



PORTLAND JACL NEWSLETTER

Portland JACL – Supporting Civil Rights Since 1928



• JUNE 2025 | VOLUME 31 ISSUE 06 •

Board Member MESSAGE

The 2025 Japanese Community Graduation Banquet

By Heidi Kimiko Tolentino

This year was the 78th annual Japanese American Community Graduation Banquet. The banquet was unique in that it was held at a new location and had an immense number of graduates. The event was held at the Riverside Golf and Country Club and 36 graduates were honored. The event was Emceed by Todd Yuzuriha, a dedicated member of the Japanese American community. Todd was part of the 1978 Japanese American Community Banquet, is an All-American trumpet player who is part of the Minidoka Swing Band and works tirelessly volunteering in the Japanese American community.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commander Ron Iwasaki and the words before and after the meal were given by Reverend Kosho Finch of Henjyogi Buddhist Temple. The Consul General of Japan, Ken Todoriki, spoke to the graduates and encouraged them to stay connected to their community and their roots in Japan. He offered the graduates and their families congratulations and noted that he was proud to be in attendance as this is his first assignment in the US.

This year's keynote speaker was Ms. Hanako Wakatsuki-Chong, the Executive Director of Japanese American Museum of Oregon (JAMO).

Continued on Pg. 2

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

June 1

"We are Still Here"

A Program of Vanport Mosaic

Portland Expo Center | 3pm

June 7

Music and Dance of Three Nations

First Congregational Church | 2pm

June 12

Loving Day

June 15

Father's Day

June 19

Juneteenth

June 20

Unite People

Epworth United Methodist Church | 630pm

July 10-13

Minidoka Pilgrimage

Continued from Pg. 1



Todd Yurzuriha was the emcee. Elaine Yurzuria was the chairperson of the banquet.

Ms. Wakatsuki-Chong has an impressive resume that encompasses everything from working for the Idaho State Historical Society to working in the White House's Office of the Chief of Staff. In 2021, she received the Esto Perpetua Award for Lifetime Achievement from the Idaho State Historical Society for her work in preservation of Japanese American Incarceration history in Idaho.

Ms. Wakatsuki-Chong focused her speech on words of wisdom for the graduating class of 2025. As a first-generation college student, she found that it was important to find the people who would help and support her during her long journey. Her father encouraged her to spread her wings and leave the nest, but she knew she needed a community to support her. Wakatsuki-Chong worked three jobs at the beginning of her college career to fund her education. Her college advisor worked with her to find scholarships and she was fueled by his assistance. She encouraged the graduates to find the people who are going to be your cheerleaders and help you each step of the way. She continued by explaining that they need to listen and be willing to open their eyes and ears to what they can learn from others. They also need to be brave and stand up for what they believe in and not be shy about advocating

for themselves. She finished her motivational speech by telling them, "Get to know who you are and live without regret, but within reason." Ms. Wakatsuki-Chong was an inspiration not only to the students, but to the whole community as they learned what she overcame to become an influential member of our community who works to make sure that Japanese American history will never be forgotten.

After Ms. Wakatsuki-Chong's speech, the scholarship recipients were announced.

Mrs. Mark Sumida Awards

The Mrs. Mark Sumida Awards are presented in memory of Alice Sumida. Alice Sumida was a long-time supporter of the Japanese American community and a generous donor to the graduation banquet. Alice Sumida passed away in August of 2018 at the age of 104. Mrs. Sumida wanted to award students in the community so that they would know their community was proud of them. This year, the awards were presented by Mr. Rich Iwasaki. *This year's recipients were Mason Birney of Tigard High School, Mona Brines of David Douglass High School, Kenshiro Duff of Grant High School, Issai Honda of Hudson's Bay High School, Alexander Jimenez of Benson High School, Kiyoshi Kiyokawa of Sam Barlow High School, Masahiro Nakano of Westview High School, Ichiro Tanada of Central Catholic High School, Thelonius VanDam of Corbett High School, Lili Baechel of Grant High School, Aki Chambers of Lakeridge High School, Kelan Egusa of Grant High School, Sayuri Hara of Grant High School, Kai Maeda of Grant High School, Isaac Matsushima of David Douglas High School, Keiden Meyer of Grant High School, Dylan Nakaji of Grant High School, Issai Ono of Grant High School, Trillium Ono of Grant High School, Takumi Schmidt of Grant High School and Joshua Strege of Grant High School.* **Congratulations to all of these recipients!**

Japanese Ancestral Society (JAS) Scholarships

The Japanese Ancestral Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to serving the Nikkei community and promoting education

and fellowship among the members of the community. JAS awards three scholarships: Hide Naito, Mary K. Naito and Sam Naito Scholarships. These were presented by Mr. Rich Iwasaki.



Selina Uehara

Hide Naito Scholarship

Hide Naito was a Portland entrepreneur who started his first of several businesses in 1921 which diversified during his lifetime into retail operations, importing and real-estate development. The Hide Naito Donors are Sam and Marsha

Naito. **The winner of this year's Hide Naito Scholarship was Selina Uehara of Beaverton Academy of Science and Engineering.** Selina conducted research on pancreatic cancer alongside professional researchers, finished 1st in State for Future Health Professionals in EMT and Pharmacy Science Skills and competed for the Portland Ice Skating Club. Selina will be attending the University of Minnesota.



Kou Yuasa

Mary K. Naito Scholarship

Mary K. Naito was a homemaker, community volunteer, businesswoman and high school Valedictorian. A former Poston internee and UC Berkeley student, Mary managed Import Plaza for 20

years and served many local organizations with thoughtfulness and grace. Verne and Aki Naito represented the donor family at the banquet. **The winner of the Mary K. Naito Scholarship was Kou Yuasa from Sunset High School.** Kou is Salutatorian of her class, a member of the marching band who is a lead student conductor and trumpet sub-section leader and has attended the Portland Japanese School

since 5th grade. Kou will be attending Waseda University in Japan.



Claire Coffey

Sam Naito Scholarship

JAS honors Sam Naito with this scholarship. Sam Naito is a respected advisor, past president of JAS and advocate for education and social justice. This award is supported by the Southwest Washington Community Fund. **The**

winner of this scholarship was Claire Coffey of Grant High School. Claire was an editor-in-chief of Grant Magazine which has won numerous awards. She was 2nd team All-PIL on the Grant Volleyball Team and she was co-President of Grant High School's Japanese Immersion Program Student Council. Claire will be attending Northwestern University.



Aiden Yee

Gresham-Troutdale JACL (GT) JACL Scholarship

The Gresham-Troutdale JACL is part of the oldest national civil rights organization in America. It serves to protect the rights of not only Asians, but all minorities, and nurtures the cultural

heritage of Japanese Americans. Mr. Terry Nishikawa, President of GT JACL, presented the scholarship. **The winner of the Gresham-Troutdale JACL Scholarship was Aiden Yee of Benson High School.** Aiden is the Co-President of the Unite People Youth Group connected to Portland JACL, a competitive Rock Climber and a barista at Bobacat Tea House. Aiden will be attending the University of British Columbia.

Epworth United Methodist Church Scholarship

Epworth United Methodist Church has evolved to



Lindsay Persuad

become a reconciling congregation that welcomes people of all backgrounds and identities, and practices with an inclusive vision and in alignment with these values. The Epworth scholarship is provided to support the promotion of

compassion, justice, and community building in our youth. Ms. Marilyn Sholian represented Epworth for this scholarship. **The winner of the Epworth United Methodist Church Scholarship was Lindsay Persuad of Clackamas High School.** Lindsay is a member of her school's Student Athlete Leadership Team, earned All League Honorable Mention in Track and Field for discus and the 4x400 m relay. Lindsay will be attending Clackamas Community College.

Oregon Nisei Veterans Scholarships

The Oregon Nisei Veterans began in 1948 with the purpose of raising money to build a monument to honor the Nisei soldiers killed in action during WWII. *The Oregon Nisei Veterans awards two scholarships: The Art and Teri Iwasaki Scholarship and The Roger T. Okamoto Scholarship.* The scholarships were presented by Mr. Paul Tamura.



Tyler Saito Takasumi

Art and Teri Iwasaki Scholarship

Art Iwasaki was a member of the 442nd Regimental Combat team during WWII and a founding member of Oregon Nisei Vets. Art was a recipient of the Congressional Gold Medal and this scholarship is given in

memory of his loving wife, Teri. **The winner of the Art and Teri Iwasaki Scholarship was Tyler Saito Takasumi from Oregon Episcopal School.** Tyler

was a paid coding instructor for elementary and middle school students, she won 1st place in the school science fair in cellular microbiology and she competes with the Rock Climbing Team at the Multnomah Athletic Club. Tyler will be attending Boston College.



Myles Mathies

Roger T. Okamoto Scholarship

Second Lieutenant Roger Okamoto was killed in Vietnam in 1966 at the age of 23. Lieutenant Okamoto graduated from Benson High School and earned an engineering degree from the University of

Washington. Mrs. Janice Okamoto and her son, Mr. Gary Okamoto, represented the family at the banquet. **The winner of the Roger T. Okamoto Scholarship was Myles Mathies of Sam Barlow High School.** Myles was a member of the Varsity Golf Team, and taught golf to kids. He also played Basketball and refereed middle school games. Myles will be attending Oregon State University.



Ren Gregie

Shokookai of Portland Scholarship

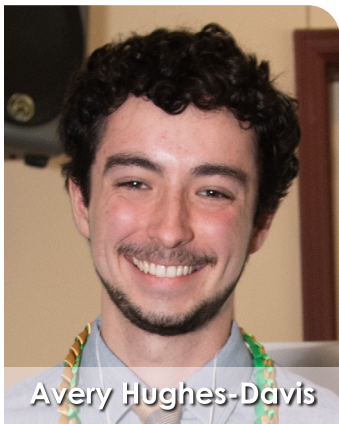
Portland Shokookai was founded in 1966 by a small group of Japanese companies. They facilitate business operations for Japanese companies in Oregon and SW Washington and run the Japanese

Language School. Mr. Yoshiyuki Hori presented the scholarship. **This year's Shokookai of Portland Scholarship winner was Ren Gregie of Grant High School.** Ren was part of his school's Constitution Team Unit that scored the highest in Oregon. He was a leader on the Cross Country and Track and Field teams and a member of Unite People.

Ren will be attending the University of Oregon.

Portland JACL Scholarships

Portland JACL was established in 1928 with an ongoing mission to fight social injustice and to preserve the cultural heritage and values of Japanese Americans. *Portland JACL awarded four scholarships this year: Two Kiyoko Yumibe Scholarships, the Yoshiko Kennedy Scholarship and the Matt Masuoka Scholarship.* The scholarships were presented by Mr. Jeff Matsumoto, the President of Portland JACL.



Avery Hughes-Davis

Kiyoko Yumibe Scholarship #1

Kiyoko Yumibe was a hard-working Nisei who was incarcerated during WWII. She established a fund, through Portland JACL, to help support youth seeking higher education. Representing the

donors at the banquet were Mr. and Mrs. Gary and Diane Onchi. **The winner of the first Yumibe Scholarship was Avery Hughes-Davis of Vancouver iTech High School.** Avery was the Student Body President, on a student advisory board for Vancouver Public Schools and volunteered 90-100 hours/year with the Oregon Buddhist Temple. Avery will be attending Georgetown University next year.



Reiko Nitta

Kiyoko Yumibe Scholarship #2

The winner of the second Yumibe Scholarship was Reiko Nitta of Lincoln High School. Reiko was the Student Body Co-President, three time Class Co-President, and competed on the Cross Country, Track and Field, Swim and Synchronized Swimming

teams. Reiko will be attending Georgia Institute of Technology next year.



Hanako Duff

Yoshiko Kennedy Scholarship

Yoshiko Kennedy used her talents as a seamstress and master of Ikebana to ensure her children would receive an education. The Yoshiko Kennedy Scholarship was created in her memory. **The winner of**

the Yoshiko Kennedy Scholarship was Hanako Duff of Grant High School. Hanako was an AP Scholar, started the Grant Badminton Club and tutored other students in SAT prep and Japanese. Hanako will be attending the University of Oregon next year.



Lennon Kalapsa

Matt Masuoka Scholarship

This scholarship honors Matthew Masuoka, a Nisei dentist, who was past president of Portland JACL in 1952, and Pacific Northwest District Governor in 1953-55. This scholarship is given in his honor by his daughter,

Dr. Connie Masuoka, who helps organize the Graduation Banquet every year. **The winner of the Matt Masuoka Scholarship was Lennon Kalapsa of Grant High School.** Lennon was a certified member of the Oregon State Sheriff's Search and Rescue team, worked as a Lifeguard with Portland Parks and Recreation and was a member of his school's Track and Field Team. Lennon will be attending the University of Oregon.

The Velela Club Scholarships

The Velela Club is Portland's oldest Nikkei women's service organization that is active

in the community today. They are dedicated to supporting the community and preserving Japanese American heritage and traditions. *The Veleda Club awarded two scholarships: the Veleda Club Scholarship and the Veleda Club Scholarship honoring Mrs. Misao Minagi.* Mrs. Sharon Takahashi represented the Veleda Club.



Midori Carollo

The winner of the Veleda Club Scholarship was Midori Carollo of Ida B. Wells High School.

Midori was a Varsity Cheerleader, she played and performed on Koto and she was a 13 year member of Girl Scouts. Midori will be attending the University

of California Davis.



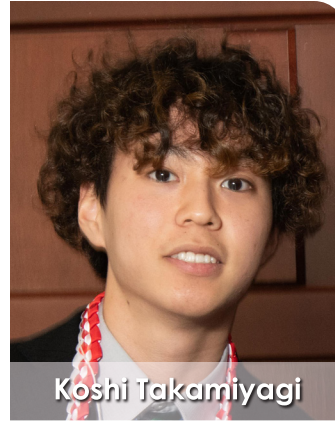
Reon Sano-Ochiai

The Veleda Club Scholarship in honor of Mrs. Misao Minagi Mrs. Minagi was 105 years old when she passed away on March 1, 2025. She was an ardent supporter of our youth and this event. **The winner of the Veleda Club Scholarship in honor**

of Mrs. Misao Minagi was Reon Sano-Ochiai of Mountain View High School. Reon conducted independent research at Reed College on retinal development, participated in the International Leadership Conference for Health Occupations and played on the Varsity Soccer Team. Reon will be attending the University of Oregon.

Nikkei Fujinkai Scholarship

Portland Nikkei Fujinkai is a Japanese Ancestral Women's Association that was established in 1935. They support community activities and cultural education. Mrs. Michie Uzunoe presented the scholarship. **The winner of the Nikkei Fujinkai**



Koshi Takamiyagi

Scholarship was Koshi Takamiyagi of Early College High School.

Koshi received the gold and silver in abacus competitions for Kawakami School Japan and placed 52nd nationally. He also tutors students in math at Portland Community College. Koshi will be

attending Boston University next year.

The Graduate's Response was given by Reiko Nitta of Lincoln High School.

Reiko thanked the Japanese American community for helping the graduates and noted that the students thrived because of the community's constant support. She also thanked all of the donors and noted that the entire event would not have been possible without the graduation banquet committee. Reiko said that she and the other graduates felt the love and support of the whole community and were grateful to be part of the Japanese American community.

The Ice Breaker Awards, a fun event for the graduates to learn about people in the Nikkei community, were given out by Mrs. Elaine Yuzuriha. She ended with a reminder to the graduates to return back to their community after they graduate and wished them well in their next steps.

Congratulations to the graduates of the class of 2025! You are a class filled with academic prowess, athletic abilities, commitment to your communities and so much more. We applaud you and look forward to hearing about your future endeavors.

Thank you to Curtis Suyematsu for the photos of the students and the Graduation Banquet.





The High School Graduating Class of 2025 was recognized at a reception at the Riverside Golf and Country Club. ✨

Congratulations!

❖ Dr. Satsuki Ina Book Talk ❖



Dr. Satsuki Ina was in Portland to talk about her recent book about her family, "The Poet and the Silk Girl." She was also kept busy with speaking to the newly forming Oregon Chapter of Tsuru

for Solidarity and helping lead our Mother's Day March. Dr. Ina called for the Japanese American community to condemn the current treatment of immigrants and refugees. When we were being targeted in the 40's, very few people spoke up for us. We have a responsibility to share our story and how relevant it is to today's actions. We were told that we would demonstrate our patriotism by complying with the government's orders which was also supported by the JACL. We now know that the government's policies were "an aggressive act of oppression legitimized by military necessity." Dr. Ina used her professional background in psychotherapy to sympathetically portray not only her family's experience but the experience of the Japanese American community in the 40's.

❖ JACL/OCA Leadership Summit ❖

By Lauren Sadataki



Lauren Sadataki is seated center and Celestine Taevs-Nakaya is the second from the left. Both were representatives sent by the Portland JACL to the Leadership Summit

My name is Lauren Sadataki. This past March, I had the honor of attending the JACL/OCA Leadership Summit. Through participating in the JACL/OCA Leadership Summit, I hoped to strengthen my ability to advocate for the Japanese American community and develop crucial public speaking skills that will enhance my effectiveness as a cultural bridge-builder. I am deeply inspired by my grandmother, who successfully negotiated a rental program that allowed elderly first-generation Japanese individuals to live together, providing them with a supportive and communal environment. Her ability to advocate for her community and bring about meaningful change has motivated me to follow in her footsteps.

I am very thankful to JACL, Portland JACL, and Sheldon Arakaki for encouraging me to apply to this program. This Summit was a great intro into advocacy, and it showed me that speaking to our representatives is easier than I thought. During this Summit, we had the opportunity to talk about three bills with our representatives from Washington and Oregon. We were advocating

for the "Fred Korematsu Congressional Gold Medal Bill, Neighbors Not Enemies Act, and the C.A.R.E. Act". Celestine and I were partnered with two other attendees from the Washington OCA chapter. Together, we worked together to research these bills and build a story around why our representatives should co-sponsor them.

One of the biggest takeaways I learned from this Summit is that your story matters. For example, when advocating for the Fred Korematsu Congressional Gold Medal, I tied in my own family's history about their WWII experience. We have the power to create change and be a collective voice. Also, we had only 15 minutes to discuss these three bills, which made it even more crucial to share my story in an efficient manner.

This Summit was a great opportunity to connect with other JACL chapter members across the country and learn about OCA. I'm excited to take this experience into my personal and professional life to continue to make a positive impact in what I can.

Photo Corner



1. Jenney Yamada, Amanda Shanahan, Marleen Wallingford and Gloria Lee are at the Mother's Day March supporting immigrant families.
2. Stevie Dunbar and Celestine Taevs-Nakaya staff the Portland JACL table at Oregon Rises Above Hate.
3. Dr. Satsuki Ina speaks at the rally with local supporters.
4. Frank So, Executive Director of Ecumenical Ministries rallies marchers at the Japanese American Historical Plaza.

The Prefecture Club learned how to slice fish. Prefecture Club participants tried out the Kagegawa cuisine. Another meeting or two are planned for June.



Thank you to everyone who attended the Old Town Clean-Up on May 10.

China



Japan



Korea



THE OREGON CHINA COUNCIL, CONSULAR OFFICE OF JAPAN IN PORTLAND AND
KOREAN CONSULATE IN SEATTLE PRESENT

— 10TH ANNIVERSARY —

MUSIC & DANCE 10TH ANNIVERSARY THREE NATIONS

Free
Event

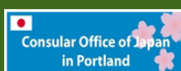
Ticket required

SATURDAY, JUNE 7, 2025

1:30pm Doors Open, 2:00pm Event Starts.

First Congregational UCC
1126 SW Park Ave, Portland

Get your ticket!





Iko no Kai - JUNE 2025

1333 SE 28th Ave / 503-238-0775

MON	TUES		THURS	FRI
2 Saba Shioyaki 鯖の塩焼き Salt-grilled Mackerel 12:30pm Mahjong	3 Shumai 焼売 11am Blood Pressure 12:45pm Sing-along	X	5 *Mapo Tofu 麻婆豆腐 11am Blood Pressure	6 Karaage 鶏の唐揚げ Fried Chicken 10-11:30am Shigin
9 Gyoza 餃子 11:30am Chair Yoga 12:30pm Mahjong	10 Teriyaki Miso Chicken 鶏の味噌照り焼き 11am Haiku 11am Blood Pressure 12:45pm Sing-along	X	12 *Croquettes コロッケ 10:30am Ukulele	13 Hawaiian Chili ハワイ風 チリシチュー 10-11:30am Shigin 11:30am Tai Chi 12:30pm Bingo
16 *Tempura Udon 天ぷらうどん 11am-2pm Reiki 12:30pm Mahjong	17 Nikujaga 肉じゃが Beef & Potato Stew 11am Blood Pressure 12:45pm Sing-along	X	19 Fish Nanban 白身魚の南蛮漬け 11am Blood Pressure	20 Char Siu Barbecue Pork チャーシュー 10-11:30am Shigin
23 Chicken Katsu Curry チキンカツカレー 11:30am Tai Chi 12:30pm Mahjong	24 Sweet & Sour Pork 酢豚 12:45pm Sing-along	X	26 *Kim Bap キンパ 10:30am Ukulele	27 Takoyaki たこ焼き Octopus Fritters 10-11:30am Shigin
30 Birthday Sushi お誕生日寿司 *Reservations required (suggested donation \$12) 12:30pm Mahjong				

Chefs: Naomi Molstrom-M Kyoko Adcock-Tu Justin Sato -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**



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If you would like to contact the Board, their email address is *First Name@pdxjacl.org*

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