhile. Being on the board has also given my 14-year-old daughter a community like my grandparents gave me.

What challenges has the board faced during your time on it?
We have grappled with so many things during my years on the board. We do not always agree on how to address social justice issues and often spend much of our time debating and discussing issues impacting our local community and the broader community. Issues around Immigration, Anti-Asian Hate, Voting Rights, Anti-Blackness, Black Reparations and the war between Hamas and Israel stick out in my mind as some key issues we have tackled in the last few years.

What are you most proud of during your tenure?
The work we have done during the past few years around addressing Anti-Black Racism in our community stands out to me. Our work to find ways to actively be part of the Black Lives Matter movement and the movement for Black Reparations has been important. This work is not easy and it comes with hurdles we could not foresee, but we worked hard as a completely volunteer board to put in the time and effort to educate ourselves, debate the issues, and work to volunteer with Black organizations who are doing the grass roots work. We are continuing this work and I think it’s a crucial part of what we are doing.

Who would you encourage to consider getting involved with Portland JACL?
Anyone who wants to be more involved in the Japanese American community in Portland and cares about Social Justice issues. No past experience necessary! Most of us started without having done this work before and found our way with the help of the other board members. A great way to start is to come to a board meeting and hear about what we are working on and how we go about making decisions. Come join us and ask questions. We love to have people come and learn about what we’re doing!

What are you excited about for your upcoming term?
My daughter is part of our Youth Group, Unite People, and the President of the group, Lincoln Hirata, is going to join our board as a Advisory Board Member. As a high school counselor, I love to see our high school students bringing their voices into social justice work. I’m really excited about how Lincoln’s input will give us a new perspective and insight on our work.

Call for Volunteers
As a small, all volunteer run organization, Portland JACL is always looking for more help. Why volunteer? Make new connections with the community. You can meet some amazing folks within our org and beyond. Your terms, your time. Whether you have an hour a month or a few a year, everyone brings something to contribute.

One person can have an impact. Because we’re a local chapter, one person can shape our organization and have an influence on our board’s direction.

Here are some examples of volunteer opportunities:
• Join us at a Nihonmachi/JA Historical Plaza Clean-Up. Next one is April 28!
• Contribute content to our newsletter (photos, articles, art piece, event promotion)
• Table at events
• Help plan or volunteer at our Day of Remembrance and Nikkei Picnic
• Attend a finance or an advocacy committee meeting
• Make social/website updates
• Help coordinate the annual printed calendar

Plus, we’re always looking for people to help with development, scholarships, and to join our board.

Volunteering with Portland JACL is a great way to give back or to get engaged with the local Nikkei community. Email us at contact@pdxjacl.org or fill out our volunteer interest form. ありがとうございます Thank you!
77th Annual Japanese American Graduation Banquet

Sunday, April 21st, 2024 | 1 pm
Monarch Hotel & Conference Center
(12566 SE 93rd Ave, Clackamas, OR)

Attend the annual Japanese American Graduation Banquet, an event celebrating the achievements of the Japanese-American high school class of 2024 who reside in the Portland metropolitan area and Clark County, Washington. This year’s keynote speaker will be Tiffany Tamaribuchi, the new Artistic Director of Portland Taiko. Japanese American community scholarships are sponsored by Portland area businesses, organizations, and individuals and will be awarded at the banquet. All Japanese-American High School graduates are honored at the banquet. Tickets are $50 for the banquet luncheon, graduates are complementary. The public is invited. Please support the Japanese-American community.

For info or to buy tickets, email Bill at isugar@comcast.net.
The Oregon Hiroshima Club held their annual Shinnenkai celebration on March 2, 2024 at the Dragon Palace restaurant. The ice/snow storm in January delayed the celebration.

Clean-up Nihonmachi with SOLV

Meet at the Japanese American Museum of Oregon between 8 am and noon on April 28
PassinArt, Oregon’s longest producing Black Theatre Company, is celebrating its 41st season, highlighting Black culture and turning the spotlight on critical issues that impact the community.

This spring they perform “Yohen” which is the Japanese word which refers to pottery that has undergone a transformation during the firing process. So when yohen is created, you need to ponder whether to save it or to throw it away. This question confronts Sumi and James as they grapple with the cracks in their marriage fueled by divisions in their families about their inter-racial relationship.

William (Bill) Earl Ray is playing James and is celebrating his 46th year as an actor/director.

Kathy Hsieh (she/her) is an award-winning actor, writer and director from Seattle. She plays the role of Sumi. In Portland, she was most recently seen in Gambatte (Grandmother) at the Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center.

Dmae Lo Roberts, director is a two-time Peabody award-winning biracial Taiwanese-American writer, director, theatre and media artist. Roberts directed The Journal of Ben Uchida and Where The Mountain Meets The Moon at Oregon Children’s Theatre.

She will be directing the touring production of Shizue: An American Story, in which she wrote the libretto, at Portland Opera.

Philip Gotunda, the playwright will discuss his play after the performance on April 5th.

Music and Stories of Exclusion and Belonging

I AM AN AMERICAN live

SAT., MAY 11, 7 P.M.
PATRICIA RESER CENTER FOR THE ARTS
12625 SW Crescent St., Beaverton, OR 97005

Get ready to jitterbug and jive with Minidoka Swing Band!

Wafa Almaktari  Thao Thi Nguyen  Soulayvane Beisal  Nau Abikaila Ki
SAVE THE DATE
MINORU YASUI DAY • 2024

PLEASE JOIN US ONLINE OR IN-PERSON!
ADVANCING DEMOCRACY
IN THE FACE OF CURRENT THREATS

FREE EVENT
SATURDAY, APRIL 6, 2024
1:00PM-3:00PM PDT
UNIVERSITY OF OREGON
WHITE STAG BUILDING
70 NW COUCH STREET
PORTLAND, OR 97209

WELCOME & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS  Sharon Maeda
STUDENT CONTEST WINNERS  Jillian Toda-Currie
TRIBUTE TO HOMER YASUI  Barbara Yasui
PANEL DISCUSSION  Sharon Maeda, Moderator
Panelist to discuss their activism in Advancing Democracy in the Face of Current Threats and provide a call to action.
KEYNOTE SPEAKER  Rep. Khanh Pham
COLLECTIVE CALL TO ACTION  Share your Voice & Closing
RECEPTION  Join us at the Japanese American Museum of Oregon for a reception following the event.

HOSTED BY:
The Minoru Yasui Legacy Project in collaboration with the Japanese American Museum of Oregon

REGISTER HERE
bit.ly/minoru-yasui-day-2024
## Ikaru no Kai - APRIL 2024

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>MON</th>
<th>TUES</th>
<th>THURS</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Chow Mein</strong></td>
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<td>Ankake Yakisoba</td>
<td>Wonton Soup</td>
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<td>あんかけ焼きそば</td>
<td>Knife Sharpening</td>
<td>Fried Shrimp</td>
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<td>11:30am Chair Yoga</td>
<td>12:45pm Mahjong</td>
<td>Ebi Fry Croquette</td>
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<td>12:30pm Mahjong</td>
<td>12:45pm</td>
<td>10:30 Move On Class</td>
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<td><strong>Beef Rice Bowl</strong></td>
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<td>Gyudon</td>
<td>Miso Ginger</td>
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<td>牛丼</td>
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<td>12:30pm Mahjong</td>
<td>11am Blood Pressure</td>
<td>Chicken Meatballs</td>
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<td><strong>Grilled Mackerel</strong></td>
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<td>Saba Shioyaki</td>
<td>* Singapore</td>
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<td>鯖の塩焼き</td>
<td>Noodles w/ Shrimp</td>
<td>Potato Stew</td>
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<td>12:30pm Mahjong</td>
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<td>12:45pm Mahjong</td>
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<td><strong>Minced Meat Cutlet</strong></td>
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<td>Menchi Katsu</td>
<td>Orange Chicken</td>
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<td>メンチカツ</td>
<td>11am Blood Pressure</td>
<td>10:30am Ukelele</td>
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<td><strong>Birthday Sushi</strong></td>
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<td>お誕生日寿司</td>
<td>Pork Kimchi</td>
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<td>12:30pm Mahjong</td>
<td>Rice Bowl</td>
<td>10-11:30am Shigin</td>
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<td>*Reservations required</td>
<td>11am Blood Pressure</td>
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**Chefs:** Naomi Molstrom-M    Kyoko Adcock-Tu    Rieko Shimada-Th/F

**Suggested Lunch Donation:** $9 for seniors 65+ / $11 for adults under 65 / $6 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

* vegetarian option available on that day - please reserve two days in advance
Japanese American Museum of Oregon

Free First Sundays

April Sponsor: In Memory of Homer Yasui

HISTORY DETECTIVES CHALLENGE 1:
ARTIFACT ANALYZER

Free admission
Kids can become History Detectives!
Collect 3 stamps in 2024 to earn an official badge

Sunday
April 7

COMPLETE FOR A STAMP