



GVJCI JAPANESE LANGUAGE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

This past summer, GVJCI Japanese Language School successfully completed a fun-filled 4-week summer session with Onigiri Making Day and a lively Natsu Matsuri celebration. The students enjoyed bowling, fishing for snacks, practicing Japanese phrases while role-playing at yatai food stalls, and topped it off with an energetic Obon dance. We'd like to extend our gratitude to Naoko Tran Sensei for spearheading the Natsu Matsuri and Stephanie Ajifu and Chiaki Suzuki Sensei for their tremendous support. Special thanks to Anatalia Morinaka, Erica Toide, Conner Ma, Avaya McCoy, Akane Glaze, Miki Gilmour, Megan Denkers Baca, Angelica Gomez, Seiko Kussman, and Lynne Mori for their contribution in making the events possible for the children.



Our children's online teacher, Asaka Morita Sensei, led a week of immersive learning on Japanese beauty and traditional fashion, sparking the interest for the students in learning about hakama, while building vocabulary and language in Japanese. Meanwhile, Aki Izumi Sensei hosted her annual gathering with the adult online students at Columbia Park, offering a meaningful opportunity to meet their teacher in person. The students enjoyed practicing their Japanese in a real-life setting, making the event both a bonding experience and an extension of their learning.

After nearly 5 years of pause in cultural activities and celebrations due to the pandemic, our school is back in full swing. We welcomed more than 80 new and returning families in the fall as this year marks a fresh beginning filled with meaningful learning experiences and cultural immersion. Our first big event will be the Sports Festival in October, a Japanese tradition that brings together students, families, and teachers for a day of fun, teamwork, and cultural pride. In November, we will embark on a special school field trip, giving students the opportunity to experience learning beyond the classroom. Looking ahead to January, we will welcome the New Year with an Oshogatsu celebration, joined by our Adults Online Class, as we share in festive customs and traditions of mochi making, along with arts and crafts.

We are deeply grateful for our team of extraordinary Sensei, dedicated Parent Group, and generous volunteers who help make our school unique and welcoming for the community. Your support allows us to provide enriching cultural experiences alongside high-quality language instruction. We look forward to building new friendships and celebrating the Japanese heritage with our community at GVJCI Japanese Language School.

With Sincere Kansha,

Judy Kawazoe

GVJCI Japanese Language School Principal





Car Donation Program

Thinking of donating your car to charity? Now you can, and at the same time, support GVJCI! We have teamed up with Harold's Car Donation Service.

HOW IT WORKS:

1. Call or email us to arrange pickup at: (310) 324-6611 or cars@jci-gardena.org
2. Harold's Car Donation Service (HCDS) will arrange towing, always free of charge to you. (Disabled Vehicles, Junk Cars, Scrap Cars and Wrecks also accepted.)
3. HCDS handles all DMV paperwork at time of pickup, including Release of Liability.
4. After the car is sold, your acknowledgment and tax forms will arrive by mail.
5. You get rid of an unwanted car and get the satisfaction of helping others. You also get an IRS approved tax deduction. Yay!

BSA EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT


The GVJCI is very lucky to have the support of Boy Scouts in the South Bay. This past spring, Jake Yamada from BSA Troop 378 completed his Eagle Scout project. Jake and his team built two picnic tables for the JCI Gardens Senior Apartments and assembled two display cabinets for the Gardena Nisei Memorial VFW Post 1961. He displayed leadership, organization, and discipline.

This summer, Kaitlyn Yamanaka from Life Scout Troop 258 completed her Eagle Scout Project. Kaitlyn built two games for GVJCI events. Her organization, creativity, and attention to detail were excellent. Thank you, Kaitlyn and Jake, for your support and beautiful craftsmanship. Jake and Kaitlyn, your projects will touch the lives of future generations. The GVJCI wishes both of you great success on your journey in life. We appreciate both of you!


1ST ANNUAL GVJCI CAR SHOW FUNDRAISER

In August, we held the 1st Annual GVJCI Car Show. This Car Show was designed to be a family event, to share a little of the past with upcoming generations before digital technology took over, and to give local car enthusiasts a space to display their passion. The GVJCI Car Show turned out to be a reunion of family, old friends, and neighbors.

Thanks to all the car owners, we were able to display 42 Japanese and American cars from as early as 1931. It was beautiful to enjoy a stroll down memory lane and see their dream cars restored. There were free games for the kids and a Pinewood Derby track for all ages to enjoy. Thanks to BSA 683 for organizing the Pinewood Derby Race. The food was excellent from Okamoto Kitchen Truck and Handel's Homemade Ice Cream. Thank you to the Japanese American National Museum, Oliver Wang (Cruising J-Town), and the Japanese Classic Car Show for their support. Appreciation goes out to our In-Kind Donors, B&G House of Printing, Shin-Shen-Gumi, and Petersen Automotive Museum. And to our Sponsors, it was their support that made this Car Show happen: Honda Automotive Guys, Nikkei Credit Union, and Ken Yanai Music. We also had a special screening of "Japanese American Legacy on Wheels," produced by Sansei Legacy and directed by Mitchell Matsumura. Thank you volunteer committee members, Dan Morimizu, Wayne Nakatsu, & staff members Lyndon Meighan & Andrew Bacon, for all their hard work and commitment to the GVJCI. Like always, our fundraisers could not happen without all our fantastic volunteers and staff. We appreciate everyone's time, support, and commitment. Thank You!!




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2026 TOMO NO KAI MEMBERSHIP OPENS ON OCTOBER 13TH

It's almost time to renew or sign up for 2026 Tomo No Kai membership! You can sign up or renew your membership for \$12 beginning on October 13th, and you can begin using your membership to participate in classes immediately. What comes with membership? Participation in any of our TNK classes (most of which are only \$6!), our senior bento program which serves healthy and delicious \$7 Japanese bento meals, and our Tomo Cafe social hour where friends and new friends gather to socialize and enjoy coffee and pastries. There are 2 ways to sign up/renew membership:

1. Visit JCI-Gardena.org/Membership and fill out the online membership form OR download and print out a paper form to fill out and return to the GVJCI Office.
2. Visit the GVJCI front office to fill out a paper membership form.

Please see our website for the latest class schedule or pick one up at our office.

GVJCI Closure Dates:

- Tuesday, November 11 - Veterans Day
- Thursday, November 27 & Friday, November 28 - Thanksgiving Holiday
- Thursday, December 25, 2025 to Thursday, January 1, 2026 - HOLIDAY CLOSURE

Important Dates:

- Wednesday, December 10 - Last day to order senior bento for 2025
- Friday, December 19 - Last day of TNK classes and Senior Bento Program for 2025. Please talk with your teacher(s) for specific dates for the last day of your class(es).



2026年の友の会会員の更新または登録の時期が近づいてきました。

10月13日から12ドルで会員登録または更新でき、10月13日から会員資格を使用してクラスに参加することもできます。会員になると何が得られますか? TNK クラスへの参加 (ほとんどが6ドル!)、健康的でおいしい7ドルの日本食弁当を提供するシニア向け弁当プログラム、友人や新しい友人が集まってコーヒーやパストリーを楽しみながら交流できる友カフェ ソーシャル アワーなどがあります。会員登録/更新には2つの方法があります:

1. JCI-Gardena.org/Membershipにアクセスし、オンライン会員登録フォームに記入するか、紙のフォームをダウンロードして印刷し、記入してGVJCI オフィスに返送してください。
2. GVJCI フロントオフィスを訪れて、紙の会員登録フォームに記入してください。

最新のクラススケジュールについては当社のウェブサイトをご覧ください。当社オフィスで入手してください。

GVJCI 休館日:

- 11月11日火曜日 - ベテランズデー
- 11月27日 (木) および11月28日 (金) - 感謝祭
- 2025年12月25日木曜日から2025年1月1日木曜日まで - 休館

重要な日付:

- 12月10日水曜日 - 2025年度シニア弁当注文最終日
- 12月19日金曜日 - 2025年のTNKクラスとシニア弁当プログラムの最終日。クラス最終日の具体的な日付については、担当の教師にご相談ください。

Established on May 31, 1979, the GVJCI Tomo No Kai or Senior Citizen Friendship Society was formed to promote and support programs at the GVJCI for the senior community, as well as, to provide recreational and social activities, and the annual Christmas parties. Your membership dues, class participation fees, and donations support the senior programs and GVJCI facility operations. Thank you very much for your participation and support!

NOVEMBER

OSECHI RYORI COOKING WORKSHOPS: JAPANESE NEW YEAR FOODS

SATS, NOV. 1 & NOV. 15, 10:00AM-12:00PM

GVJCI Nisei Veterans Memorial Hall Kitchen

Learn to make Osechi Ryori (traditional Japanese New Year foods) in time for the new year! Participants will be instructed by veteran sushi chef Mike Inouye on how to prepare a variety of dishes. This is a two-part workshop series taking place over 2 Saturdays. In-person participation fee is \$90 for the entire series and includes all foods and supplies. A recording of the class will be available for \$20 for those who cannot attend. Limited to 8 people for in-person workshops. The recording for each workshop will be shared with all paid participants. This workshop is for ages 16+. To register, please visit the GVJCI website!

SMARTPHONE Q&A SESSIONS

MONS, NOV. 3, 10, 17, & 24, 1-3PM

GVJCI Nisei Veterans Memorial Hall

Do you have questions about your smartphone? Don't worry - we've got the answers and are ready to help! Come to our smartphone Q&A session where volunteers are ready to answer any questions you have about both Android and iPhones. Each session is \$5 to attend. To register, please visit the GVJCI website or visit the GVJCI office.

NUTRIENT NEEDS AS WE AGE AND MALNUTRITION & AGING

WED, NOV. 5, 11AM-12PM

GVJCI Upstairs Classroom 202/203

Eating well is one of the most powerful ways to support health and independence as we get older. Nutrition as We Age is a program designed to help older adults understand how food choices affect energy, strength, and overall well-being. Participants will learn about key nutrients for healthy aging, including protein for muscle strength, calcium and vitamin D for bones, and fiber for digestion. We will also discuss the importance of colorful fruits and vegetables, healthy fats, and whole grains. By the end of the program, participants will have clear, realistic strategies to improve their nutrition and support healthy aging. With the right knowledge and habits, good nutrition can help older adults stay strong, energized, and independent FREE to participate. To register, please visit the GVJCI website or visit the GVJCI office. This workshop is made possible by funding from Keiro.

ELEMENTAL FUNK CONCERT

SAT, NOV 8, 4-9PM

Early Bird Tickets \$55 through Oct 24

Visit our website to purchase tickets & for more info.



SOUND MEDITATION WORKSHOP

FRI, NOV. 14, 1-3PM

GVJCI Nisei Veterans Memorial Hall

Join us for a Sound Meditation Workshop conducted by Sound Body Healing Practitioner Yuki Uwasawa Fultineer. What to bring: yoga mat (or equivalent: a bath towel or rug is fine), an extra towel, blanket, socks, etc. to keep you warm when lying on your back. This session will use singing bowls and focus on the deep healing properties of sound. FREE to participate. To register, please visit the GVJCI website or visit the GVJCI office. This workshop is made possible by funding from Keiro.

SOUND BATH & HEALING WORKSHOP

SAT, NOV. 22, 10AM-11AM

GVJCI Nisei Veterans Memorial Hall

Practice healing and self care at our Sound Bath workshop for seniors! Practitioner Nana Tsubota is a registered yoga instructor and sound healer. She will guide participants in light stretching and sound healing using singing bowls. Participants must bring a yoga mat and water to stay hydrated. FREE to participate. To register, please visit the GVJCI website or visit the GVJCI office. This workshop is made possible by funding from Keiro.

DECEMBER

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS SEMINAR あなたの権利を知るセミナー

MON, DEC. 1, 1-2PM

GVJCI Upstairs Classroom 207/208

Please check the GVJCI website for updates! 最新情報については、GVJCIのWebサイトをご確認ください。

JANUARY

2026 GVJCI RAFFLE DRAWING

THU, JAN 29, 10AM

GVJCI Nisei Veterans Memorial Hall

Live drawing & Umeboshi performance! Raffle Tickets included in Fall Newsletter or available at the GVJCI office Mon-Fri 9AM-5PM.



SHIBORI + NOREN + AI (SHIBORI DYE WORKSHOP)

SAT, JAN. 31, 9AM-1PM

GVJCI Outdoor Breezeway

Using Japanese Indigo (Ai), this workshop will explore traditional Shibori techniques to create an original Noren (doorway curtain) to grace a doorway in your home. Taught by mother and son Shibori artists, Diana Fullmer and Nick Kuriyama, participants will explore stitching, clamping, binding and pole wrapping. Pre-made cotton Noren from a Japanese supplier will be dyed in class, by students using Indigo also from Japan. This workshop is open to adults with all levels of knowledge and limited to 20 participants. The fee is \$65 to participate. All tools, supplies and materials are included in the class fee. To register, please visit the GVJCI website.

FEBRUARY

CREATE A BUSINESS PLAN WORKSHOPS

TUES & THURS, FEB. 3, 5, 10, 12, 17, 19, 24, & 26, 7-9PM

GVJCI Upstairs Classroom 205

This 8-part in-person workshop series will walk small business owners step by step through the process of building a complete, customized business plan. Led by Mariko Lochridge, Small Business Programs Coordinator and 2024 LA Conservancy Historic Preservation Award recipient, the series will combine hands-on exercises, case studies, and practical tools to make business planning approachable and useful. To register, please visit bit.ly/2026BusinessPlanCourse or the GVJCI website.



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SETSUBUN

SAT, FEB. 7, 10-11AM

GVJCI Nisei Veterans Memorial Hall

Celebrate Setsubun with GVJCI with fun themed crafts and activities for children ages 5-10. Participation fee is \$5. Please visit our website to register.

GVJCI DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

SAT, FEB. 28, 2-4PM

GVJCI Main Hall

Save the date! More information on the theme of the 2026 DOR coming soon. Please check the GVJCI website for updates. ABOUT GVJCI DOR: Each year, the Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute (GVJCI) holds its annual Day of Remembrance (DOR) which commemorates the incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII. A different theme and related film is selected each year, and a panel of experts is carefully selected to help further educate the community on the events, experiences, and lessons that should be learned from this time in American history. The GVJCI and the DOR Committee are so grateful for the tremendous support shown by the community each year and hope our DOR program continues to educate and motivate all people to speak out against injustice in all its forms.



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THANK YOU 2025 GVJCI SUMMER INTERNS!

Thank you Kelsie Kato, Christy Kaneshige, Yurika Mahr, Kristi Ikemoto and Hina Kaizuka for all of your contributions this summer! We enjoyed working with you and getting to know each of you! Wishing you all the best as you return to your respective schools. You can read intern reflections on our website on the Careers tab.





To visit the GVJCI website, scan the QR code above

Friends of the GVJCI is now in its 10th year! Thank you to all of our Friends who have made a pledge and continue to support us through the years! It's not too late to become a Friend of the GVJCI this year!



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GARDENA VALLEY JAPANESE CULTURAL INSTITUTE

The Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute (GVJCI) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit community center providing various classes, programs, services, and facilities to the South Bay area. We also provide affordable housing through the JCI Gardens Apartments, the adjacent senior housing property.

The GVJCI's roots date back to 1912, when it was known as the Moneta Gakuen, a Japanese language school. In 1967, it was formally incorporated as the Gardena Valley Japanese Language School. Then, in 1968, the corporation changed its name to the Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute to incorporate the broader services and functions the organization offers. In 1971, Compton Gakuen, Gardena Gakuen, and Moneta Gakuen merged, opening its doors officially as the GVJCI's Japanese Language School. The GVJCI has a very proud history spanning over 100 years.

Today, we continue to provide a variety of activities, programs, and services. We are truly fortunate to have an active and well-utilized center serving people of all ages. We thank you, the community, for your active participation and for your support through donations and volunteerism that enables the GVJCI to continue.

MISSION STATEMENT

A space to engage, share, and embrace the Nikkei experience and culture.

VISION STATEMENT

The GVJCI envisions a vibrant network and a welcoming space for all persons interested in Japanese heritage and culture where history and tradition are honored, people are inspired to create action and change, and cultural pride and respect for all humanity are promoted.

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- Naoko Tran, *Teacher*
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