



# PORTLAND JACL NEWSLETTER

Portland JACL - Supporting Civil Rights Since 1928



• JANUARY 2026 | VOLUME 32 ISSUE 01 •

## Board Member MESSAGE

By Spencer Uemura

明けましておめでとうございます。今年もよろしくお願  
い  
します。

*Akemashite omedetou gozaimasu. Kotoshimo  
yoroshiku onegaishimasu.*

Happy New Year! I look forward to stepping into  
this new year with you all, with curiosity, care,  
and a willingness to lean into what's possible  
together.

As I look back on this past year, I feel deep  
gratitude for our community. Thank you to each  
of you, however your involvement shows up.  
I'm grateful for those who are able to donate  
financially to support our work in community  
building and advocacy, for those who volunteer  
their time and energy at events, and for those  
who do their best to fit it into their lives to attend  
our main gatherings. Each person, by attending,  
supporting, or staying connected, helps make  
this community what it is.

The Nikkei Winter Holiday Party at the end of  
November was a wonderful way to kick off the  
season before the rush of travel plans and year-  
end busyness set in. It's always a joy to meet  
new folks, reconnect with familiar faces, and  
share good food. This year, our Unite People  
youth group treated the younger kids to cookie  
decorating and performed their now-famous  
Soran Bushi dance. There were memorable  
moments of a piñata bravely dodging swings  
from an enthusiastic plastic baseball bat. And

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

**January 1**  
**New Year's Day**

**January 10**  
**Know Your Rights**  
Oregon Buddhist Temple | 1pm-5pm

**January 17**  
**Mochitsuki**  
Epworth United Methodist Church | 11am-3pm

**January 19**  
**Martin Luther King's Birthday**

**January 27**  
**International Holocaust  
Remembrance Day**

I'm starting to think our holiday gathering might be one of the only places you can reliably spot a Japanese American Santa Claus, complete with a few well-timed shaka's.

In between bouts of gently herding my crawling child so he didn't trip anyone, I found myself watching the many smiling faces that greeted him as he ventured around the room. While he is admittedly a charming little guy, it also felt like a reflection of the warmth of this community. He took me on what felt like a grand tour, stopping to meet person after person. It struck me that many of the people in that room are people I'll likely continue seeing for years to come. My kids will grow up and one day they'll be the ones swinging wildly at the piñata, while today's piñata-hitters may be in Unite People, creating meaningful experiences for the next generation. There is real strength in a community that continue to grow more diverse in many ways, connected by shared heritage or relationship to it, gathering to have fun, eat good food, and work toward making a difference.

That sense of connection is matched by how active our chapter has been. This past year, Portland JACL stayed busy, with strong turnouts at Mochitsuki, Day of Remembrance, the Nikkei Picnic, and the Nikkei Winter Holiday Party. And our work goes beyond celebration. Our chapter has been represented at protests and rallies opposing xenophobic immigration policies and the expansion of illegal detention practices. We have engaged in movements supporting

Black reparations and racial justice. Our Unite People youth have taken on direct advocacy efforts of their own, many participated in the Minidoka Pilgrimage, and their energy and leadership continue to be an invaluable part of our chapter's life. These are only a few examples of how our community shows up.

Compared to many in our community, my time in Portland is still relatively new, and I'm honored to step into this role as co-president. With gratitude, we say thank you to board members who are moving on, and we welcome new folks stepping into leadership. We are living in a time of significant political turmoil. While many of us do not face the same immediate threats of removal or incarceration like earlier generations of Nikkei, their history reminds us how quickly fear-driven policies can take hold and how necessary it is to respond with courage and solidarity. Their resistance and resilience prove that there is always something that can be done. I encourage us, both as individuals and as a chapter, to reflect on how we can stand against injustice and support those who are being targeted today.

May we leave behind beliefs that have limited us.

May we lean into brave opportunities for growth.

And may we do it together.

*Kotoshimo yoroshiku onegaishimasu.*

## Mochitsuki 2026

11 am- 3 pm, January 17  
Ikoi No Kai

Enjoy the New Year with Japanese  
treats and mochi pounding.  
Menu will be posted on Ikoi No Kai  
website.



## ❖ Centenarians Honored in 2025 ❖



By Betty Jean Harry

### **Bessie Watanabe Asai (3/12/1923 | Hood River, OR)**

She was very active in the Hood River area. She taught 4-H for 28 years, and she served on the Hood River hospital board for ten years. Family has always been the most important part of her life.

### **Paul Ase (8/4/1930 | Nogales, AZ)**

He has been a regular at Ikoi No Kai who lives with his son Randy in Gresham, OR. The head of their household is actually their cat! (Sadly, Paul passed away recently.)

### **Linnea Okazaki Foss (11/6/1922 | Honolulu, HI)**

She is very grateful for the monthly bento delivery from Ikoi No Kai and lauds close captioning on television as she keeps up with the world events.

### **Aya Fujii (3/3/1927 | Portland, OR)**

Aya is an active member of Epworth United Methodist Church. She and two sisters are living the good life at Russellville, participating in many activities.

### **Tom Fujii (2/4/1929 | Troutdale, OR)**

Tom is a proud veteran and devout fan of the

Oregon State Beavers. He enjoyed his time with the Soil Conservation service. Tom is an incredibly cheerful and positive person. If you ever need a pick me up, join him at Ikoi no Kai any Tuesday.

### **Amy Furumasu**

This active volunteer came to Portland after working for the WA Dept of Health and Social Services for 21 years. She raised her active family in Spokane, WA.

### **Dan Daisuke Hinatsu (4/3/1924 | Portland, OR)**

Dan is a talented artist! He worked as a graphic designer for Meier & Frank and created their ads in "The Oregonian." He painted winter watercolor scenes for Christmas cards every year.

### **Kimi Iwamoto (11/19/1921 | Auburn, WA)**

Kimi loves her family and always thanks them when they visit her. She sends them off by blowing a kiss to accompany her smile.

### **Michiko Kiyokawa (9/24/1923 | Parkdale, OR)**

Mich is the matriarch of Kiyokawa Family Orchards in Parkdale! She loves her family and living in the beauty of the Hood River valley. A couple of years ago, OPB produced a documentary on the family heritage farm. When they met Mich, they couldn't believe that she was over 100!

### **Fude Fujita Kagawa (10/12/1927 | Milwaukie, OR)**

We are grateful for her many years of volunteering at Ikoi No Kai. Daughters Heidi, Nancy and Sandy are their mom's legacy, all actively volunteering in the community.

### **Misa Kodama (4/28/1927 | Redondo Beach, CA)**

Misa led many organized tours to Japan for her family and friends. They remember that she never lost her cool.

### **Seichi Konno (8/3/1925 | Redmond, OR)**

It is impossible to talk about Seichi without talking about Shu! They are both active at Epworth

United Methodist Church.

**Shu Konno (11/29/1927 | Hood River, OR)**

This active, adventurous, independent couple has been married for 70 years!

**Jean Kozawa (1/6/1929 | Pasco, WA)**

Jean remembers waitressing at her aunt's restaurant and receiving a nickel tip, for which she was very grateful. She remembers getting up at 5 to pick asparagus before going to school.

**Mishie Matsumoto (3/5/1930 | Osaka, Japan)**

Mishie was trained in flower arranging while living in Japan. She worked for a Japanese florist in Whittier, Ca for many years. Now a resident of the NW, she enjoys lunches at Ikoi no Kai with her daughter Cecelia & granddaughter Tori.

**Taka Iwasaki Mizote (5/30/1924 | Portland, OR)**

Taka participates in many activities at Russellville! One day while Taka was volunteering in the kitchen, she began making apple crisp for dessert. She prepared the apples then reached for a canister of what she thought was sugar. You guessed it, it was salt! Dessert that day came from the Safeway bakery a couple of blocks away!

**Tsuyako Monas (5/9/1928 | Tokyo, Japan)**

Tsuyako is always gracious and thanks everyone for all their kindnesses. She is a longtime Nikkei Fujinkai member and past TransPacific Women's Society member.

**Ella Morisato (6/12/1928, Hawaii)**

Ella resides at Holladay Park Plaza and still is a champion knitter and crocheter. Her family visits are appreciated by the residents as they bring two affectionate therapy dogs.

**George Morishige (9/1922 | Auburn, WA)**

George is a retired farmer residing in Ontario, OR. He has been actively involved in the local JACL chapter.

**Setsuko Morishige (11/1929 | Chiba, Japan)**

Setsuko and George have lived and farmed in

Ontario for a long time. Their church activities and help in the community are praised by their friends.

**Janet Ayako Nagata (10/14/1928 | Tokyo, Japan)**

Janet worked at several Japanese restaurants, but her favorite job was with Azumano Travel, assisting Japanese business travelers to Oregon. She made many friends while bowling in the Portland Nisei League.

**Sam Naito (12/10/1921 | Portland, OR)**

"Mr. Portland" has been a supporter of the seniors and youth in our community for decades. One of Sam's gifts is being able to recognize upcoming community leaders and enticing them to start volunteering to help others.

**Harry Haruto Nakamura (3/21/1930 | Portland, OR)**

After Minidoka, Harry was sent to Utah, where he went to seminary so he could participate in sports. His fishing prowess is recognized by hordes, including Ikoi No Kai.

**Frank Wataru Nakata (10/9/1926 | Portland, OR)**

Frank is a World War II Nisei veteran! He is an avid gardener; his roses and vegetables are amazing! Frank's recipe for raspberry jam is featured in the new Ikoi no Kai Dessert Cookbook! When he isn't at Ikoi no Kai, you'll find him eating lunch at Wendy's.

**Afton Itsue Nozaki (5/28/1924)**

Portland, OR Afton is a longtime member of the Portland Nichiren Buddhist Temple and one of its staunchest supporters. She was the standard bearer of their fundraising bazaars, preaching high standards.

**Hideo Ouchida (3/23/1927 | Gresham, OR)**

Date (as he is fondly called) was a Gresham farmer for many years. One of his saddest memories is seeing a new tractor being sold for a song as they went to camp.

**Robert Ouchida (3/19/1923 | Gresham, OR)**

Robert is 102, but he is physically fit and walks.

Relatives can still hear him say, "Don't spend too much money; save for college."

**Bertha Saiget (9/13/1925 | Portland, OR)**

Bertha instilled in all, the importance of education. Until last year, she was actively driving herself.

**Henry "Shig" Sakamoto (1/27/1927 | Portland, OR)**

Before the war, Shig as the Tony Bennett of Portland's Japantown. In his later years, he sang with the Minidoka Swing Band. While working for the Oregon Wheat Commission, Henry was instrumental in obtaining the cherry trees from Japan that line the Japanese American Historical Plaza along the Willamette River.

**Dorothy Sato (5/24/1923 | Seattle, WA)**

Dorothy lived most of her adult life in Parkdale where her husband Ray was a successful orchardist upon his return from serving in World War II. Dorothy is immensely proud of her children and grandchildren. Her mantra is "Never let what happened to us happen again to anybody." She now lives in Beaverton and enjoys the monthly bento deliveries from Ikoi no Kai.

**Jeanne Shioishi (3/10/1923 | Redmond, OR)**

Her words of wisdom are 'keep busy and stay active.' Since her mom lived to a ripe 113, her friends and family have issued that challenge to her.

**Kazue Sumoge (3/3/1926 | Dee, OR)**

Kaz was born in Hood River and enjoys going for car rides in the beautiful Hood River valley. She enjoys watching sports on TV and doing jigsaw puzzles and crossword puzzles.

**Satoru Terada (9/19/1927 | Honolulu, HI)**

Satoru is a new Oregon resident, coming to Oregon to live with his son Ricky. He is grateful for connecting to the wonderful Ikoi No Kai bento program.

**Alice Watanabe (7/18/1925 | Astoria, OR)**

Alice was a young widow who rose to life's challenges and raised 3 outstanding children

alone. She is grateful for her family and friends' support back then, and now is thankful for her children's support.

**Chiyoko Watanabe (9/26/1927 | Portland, OR)**

Chiyoko lives in Hood River, surrounded by an orchard of beautiful pear trees. Always nearby is a squirt bottle for when her gorgeous cat does something that it shouldn't, like try to get into her bento delivery! Chiyoko is an incredibly talented ikebana flower arranger.

**Vivian Wong (11/3/1927 | Portland, OR)**

Vivian enjoyed attending the Centenarian Luncheon last year, but was unable to participate this year. She was a regular at Ikoi no Kai until moving to Cherrywood where she enjoys participating in art classes. Vivian is a talented seamstress, as well.

**HAS SOMEONE IN YOUR FAMILY  
BEEN DETAINED BY I.C.E.?**

**HAVE YOU WITNESSED AN I.C.E.  
RAID IN YOUR COMMUNITY?**

**IF SO: CALL THE  
P.I.R.C.**

*PORTLAND IMMIGRANT RIGHTS COALITION*

**HOTLINE  
1-888-622-1510**

**BE C.L.E.A.R. WHEN REPORTING:**

COUNT: "3 OFFICERS, 1 CAR"  
LOCATION: "SE 2ND & COUCH IN PDX"  
EQUIPMENT: "BLUE UNIFORMS SAY ICE, VAN UNMARKED"  
ACTIVITY: "OFFICERS CHECKING ID'S"  
REPORT TIME & DATE: "2:45 PM THURS NOV 12TH"

FOR MORE POSTERS CONTACT:



**Democratic  
Socialists  
of America**

PORTLAND, OREGON

INFO@PORTLANDSSA.ORG

# Photo Corner



Photos from the 2025 JA CL Holiday Party. Photos by Rich Iwasaki.



## Iko no Kai - JANUARY 2026

1333 SE 28th Ave / 503-238-0775

MON	TUES		THURS	FRI
<b>5 Ozoni</b> New Year's Mochi Soup お雑煮 11:30am Chair Yoga 12:30pm Mahjong	<b>6 Chicken w/ Ume Sauce</b> 鶏肉の梅ダレ 11am Blood Pressure	X	<b>8 Agedashi Tofu</b> 揚げ出し豆腐 11am Haiku 11am Blood Pressure 11:30am Tai Chi	<b>9 Beef Kimbap</b> 牛肉のキンパ
<b>12 Chicken Chanko Nabe</b> Chicken Hot Pot 鶏のちゃんこ鍋 12:30pm Mahjong	<b>13 Panko Fried Shrimp</b> 海老のパン粉焼き 12:45pm Sing-along	X	<b>15 Japanese Breakfast</b> 和食の朝ご飯 10:30am Ukulele	<b>16 Teriyaki Pork</b> 豚の照り焼き 10-11:30am Shigin 12:30pm Bingo
<b>19 Birthday Sushi</b> お誕生日寿司 *Reservations required (suggested donation \$12) 12:30pm Mahjong	<b>20 Ginger Pork</b> 生姜焼き 11am Blood Pressure 12:45pm Sing a Long	X	<b>22 Nasu Katsu</b> Panko Fried Eggplant なすカツ 10am-2pm Cardmaking 11am Haiku 11am Blood Pressure	<b>23 Kakiage Udon</b> Tempura Noodles かき揚げうどん 10-11:30am Shigin
<b>26 Steamed Rockfish</b> 根魚のきのこ ポン酢蒸し 10:30am-2pm Reiki 11:30am Tai Chi 12:30pm Mahjong	<b>27 Wonton Soup</b> ワンタンスープ 12:45pm Sing-along	X	<b>29 Osechi New Year's Meal</b> お節料理 *Reservations required seniors \$12 / Adults \$18 10:30am Ukulele	<b>30 Shoyu Chicken</b> 醤油チキン 10-11:30am Shigin

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

**Suggested Lunch Donation: \$9 for seniors 65+ / \$12 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**

## Know Your Rights

1-5 pm, Saturday, January 10, 2026  
Oregon Buddhist Temple  
3720 SE 34th Ave, Portland



Every person who lives in the United States has constitutional rights regardless of immigration status. You need to understand your rights. Know Your Rights and Legal Observation training followed by a discussion about ways to educate and support our communities. Registration required by Jan 5th  
Register online: [Registration](#),



Thank you to APANO for supporting our civic engagement efforts.

## Yes! I want to help!

Your generous donations help fund cultural events, youth programming, community partnerships and social justice causes. We appreciate your support of our work.

**You can make a tax-deductible donation online through:**

**Paypal**



**Check**

Portland JACL  
PO Box 86310  
Portland, OR 97286

**Venmo**





**PORTLAND JAACL**  
PO BOX 86310  
PORTLAND, OR 97286

NON PROFIT  
ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
PORTLAND, OR  
PERMIT #579

## Current Board Members

Jeff Matsumoto  
**Co-President**

Spencer Uremura  
**Co-President**

Tiffany Koyama Lane  
**Vice President**

Heidi Tolentino  
**Secretary**

Chip Larouche  
**Treasurer**

Setsy Larouche  
**Membership Chair**

Linda Abser  
Sean Egusa  
Erika Jennings  
Sharon Kuroda  
Connie Masuoka  
Ken Nitta  
Justin Sato  
Connor Wakayama  
Marleen Wallingford  
**Board Members**

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

Edited by Chong Sim (simc0186@gmail.com)